

Branching Out

Friends of the Forest Sedona

From the President — Jennifer Young

Hello Friends,

We are preparing for our annual New Member Welcome Event on March 9 at 2:00pm in the Red Rock District Visitor Center meeting room. We hope to greet many of you who are new to Friends of the Forest, especially those who have joined since January 1, 2015. Those who may have missed our February 2015 Welcome Event or are just curious for information are welcome as well.

Bill Kusner, our data guru, tells me that 128 new members joined in the last thirteen months! This is an awesome level of interest in our organization. We are thus able to continue to grow our involvement with the Forest Service, refresh our core activities, and bring many new talents to the scope of our work.

With 25% of our membership being relatively "new", communicating about ways to get involved is an important and ongoing endeavor. I would like to share an update on current and upcoming special projects which are outside the core Committees listed on our website and other FOF literature.

FOF Special Projects include one-time tasks and longer term tasks that have a finite completion objective, whereas our standing "Committees" have a continuous duration. **Spence Gustav** is the current Coordinator for special projects and his contact is spencehg@yahoo.com. Some projects are of sufficient duration or scope to require appointment of a project leader to set schedules and coordinate with the Forest Service.

Communication with FOF members about projects may involve a call out for volunteers through a membership broadcast email (which I strive to use infrequently!), solicitation through Committee Chairs, word of mouth, Newsletter articles, or outreach to specific members who have volunteered for a similar task in the past. We will circulate information about current and upcoming special projects at the New Member Welcome March 9 and provide an opportunity for interested volunteers to sign up. We will also circulate a survey to determine future interest in a variety of special training opportunities for FOF members.

Here are a few diverse examples of recent and current projects. Last summer and fall, volunteers monitored and gathered data for designated bat roosts and peregrine falcon nests. During this same period, volunteers made carpentry repairs to the Crescent Moon rental cabin, removed invasive plants from the Ranger Station grounds, and distributed native seed in the Visitor Center butterfly garden. In January, we tested and provided feedback on the new reservation system for Fossil Creek. Several ongoing Cultural Resource projects have been reported in the Newsletter -- photo archive digitization and cultural site photo documenting in the field. A new project is presented in this Newsletter: transcribing local oral history recordings to digital written format. Two projects that are in development are: a potential native plant garden at Crescent Moon Ranch and a Fossil Creek support task involving weekly visits to an air quality monitoring machine. In coming weeks FOF volunteers will combine GPS use and remote hiking to gather data on cattle fencing in several sensitive sites on the Forest.

Special Projects cover a wide range of tasks and widely varying volunteer environments. I will close here with a call out for volunteers for an annual recurring special event: the Sedona Saint Patrick's Day parade and festival on March 12. The Red Rock District is seeking parade volunteers for walkers, horse riders, drivers,

vehicle riders and Smokey's handler. For the festival, volunteer support positions include Smokey and Woodsy handlers, and booth/game attendants. If you would like to volunteer, the contact for this project is **Candice Mark** at 928-203-2902 or clmark@fs.fed.us.

I hope to see many of you on March 9, if not before that at the February 24th Board and Membership meeting at 9:00 at the Admin Building. **Jennifer**

Membership

Twelve new members have joined since last November, expanding our membership to a remarkable 512. On behalf of the Friends I extend a warm welcome to everyone.

Our new Friends colleagues are **John Smith, Terry DeMars, Judy Thermer, Jennifer Warnock, Cynthia Jones, Gerry and Mila Turner, Gay Chanler, Phil Finkelstein, Barb Bauk, David McPheson and Paulette Poirier. John and Cynthia** have joined as Life Members.


Veterans and rookies alike are cordially invited to our New Member Welcome event March 9 at 2 p.m. Committee chairs will present an overview of their activity and how their group contributes to the Forest Service. This special event will be in the Ranger Station Visitor Conference Room. Please join us for fun, friendship and information.

Renewal letters for 2016 were distributed electronically in mid-November. A big THANK YOU to everyone who has renewed. Several folks upgraded to a Life Membership (yea, no more dues notices). You are a valuable asset to the Friends and we look forward to your continued association with us. Simply copy and send the form along with your dues payment to;

Friends of the Forest P.O. Box 2391 Sedona, AZ 86339-2391

Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers!

Manny Romero If you still need to renew, here's the form:



Friends of the Forest Membership/Donation Form

Name (s) _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

CATEGORY: ☐ Friend \$25 ☐ Family \$35 ☐ Lifetime Friend \$150

☐ Lifetime Family \$250 ☐ Additional Donation \$ _____

Your dues and donations are fully tax deductible

Ongoing Activities

☐ Cultural Resources

☐ Graffiti Removal

☐ Interpretive Projects

☐ Publicity/Community Education

☐ Trail Maintenance/Construction

☐ Trail Patrol

☐ Visitor Information Services

Seasonal and As Needed Activities

☐ Forest Closure & Fire Tower Support

☐ Fossil Creek Clean-up

☐ Member Training Workshops

☐ Merchandising

☐ River Ranger Support

☐ Water Quality Sampling

☐ Wildlife Observation

Visitor Information Services

To underscore the popularity of the Red Rock Ranger District, Visitor Services supervisor **Nina Hubbard** publicized visitor use data for calendar year 2015. Collectively, the varied supporting contributions of the FOF can be inferred in these visitor numbers:

Visitor Center: 259,000 Heritage sites (3): 64,000 Oak Creek Vista (visitor center only): 96,000
Fossil Creek: 86,000 Concessionaire campgrounds (5): 254,000 Concessionaire day use areas (4): 47,000
Outfitter/guide special uses: 308,000 Trail use: 1,700,000 Total = 2.8 million Forest Service encounters in our district!

For the visitor center itself, foot traffic was particularly heavy during the holiday season from December 26th through January 3rd averaging over 1200 per day, including several days numbering 1500 guests.

Also active were the various educational and training programs sponsored at the visitor center. Included among these was the Holiday Youth Program, a collaboration between the FOF and Sedona Recycles, demonstrating how to make mini gift boxes from recycled greeting cards, and mats made out of plastic grocery bags. A representative from the National Weather Service gave a presentation about this year's El Nino (a 95% chance it will continue through this winter), and mountain bike patroller **Martin Gilinsky** gave several mountain bike training sessions to Forest Service employees, FOF volunteers and partners. Lastly, the Fire Management Officer for the Verde and Red Rock Ranger Districts, **Brian Steinhardt**, gave an excellent talk about the challenges of fire management on our forests (the Slide fire is still being actively investigated). On a final note, the largest training class in VIS history was held last month. Almost all of the 11 new members have already "shadowed" experienced VIS volunteers and are putting their names on the shift calendar as slots become available. **Noreen Lisowski**, in order to accommodate a growing volunteer force and to prepare for our annual peak influx of visitors, has introduced new interim shifts (to five shifts per day) over the next three months or so. Out of a VIS volunteer force of 60, most were recently active by putting in 5600 hours in 2015 – that's a cost benefit to the Forest Service of over \$130,000 (as calculated by Independent Sector.org)! **Jim Wilson**



Above Left: Elizabeth Dean and friends enjoying the Holiday Youth Program



Above Center: Martin Gilinsky pointing out bike safety features



Above right: Brian Steinhardt discussing his role of Fire Chief on the forest



New volunteers L to R: **Peggy and Barry Aronowitz, Tom Beauchamp, John Smith, Craig Stevens, Linda Allen, Lynn Zonakis, Beverly Jackson, Veronica Crawford.** Not shown: **Judy Kennedy, John Crawford.** Photo: **N. Lisowski**

Webmaster

I am pleased to announce that **Bob Haizmann** has stepped forward to assist me with the duties of Webmaster for the Friends. Bob has work experience as the director of R&D productivity, automation and data management in his former life. The Webmaster's responsibilities in managing the automated process for recording volunteer hours, documenting digital signatures using Google Docs through our web site as well as the management of our organizational and visitor information web sites is critical to the functioning of our organization. It is in our best interest that more than one person be conversant with these responsibilities. As Bob masters the ins and outs of the many software accounts that we use to manage our digital record keeping, he will be able to step in to seamlessly backstop my work when I am unavailable.

Initially Bob, will be taking the lead in managing the "friendsoftheforest.org" website including updating the program banner and Member News archives. As he becomes more comfortable with the many other aspects of our Webmaster's work activities we will be periodically switching around our responsibilities to keep both of us current with our web site content, management knowledge and periodic site maintenance duties.

At some point, Bob may be interested in assisting me with updating the trail ROGs we hand out at the visitor center as well as updating all of the maps on our "sedonaredrocktrails.org" website with new trails created by the Forest Service. With the three new trails that have been added to the trail system and three more in the works this will bring the total to 185 trails.

At Bob's suggestion, we will be working on creating detailed documentation on the various software accounts and applications we use by the people who will be following in our footsteps in the future. Bob has already drafted a framework for this documentation. I am very pleased to have his assistance and it is obvious that we have opportunities to learn from one another.

Our Forest Service Volunteer Coordinator, **Justin Loxley**, has been brought up to speed with the management of the JHA digital signatures. I have provided him with a variety of suggestions for tailoring the JHAs specifically for volunteers and the need to update many of the older JHAs that I manually scanned and converted to a digital format. He will also be responsible for archiving the Trail Patrol Forest Service Reports that we now do digitally so that it is available in an Excel format for Forest Service staff that need the data in various forms.

Among our new projects is to modify the Trail Patrol Forest Service Report form. The form will soon include volunteer hiker names to provide documentation in the event of a workman's compensation claim and to record the number of hours actively hiking the trails so that there can be a number of 'contacts per hour' calculation to assess the amount of traffic on our trails. We are also working with the Forest Service Wilderness Ranger, **Danielle Boulais**, on creating a report form for the volunteers being organized to work in the Wilderness Visitor Education program that the Red Rock Ranger District is implementing.

There is a lot of behind the scenes activity that keeps our organization running efficiently. We have been averaging about 150 volunteer hours each of the past five months reported by your officers, committee chairs and board members documenting the time they invest in running our organization. Thanks to everyone for all that you do. **Mike Ward**

River Patrol

With work going on in Fossil Creek to plan for a reservation system for visitors, this river season has been slow. The purpose of the first trip in January was to get rid of invasive plants, but the herbicide can't be used in the rain, so of course, it rained and the trip was cancelled. The second January trip went as planned, with **Jeff Dunn and Rick Baldauf** doing the "put in" at Beasley Flats, and **Mike Ober with Don McClimans** doing the "take out" at Childs. In February, **Al Gilson and Rick Baldauf** drove to Childs to let staff and supplies off, while **Mike Ward and Don McClimans** did the long drive to Horseshoe Lake for the takeout. (It's a good idea to take snacks and drinks for this trip.)

For our new FOF members, River Rangers need a government driver's license and a trailer endorsement helps. Most of these roads are dirt and in bad shape. Also good to have on hand are gloves and a sense of humor. Our season is over at the end of March and begins again in October. Call **Mike Vitek** (282-1076) if you have any questions or which to join our group. With volunteers doing this driving, an employee can keep doing his or her regular job. **Mike Vitek**

“How do we handle dogs that are not on a leash?” This is the number one question of new Trail Patrol members, and according to **Justin Loxley**, Volunteer Coordinator for the Red Rock Ranger District, “Enforcing USFS policy is not permitted under the FOF agreement...a volunteer’s role will remain in an observation only capacity.” Justin went on to say that assaults by dogs not on leash become a law enforcement issue and volunteers should then call 911 as with any emergency situation. “If a volunteer feels concerned for their safety in any situation they may contact me or any other employee. Safety and security are our top priorities.” Thank you, Justin, for clarifying this frequent question.

Justin also stressed that all dogs off leash observations should be reported so the Forest Service can assess if more of a presence is needed in these areas. This can easily be done electronically using the same links we use to complete trail reports by clicking the Trail Patrol Wildlife Observations link and selecting Trail Observations. Your attention to this area of reporting is appreciated.

Below are upcoming Trail Patrol hikes in February and March. Please consider joining me on any or all of these hikes. The only requirement is that you have a current JHA form electronically signed, which can be completed on line. Justin has graciously offered to join us on the February 25th and March 22nd hikes.

February 25th Thursday—Meet at the library at 9AM to carpool to hike Mescal.

March 12th Saturday —Meet at Court House Vista parking at 9AM to hike Courthouse loop. (The parking lot closer to Bell Rock--not the large one in the Village)

March 22nd Tuesday—Meet at Broken Arrow parking at 9AM to hike to Submarine Rock and back (carpooling is recommended, as parking is limited).

Please RSVP (Elaine @ [207-415-4228](tel:207-415-4228) or flyingpoint@comcast.net) if you plan to attend. If you need help completing the JHA form call me and I will assist you. I look forward to hiking with you, and thank you for your presence on the trails and your service to the Forest Service and FOF. **Elaine Hackett**

Graffiti Removal

Who said you can’t teach old dogs new tricks? A new member of the graffiti team, local artisan Nori Thorne, attended her first graffiti session in January. After the session, she had an idea how to eradicate the graffiti on rocks surfaced with “desert varnish.” Previously we had been sanding off the graffiti and at the same time some of the varnish surface. She suggested we try an approach of eliminating the graffiti by imitating the varnish color and sponge over the offending graffiti.

To replicate the look of darkly patinated sandstone, she used paint made from pure natural pigments commonly used by fresco artists. She combined Italian umber (natural iron manganese oxide) with vine charcoal (natural carbon phosphate) on a portable palette. These pigments often occur in patinated rock. To replicate the yellowish lichen patterns on rock at Grasshopper Point she used a combination of Italian burnt and raw sienna, both naturally occurring iron oxides.

The dry pigments were combined and wetted with river water found on site to the consistency of heavy cream, then combined with slightly diluted egg yolk for a binder. The egg yolk/mineral pigment (egg tempera) was then dabbed onto the damaged rock with a natural sponge to recreate the look of heavy patina. The resulting paint dries to a matte finish and is resistant to rain. The pigments and binder used in the process are identical to those used by ancient Sinaguans who created pictographs in the region.

The method is best used on dark patinated sandstone and is most effective in relatively small areas of restoration. For example, the graffiti and eradication scars near Grasshopper Point were approximately 5 ft. x 5 ft. and were virtually invisible after using the process on them. This method more closely duplicates the irregular look of rock patina—the black, orange or brown crust-forming deposits that change the surface of our beautiful red sandstone—than does simply smearing the scarred surface with dirt.

We were very pleased that the scared area now looks 100% natural. We think we have found an incredible new tool to help in our eradication effort. Thanks so much to Nori for spearheading this exciting new effort.

Mark Munsell

Interpretive Programs

As the weather turns warmer, outdoor activities pick up speed and enthusiasm. We all look forward to spring and the spring flower display nature provides our hikes. With the recent rains and more due to come, thanks to El Niño, we anticipate a spectacular display as spring approaches.

Special thanks to the **Photo Walks** with **JK Lovelett**, the more strenuous **Geology Hikes** with **Chris Weld**, the **Ethno-botany Hikes** led by ethno-botanist **Roy Julian**, and the **Birding Walks** with **Kevin Harding**. All continue to be popular events, usually with full bookings. Thanks to all who have supported these activities.

Note that hikes and walks require advance registration to limit group size. Call 203-2903 to register.

Upcoming events include:

Tuesday February 23 at 9:00-11:00 AM: **Nature Walk**, led by naturalist Kevin Harding.

Tuesday March 1 at 9:00-11:00 AM: **Birding Walk**, led by naturalist Kevin Harding.

Friday March 4 at 10:00 AM-2:00 PM: **March Presentation-Ancient Technology Demonstration** at the Ranger Station.

Tuesday March 8 Tuesday at 9:00-11:00 AM: **Geology Walk**, led by naturalist Chris Weld.

Wednesday March 9 from 10:00-12:00 AM: **Photography Walk**, led by local photographer JK Lovelett.

Tuesday March 15 at 9:00-11:00 AM: **Birding Walk**, led by naturalist Kevin Harding.

Tuesday March 15 at 9:30-11:30: **Ethno-botany Hike**, led by ethno-botanist Roy Julian.

March 19th and 20th from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM **Mountain Man Camp** at V Bar V Heritage Site.

Tuesday March 22 at 9:00-11:00 am: **Nature Walk**, led by naturalist Kevin Harding.

March 25th and 26th at V Bar V from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM **Archaeology Discovery Days** at the V Bar V Heritage Site.

We continue to seek speakers for activities at the Visitor Center Theater, leaders for nature walks, youth activities, and other community events. Call **Bob Beltz** (928-554-4327) or **Jennifer Young** (928-284-0016) if you are interested in volunteering or have ideas for additional events. February Photo Walk (below) courtesy of JK Lovelett.

Bob Beltz



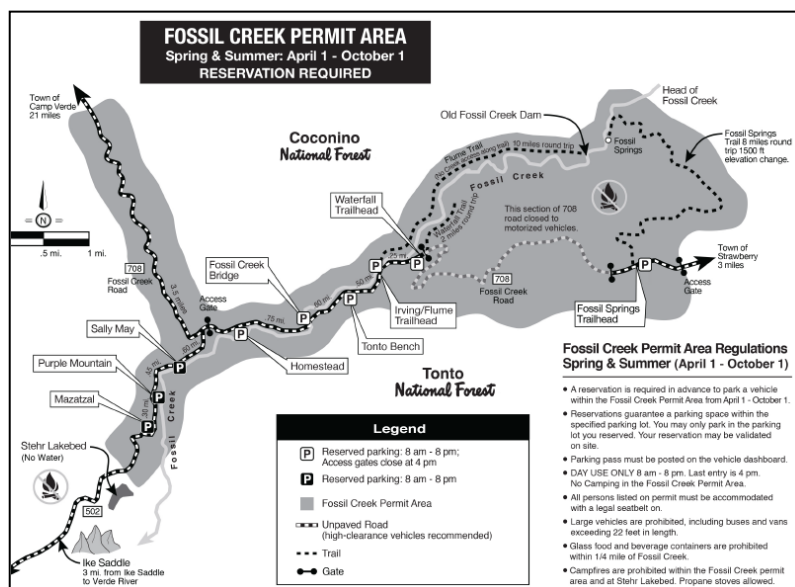
A New Fossil Creek Coming in Spring, 2016!

By **Justin Loxley**- RRRD Volunteer Coordinator

Spring is almost upon us and change is in the air. With outdoor recreating soon to be in full swing, the Fossil Creek area has seen some infrastructure improvements and implementation of a new reservation system.

Over 110,000 visitors sought access to Fossil Creek in summer, 2014. High use during summer months has caused traffic jams, preventing emergency medical and fire access into the area. During the summers 2013 - 2015 the FS closed the area on a daily basis when parking reached capacity, preventing congestion and emergency access issues. However, many visitors who drove over 2 hours to get to Fossil Creek were turned away. Over 30,000 visitors were turned away in 2015. A reservation system will ensure that those with advance reservations can access Fossil Creek. Visitors may secure a reservation before they leave their home. During the reservation season, camping will be prohibited within the Fossil Creek Permit Area (see map).

Camping is available on National Forest land outside the Fossil Creek Permit Area, or in nearby campgrounds. Anyone visiting Fossil Creek May 1 – October 1, 2016 must get an advance reservation. Reservations for May – October will become available starting March 1, 2016. Along with the new reservation system, new volunteer opportunities are being discussed in a “concierge” type capacity. These roving volunteers will assist reservation holders on site who may require assistance locating new parking and use areas within the reservation permit area.



Merchandise

Merchandise will be available for sale at the February FOF Board Meeting. We still have whistle and DVD's available as well as many fine Friends of the Forest clothing items. **Ronie Ward** will be available to take orders from the FOF catalog and handle any of your purchases.

Debbie Wych

Help Wanted

FOF Special Project: Transcription of Historic Old Timer Interviews

The Forest Service is in possession of approximately 10 hours of recorded interviews with Sedona Old-Timers. The Forest Service would like to have the digital recordings transcribed to digital text files to make them more useful. There is some interesting material here. The recordings have been converted to MP3 format and for the most part are reasonably good quality. If anyone has an interest and hopefully some experience in manually transcribing speech to text please let us know. Thanks in advance to those with the suggestion to use software to do it automatically. We have tried several methods and failed. If someone knows how to do this successfully, we have small files to test it on other systems.

To help, please contact Spence Gustav at spencehg@yahoo.com

V-Bar-V Discovery Days

Mark your calendars! Due to the occurrence of Easter in March, this year's event will be held on **Friday and Saturday 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 Thursday 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 still continues on the print portion of the project. To date, we have processed 37,080 (59%) 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 56% 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. UP-DATE: An additional 3,000 print images have been added to this project. These images are historic photographs of 26 rock art sites.

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 cultural site photo documentation project continues to photograph sites in Long Canyon, Red Tank Draw, and Boynton Canyon. In this process they are expanding the inventory of sites known to the Forest Service. In the 3 years that this project has been in existence, this team has visited and recorded 98 sites. Of these the Forest Service did not have any photos for 30 of them. Of these 30, 14 were unknown to the Forest Service. To top that off, 21 of the previously photographed sites had very few photos and now have complete and detailed images. In total the team has produced 40,000 additional photos to add to the 20,000 that were previously on file. Congratulations to Spence and his dedicated and energetic team!!

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

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

Jerry Walters 284-1339

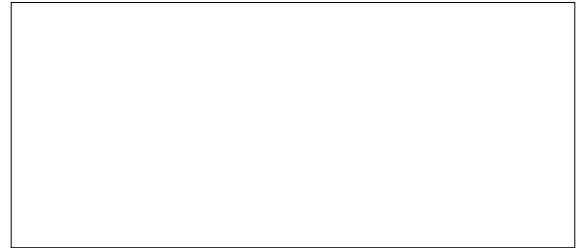


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Friends of the Forest

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IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Wednesday February 24, 2016 9:00 AM - Ranger Station
FOF Quarterly Board of Directors and Members meeting

All Members are welcome

Future Board of Director Meetings:

May 4, 2016

September 14, 2016

October, 2016 (To be determined)

December 14, 2016



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.