



Special Issue

NOVEMBER 2017

Sedona Friends of the Forest

Gene Rector recognized for 22 years of Volunteer Service



GENE AND DARL RECTOR

Gene Rector is being honored by the Sedona Friends of the Forest November 4th at the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony at Beaver Creek Ranger Station at 10:00 a.m.

Gene has over 22 years and 12,000 hours of volunteer work with the Friends. Many of these hours have been spent maintaining miles of trails and cutting over 4,000 downed trees. In recognition to his many hours of dedicated service Gene is being honored with the 2017 President's Award.

Gene and Darl joined the Friends in 1996, Terry Adams, volunteer coordinator asked them if they would start working on clearing trails in the wilderness trails off Forest Road 152 (Vulture Arch Road). **Darl** remembers Secret Canyon trail was overgrown with manzanita and brush growing together over the trail and no drains were in place.

They worked for three years on Secret, they began work and counted their accomplishments in *feet* cleared. It was a challenge for **Darl** to find places to hide all of the clippings that **Gene** was creating. Over 60 trees had to be removed from the trail and Gene used many cuttings from these trees to build drainage structures on the trail.

People frequently ask about the difference between the Hotshots and Friday Trail Maintenance and I think that an article from the March 1998 Branching Out by Patrol Committee Chairman, Buck Packard, explains it best: "In addition to the normal Patrol activities, several of our group are now doing extensive trail maintenance on an "as needed" basis.

Gene and Darl Rector started pruning back brush that choked the trails when they were out hiking. Then it got more serious. As they came across downed trees, they

removed them to clear the trail. Gene saw that erosion and lack of proper drainage was degrading some of the trail, and organized small, all-work parties to correct the problems.

A major effort has gone into the lower section of Secret Canyon to install water bars, rolling dips and drainage to control the erosion. In addition, the dirt along the edges of the tread has been pulled into the deep trench in the middle of the trail that had been formed by erosion and foot traffic. That section of the trail is now level, and has proper water control.

This maintenance effort differs from the scheduled trail construction and maintenance projects of the Trails Committee in that when a problem is recognized, we "just fix it".

It's fun, good exercise, and a good way to contact lots of hikers who stop and chat. Small crews of 3 to 5 people work best because they can be organized quickly"

The Hot Shot article from December 2005 Branching Out explains what Gene and Darl faced. "When Gene Rector returned from his summer home in Oregon, the call is out to work the trails. His following are **Darl Rector, Al Cornell, Buck Packard, Kevin Harding, Bob Tener, John True, and Rick Zabor.**

The trails worked on since early October were, Bear Sign, David Miller, Secret Canyon & Vultee Arch. Secret Canyon has a section that recently had a fire. There are a number of dead standing trees that tend to "lay down on the job" when a strong gust of wind blows. Over 21 trees were removed off this part of the trail including one that measured 24" in diameter.

Sterling Canyon has been worked on partially on either side of the saddle and will require another visit to complete it. Brushing and drainage repair has taken a high priority this year due to the rainfall which has put the growth into overdrive."

But trails were not the only thing that kept the Hot Shots busy as this article from February 2006 explains. "The trail crew make themselves available when a call for tools is made. Jack Norman and Janie Agyagos of the Forest Service made such a call.

A fence was damaged by vandals and allowed ATV access to a Bald Eagle nesting area. The Crew, **Gene Rector, Buck Packard, Mike Vitek , Al Cornell, Kevin Harding, Joe Landholm and Rick Zabor,** added more posts and dug holes for an H brace, filling them with concrete. to make them more robust.

Al and Mike returned a second day to string barbed wire to re-secure the area and ensure a quiet nesting/ brooding season."

In April 2006 another busy time for the Hot Shots was reported. "The Patrol Hotshots have also been busy over the past two months, putting in a total of 147 hours in addition to working on the Red Rock Pathway Project. Woods Canyon Trail needed a lot of maintenance.

The cat claw was ferocious there and took several days of brushing, in addition to time spent on drainage structures. The crew, consisting of **Kevin Harding, Bob Tener, Rick Zabor, Al Gilson, John True, Buck Packard , Gene and Darl Rector,** also worked on Sterling, Vultee Arch, Dry Creek, Bear Sign, Secret

Gene Rector, Al Gilson and Bob Tener worked on one of fifteen trees across the trail in upper Loy Canyon. The Patrol Hotshots also returned later with a bigger saw to remove a 32 inch ponderosa. The Secret/David Miller/ Bear Sign loop was especially bad with down trees and debris piled up in drainage crossings. The ten-member Hot Shot crew put in over 100 hours in October 2007.



Gene showing his skills on the crosscut saw



Trails were not the only thing that kept **Gene** busy. He joined the River Rats to assist the Forest Service Rangers get to and from the Verde River Clean Up trips. Here is the group getting ready for a trip down the river.



Of course, these trips were not without their problems as seen in the second photo. But, the many hours **Gene** spent driving the fuel oil truck with groceries, mail,



dynamite and caps to the mines in Death Valley, (don't worry **Gene** kept the dynamite caps up in the cab with him) gave him the skills to navigate Forest Service Road 708. Winter rains made the road a slippery mess and as **Gene** said the trailer was like "the tail wagging the dog" on the curves. This 2014 River Rats adventure was cleared up the next day after the roads dried and a crew went in to "jack" the trailer back onto the road.



Gene's years of working with heavy equipment came in handy with a project at Honanki



Working on Two Fences March 2010 with **Kevin Harding** and **Mike Haboush**



Fall hike with Barbara Miller and Jim Tanis 2013

Sunday Hikes were a great feature of Trail Patrol lead by Gene and Darl Rector. Many new members to Trail Patrol learned the reporting requirements and found many new trails in the area on these Sunday hikes.

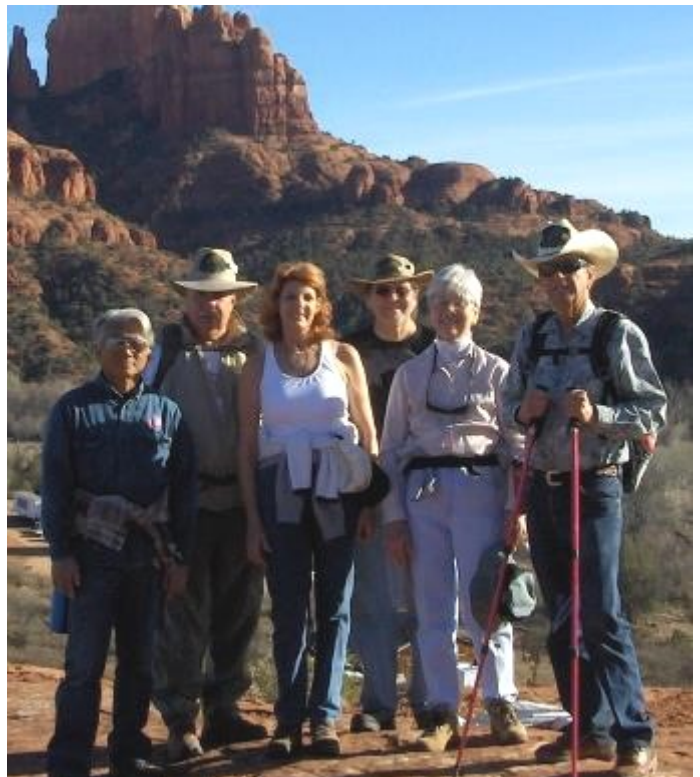


Friends and more friends hiking with Darl and Gene in the beautiful Red Rocks!



Buck Packard, Gene, Helen Campbell and Joe Landholm 1998

Gene and Lois Johnson on Lime Kiln trail



Gene and Darl Rector Special Recognition



Comments from Trail Maintenance Crew:

When I came to Sedona 13 years ago I was hiking the Soldiers Pass Loop when I ran across Gene. I thought to myself, "who is this old guy working on a trail all by himself lifting rocks?" A quick conversation and someone called "Darl" and he asked me if I was interested in doing trail work.

Sometime after that encounter I was way out in Secret Canyon with Gene and Bob Tenner. It was my first time working with Gene and I was just amazed how this old guy could do all this hard work after walking miles. It was an eventful day as I broke the handle on his crosscut saw and we heard thunder in the distance. He excused the broken handle, but at the sound of thunder Gene suddenly announced we were leaving. I was a bit

mystified because it wasn't even raining and in Maine a thunderstorm doesn't last long. We started out and the creek started rising. By the time we got to the stream we needed to cross to get to the truck it was over our knees and rising fast.

Gene taught me more than anyone about working on trails. He was always concerned about safety and when I was with Gene I knew we would be OK. In the many years we worked on trails no one ever got hurt. Darl once added up all the trees Gene cut - over 4,000.

Kevin Harding

Gene gave me my first (and still in use) blue hard hat to wear when I was helping him on trail work as a member of the "Hotshots". I suspect he bought it with his own money.

I remember when **Kevin Harding, Rick Bauldauf and I** kept Gene from sliding "all the way to Schnebly Hill Road" when he slipped while walking up the switchbacks on the Munds Mountain Trail. It was pretty scary - he caught a bush with a trunk about the diameter of your forefinger, which kept him from sliding further downhill into a prickly pear that was directly below him in his path.

Debbie and I went on many Sunday afternoon "trail patrol" hikes led by Darl and Gene during our first couple years in Sedona. It was a great way to learn new trails, and we also made many enduring friendships.

Bob Wych

Gene and Darl were the ones who got me started in on this whole trail work thing.

Dan Aragaki

After hiking Vultee Arch, we came across this skinny guy with a rock bar in his hand working on a "rough" section of FR 152 near Brins Mesa. He told me "the best way to take this thing is straight on" referring to driving over the rocky road.

When I first met Gene, I remembered him from this encounter and joked with him about doing rock work on 152. Gene and Darl have shown us the wonderful opportunities that the Friends offer. We will be forever grateful to them for their trail training, for sharing their love of the red rocks and most of all their friendship with us.

Mike and Jean Ober



On March 16th and 17th, 2010 a combined group of Patrol Hotshots and Trail Maintenance and Construction members took a Crosscut Saw Certification class from Justin Loxley, Forest Service Volunteer Coordinator from the Peaks District. Justin is well known to most of the group, having previously been on the Red Rock District. The Class consisted of one day in the classroom learning about saws, wedges and axes, personal protection equipment, maintenance of equipment, techniques for bucking logs, safety both in use of saws and calculating how the log will respond and the possible hazards around the work area. The second day was spent in the field at Beaver Creek Station demonstrating our skills. Twelve people were certified in two categories by Justin and Shaun Murphy from the Peaks District. Experienced people were given a “B” rating and are required on every job to supervise “A” sawyers and Crosscut Assistants. Also required for this certification is First Aid, CPR and bloodborne pathogens which was completed by seven members of the group on March 26th. Forest Service personnel, Terrilyn Green with the assistance of Anthony Montiel provided this course. Friends members include: **Gene Rector, Rick Zabor, Glen Benning, Dan Aragaki, Bob Tener, Al Gilson, Kevin Harding, Rick Baldauf, and Ron Rusk**



Gene and Darl Rector Special Recognition

Rick Zabor reported in the June 2005 Branching Out, "A big thanks to **Gene Rector**, who with Forest Service approval, led teams to Secret Canyon Trail. It took a real beating with high winds & flooding this past winter. Gene led **Darl Rector, Kevin Harding, Bob Tener, & Rick Zabor** to remove over 100 trees from the trail. All told they put in over 235 hours to bring the trail back to it's former, if not improved state."

December 2007 saw more action for "the Patrol Hotshots were very busy in October repairing damage from summer rainstorms. The Secret/David Miller/Bear Sign loop was especially bad with down trees and debris piled up in drainage crossings.

The ten member crew put in over 100 hours in October. Work was also done on Dry Creek Trail, Vultee Arch Trail, Turkey Creek, Cookstove, Big Park Loop and North Wilson. Since it is difficult to hike eleven miles carrying tools and have time to get much work done, on November 7 and 8th,

Bob Tener, Roy Julian, Kevin Harding and Rick Zabor did an overnight in upper Secret Canyon. They cut and removed 12 trees, cleaned drainages, built steps and worked on trail tread" The crew was up to the task with this trail maintenance challenge.

In February 2008 the Hot Shots were called upon to do a different type of maintenance, assisting the FOF Wranglers in building a fence for the horses. "**Helen Campbell**, Chair of the new Wranglers Committee, said that she "stood in awe" as the FOF trail crew worked to fence pasture land at the old Beaver Creek Ranger Station. Helen joked that according to the men, the women who were there to volunteer "were deemed to have the skill level to clear rocks."

So clear rocks they did! Helen quoted friends **Darl and Gene Rector** in saying that a good fence should be "pig tight, bull stout and horse high." Now that the fence is in, the horses have more roaming room."

As well as this new challenge encountered on the trail, "Beware, there are some hazards out there! Last week, a very large yellow lab bounded into the area where six of

us were about to eat our lunch. In one fell swoop, the dog grabbed Darl Rector's sandwich and cookies and was off up the trail with Darl in hot pursuit. Fortunately, Marie Fox had brought enough lunch to share."

With more adventure in March and April, "Neither snow or sleet nor . . . stops the Patrol Hotshots from their work. It has been another busy time the past two months. One of our members reported that Boynton Canyon Trail needed work and he was correct.

A lot of brushing was needed along with repairing drainages and removing trees. The snowfall provided a bonus with small waterfalls appearing during February. It is special to hear and see running water in these normally dry canyons."

An added bonus to our work in the forest is seeing the change in the seasons. "The Hotshots began the fall season (2009) by working on Dry Creek, Bear Sign, David Miller, Secret Canyon, West Fork and Wilson Canyon Trails.

The usual activities of drainage repair, brushing and tread maintenance were done along with removal of 57 trees from across the trail. The poison ivy is prevalent in these canyons and was clad in fall colors to help

us avoid it. The maples in upper Secret Canyon were also putting on a nice fall color show."

The Trail Patrol trail maintenance crew led by Gene Rector decided it needed a name and became "Hotshots" since they respond rapidly to reports of down trees, etc.

In June 2016, the Trail Committees were combined. Gene retired from Hotshots and **Mike Ober** became chair with **Kurt Starbuck and Paul Ward** co-chairing the Friday trail group and Mike will take on general maintenance, focusing on Wilderness trails. Co-Chairs for Sign Construction and Placement are Sam **Serrill**, **Rich Spinelli and Garry Neil**. Co-chair for Sawyer/Tree Removal is **Jim Manning**.



The Human Trail Machine

When Darl and Gene Rector walk and work in the woods of the Red Rock Ranger District, they feel like they are inside a church. But worshipping doesn't need a prayer book, bible, choir or even a building—just the sound of the swish, swish, swish of their cross-cut saws.

Two hard-working members of Friends of the Forest, the Rectors commute at least 50 miles to work on trails 3 to 4 times a week. Both grew up close to nature. Darl's dad ran the Cecil Pack Train in Sequoia National Forest, and she helped with the mules and did some camp cooking for the visitors who came to fish and hunt.

Gene grew up on a California cattle ranch. Their early love of the outdoors still exists during their seventh decade of life.

"Going to work in the woods is like entering a cathedral," Gene said. "It is full of peace and quiet and is therapeutic for me." Wife and former nurse Darl spoke of the ten surgeries Gene has had on his legs. "The walking and working has helped build collateral arteries, especially around his knees," she said.

At seventy-seven, Gene believes he couldn't be as active as he is now without this volunteer work. "When we are out on a trail, we especially like the engineering—the planning of how to build a step or an erosion structure to keep the water off trails, how to cut logs correctly, using our brains. We have to design the trails so that water won't be the enemy. That's what we enjoy—figuring it all out as a group," Gene said.

He leads the Friends of the Forest "Hot Shot" crew, volunteers who have special training with crosscut saws and trail building. Darl works with the Hot Shots, is the editor of the Friends newsletter, and is the new chair of the Trail Patrol Committee. Members of the trail patrol hike and help visitors or locals with advice and directions and report anything on the trails that might impede safe hiking. Together, Darl and Gene have made a great team since they first saw Sedona on their honeymoon in 1959.

They also enjoy talking to people from all over the world. "This is where our work as members of the Friends of the Forest Trail Patrol comes in," Darl said. "We have a pick, so most people ask if we are prospecting. As we explain our work involving brushing, clearing, repairing and building erosion structures, visitors eyes are opened and they really pay attention.

When they leave us, not only do they have more trail information, but we think they have a better appreciation

of things like the 20 rolling dips they just may have hiked on."

The Hot Shot crew usually works 4 to 8 hours a day. They need to carry their tools to the part of the trail they will work on, and that can mean a significant gain in elevation. When they see people entering long trails as they are heading home, the Rectors suggest to hikers that they turn around and start earlier on another day. "Most people are from the city, and they are uneducated about basic outdoor hiking skills. This is especially important in winter with early sunsets and how quickly it gets cold," Gene said.

During their 6 month volunteering time with Friends of the Forest, Gene works about 600 hours and Darl about 300. No wonder Hot Shot member Rick Zabor calls Gene "the trail machine." Zabor says that Gene's numerous sayings keep the crew laughing.

Referring to a person who never shuts up, Gene quipped, "He talks so much he must have been vaccinated with a phonograph needle!" Sitting in their comfortable Cottonwood home, they are neatly surrounded by western art, books and wall décor. There is a saddle, boots, a branding iron, spurs, a spinning wheel (which Darl still uses) and my personal favorite—a book titled "The Natural Superiority of the Mule."

The Rectors have won many awards as members of Friends of the Forest. Recently, Gene was presented with the 2010 Distinguished Volunteer "For his 15 years of hard work and tireless dedication to the forest, where he has led the "Hotshot" crew to maintain wilderness trails, clearing thousands of downed trees and installing drainage features."

When Gene was 19, he needed a job and he got the best award of all. "I went to get a job working for Darl's father and she came with it," joked Gene. This year, they will celebrate 52 years of marriage.

They are the essence of what it means to be really good friends of the forest. If you want to make a difference, visit our website at friendsoftheforestsedona.org.

By Susan Vitek

2011



Gene and Dan Aragaki hard at work.



Gene, Mike Haboush, and Al Gilson



Darl and Bob Tener on Bear Sign Trail 2007

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS

2008 Volunteer of the Year: This award is given to the member who has, over the past year, given generously of their time, through a variety of activities and exemplifies the volunteer spirit. This year's award winners are a founding couple who joined the Friends in 1996. **Gene and Darl Rector** embodies what the Friends are all about. Gene is a founder of the Hot Shots and over the years has spent thousands of hours working on trails, sometimes several times a week. Darl has served as the Friends Newsletter editor and handles one of the ends of crosscut saw as well as most young men. Darl also organizes the Sunday trail hikes which are designed to acquaint newer members to the trails that we patrol in the Sedona area.



2010

Distinguished Volunteer: This award is given to the member who has over many years consistently given of their time to the Friends of the Forest in a variety of activities. This year's Distinguished Volunteer award went to **Gene Rector**, *who for the past 15 years has been going out as many as five and sometimes six days a week working on maintaining and constructing trails in our District, with his Hotshot crew. Gene amassed 762 hours during this past year, which I believe is the most for any individual in our organization.* This is even more remarkable when you consider that those hours were achieved while only being here six months out of the year.



2011 The President's Award – This award was given to Darl Rector in recognition of her outstanding contributions.



2014 Heart of the Friends Award - Darl Rector



Gene and Darl celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary with a few FRIENDS at the February 2014 Board and Member Meeting

Gene and Darl Rector Special Recognition



2017 Trail Patrol Certificate for work on Trailhead Cleanup with Elaine Hackett

2017 Presidents Award

As a 22-year member, Gene is not only a significant part of our early lineage, he's achieved near iconic status in the lore of the Red Rock District. Gene was a leader in the original Hot Shot team, has contributed a remarkable 12,000 hours, maintained untold miles of trails, installed drainage features, and cut over 4,000 downed trees. It's hard, grueling labor, but Gene thrived on it. The Sedona outdoors is a natural fit for someone who grew up on a California cattle ranch. It's my distinct pleasure to present Gene with a 2017 President's Award. *Manny Romero, FoF President*



New trail between Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte to be named **Rector Connector**.

"It is a very unusual situation to be able to name something which will last forever for somebody who has made a lifetime contribution to the Red Rock District and the trails here. I am honored to be able to make that happen for you Gene." *Adam Barnett, US Forest Service Recreation Staff Officer, Coconino National Forest Red Rock District.*

Gene and Darl Rector Special Recognition

What a shocking surprise it was to be so honored at the annual FOF meeting !!

We had no idea that many of you have been planning this surprise for Gene for a long time.

We think we have had the best retirement that anyone could have here in the Verde Valley working on trails, keeping fit and meeting an unbelievable array of helpers. Going back through our records we found at least 50 Friends of the Forest members who helped with the work. Many of the Forest Service people have facilitated what we could do. A big thank you to them also. Volunteer Coordinator, Terry Adams, was the first to let us start working on Secret Canyon which was overgrown with brush, full of down trees and had no drainage structures. Terry hiked with us and gave us instruction for making drainage structures and returned later to have a look. Buck Packard was Trail Patrol chair for many years and he worked with us a lot. Gene and Buck also attended the Trail Boss class offered by Terry and actually built a section of Courthouse Trail as their final exam.

Having a trail named in our honor is over the moon! We know that many people will enjoy having that trail as part of the system. If our bodies would let us, we would happily do this 22 years of our life again.

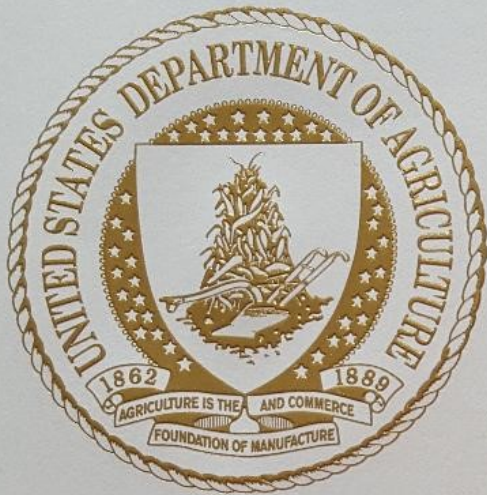
Thanks so much, **Gene and Darl**

Helpers:

Buck Packard	Frank Wirkus	Ernie DiMillo
Bill Rowland	Mike Haboush	Dean and Helen Campbell
Paul Burton	Jim Manning	Pete Bertelson
Bob Tener	Buck and Janet Seals	Rich Boston
Al Cornell	Jim and Sandi Beckett	Ted Jones
Chuck Jenkins	Steve Peake	Dick Christenson
Al Gilson	Dave Nokes	Justine and Bill Kusner
Rick Zabor	Marie Fox	Hobey Henderson
Kevin Harding	Garry Neal	Bob Wych
John True	Mike and Jean Ober	Ron Rusk
Roy Julian	Kurt Starbuck	David Poppe
Joe Landholm	Sam Serrill	Jerry and Deneise Piepiora
Dan Aragaki	Rich Spinelli	Jim Gier
Rick Bauldauf	Jim Sauve	Ulf Hamilton
Paul Ward		



Gene and Darl Rector Special Recognition



United States
Department of Agriculture

Certificate of Appreciation

Awarded to

Gene Rector

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF
THE TRAIL BOSS WORKSHOP.
YOU ARE NOW A SEDONA TRAIL
BOSS.

Date

11/18/00

Ken Anderson

Gene Rector Certificate of Appreciation for Trail Boss Workshop completion.

"YOU ARE NOW A SEDONA TRAIL BOSS!"

November 18, 2000

WHAT FUN WE HAVE HAD!



22 years and counting