

FRIENDS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA FORESTS



NEWSLETTER

March 2020

Early Start to 2020 Projects for Aspen Team

This a good news/bad news story on the mild winter weather we've had in northern Arizona since the first of the year:

- The **bad news** first: lack of moisture and warmer days creating anticipated early onset of drought conditions through the summer.
- The **good news** is the Aspen Team has taken advantage of our milder weather conditions and has already been in the field completing project.

An early start has been advantageous for the team based on the wish lists projects for 2020 requested by representatives from the Forest Service and other allied agencies. At the FoNAF Board of Directors meeting on January 15, their proposed projects for the Aspen Team were presented and described by the respective representatives.

Below are brief summaries of each representative's wish lists.

Mark Nable: Flagstaff Ranger District

- Two new aspen exclosures,
- Reconstruct/repair exclosures #25 and #27 and remove fencing in two other exclosures,
- Water seedlings in two exclosures on Highway 180 where aspen saplings were replanted if needed in early Spring before monsoons arrive,
- Chip/haul slash in Lockett Meadow, possibly using available logs for peeling/log-worm fences.

Amy Madera: Flagstaff Ranger District

- Fence work and modifications along Waterline road, Casner Park and along FR420,
- Barbed wire fences are candidates for removal following consultation with Forest Service.

Patrick McGervey: Flagstaff Ranger District

- PSAR volunteers from FoNAF to participate throughout the season,
- Building log worm fences,
- Clean up the area surrounding a water catchment off the Sunset Loop Road near the Strawberry Crater wilderness area.

Jeremy Haines: Forest Service Archeologist

- Assistance with ongoing restoration of the Mormon Lake Guard Cabin working with the HistoriCorps group.
- Red House Pueblo restoration on the Coconino National Forest.

Mary Price, Chuck Stocksdale, Kit MacDonald: Mogollon Rim Ranger District

- Removal or repair of existing exclosure fencing with emphasis on the several University of Montana exclosures,
- Install up to ½ mile of new cattle exclosure fencing at the Blue Ridge Campground,
- At all sites where oyster shell scale (OSS) is present, dead and live infected trees need to be cut, removed and piled away from any existing aspen trees,

- At Houston Draw build a new enclosure using the “cattle corral” system installed last year by the Aspen Team.

Subsequent to the board meeting the list was prioritized and approximate target dates set by the members of the Aspen Team lead by Dave Downes. The list is always subject to weather conditions, equipment availability, supplies, and of course volunteer availability.

The FoNAF website is updated monthly to reflect the most immediate project lists and can be found in the “Events” section of the website.



Early spring Aspen Team members

PSAR 2020 at Humphreys Trailhead by Bruce Belman

The trail to the summit of Humphreys Peak is one of the most popular in Arizona. Each summer season sees hundreds of visitors (and often their dogs) attempting the trek. The trailhead of choice is located at the northern end of Arizona Snowbowl Resort's parking lot number 9.

The Flagstaff Ranger District staffs an information kiosk near the trailhead each weekend from June to September with two seasonal volunteers. Our organization supports this program by providing one or two additional volunteers. Our role is to provide visitor contact both at the kiosk and on the trail.

While our main topic of discussion is hiker safety, we also provide information about alternative trail choices. More than a few visitors arrive at the trailhead seeking an opportunity to hike a shorter distance and/or find the sort of solitude not available on the busiest trail on the forest. Typically, we mention the Aspen Loop Trail, Viet Springs at Lamar Haines, Big Leroux Spring, and the Kachina Trail.

Along the Humphreys Trail we often encounter visitors suffering from symptoms of altitude sickness. "Head downhill" is the first aid instruction of choice. Occasionally our assistance is required for minor injuries due to falls or a twisted ankle from a stumble over a root-covered patch of trail. While first-aid training is useful, often just some words of encouragement and maybe a band-aid are enough.

Volunteers are always welcome and appreciated. Each day we offer two different shift periods of three hours. You can decide to participate in the early (8am-11am) or the late (11am -2pm) or both. An on-line sign-up is used to spread us out.

If you or someone you know might be interested in this volunteer opportunity, contact the 2020 season coordinator Bruce Belman: svaileen@hotmail.com or 928-856-8969.

Strawberry Trick Tank Removal by Bruce Belman

At the January 2020 project proposal meeting it was requested that FoNAF work on removal of an abandoned water-catchment/tank (Trick Tank) adjacent to Sunset Crater Road (FR 545). The metal collection surface was largely gone but the metal frame remained. In addition, there was a roughly twenty-five foot in diameter steel tank with a badly decayed wooden roof and some adjacent metal drainage.

On March 8 a crew of ten FoNAF volunteers and Matt Sommer from USFS Recreation began the process. We removed all of the old metal framework from the collection area, the drainage channels into the steel tank, some old fencing and an associated dirt/metal structure. This generated a dump truck load of metal scrap that was sold to the recycling center.



The big project of the day was to essentially ‘implode’ the wood roof of the steel tank. Using a combination of saws, crowbars and brute force the majority of the roof was collapsed into the tank.

We also assisted Matt Sommers on placing some heavy rocks across the path of an old road that extended into the Strawberry Crater Wilderness and put up some new signage.

In exploring the area adjacent to the project area for additional debris from the old trick tank we found an abandoned vehicle and a rather large mess of trash about one hundred yards inside the wilderness area. We were able to bag up and carry

out an entire pick-up truck load of trash but the vehicle will remain until someone figures out how to get it out. Not our job.



Since the walls of the steel tank are ten feet tall, we were concerned about what to do with the wooden roof: we carefully had dumped it into the center. Could we just start a fire? On March 10 this problem was solved when four FoNAF volunteers returned to the site and cut out a large panel on one side of the tank. We will complete our part of this project by hauling out all of the wood and some steel bars through this opening later this spring. The disposition of the remainder of the steel tank will be decided by the Forest Service at some future date. Meanwhile it should make a great party spot.

Safety: Top Priority, Always

The Forest Service consistently stresses the importance of safety for our volunteers in the field. Although our project coordinators have kept safety as a priority and regularly reminded volunteers on the Aspen Team about safety rules, special emphasis will be placed on safety this year to avoid injuries and to protect valuable equipment.

Prior to work starting at each project location FoNAF leaders and coordinators will review all safety rules according to the following outline:

FoNAF SAFETY BRIEFING NOTES

NO ONE IS TO START WORK BEFORE WE HAVE A SAFETY MEETING AND A PROJECT DESCRIPTION

General

- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings. Stay clear of moving vehicles. Know your physical limits. Gloves, long pants, closed toe shoes and eye protection are always required. Anytime there is overhead work hard hats are required for those doing the work.
- ✓ Identify location of AED and first aid kit.

Environmental

- ✓ Watch for trip hazards.
- ✓ Be alert to overhead hazards such as tree limbs especially if it's windy.
- ✓ If there is lightning in the area head for the vehicles ASAP
- ✓ Use sunscreen
- ✓ Be aware of biologic hazards such as bees, wasps/hornets and snakes.
- ✓ Any other site-specific environmental concerns?

Vehicles

- ✓ Drivers must use a spotter when reversing. Always. No exceptions.
- ✓ Before moving vehicle make sure no one is loading or unloading.
- ✓ Before closing a tailgate make sure no one's hands are in the way

Chainsaw operation

- ✓ Full PPE is required. No exceptions.
- ✓ If assisting chainsaw operation wear hearing protection and eye protection.
- ✓ If you need to communicate with the chainsaw operator make visual contact before approaching.
- ✓ Stay at least five feet from a running chainsaw.

Wire winder operation

- ✓ PPE is required for operator. No exceptions.
- ✓ When winding wire there should be at least one observer within visual contact of operator.
- ✓ When wire is being pulled everyone stay at least twenty feet away from moving wire.

Post pounder operation

All personal in a pounding operation should wear hearing protection and have hard hats.

Ladder use

- ✓ Always have at least one person holding the ladder.
- ✓ Do not go above the third step from the top.
- ✓ Before mounting ladder make sure it is in a stable position.

Someone to know.....

Patrick McGervey

Patrick, as he is known to many, is the Flagstaff Ranger District Recreation and Wilderness Staff Officer. With his varied responsibilities many FoNAF members have had the pleasure of working with Patrick over the years.



Originally from the Bay area, Patrick enjoyed family outings hiking and backpacking in the Sierra's and other attractive locations. As he got older, he continued these outings with other friends and his love of the outdoors continued as an important part of his life. While attending Chico State, he became aware that there was actually a whole curriculum devoted to Parks and Recreation Management and that's when he decided on that course of study. His summer employment included work at various marinas in northern California and working for other concessionaires where he enjoyed interacting with folks and enhancing their outdoor opportunities.

In 2006 Patrick was awarded an internship on the Tonto National Forest as a wilderness ranger and that led to his Forest Service career including a stint on a hot-shot crew.

During the past 14 years Patrick has seen many changes in his profession and technology is one that has really taken off. Instead of providing folded up maps or bulletins, smart phones with GPS functionality provides all of the information needed for directions, local weather, attractions and helpful hints.

While there were trucks and some early 3 wheelers or even 4 wheelers, the proliferation today of powerful side by side 4 seat UTV's has opened up another whole arena for outdoor recreation, along with a new set of challenges for Patrick and his staff. The varied RV lifestyles have also added to the Recreation staff challenges and tasks, especially when it comes to "residential campers" in our forests.

Patrick, along with his wife and two children, enjoy their lives in Flagstaff and like many of us, their sense of "place" is very strong. For the future, Patrick indicated that there is still a very strong interest in Parks and Recreation amongst college students and recent graduates so new employees are never lacking.

He feels he's been fortunate to work with a tenured group of recreation advocates and fellow employees, and he's grateful for the hard work FoNAF and other volunteer groups contribute to the Coconino National Forest.

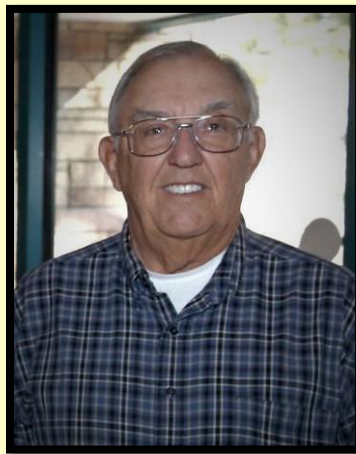


Dedication, Contributions and Longtime Service **Recognized by Arizona Game and Fish Department**

As anyone knows who has worked with our president Tom Mackin, he rarely shares news about awards or special recognition he has received. But his recent award from Arizona Game and Fish Department was too significant to not bring to the attention of his fellow Forest Service volunteers and FoNAF members.

2019 Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award

**Wildlife Volunteer Ranger Program/Region 2
and Hunter Education Program**



Tom Mackin

As stated by Arizona Game and Fish for Tom's outstanding service:

“This award recognizes one volunteer who has served AZGFD for 20+ years while demonstrating exemplary leadership skills, service and an outstanding desire to do work that benefits wildlife, wildlife habitats, or other programs within the AZGFD.”

Congratulations, Tom from all the FoNAF members and volunteers.

Any Interest Out There?

FoNAF has a Facebook account—but has no one to manage it! We need of a member to become our Facebook coordinator! The executive committee appreciates the exposure Facebook provides to the general public and our membership. But the page must be maintained and kept current for maximum value as a recruitment and general information resource.

If you want to volunteer for this prestigious position please contact Bruce Belman, svaileen@hotmail.com.

SPECIAL NOTICE REGARDING SPRING EVENTS

In light of the coronavirus outbreak, President Tom Mackin sent this memo out on March 13, 2020 to all members regarding FoNAF's activities for this spring:

Fellow FoNAF Members:

After speaking/emailing with several of you regarding the current health concerns, effective immediately and until further notice, we're suspending all FoNAF activities, including Aspen Team field work this weekend.

None of our pending planned activities represent a dire need and so I feel this is the most appropriate measure we should be taking at this time.

Thank you all for your support and engagement and I look forward to resuming our actions when all conditions improve.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Tom Mackin, President

FoNAF Board of Directors

Tom Mackin, President

Bruce Belman, Vice President

Bob Dyer, Secretary

Dave Downes, Treasurer

Ed Clark

Tony DeCou

Jim Hoyne

Bill Kluwin

Curt Knight

Jim McGeorge

Bill Waters

Coconino National Forest information:

District Rangers: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/coconino/about-forest/offices>

Website address: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/coconino/>