



Branching Out

Friends of the Forest Sedona

From the President — Manny Romero

In this issue

Hello Friends,

As I transition into the role of President, I want to thank everyone for your kind words of encouragement and support these past few months. You made me feel valued and very welcome. I feel fortunate to be part of such a talented, enthusiastic, hard-working group.

To recap my comments at the December meeting, I owe particular gratitude to **Jennifer Young**, not just for her professional and spirited leadership, but for her invaluable guidance. To prep me for this job, she gave generously of her time and expertise in a series of face-to-face meetings—one every few weeks beginning late last year. I'm truly grateful.

Jennifer has given so much to this organization and has certainly set a high bar for all who follow. On behalf of the Friends, I had the pleasure to present her with a beautiful framed image of Cathedral Rock from Crescent Moon Ranch as an acknowledgment of her exceptional service as President. The photograph is the work of Friends member **Bob Shuman**.

Also at our December meeting, new Board Officers were formally elected by the Board of Directors, including myself; **Jean Ober**, Secretary; **Tom Cloonan**, Treasurer; and **Joe Polorski**, Assistant Treasurer. **Jerry Checcia** was welcomed as Graffiti Co-chair, and an informative leadership seminar was presented at the conclusion of the meeting.

Trail Patrol Chair **Elaine Hackett** organized a first-class training seminar January 19 for new and veteran trail patrol and wilderness patrol members. Topics ranged from how to identify reportable trail conditions, to training on converting GPS coordinates to UTM, safety and new electronic reporting tools, presenters included **Bob Kenney**, **Jerry Pieporia**, **Al Cornell**, **Mike Vitek** and **Bob Haizman**.

Plans are in full swing for our New Member Welcome Event, set for Thursday, March 2, at 2 p.m. in the Ranger Station Visitor Center. If you're new to the Friends, especially if you joined after our 2016 event last March, please come and discover more about how Friends of the Forest can enrich your life. Everyone is welcome.

Two exciting new projects are moving us forward into a digital future. First, at our December meeting, the Board approved an internal funding request for a one year contract with NeonCRM. Neon is a powerful database/membership management software package that can revolutionize the way we communicate with our growing membership. Jennifer Young, **Peg Kern** and **Marilyn Painchaud** are working hard to customize Neon to fit our specific needs. Peg and Marilyn have distilled membership lists

Page 1 - 2

Presidents Letter

Membership

Page 3 - 4

Cultural Resources

Merchandise

Page 5

River Patrol

Welcome Event

Page 6

Trail Patrol

Page 7

Visitor Information

Page 8 - 9

Graffiti Removal

Page 10

Trail Maintenance

Page 11

Calendar

from our multiple databases into one standardized list in Neon. This has been a tremendous effort. To have everyone's name appear in a single database in the same format—including guests and donors—is a huge step forward managing our member data. Jennifer will provide additional details at our meeting next week.

In a second digital project, computer guru **Bob Haizman** created a remarkable smartphone app that enables those on trail patrol to record and report abnormal trail observations. "FOF Trails" records date and time, observation type, trail name, GPS coordinates and hiker contact info. The app also saves photos. Data is stored in the phone's memory and when the hiker reaches an area with cellular or Wi-Fi service, the data is transferred to a spreadsheet on the Friends of the Forest website. The website has tabs for Graffiti, Signage, Trail Work, Wildlife and Additional comments, kudos to Bob for his work.

Spence Gustav has once again set the Friends record for most volunteer hours. One ongoing special project that's especially time consuming is Heritage Site 3D modeling. The archeological photo documentation team led by Spence has photographed more than 140 sites in the Red Rock District. This large image data set helps Forest Service archeologists evaluate current site condition. The 3D modeling venture is an extension of the valuable contributions the photo team makes toward site preservation.

A series of narrated slide shows coordinated by Spence and **Craig Swanson** is another notable photo project launched recently. The first program highlights the Red Rock Ranger District Visitor Center and is designed to give visitors an illustrated overview of the Center's interpretative programs and information resources. The Forest Service has compiled a list of potential shows for future production, and would like to make the programs available in both an English and Spanish versions.

I look forward to working with all of you as we continue our dedication to protecting the spectacular forest and wilderness lands of Red Rock country. I hope to see you next Wednesday, February 22nd at our Board and Membership meeting (9 a.m. in the Admin Building) and the New Member event, March 2 at the Visitors Center.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with your ideas, questions or concerns. You can reach me at manny.romero@fosedona.org or by phone at 928-380-3421. Keep up your good work.

Membership

On behalf of the Friends, I would like to extend a warm welcome to **30** new members. Four have chosen Lifetime Membership, five have chosen the Friends level, and ten joined as Family Members. In October those joining included: **Chuck Armbruster, Joe and Sandi Connellan, Peter O'Carroll, Stephen Orr, Darlene and Cliff Stiffler, and Susan Will.** In November, **Robert Breard, Ann Ellerman and Joseph DeNardo, David and Ania Hanke, Aaron Hayne, and KC Jones** joined. In December those joining included: **Sergio and Lora Mazza, Elanda Poff, and Nancy and Art Weeks.** By the end of January, we welcomed **Tim and Heidi Anderson, Rich and Susan Antczak, Denise and Rob Gibbs, Thomas and Margaret Likens, and Paula and Dennis Uthe.**

Also, time to **RENEW** is running out. If you do not renew by **April 1, 2017**, your membership will be void and you will no longer be able to volunteer!

You can now renew online and pay with PayPal or a Credit Card. Go to the **Join Us** section on the Friends of the Forest website friendsoftheforestsedona.org and follow the directions. Or, you can still pay by check. Mail it to **Friends of the Forest, PO Box 2391, Sedona, AZ 86339.** Please add **"RENEWAL"** to the memo line on the check. Thank you!

Betty Parker

Membership

Now that our seasonal members have returned and the wet winter weather has subsided, there is a lot happening within the Cultural Resources committee.

V-Bar-V Discovery Days

Mark your calendars! This year's event will be held on **Saturday and Sunday March 25th and 26th**. The usual call for volunteers for parking duty, tent setup/takedown, etc. will be going out in early March. Setup will take place on Friday the 24th. This is always a fun and highly attended event. Our organizations perennial participation has been a big contributing factor to the success of the event.

Photo Digitization Project

The project to digitize and catalog the historical/archaeological 35mm slides and prints for the Coconino National Forest continues in Phase 3 of the project. The slide portion of the project was completed in 2012. Work continues on the print portion of the project. To date, we have processed 50,001 (74%) of 67,442 print images! Phase 3 entails transcribing the hand-written comments, from the margins of the slides and back of the prints, into a "photolog" database (MS Excel). This phase is by far the largest in terms of hours required for completion. We are 78% complete for the total project. The skills required to be a member of this team include a general comfort with using a Windows based PC, entering data into a spreadsheet, using an image (i.e. photo) viewer, and attention to detail. Training and hands-on work sessions will be provided.

Please consider volunteering for this project. You do not need to be a docent to provide great value to this project.

If you are interested in helping with this project, or would like more information, please contact Jerry Walters at fofdocents@gmail.com.

Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project

The activities of this team have been slowed down by the holiday season and the rainy conditions we have had in Nov., Dec., and January. In the interim their activities have focused on the 3-D Modeling project. Field work will continue in earnest in the next few weeks.

The site photography project still has several years of work ahead. If you are interested in helping with this project, or would like more information, please contact **Spence Gustav** at spencehg@yahoo.com.

3-D Modeling Project

This project was reported on in the December Newsletter and is an off-shoot of the Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project. This project has tremendous benefit to the archaeology community and the public. The public interface is through the SedonaRedRockTrails.org website that Friends of the Forest maintains. A great deal of effort has been put forth in recent months to greatly expand the archaeology section of that site. In addition to general information about the prehistory of the Verde Valley, there a dedicated page to Palatki, Honanki, and V-Bar-V that include maps, site specific interpretation information, and 200 3-D models! I encourage you to visit sedonaredrocktrails.org/PublicOpeningPage.html and check things out. The models have had over 4,300 views and continue to grow. We have recently upgraded the workstation that generates the models so that the existing models will be replaced with larger and higher resolution models.

In addition to the public models, there are currently 800 "private" models for the Forest Service. The number of models grows weekly! Generating these models requires a high-end graphics workstation with lots of computer memory and graphics memory. As the quality of the models has improved, we are exceeding the capabilities of the

web based interface and some of the online models have had to be simplified for that presentation. Even so, these models are amazing! A related dilemma is that the Forest Service computers are not currently capable of viewing the full size high resolution models.

Site Recording Project

This is a new project that is due in part to the Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project. It has become apparent that there are dozens of archaeological sites in the Red Rock Ranger District that are known to many locals and avid hikers and are unknown to the Forest Service. It is important to get these sites recorded and into the Forest Service inventory so that they can be documented for future evaluation. Many are in readily accessible areas and are at risk for vandalism/graffiti. This project is being headed up by **Scott Newth** and is a joint effort with Friends of the Forest, Verde Valley Chapter of the Arizona Archaeological Society (VVC/AAS a.k.a. VVAS), the Verde Valley Archaeology Center (VVAC), and the Arizona Site Stewards. Field sessions are being conducted by **Peter Pilles** (Coconino Forest Archaeologist) and **Ted Neff** (Red Rock Ranger District Archaeologist) in late February and early March to get things going.

Docent Program

I am pleased to announce a ground swell of new docents in the past several months. Please join me in welcoming **Barbara Bank, Phil Finkelstein, Joe DeNardo, Annie Ellerman, Gerry & Mike Turner, and Annie & Werner Reis**. Special thanks to **Spence Gustav** for providing training at Palatki and Honanki. We are always in need of new docents, particularly if you spend all or part of the summer months in the Verde Valley! Our bi-annual "Docent Refresher" all day training program will be held on February 28th. Peter Pilles and Ted Neff will be conducting this training as well.

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 (fofdocats@gmail.com) for more information.

Jerry Walters 284-1339

Merchandise

We have a variety of gear for you to look at when you come to the February 22nd meeting. We still have one winter weight vest. There are a variety of caps, shirts, badges, safety whistles, and DVD's. Barbeque season is fast approaching, and there is a very nice denim apron with the FRIENDS OF THE FOREST logo embroidered on it. We welcome ideas of items you would like us to stock, and we are working on some new ideas for merchandise items. Also, if you have gently used clean clothing, we will gladly accept your items for resale at greatly reduced prices. At last month's meeting, we held a raffle for the red fleece blanket. The winner was **Tom Cloonan**. Congratulations, Tom!

Debbie Wych and Roni Ward



Some Friends of the Forest members may not know that the Verde Valley is home to two “Wild and Scenic” rivers— Verde River and Fossil Creek. Portions of these systems have received their designations through an Act of Congress. Caring and maintaining both rivers is the responsibility of the Red Rock Ranger District with support from the Tonto and Prescott Forests, in doing this important job. Depending on time of year and precipitation runoff, the Verde River can have class 4 and 5 rapids. During these wet periods, many boaters use the river.



We usually have two river trips each month, but with high water, the plans kept changing. Some trips were planned to remove evasive plant species that are underwater and were canceled. **Jim Manning** (pictured above with the truck and duckies) had his first trip with us to Childs, new territory for him. Rain was expected but it held off until we returned to Camp Verde. The Forest Road 708 does become a muddy mess in some locations making driving very challenging. Trips will probably be scheduled into April.

The Verde River Canoe Challenge will take place on March 18th. If any Friends of the Forest members are interested in helping the Forest Service monitor the Canoe Challenge, they will provide boats, paddles, helmets and life vests to us. Please e-mail me at Mvitek2@msn.com if you wish to help.

Thanks,

Mike Vitek

**FOF Member Welcome Event
Thursday, March 2, 2 PM
Red Rock Ranger District Visitor Center**

New members, prospective members, and current members are welcome.

**Come learn about FOF volunteer opportunities,
hear from committee chairs,
and meet other members.**

Trail Patrol activities got off to a strong start in 2017 with a training seminar for all Trail Patrol members. The event was well attended and covered a broad range of topics relative to Trail Patrol, including graffiti removal, trail maintenance, trail safety, emergency situations, and current and upcoming electronic reporting protocol. An interest was expressed among those attending for similar training opportunities, especially in the areas of GPS and Survival training. Watch for the schedule of these seminars slated for this Spring.

Inclement weather resulted in the cancellation of two scheduled hikes in January. Therefore, additional hikes in February and March have been scheduled and are outlined below.

REMAINING FEBRUARY HIKE

Tuesday, February 28th. Meet at 9 AM at Cathedral Rock parking lot to hike down to Oak Creek and back. Distance about 4 miles round trip.

MARCH HIKES

Thursday, March 9th. Meet at 9 AM at the library in West Sedona to carpool to Doe Mesa. This trail switchbacks up to the Mesa with paths to walk atop the Mesa. Distance is about 3 miles round trip, depending on how much walking we do on top.

Friday, March 24th. Meet at 9 AM at Little Horse parking lot to hike to Chicken Point and back. Distance is about 3 miles round trip.

Wednesday, March 29th. Meet at 9 AM at Schnebly Hill parking lot to hike Margs Draw and back. Distance about 4 miles round trip.

The hikes are leisurely paced, include a snack break, and are a great way to meet and share time with other Trail Patrol members. Please RSVP by email at flyingpoint@comcast.net or call me at 207-415-4228. Hikes are limited to 12.

Trail Patrol members logged 600 hours in December and 682 hours in January, impressive totals for our committee. However, our trail observation reports do not reflect just the hours we spend hiking the trails. Trail observations include graffiti, trail maintenance needs, unusual wildlife, and any illegal situations we encounter, such as bikes in Wilderness areas. Our protocol is to observe, record GPS location, take photos and report. We do not attempt to remove graffiti or engage in trail maintenance. Attention to this aspect of Trail Patrol as you hike is appreciated.

Thank you for your presence on the trails and for all you do on behalf of Friends of the Forest and the Forest Service.

Elaine Hackett

January Trail Patrol Hikers Susan Antczak, Roy Julian, Lois Johnson, Jean Ober and Jeusita Tekell. Photo by Elaine Hackett



Visitor Information Services

If you've had the feeling that your shifts at the Visitor Center seemed busier than they used to be, it's because they have! According to the 2016 fiscal year-end statistics published by **Nina Hubbard**, visitor traffic was up **15%** compared to the previous year. In fact, in the first quarter of the year we welcomed record-breaking numbers of visitors.

Our Friends of the Forest Volunteers, passionate about the beauty of Sedona, ensure that our thousands of visitors get the most out of their time spent here, and leave loving Sedona as much as we do. In YR 2016, our volunteers served over 6,300 hours. That's up **12%** over last year and equates to a **\$145,000** benefit to the Forest Service. (Value of volunteer time per Independent Sector.org.)

Newbies and veterans alike are eager to take shifts at the Visitor Center. At times, we're blessed with more interest than open shifts. While this can be frustrating to those volunteers who'd like to work more, take heart in knowing that as an organization, we're in an excellent position to provide strong, reliable support to the Forest Service and the visitors to Sedona. (And keep in mind, we're coming up on flu season, so there's bound to be opportunities to fill in for cancellations and save the day.)



We welcomed 2 new visitor center recruits in the past quarter. Welcome to **Darlene Stiffler and Chuck Armbruster**.

Whether you've worked the counter, answered the phones, led an education program or supported visitor services in any way, thanks for a great year. I suspect another record breaking year may be on our horizon. In January, the *New York Times* named Sedona as one of the "52 Places to Visit in 2017". Among destinations as varied and exotic as the Great Barrier Reef, Marakesh, Madagascar and Botswana, they described Sedona as: "Sun-soaked luxury that's Zika-free."

Snowbirds have traditionally escaped gray skies by fleeing to the tropics. But with continued Centers for Disease Control warnings about the Zika virus, some travelers, especially potential parents, are seeking mosquito-free destinations. Consider Sedona, which basks in the dry warmth of the Arizona desert, its natural beauty gleaming under a new sheen of luxury."

Here's to a great (and Zika-free) 2017! **Terry Orlick**

FRIENDS OF THE FOREST SEDONA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS MEETING RED ROCK RANGER
STATION CONFERENCE ROOM

FEBRUARY 22, 2017 @ 9:00 AM

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME. HOSPILITY COMMITTEE PROVIDES COFFEE, TEA AND LIGHT SNACKS
PLEASE JOIN US AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FRIENDS AND HOW WE ASSIST THE U. S. FOREST SERVICE

Friends all – I would like to offer a slightly different flavor for this article. Rather than just reporting on our activities in the Forest and Wilderness, here is an update on education and training.

We continue to face more and varied challenges on the types of surface defacing being done by those very few visitors. Not only do we still see spray paint, but also fingernail polish, and recently paint ball splatters on signs. Each requires different removal techniques. For the “regular” scratching we continue to come up with new ideas so when completed, the rock surface looks as natural as possible.

I am continually reminded of a comment made by a senior hiker we came across while cleaning an upper surface on Cathedral Rock. He felt our aggressive rock scratching left an area that looked worse than with just the graffiti. I hope we can convert him.

The second area of education is historical art recognition. We live in an area once inhabited by Yavapai, Sinagua, and other Native American tribes. The preservation of their history is always paramount in our efforts.



Fortunately, we have several knowledgeable people available to assist us in this area, including **Spence Gustav** and **Ted Neff**, a new Forest Service employee. Their guidance is critical to our efforts. We are unable to clean obvious graffiti, which has been scratched over the top of ancient or historical writings. As Ted or Spence will tell you, the potential destruction of the underlying history is the more serious issue. Many times, the copy cat writings are nearly identical to something of historical value, and only by their careful examination can we discern what is the appropriate action.



Even our committee operates under the “**Report, but do not touch**” policy until approval is received. It is far more important to send a photo reporting on any graffiti sighting for review and approval, than to attempt to remediate the damage ASSUMING it is recent.

To this end, the Graffiti Removal committee is holding an in-house training session in the afternoon of March 23, 2017. There will be two instructors – **Nori Thorne and Spence Gustav**.

Nori will be teaching us several of the techniques she uses in the restoration of graffiti damaged patina surfaces.

Spence will show how subtle some of the ancient writings are and the dangers of cleaning what appears to be recent.

If anyone wishes to attend, please let me know at graffiti@fosedona.org. More details are available. Space is limited.

The entire graffiti team looks forward to seeing you on the trails.

Jerry Piepiora

Chairman



Samples of the paint graffiti that the team has removed from rocks and bridges in the area.

J. Piepiora



Reminder to all visitors to our
National Forest

Trail Maintenance & Construction

December and January have been difficult for trail work. Mother Nature seems to want to rain on Fridays! We have supplemented our time with "Special Projects".

We had a fencing project at Boynton Canyon Trail Head. **Mark Munsell, Kurt Starbuck and Tim Forgarty** aligned and placed T-post with the help of Forest Service employee **Nathan Buck**. Photo upper right.

Steps were installed on the Hog Trail at a slick rock section by **Mark Munsell, Jerry Checchia, David Murrill and Ernie DiMillo** (taking the picture lower right).

Forest Service employee **Kyle Robb** led a crew on tread repair at Deadman's Pass. (Photo lower left)

John Kuzmiak has been regularly taking a crew out during mid week, tackling difficult wilderness trails. A big THANKS to him and the brave souls who accompany him.

Ernie DiMillo



January 25, 2017 Boynton Canyon Tree Cutting

Jim Manning, Tim Fogarty, Pete Malmgren, and Ernie DiMillo

IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

February 22, 2017 @ 9:00 AM FOF Quarterly Board of Directors and Members meeting - Ranger Station

February 28, 2017 @ 9:00 AM Trail Patrol Hike - Cathedral Rock

March 2, 2017 @ 2:00 PM Welcome Event, Red Rock Ranger District Visitor Center

March 9, 2017 @ 9:00 AM Trail Patrol Hike - Doe Mesa

March 23, 2017 Graffiti Removal Committee Training

March 24, 2017 @ 9:00 AM Trail Patrol Hike - Chicken Point

March 25 & 26, 2017 V-Bar-V Days

March 29, 2017 @ 9:00 AM Trail Patrol Hike - Margs Draw

April 1, 2017 Membership renewals Due

May 3, 2017 @ 9:00 AM FOF Quarterly Board of Directors and Members meeting - Ranger Station

September 13, 2017 @ 9:00 AM FOF Quarterly Board of Directors and Members meeting - Ranger Station

December 13, 2017 @ 9:00 AM FOF Quarterly Board of Directors and Members meeting - Ranger Station

Friends of the Forest Sedona

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.