

Branching Out

Sedona Friends of the Forest

From the President Manny Romero

In this issue

Hello Friends,

Springtime in Sedona. Warmer temperatures, a burst of wildflower color and an unmistakable surge in forest visitation. As the community revs up for the busy months ahead, Friends members lead the way with a sustained high level of activity.

We were particularly active during Archaeology Awareness Month in March, highlighted by Archaeology Discovery Days at V Bar V Heritage Site, March 24 and 25. Friends teams were on the job for canopy setup a full day before the event began, and the last ones to leave once they completed teardown.

Earlier in the week several of our volunteers helped make the agave roast a success. Thank you to Cultural Resources Chair **Jerry Walters** who worked closely with District Heritage Site Operations Work Leader **Terrilyn Green** to orchestrate this annual celebration of archaeology and cultural preservation.

Education is the central focus of a number of our programs. Past president **Spence Gustav** works with Forest Service fire teams and local fire departments to stage a series of presentations to elementary schools throughout the Verde Valley. The LAFS (Life and Fire Safety) programs are video recorded for social media distribution.

Page 1 - 2

Presidents Letter

Page 3

Graffiti Removal

Page 4

Trail Maintenance

Membership

Page 5

Statistical Data

Page 6

Cultural Resources

Page 7

Visitor Information



Good Fire ... Bad Fire.

Henry the Clown and members of the LAFS team entertain and educate. Smokey Bear also makes an appearance, to the delight of the young audience

To take the LAFS videos one step further, District Ranger **Nicole Branton** would like Spence to produce a version with Spanish subtitles. If you have Spanish language skills and are interested in helping with this project, contact Spence at spencehg@yahoo.com. You need only listen to the videos and provide written translations so subtitles can be added.

Another activity that calls for language proficiency will help the Forest Service reach out to Latino visitors this summer at campgrounds and picnic sites. In announcing this opportunity, Customer Service Representative Candice Mark stressed that since the interpreter would accompany a presenter, no knowledge of the environmental topic to be presented is required. To volunteer, contact Interpretive Program Chair **Jennifer Young** at jennifer.young@forsedona.org or Co-Chair Bob Wych at bobwych@aol.com.

Special thanks to our “Artist in Residence” Nori Thorne, who applied her artistic savvy to create reproduction pictographs on sandstone using traditional red, white and black pigment and classic binders. These pictographs are part of a recently-launched archaeological study to assess the impact of dust at Palatki and Honanki. The pictographs will be photographed at regular intervals for an extended period of time.

Longtime River Rangers Chair **Mike Vitek** has announced his intention to step down from the

Rangers leadership role effective May 1st. As Mike transitions to a well-deserved retirement, I extend my very deep appreciation for a job well done. Mike has guided the Rangers group since the committees inception in support of the Forest Service mission to keep the Verde River as pristine as possible.

The ever-versatile **Marilyn Painchaud** has responded to a request from District Wildlife Officer Janie Agyagos for assistance in coordinating volunteer assignments in wildlife, fish and plant projects. Marilyn is our webmaster and former chair of the Air Quality Control group, which evolved to full committee status from modest beginnings as a dedicated project. Thank you, Marilyn. I appreciate your volunteer spirit.

Our next Board and Member meeting only days away—Wednesday, May 9 at 9 a.m. in the District Administration building. Since we do not meet during the summer, this will be our final meeting until next fall.

Our remaining 2018 Board and Membership meetings will be held on:

September 12

Annual Meeting (October date to be set by Forest Service)

December 12

I look forward to seeing you next week. Thank you for your dedication to Friends of the Forest.

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

May 9, 2018 @ 9:00 AM

All Members Are Welcome. The Hospitality Committee Provides coffee, tea and light snacks.
Please join us and learn how THE FRIENDS assist the U. S. FOREST SERVICE

Greetings fellow FOF'ers

We have been very busy since our last newsletter, which wasn't that long ago. We took a team up to Bell rock a few weeks ago, place was a mess. We still need to get back there when we have time.

We just took care of a huge mess up Oak Creek Canyon, paint everywhere. This report got media attention & we were able to respond quickly. With the help of a group from Gilbert, Natural Restorations, The Forest Service and 14 volunteers from our Graffiti committee we were able to tackle almost all of the paint that we found. It was a difficult site to get to, just above Slide Rock,

We will be busy for the next few months with reports coming in from all the usual places. Keep an eye out for the emails & please try to join us on one of the upcoming outings

Special shout out to Nicole & Justin Corey from Natural Restorations, who made the long trip up from Gilbert to assist in this clean up. Check out their website at NaturalRestorations.org

Happy Hiking,

Jerry Checchia



J. Checchia

Greetings fellow volunteers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank **Ernie DiMillo** for all his hard work & dedication to the TM&C committee. He has taught me a lot in the two years that I have been here. He is a great guy to work with & always has a sense of humor. I look forward to his guidance & leadership as I take on this roll as chairperson.

We have a few things planned for May, but might take some time off as the weather heats up & the snow birds take flight.

We currently have 85 members with 2,232 hours logged in since Oct 1st

I wish everyone a safe & happy summer & look forward to seeing you out on the trails.

Sincerely,

Jerry Checchia



J. Checchia

Membership

Since our March 29th Board Meeting, we have had three new members join Friends of the Forest. Let us welcome **Valerie Irons, Mary Ann and Andrew Wilcox**. As of this writing, we have 498 members. Jerry Piepiora will be reporting at the May Board Meeting. I expect by then, we will have more new members!

Betty

**Check out all of the great
interpretive programs on our
website:
friendsoftheforestsedona.org**

Volunteer Hours

The Friends have volunteered an amazing 20,533 hours in the 1st half of fiscal 2018; that's an average of over 3,420 hours per month, or about 790 hours per week! This represents an 8% increase over the same period last year, so we're continuing on our path to another new record for the year.

Committee	FY18 Hrs thru Mar	FY17 Same Period	Change in Hours	% Change
Air Quality	284	324	-40	-12%
Cultural Resources	6,150	4,167	+1,983	+48%
Graffiti Removal	599	764	-165	-22%
Interpretive Pgm	224	194	+30	15%
River Rangers	213	225	-12	-5%
Special Projects	2,238	982	+1,256	128%
Trail Maint&Const	2,014	2,424	-410	-17%
Trail Patrol	4,671	4,675	-4	0%
VIS	2,494	2,770	-276	-10%
Water Sampling	0	0	0	0%
Admin/Meetings	1,646	2,470	-824	-33%
Total	20,533	18,995	+1,538	+8%

Cultural Resources continues on a staggering pace, already surpassing the full year total for 17 of the past 19 years. Also, Special Projects included 1,648 hours in support of Wildlife Projects (aka 'Janie's Projects'); for the same period last year, 320 hours were reported for this category, so that's an increase of 415 percent!

As a reminder, please report ALL hours (including Admin hours for Committee chairs and all Trail Patrol hours by individual members) as soon as possible at the end of each month, so that we can consolidate and update the hours in each member's NEON profile. Ideally this should happen within a week of month's end, as all hours should be finalized by then.

Peg Kern

V-Bar-V Discovery Days

Many thanks to the 29 volunteers who contributed 378 hours to help make this year's event a success! As expected, the Agave Roast was a big draw and brought in over 850 visitors over the weekend. There were an additional 150 people in attendance of the special Spring Equinox talk by **Ken Zoll** that kicked off the Agave Roast on the preceding Tuesday.

Site Recording Project

The team has concluded activities until the fall. The team was able to record and document 19 sites and analyze 1,500 sherds and lithics. There are still enough currently known unrecorded sites for this project to continue for several more years.

If you are interested in helping with this project, or would like more information, please contact **Scott Newth** at rsnewth@msn.com. (928-274-7773)

Cultural Site Photo Documentation Project

This team photographically records archaeological sites and artifacts utilizing numerous techniques. These techniques include conventional digital photography, 3-D modeling, RTI (Reflectance Transformation Imaging), and image enhancement using specialized software. Both the 3-D modeling and RTI processes require a firm protocol and attention to detail to achieve even mediocre results.

This team has remained quite active and has been focused on sites that are more difficult to access. This team is a hardy bunch and will remain active over the summer.

The Pictograph Degradation Analysis project, that was describe in the last newsletter, is officially underway. Reproduction pictographs using several traditional pigments and several binders were created on small sandstone slabs. These slabs are being placed in select locations at

Palatki and Honanki. A control set is being kept indoors. Baseline photos have been precisely calibrated and new photos will be taken periodically for comparison. This will be a long running project. Small signs will be placed near the slabs describing the project. **Because the study requires precise calibration and repeatable measurements, the slabs should not be touched, picked up, or moved.** Many thanks to **Nori Thorne** for creating the authentic reproduction pictographs and an excellent video of the process!

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.

Docent Program

We were saddened to learn of the passing of **Paul Schwartz** on March 26th. Paul was an ardent supporter of the docent program since joining in 2013 and had contributed 400 hours each year. He loved Palatki and was the first person to volunteer to fill any special needs that came up and days that others were not able to fill. Thank you, Paul! We will miss you!! (A celebration of life will be held on June 23rd)

We are always in need of new docents, particularly if you spend all or part of the summer months in the Verde Valley!

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 284-1339

First and foremost, a big thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers, and welcome **Karen Hazzard**, the latest volunteer to complete training.

Despite the worst flu season in memory, visitors kept coming, and we continued to welcome them. Our volunteers were on hand to greet the nearly 80,000 visitors that passed through our doors in the 1st quarter of 2018. Visitation in Q1 outpaced Q1 of 2017 by 4.3%, and shows no signs of slowing down. Extra shifts were added in March, April and May to help accommodate the steady stream of visitors.

Obviously, parking at the trailheads continues to be a challenge. In fact, some visitors have returned to the Visitor Center to voice their frustration at the inability to find a place to park. We do now have a list of for-fee ride services available to take visitors to the various sights. It is available to share upon request.

If you're looking for ideas on how you can improve our visitors' Sedona experience, help smooth out congestion and reduce wear and tear on our most heavily visited destinations, check out <http://www.SedonaSecret7.com>. It's a tool developed by the Chamber of Commerce, with input from the Red Rock Ranger District. It features some of the lesser known trails and activities in Sedona.

Cheers,

Terry Orlick



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.