



From the President — Manny Romero

In this issue

Hello Friends,

As we bask in above normal temperatures, the calendar says fall is here. September 22 is the autumnal equinox, the official end of summer. This is also the time of year when we ramp up our activities.

That's not to say we were inactive during the hot months. This issue of Branching Out will bring you up-to-date on all our summer activities and give you a preview of what to expect in the coming weeks. A big thank you to Newsletter Editor **Jean Ober** for producing this eye-catching issue.

Each year at our Annual Meeting, you can cast your vote for our Board of Directors. Pending Board approval, ballots will be distributed through NEON and by mail to those without email addresses. (On-line and mail ballots are only if you are unable to attend and vote in person). The Officer and Director Nominating Committee is pleased to recommend **Terry Orlick, Deneise Piepiora and Bob Wych** for three-year terms. Returning for another term are **Ernie DiMillo, Ed Hodges, Peg Kern, Garry Neil, Mike Ober, Jean Ober, Jerry Piepiora, Manny Romero**. Retiring from the Board are a half-dozen insightful leaders that have enhanced our organization in countless ways: **Elaine Julian, Mark Munsell, Betty Parker, Paul Ward, Veronica Ward and Debbie Wych**. They have my deepest appreciation for their years of hard work in helping the Friends move forward. Nominating Committee members this year were **Jerry Checchia, Joe Pokorski, Jennifer Young, myself, and Craig Swanson**, chair.

Several program leadership changes have taken place since our May meeting. Merchandising expert **Debbie Wych** and long-time River Rangers Chair **Mike Vitek** retired from their leadership roles. It's been my pleasure to work with such dedicated, forward-looking colleagues. Thank You. **Terry Orlick** is the new Merchandising Chair and will continue in her role as VIS Training Coordinator, while the versatile **Mike Ober** will take the helm of the River Rangers group. I extend a warm welcome to these two very capable new program leaders.

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Merchandise

Past President **Justine Kusner** was honored August 28th with a festive reception hosted by the Red Rock District for her more than 20 years of significant contributions to the District. Justine's most recent position was that of Forest Service news archivist, but she has worked with Cultural Sites and Docents, toiled on trail maintenance projects, helped maintain the West Fork Orchard, created and coordinated a "weed warriors" program, participated with trail patrol crews ... and much more. Justine has compiled nearly 7,000 volunteer hours for Friends of the Forest and the Red Rock District. "Her bright smile and enthusiastic wit will be missed in our office each and every Wednesday," observed Forest Service Support Service Specialist Rochelle Hall. "She has worked long and hard for her well-deserved respite." From all of us in Friends of the Forest, thanks ever so much, Justine, for all you've done.



Al Cornell, another long-time Friends member and past president, was the subject of a major feature article in the September issue of the internationally known Arizona Highways magazine. Authored by Northern Arizona University journalism faculty member Annette McGivney, the article spans six pages and highlights Al's many outdoor skills. "This mild-mannered senior doesn't look like the cocky, shirtless gurus featured on reality TV shows," writes McGivney, "but Cornell is one of the most respected survival and primitive skills experts in Arizona." Kudos to our colleague Al Cornell.

Don't forget to update your Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) form after October 1, which marks the start of the 2019 fiscal year. As you know, to volunteer for any project, you must electronically sign the appropriate JHA every October. Sign your form(s) through NEON. Please mark your calendar for the Annual Meeting/Volunteer Appreciation Event at the Beaver Creek Work Center, Saturday, November 3 beginning at 10 a.m. Vote for Board of Director candidates, congratulate individual and committee award winners, connect with other members, socialize with our Forest Service colleagues, and enjoy a tasty lunch hosted by the Forest Service and District Ranger **Nicole Branton**. Hope you can join us November 3. Our next Board and Membership meeting is just around the corner — Wednesday, September 12 at 9 a.m. Come early, munch on mouthwatering treats, connect with Friends and Forest Service colleagues and browse through the newest selection of Friends merchandise. I hope to see you there.



From the left: Jerry Piepiora, Justin Loxley, Nicole Branton, Cal Joyner, Spence Gustav, Jerry Checchia, Bob Haizmann

U.S. Forest Service Regional Forester Cal Joyner presented Friends of the Forest with a special Department of Agriculture Volunteer Innovation Award, Thursday August 23.

Regional Forester Joyner pointed out that in addition to this special recognition from the Under-Secretary, Friends of the Forest now qualifies for the more prestigious Secretary's Award.

The Under-Secretary's Award recognizes the unique ways that FOF has worked with our local Red Rock Ranger District to protect and restore our public lands.

This award comes on the heels of being selected by the Forest Service for the Chief's Honor Award as the best volunteer organization in the country. We continue to be recognized for our extraordinary contributions and for our ability to implement innovative solutions to meet the challenges faced by the Red Rock Ranger District.

In particular, the award recognizes innovations in graffiti removal, photo documentation of archeological sites, trail maintenance and construction, and smartphone trails reporting. FOF leaders in these areas, Jerry Piepiora, Spence Gustav, Jerry Checchia and Bob Haizmann accepted the award, along with District Ranger Nicole Branton and Forest Service Volunteer Coordinator Justin Loxley.

Craig Swanson

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

September 12, 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**

Donations to Friends of the Forest

With the upcoming implementation of changes to the tax code and its presently unknown impact on donations to non-profits, make sure to check with your tax advisor/preparer or tax software vendor when filing your 2018 taxes. The information below is the current tax policy and subject to revision.

Friends of the Forest, Inc. is a registered 501(c3) non-profit. Donations to the organization including membership dues are, in most circumstances, tax deductible. Please check with your tax professional to verify deductibility based on your tax situation. All donors receive a tax letter from the organization. While we greatly appreciate your donations, as an organization we do not actively solicit donations from within or from outside the organization. We will never share member or donor information with anyone.

Monetary donors (check, cash or PayPal) receive a recognition letter that includes the donation date, amount of the donation and our heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

In-kind donors receive a recognition letter that includes the donation date, list of item(s)/service(s)

donated, our intended use of the donation and our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. The letter cannot include a valuation of the donation. The IRS does not allow non-profits to place a value on donated items or services. We cannot be placed in the role of an appraiser.

If requested by the IRS to justify the claimed value of a tax deduction, the donor must prove the value. Keeping purchase receipts and/or taking a picture of the item at the time of donation works well. You could also search internet sites like E-Bay for a like item for sale at the time and print out the description and price for your records.

A few members have purchased specific equipment, software and/or services as donations to us. To save any problems with donation valuation justification to the IRS at a later date, it is simpler to make a directed monetary donation to the organization and allow us to make the purchase.

To simplify our tax status, we do not own any assets. Friends of the Forest does not retain donated item(s); the ownership is transferred to the Forest Service.

Tom Cloonan

ETERNAL OPTIMISM!

I can't think of a more positive title to end the summer reporting season.

At the risk of sounding too optimistic, we are seeing a DECREASE in graffiti at some of the more popular locations — Devil's Bridge, Bell Rock, Cathedral Rock, Long and Fay Canyons, Doe Mountain, and even Grasshopper Point. Maybe it's been our regular visits minimizing the effects of the copycats, or it could have been the weather since spring break. No matter the reason, the number of visitors will continue to increase, and we know there will always be another report.

West Fork has been a significant exception. We found two very long rock walls (70' or longer) we didn't know existed and no one knows how long it has been since a graffiti removal team has even visited these locations. The photos attached to this article show very heavy charcoal, scratching, and even some black marker writing. Some of the artwork is quite good...

With only September to complete, the rough statistics for our team are as follows: over 80 site visits representing nearly 1400 hours in the field. Our official membership shows 68 team members. Of that, 2 are Forest Service employees, 6 primarily live out of State, and 8 we consider "retired" or on the injured reserve list. That leaves 52 active members. Of the 52 remaining, 43 have joined us on at least one outing and there are 21 who have enough hours (16) in just graffiti removal to qualify for a FS Annual Pass. Special thanks go out to the core members of our team — **Jerry Checchia (JTY - who is back in the role of co-chair), Tim Fogarty, Ernie DiMillo, Pete Malmgren, Deneise Piepiora, Jean Ober, Charlotte Danner, Evan Holz, Brad Kincaid, and Adrienne Pichette.** Not only did they contribute many hours to our effort, but their upbeat attitude has always made the work seem less tedious.

REQUEST: We again ask all hikers and trail workers to leave the graffiti removal to our team. We are hearing more often that someone removed some scratching "near" the trail. Please don't. Obviously, if you see something directly on the tread of the trail, please get rid of it, but there are a number of archaeological locations very near recognized trails. We are in constant touch with Spence Gustav to make sure what we remove is modern and we are always reviewing sensitive sites for possible cleaning.

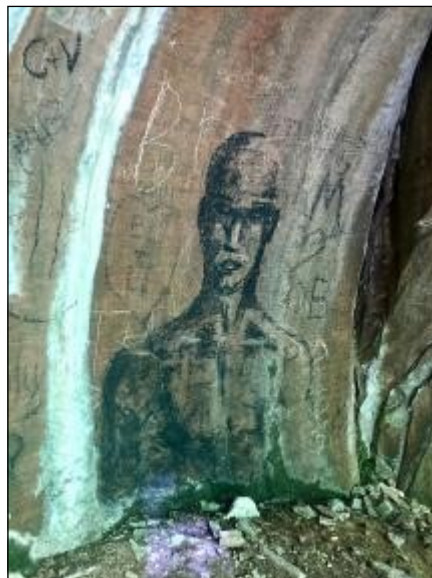
We continue to work successfully with the State folks at Slide Rock, and receive reports from those outside of the FOF, including some of the Jeep companies and resorts. **Bob Haizmann** has developed a very useful tool for reporting graffiti, and it's being used more frequently. We still, however, encourage any kind of report, regardless of the source or type. That is the single most important tool we have in making a difference in the Forest.

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

Jerry Piepiora, Chairman



West Fork Trail first routing to 1/4 mile past the end of trail sign to remove tagging and graffiti. Tim Fogarty, Evan Holz, Jerry Checchia, Brant Gigas, Deneise Piepiora, and Pete Malmgren is his traditional pose, back to camera.





West Fork work session number two. Work crew is Jerry Piepiora, Evan Holz, Denise Piepiora, Adrienne Pichette Jean Ober, Leila Ober. And Tim Fogarty,



Tim showing the large wall of graffiti in West Fork



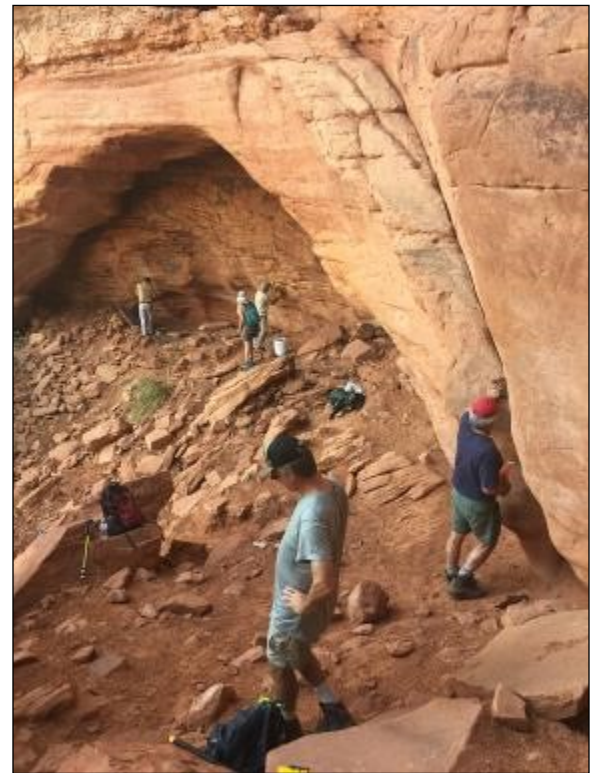
**Job well done by the crew
Deneise, Leila, Jean, Adrienne and Tim**



Graffiti Removal



June 2018 graffiti removal from underpass on 89A in Oak Creek Canyon and a well deserved respite after for the hard working crew. Left to right—Ernie DiMillo, Michael Campbell, Mike Ober, Dan Aragaki, David Murrill, Tim Fogarty, Jerry Checchia, Jerry Piepiora and Jean Ober.



Work session on the Soldier's Pass Arch done by Tim Fogarty, Evan Holz, Rich Spinelli, Mike and Jean Ober and Jerry Piepiora.



It is not all work on our outings as Charlotte Danner and Jean Ober pose on top of Devil's Bridge at the conclusion on our graffiti removal



Greetings fellow volunteers.

I hope everyone enjoyed their summer. We took July and August off from our regular TM&C work, but we did do a few special projects. One most recently at Fossil Creek, we created a large drain next to the restroom that was getting filled with mud from the monsoons. It was long day, but we got the job done. We have also been busy removing trees from some of the trails like: West Fork, Boynton & North Wilson. We spent three Fridays back in May spreading gravel at Palatki leading up to the ruins and most of June working on the trails up the Canyon.

The TM&C group currently has 89 members with close to 3000 hours logged in since Oct 1st. As we start our regular Fridays back up, I hope to see some new faces as well as the regular ones. I also ask if you see any trails that might need work to please let me know. You can report them on the FOF report app or send me an email at tmc@fosedona.org.

I would also like to give a special thank you to the person who made a generous donation to the TM&C group, it was greatly appreciated and will be put to good use.

Happy Hiking and I look forward to seeing you out on the trails.

Jerry Checchia



Trail work in the canyon with Wayne Schwetje, Rob Garrison, Tana Allman and Bill Cobb

Right: Tree Cutting Crew on West Fork Trail, Jim Manning and Jean Ober on the cross cut saw.



Palatki work day packing gravel on the trail



Another truck load of gravel ready to be off loaded by Bob Wych and Jim Manning



Fossil Creek Crew, Ernie DiMillo, David Murrill, Jerry Piepiora, Jerry Checchia and Francis Adrian (Forest Service)



Site Recording Project

The team has been on hiatus through the summer heat and will resume activities in October. This past year 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

The team was asked to participate in this year's **Pecos Conference** (an annual informal conference on Southwest U.S. archaeology) that was held in Flagstaff. They presented four posters on their efforts in 3D modeling, RTI, DStretch use on rock art, and the Dust Impact study. There are currently 1,250+ 3D models that are available to the public on www.Sketchfab.com/FOFSedona. They had a lot of positive feedback as well as an urgent request to make 3D models of several historic structures in other Coconino NF districts that are on the verge of collapse. The historic structure request was extended to structures at Palatki, V-Bar-V, Beaver Creek W.C., and Crescent Moon Ranch. The posters will be on display at the September meeting and at the Visitor Information Center for several weeks afterward. The 3D models of the Mormon Lake cabins can be viewed at: <https://sketchfab.com/FOFSedona/collections/mormon-lake>. At the conference, Red Rock Ranger District Archaeologist **Ted Neff** gave a talk on the very significant contributions towards archaeology made by volunteers in the district. He specifically mentioned the photographic work of this team and the combined site recording efforts of Scott Newth's multi-organizational team and Jerry Ehrhardt's team under the Verde Valley Chapter of the Arizona Archaeological Society. There are several participants that are on both teams.

The Pictograph Degradation Analysis project (A.K.A. Dust Impact Study) has placed a few more of Nori Thorne's authentic reproduction pictographs (a video of her making some of them will be available online and available for general viewing in the coming weeks) and started working through the nitty details of how to

do the baseline photos and ongoing photos.

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

Join me in welcoming new FoF members and new docents **Lyle Beaudoin** and **Kevin Cook**. Both are recent arrivals from the state of Washington. Thanks to Spence Gustav for conducting the Palatki and Honanki training (and for enduring a very localized yet severe thunderstorm with hail at Honanki).

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@fofsedona.org for more information.

Jerry Walters 284-1339



Cloonan and Pilles double teaming Pecos Conference attendees at V bar V



How we train Peter Pilles by giving him T-shirts to identify rock art



Teamwork and Trust
The photo team doing 3D at 2 historic cabins near Mormon Lake.



S. Gustav



Ken Zoll, archaeo-astronomer, former FOF docent and director of the Verde Valley Archaeology Center at Camp Verde, standing left of the rope barrier, explains the alignment of shadow and rock art marking the vernal equinox to the large crowd witnessing the occurrence at the V Bar V rock art site. Photo by Dave Kennedy, FOF docent

Welcome to the upcoming year of Trail Patrol. We want to thank all the Trail Patrol members for a great year of participation.

We are continuing to offer 1 to 4 monthly group Trail Patrol hikes, initially starting at 7:30 AM and then starting a little later as the year progresses. Hikes are generally 3 to 5 miles, some longer when the weather is good. During the hike, we will use the smart phone Report application to document trail issues like graffiti, brushing required, signage issues, downed trees, large amounts of trash that we didn't pick up, and any other issues that we come across. If you are a member of Trail Patrol then you will be getting emails with the group hike schedule during the first week of each month.

Please be timely in reporting your trail hikes. The Friends use this information to report to the Forest Service. This is especially important for September because this is the end of the government fiscal year and all volunteer hours for their fiscal year 2018 through September 30 need to be reported by October 1.

The next newsletter will have the summary of the 2017-2018 Trail Patrol statistics. Here is a summary of just the summer months of June, July and August.

Stats for June, July & August

Number of TP Members that hiked	38
Number of trails hiked	85
Number Trail Patrols	242
Total Hikers Observed	2772
Total People Engaged	1340
Total Bikers Observed	408
Total Equestrians Observed	8
Total Dogs Off Leash	114
Total Lbs Trash Removed	42.4

Hope to see you on the trails.
Jon and Terri Petrescu



Trail Patrol in action!

Volunteer Hours

With one more month left in the Fiscal Year, the Friends continue on a record-setting pace with 33,176 hours reported so far through August, which is over 700 hours ahead of where we were last year at this time. One month to go to surpass last year's total of 35,464!

Committee	FY18 Hrs thru Aug	FY17 Same Period	Change in Hours	% Change
Air Quality	478	590	-113	-19%
Cultural Resources	9,411	7,446	+1,965	+26%
Graffiti Removal	1,387	1,305	+82	+6%
Interpretive Pgm	545	347	+198	+57%
River Rangers	242	225	+17	+8%
Special Projects	3,892	2,004	+1,889	+94%
Trail Maint&Const	2,995	3,982	-987	-25%
Trail Patrol	6,948	7,448	-500	-7%
VIS	4,581	4,754	-174	-4%
Water Sampling	179	214	-35	-16%
Admin/Meetings	2,518	4,150	-1,632	-39%
Total	33,176	32,465	+711	+2%

As you can see by the chart, Cultural Resources and Special Projects account for some major gains, which offset the slow-down in several of our other core committees. And our Admin time has been cut significantly, which is a good thing; more of our hours are directly project-related. The Wildlife (aka 'Janie') projects within Special Projects account for 78% of that group, a staggering 3,034 hours so far this year, almost three times the hours from last fiscal year.

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, no later than the 7th of the next month. This allows us to consolidate and update the hours in each member's NEON profile in a timely fashion. This next month-end (September) is the most important one, as it will be the FINAL opportunity to report hours for FY18. So please ensure all your hours are in by October 7, 2018 at the very latest. No late Trail Patrol reports, please!

NEON (Member Information Software)

Our administrative software for managing all our member information (NEON – Nonprofit Enterprise Online Network) continues to be a valuable tool. Remember that you can log in to your own profile at any time to update your contact information, as well as your seasonal dates, skills/knowledge, and the expiration date of your Government Driver's License (for drivers of Forest Service vehicles). You can also view your total FOF hours by fiscal year from 2014 forward, with the current year updated on a monthly basis. To log in, go to the Friends website (friendsoftheforestsedona.org), click on Members Area, then click on Member Updates. Instructions are provided directly below the Member Updates button.

Peg Kern

Membership

This is my first report as Membership Chair. Many thanks to Betty Parker for leaving me her notes! At least I have some format to generate this report and future events. (miss you, Betty!!)

New members or renewals

www.friendsoftheforestsedona.org, select "Join Us," and follow the steps to **join or renew**, using PayPal or Credit Card. Please remember your funds will be dedicated to maintaining, protecting, and restoring the scenic beauty of our National Forest lands in the Sedona area.

One way we can get information about the good works of the FOF out to the public is to have a few of our business cards in your pocket as you hike the trails. It's easy to hand one to another hiker, especially if its from a member of one of our trail committees out working or on a trail patrol. People are always interested in what we do.

Since Betty's last report of May 1, FOF has welcomed 16 new members! That gives us a total of 515 members. The new members include: **Charlotte Danner (L)**, **Bill Bray (L)**, **Linda Bray (L)**, **Pat Walicke**, **Andrew Ober**, **Leila Ober** (think it's a family thing!), **Joe Gigas (L)**, **Brant Gigas** (father/son members), **Dondi West**, **Cathy Chess (L)**, **Lyle Beaudoin (L)**, **Kevin Cook**, **Robin Low**, **Dave Maple**, **Nancy Outsen-Maple**, and **Glenna Gaudy**. NOTE: (L=Lifetime members). We hope you enjoy volunteering in all the areas you chose. Thank you for joining and supporting Friends of the Forest.

For those new members who signed up for specific committees, your requests go to the chairperson of that committee with a copy to me. I still have a few pending referrals not answered by the chairs. Please respond to these new members as soon as you can.

Jerry Piepiora
Chairman

Interpretive Programs

Our 2017-2018 program has come to an end after several interesting walks and presentations. A sincere thank-you is extended to Tori Marshall (ANHA), Lenore Hemingway, Tony Merriman (NWS), and FOF members **Bob Beltz**, **Chris Weld**, **Kevin Harding**, **J. K. Lovelett**, **Ken Shuman**, **Garry Neil**, and **Ken Bork** for the time they spent in preparing and delivering interesting topics in April through August.

Several returning events, as well as a couple new ones, are scheduled for October through December: Geology Walks, Birding Walks, and Photo Walks will all be repeated one or more times between now and the end of December. First Friday presentations will include a special celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Wild and Scenic Rivers (October) and a talk about butterflies in November.

For a complete list of upcoming events and a brief description of each one, check out the "Public Events" on the FOF home page on a frequent basis.

Bob Wych

Chair, Interpretive Programs



Hummingbird hand feeding at the Visitor Information Center. This Interpretive Program was held Saturdays in August and September 1, 8 and 15

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

friendsoftheforestsedona.org

Monarch butterflies in decline—Friends of the Forest to the rescue!

A group of about twenty dedicated FOF members and volunteers have been busy this summer learning about the Monarch--Milkweed connection and putting what they have learned into action.

Two training workshops were offered by local Monarch Conservation Specialist, **Denise Gibbs**. Denise is a volunteer for Monarch Watch; see <https://www.monarchwatch.org/cs/>. The first workshop was a presentation about monarch butterflies, their life cycle and migration through Arizona, and reasons for their population decline in the U.S. The second training was a hands-on workshop on milkweed propagation. Participants learned which milkweed species are native to our region, how to collect/process/store seeds, techniques for sprouting seeds, and cultural requirements for growing milkweeds. They went home with a box full of seeds, sprouts, seedlings and mature plants to grow in their gardens. Many volunteers have since created a Monarch Waystation on their property. A recent report from **Jeri Merritt** is that she has a thriving population of monarchs breeding in her certified Monarch Waystation. She has not only provided milkweed for monarch caterpillars, but plenty of nectar sources to sustain adult monarchs during their spring and fall migrations. For more info, please see <https://www.monarchwatch.org/waystations/>.

After learning how to identify local native milkweed



species, some volunteers have become citizen scientists by finding and monitoring sites within Coconino National Forest that have naturally-occurring milkweed species. Others have been reporting their monarch sightings. Anyone can participate in these studies by using the Monarch SOS App available for their iPhone or iPad devices. Please see: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/monarch-sos/id956347677?mt=8>. Data are submitted to The Southwest Monarch Study for compilation. Please see <https://www.swmonarchs.org/>. The data will help **Janie Agyagos** determine the best locations in Coconino NF for future milkweed plantings to help monarchs.

By far the best contribution by volunteers to benefit monarchs this summer was a workday to plant 100+ native milkweed plugs into three areas: the pollinator garden by Red Rock Visitor Center and the front and back courtyards at the Administration building. Volunteers are currently nurturing the plants with regular watering until roots are established. One of the milkweed species—Horsetail milkweed (*Asclepias subverticillata*) grows on rhizomes and will spread to fill the bare spots. Milkweed spends its first year growing deep roots and the second year putting out above-ground growth. All these milkweeds will provide a succession of blooms next year, beginning in March and ending in November. They will support not only monarchs but will provide nectar for many other important pollinators. Migrating monarchs returning from Mexico and the California coastal preserves usually begin arriving in our region in late June to mid-July. Be sure to visit the gardens next summer to witness the monarch's spectacular life cycle.

NOTE: Janie Agyagos will be leading a fall monarch tagging program for volunteers at Crescent Moon Ranch in September. Please contact her for more details. And if you have any questions about monarchs in the Verde Valley, please contact Denise Gibbs at MonarchTagger@gmail.com.

Wildlife/Fish/Rare Plant Projects

It was a dark and stormy night when a small group of volunteers hiked into Sycamore Basin in July with **Janie Agyagos**, Red Rock Ranger District Wildlife Biologist, and **Shauna Hadwell**, US Fish and Wildlife Service, to search for Chiricahua leopard frogs prior to a tank being cleaned. One Chiricahua leopard frog was found at Sycamore and moved to Middle Tank. “What a great crew to work with!” says Shauna. “They are part of Janie’s amazing volunteer group and they are fantastic. We put quite a bit of survey effort in and we located at least 5 adult tiger salamanders as well, so we know we were seeing animals, but only found one frog. The exciting news was seeing seven additional frogs at Middle Tank when we moved this adult frog from Sycamore Basin to Middle Tank”.



Paul Clifford assists Janie Agyagos (District Wildlife Biologist) with emergency frog salvage

Human activity on social trails continue to threaten wildlife. In the July heat, a small group of volunteers worked near the Turkey Creek sinkhole to obliterate social trails and install a bat roost etiquette sign. In Fay Canyon, people are recreating around a pair of nesting Mexican Spotted Owls. A small project is underway to document the social trails for discussion of closure around the owls.

Ongoing activities at this time include caring for and monitoring the milkweeds/monarch waystation at the Ranger Station and Visitor Center, the domesticated agave inventory, riparian area exclosure monitoring.

Upcoming projects are monarch tagging at Crescent Moon, Thursday Sept 20th and removal of old, downed fence surrounding a meadow south of Apache Maid Mountain sometime the end of Sept, beginning of October. There are plans for a native seed collecting event at the Ranger Station and a need for volunteers to cut seed heads off of a new non-native invasive grass (yellow bluestem) at the Fay Canyon Trailhead.

If you are interested in any of the many diverse Wildlife/Fish/Rare Plant projects, log in to NEON today and join the project!

Marilyn Painchaud

Visitor Information Services

First of all, kudos to everyone who has staffed the Visitor Center throughout the year. And of course, a special thank you to the summer stalwarts, those who take the shifts open due to vacations and seasonal staffing variations. You know who you are, and we couldn't have made it through summer without your generosity.

We started out with a very busy winter season with January and February seeing an increase of 4050 visitors over 2017, a 10% jump. Since then, things have eased up a bit, resulting in an overall decrease of 5% year-to-date.

Regardless of what the numbers may tell us, we know there are stills lots of visitors pouring into town, many of them wanting to track down the "top 10" highlights they've read about on TripAdvisor and Facebook. This generally includes

interest in wanting suggestions for the "best" hikes. Instead of limiting the options to the old reliables, try to mix it up a bit. Here are seven trails that will not only provide a great red rock experience but can also help distribute traffic to less congested areas: Baldwin, Turkey Creek, Chimney Rock Loop, Jacks Canyon, Woods Canyon, Huckaby and Scheurman Mountain.

And here's one more thought to share. Did you know that Coconino National Forest is one of the most diverse National Forests in the country? Landscapes range from the famous red rocks of Sedona to Ponderosa pine forests, and from southwestern desert to alpine tundra. Are we lucky to live and play here, or what?

Terry Orlick

Merchandise

We will be clearing out the closet at this meeting. There are sun shirts, polos, and some items for cooler days. We have hats and sew on badges in stock. We are hoping to have a new item that is not clothing for sale, but I will keep that a secret hoping it will arrive in time for this meeting. If you have clothing you already own and want to have the FOF badge embroidered on it, bring it to the meeting, and I will see that it gets to the embroiderer.

Roni and I have been on the FOF board for quite a few years, and it is time to give newer members the opportunity to join the board. Therefore, there will be a new

chairperson for merchandising, **Terry Orlick** will be taking over for us. Terry will be helping me at the September meeting to enable her to become familiar with what is involved with merchandising.

Remember that we take only checks and cash. Looking forward to seeing you on September 12th and helping you find some FOF gear you would love to have!

Debbie Wych and Roni Ward



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.