



From the President

In this issue

President’s Message - Prepared

Preparedness has always been my go-to task. I trained children through the Red Cross on how to be prepared for tornadoes and home fires. I think everyone should have an emergency kit in their car, their home, their RV, and their office. Certainly, our backpacks should have a few critical essentials when we hike.

Spring Break crowds have been out in full force as we all know. The warmer weather plus more visitors than normal tells us that we are in for a very busy time. The Forest Service is requesting our support and that’s what we do...we support our Forest Service. I am thrilled to report that we will once again implement our Trailhead Ambassadors (TA) program. The TAs will be stationed at two trailheads: Bruce Brocket/Bell and Devil’s Bridge. I know that the Fire Departments, Search and Rescue, and Emergency Rooms will also benefit from us being at these trailheads. We have nineteen (19) volunteers who said they will step up and do this. It’s taking a little longer to schedule because we are awaiting our new Volunteer Coordinator, Brady VanDragt. We’ll get it up and running before you know it and that’s when the weather will be the hottest and we are needed the most. The TAs will reinforce being prepared with water, proper sun protection, and understanding what the hikes are really like. Thank you to all the volunteers who have signed up for this program; you will be saving someone’s life. Hours are Saturday, Sunday, or Holiday/Mondays from 10am to 2pm. Let Jean Ober know if you would like to participate (rebopm@yahoo.com).

So much has been going on and all the little things are adding up to the overall successes of the Friends of the Forest. For instance, the newest members finally have had the opportunity to get out and get their training. That had to be so frustrating, joining an organization and being put in idle for months and months. It just shows the dedication and willingness to want to do good things in Sedona. They are now prepared to go forth and do good things!

Most of our Chair-people are hustling and bustling again. They were prepared to get back to it! As opportunities arise, they are jumping on them and using creative ideas and tools. Signup-genius was an example that TM&C utilized. Since we must keep our groups to a certain size, why not have sign-ups with just the right number of slots, genius Melissa! Adopt-A-Plot has taken off. Lots of super volunteers have gotten their hands dirty in these gardens.

Special thanks to **Brian Painchaud**, he got his drone out and was able to get great aerial shots of the Visitor Center gardens. (Photo Right)



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Jean Ober
Branching Out Editor
newsletter@fosedona.org

If you haven't been there in a while, stop and take a look. The pollinator garden is on the right side of the building and the TM&C crews helped put in some rock walls there. Let me know if you would like to get involved in the garden maintenance of watering and pulling weeds anne.glickstein@fosedona.org.

I hope everyone is feeling well, getting active, and is enjoying being a member of the Friends of the Forest. I know that I find tons of activities to keep me busy inside (on the computer) and outside (on the trails). I hope you are finding interesting and rewarding activities as well. I would also like

you to think about stepping up and taking on responsible positions if you have not yet done so. As some Chair-people are getting ready to step down (they've been at it for years), we want to make sure we can back-fill those positions. Also, think about becoming a Board member when the time comes. Keeping these spots filled with new blood keeps our organization fresh and alive. Some members go above and beyond, and we don't want to burn them out or push them out. We want to be prepared. Thank you everyone, for all the good things you do.

Anne Glickstein

Cultural Resources

Nearly all activities for the Cultural Resources Committee continue to be shut down due to the pandemic. A few tasks that are either solitary in nature, involve just a spouse, very small team, and/or hiking dog have managed to continue.

Site Recording Project

Still on hold. Hot weather is approaching. This team ceases activities in the hotter months and usually resumes late October.

Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project

The only ongoing work has been the "Fine Incised Petroglyph Study" (formerly known as the "Paleo Scratch Study"). Work is underway to produce a preliminary status report presentation for the June ARARA (American Rock Art Recording Assoc.) virtual convention and subsequently published in their journal. **Computer based help is still needed in support of this effort.** Spence will provide training via Zoom.

If you are interested in helping with this project, or would like more information, please contact **Spence Gustav** at spencehg@yahoo.com.

Docent Program

Still on hold but eagerly anticipating resumption of activities in the next few months. Training will not resume until both V-Bar-V and Palatki are reopened.

We are always in need of new docents, particularly if you spend all or part of the summer months in the Verde Valley! With the sites being shut down we cannot do training for new docents. I am still taking names of those who are interested so that I can notify them when training becomes available.

If you are interested in helping protect our cultural heritage sites and learning more about the **Palatki, Honanki and V-Bar-V** sites, consider joining the Cultural Resource and Protection Committee. Please call or email (docents@fosedona.org) for more information.

Jerry Walters (928) 284-1339

HELP WANTED

I could use one or two more computer interpreters for the "Fine Incised Petroglyph" Study. If you can help please contact me at spencehg@yahoo.com. I will provide training via Zoom. **Spence Gustav**

Membership Chair Position

is open, anyone interested in helping with this valuable committee position, please contact anne.glickstein@fosedona.org.

Membership Report

I'm happy to report that since our last board meeting we have welcomed 10 new members. **Individual:** Mark Antin, Marybeth Rose and Mia Tramz. **Life Individual:** Ela Czerski. **Family:** Jan & Angelita Allen, Hugh & Jeanne Davidson and Christine Nuez & Mark Kennedy. Welcome all to the FOF family!

Unfortunately the pandemic has taken its toll and 60 members chose not to renew in 2021, some have moved away, some were new members who may have lost interest during the curtailment of activities, but some were years-long members. I hope they will reconsider once fears of the pandemic have passed and all committees are fully operational. Currently our total membership stands at 573. Down from our last report of 618.

On another note, it is with great sadness that I must surrender my position as Membership Chairman. Hubby and I are moving to Colorado to be closer to family. When I took on the job in 2019, I was just beginning to learn the ropes, then the pandemic blew all plans for 2020 out the door and it was quite the new adventure coordinating with **President Annie Glickstein**, tech guru **Marilyn Painchaud** and all our **Committee Chairs** to hold our **New Member Event** virtually. Thank you all for your tremendous help.

The Membership Chair position is open and we are currently looking for someone who would like to pick up the reins. If you are interested please contact Anne Glickstein at anne.glickstein@fosedona.org.

Noreen Lisowski

Statistical Summary

Volunteer Hours Peg Kern

Several committees continue to be on hold, while several others have just started to ramp up their activities a bit in March. The Water Sampling committee is on indefinite hold, while Trail Maintenance has resumed small group outings.

Here's the recap of the hours by committee for FY21 thru March, compared to the same period last year:

Committee	FY21 Thru Mar	FY20 Thru Mar	Change in Hours	Percent Change	FY21 % of Total
Air Quality	0	239	-239	-100.0%	0.0%
Cultural Resources	2,179	4,471	-2,292	-51.3%	18.2%
Graffiti Removal	869	875	-6	-0.7%	7.3%
Interpretive Pgm	68	202	-134	-66.4%	0.6%
River Rangers	60	229	-169	-73.8%	0.5%
Special Projects	205	177	+28	+15.7%	1.7%
Trail Maint&Const	665	1,572	-907	-57.7%	5.5%
Trail Patrol	6,305	6,321	-16	-0.3%	52.6%
VIS	0	2,006	-2,006	-100.0%	0.0%
Water Sampling	0	0	0	0%	0.0%
Wildlife/Fish/Plants	1,076	2,092	-1,016	-48.6%	9.0%
Admin/Meetings	548	1,130	-582	-51.5%	4.6%
Total	11,975	19,314	-7,339	-38.0%	100.0%

“Is there any hope for the future?”

Maybe time for a break from the normal collage of graffiti photos. As we continue to work individually in most cases, there are fewer shots of our group antics. And all of us know what spray paint and scratchings look like, although we could start another album of illegal sign stickers and tree carvings....

Probably the biggest challenge our team faces today is parking! For the more popular TH's if you don't arrive by/ before 6:00 AM, be ready to play the parking lot musical chairs game.

Not that we are noticing any decrease in the amount of graffiti, but sometimes the frustration of unending damage takes a toll. Fortunately, the *Graffiti Removal Team*, which now numbers over 60 members, has always responded when the next outing is announced. Somehow we seem to stay positive, and we genuinely appreciate the “thank yous” we receive by many we meet on the trails.

So, the question remains, is there any hope for saving our delicate and unique environment?

The answer may be found in looking to the future. At some point, those who enjoy defacing the rocks and trees today will become responsible citizens with families of their own.

Included at the bottom of this article is a single photo of perhaps a glimpse into the future. One of our member couples, **Les and Barb Heffner** recently enjoyed a visit from their kids and grandchildren. In this photo, Les is explaining the damage of scratching on the Red Rocks. According to Les, the remainder of their hike was spent looking for more graffiti to remove. So, maybe the NEXT generation will value what we leave for them - at least what is left of it. Well done, Les & Barb.

Keep the reports coming!

Jerry Piepiora, Chairman



As of April 25, 2021, there are currently 134 Trail Patrol members.

Continuing the pattern of the previous year Trail Patrollers have been very active over the last 7 months. I predict the year over year statistics will be broken again. The substantial increase in the number of hikers, bikers, and equestrians support what we have all seen with the increase in visitors to the Red Rock District.

The trails most hiked by Trail Patrol members are: Bell Rock Pathway (311), Big Park (310), Turkey Creek (200), Girdner (115), and Courthouse Butte (113). The trails that visitors are attracted to, Boynton Canyon (19) and Devil’s Bridge (2), are not patrolled/reported on much at all.

With the Forest Service reducing restrictions we are planning on offering group trail patrol hikes starting in June. Look for the announcement at the end of May.

As a reminder, please be timely in reporting your trail hikes.

Here is the summary of trail patrols from October 1, 2020 through April 25, 2021 compared to the same period the previous year.

Please stay safe.

Jon and Terri Petrescu

Stats For 10/1/2020 to 4/25/2021		Same Period Previous Year	Delta	
Number of TP Members who hiked	86	97	-11	-11%
Number of trails hiked	177	161	16	10%
Number Trail Patrols	1,927	1,772	155	9%
Total Hikers Observed	34,507	29,687	4,820	16%
Total People Engaged	9,805	10,761	-956	-9%
Total Bikers Observed	9,212	6,622	2,590	39%
Total Equestrians Observed	172	126	46	37%
Total Dogs Off Leash	1,139	937	202	22%
Total Lbs. Trash Removed	383	360	23	6%

To learn more about the FRIENDS, check out all of the great interpretive programs, interesting activities, past newsletters and how to join the FRIENDS

visit us on our website:

friendsoftheforestsedona.org

If you have ideas, pictures or articles for the newsletter please send them to the editor at newsletter@fosedona.org

Trail Maintenance & Construction

In mid-March, the awesome Trail Maintenance & Construction volunteers were able to don their hardhats, pick up ground tools and hit the trails. After months of COVID-hibernation, this crew was ready to work and they dug right in, literally, building a new trail off of Jacks Canyon. Alongside the USFS, we spent several volunteer mornings clearing a corridor, creating tread, trimming trees, and installing new signage. It's always a great challenge and incredibly rewarding when we get to put the "Construction" aspect of our group to work.

More traditional trail maintenance was on the docket for April. Our volunteers closed an exorbitant number of social trails, removed unnecessary rock cairns, built new rock cairns, removed catclaw, trimmed back branches and performed general trail maintenance. Work was centered around the Girdner/Western Gateway Trailhead, the Sugarloaf Trailhead, and the Fay Canyon Trailhead.

There are also times when we get special requests from the US Forest Service and our volunteers jump right in. One such project was clearing the Midgley Bridge parking lot and installing a drainage ditch. Coming up, a few volunteers will be working with the Oak Creek Water Shed Council, in coordination with the USFS, to install dog poop stations throughout the district.

Our Friday morning volunteer sessions will continue in May and we plan on tackling Huckaby, Jim Thompson, Brins Mesa and Wilson Mountain, just to name a few. We typically don't have volunteer sessions past May due to the heat and restart volunteer mornings in the Fall.

We can't thank our volunteers enough for all of the dedication, hard work and sweat equity they put into maintaining Sedona's incredible trail system.

Melissa Pontikes and Mike Boyd

Trail Maintenance & Construction Chairs
Friends of the Forest Sedona



Midgley Bridge Drain

Photos courtesy of **Jerry Checchia**
and **Rod Cashin**





Rock Cairn install



Ernie DiMillo, Ed White, and Rod Cashin showing off the new rock cairn alongside seasonal USFS employees **Scott and Wren**.



TM&Cer **Bob Wych** and **Matt** from USFS taking advantage of some shade on Teacup

IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Wednesday, May 5, 2021 9:00 AM via Zoom

FOF Quarterly Board of Directors and Members meeting

All members are welcome

Future Board of Directors Meetings

September 1, 2021

December 1, 2021

The Friends of the Forest, Inc. is dedicated to assisting the U. S. Forest Service in maintaining, protecting, and restoring the scenic beauty and natural and cultural resources of forest lands for the enjoyment and use of present and future generations. The objective of this nonprofit, volunteer group is to work in partnership with the U. S. Forest Service in tasks it does not have the manpower or the funds to accomplish on its own.



Hoping for rain in the Red Rocks - photo by **Mike Ober**