

FoNAF News

Friends of Northern Arizona Forests



Issue 4

Fall 2012

The Aspen Team Works Hard, Eats Well



(L-R) Tony DeCou, Ed Clark, Bill & Liz Rahr, Dave Downes enjoy a day of work in the forest.

The Aspen Team has had a busy and productive spring and summer building and maintaining fences to protect young aspen and Bebb willows from browsing by ungulates. The team began the work season with ten members -- Bill Rahr, Curt Knight, Dave Downes, Dave Laplander, Ed Clark, Jim Hoyne, Ralph Baierlein, Scotty Scott, Tom Mackin and Tony DeCou. We quickly added two more -- Bob Dyer and John Holmes. Working with Patty Ringle, a silviculturist at the Flagstaff Ranger Station, and other FS employees and contractors, Aspen Team members have spent more than 1250 hours in the field. We made major repairs to six existing aspen enclosures, built seven new ones, rebuilt two Bebb willow enclosures and built one new one, and we even constructed a barbed-wire fence at Logan's Crossing. On five Saturdays we held public workdays and were joined by other FoNAF members and some non-FoNAF volunteers who contributed approximately 225 hours. Marc Brown and Maynard Keenan deserve special mention as they have come up from Phoenix to participate in all five workdays. On these Saturdays, we provided lunches to all the volunteers with Bill Rahr and Tom Mackin serving as chefs. Patty's desserts were always delicious and appreciated.

Over the winter, we will monitor as many of the 52 enclosures on the district as we can access and we will plan for the 2013 work season. If you are interested in knowing more about the aspen fence project, go to our web site <http://www.friendsofnazforests.org/aspen-program.html> and if you would like to become involved, contact me at downes@haas.berkeley.edu or 928-522-9207.

-- Dave Downes, Aspen Fence Project Coordinator

*This season **Trail Ambassadors** hiking, biking and riding horses logged 143 hours meeting and greeting trail users around Flagstaff. They turned in 57 reports to the Forest Service identifying areas with blow-downs, wash-outs and trash.*

The President's Perspective

A Walk in the Woods

I parked my Corolla alongside a good dirt road in the Hart Prairie area and started hiking northward. Within five minutes, I was checking the west and north sides of my first exclosure: a fence that protects young aspen from browsing by elk, deer, and livestock. A few minutes later, I checked those sides on exclosure #22. Another 100 yards northward, I swung around tiny exclosure #23, ready to head southward and check the east and south sides of the previous exclosures.

At 30 minutes on my watch, I was back at my car. Not only had I checked for breaks or trees fallen on the fences, I'd had a lovely hike through an open and grassy forest.

On my drive back to Flagstaff, I stopped along Route 180 and checked exclosure #12. The "Aspen Protection" signs are only 20 feet from the pavement.

How often am I expected to check my exclosures? Two or three times a year: spring, late summer, and—if the weather and my time permit—early winter.

Since 2009, FoNAF has built new exclosures and rehabilitated many old ones. More than 50 exclosures exist on the Flagstaff Ranger District, and most of them have stewards: folks who have committed themselves to making semi-annual inspections and to reporting any repairs that need to be done.

Yet other exclosures are waiting to be adopted—perhaps by you? Up for adoption are exclosures right next to roads and ones that require a short stroll through the woods. Some are close to town (like the base of Mount Elden), and others are in the Hart Prairie area.

For details about the available exclosures, please contact Dave Downes at 522-9207 or downes@haas.berkeley.edu.

The rewards of adoption are many, and so I hope you will pick up an exclosure or two.

— *Ralph Baierlein*



Adopt a Piece of History



During World War II, an Army Air Force plane on a night training mission crashed into the side of Mount Humphreys. All eight crewmen died. A plaque near Snowbowl Lodge commemorates their lives and sacrifice.

Some fifty miles to the south, a plaque on the west side of Mormon Lake recalls the agricultural history of Dairy Spring. The photo shows the monument and plaque as they were on my visit in August. Under the heading "Mormon Dairy," the plaque starts with the sentence, "Between 1876 and 1886, Hyrum Judd, under the direction of Lot Smith, supervised a Mormon dairy one mile northeast near Dairy Spring."

In July, the Forest Service asked FoNAF to "adopt" the two historical markers. That entails nothing more than checking the plaques annually, tidying up the surrounding area, and reporting any repairs that need to be made. FoNAF's officers agreed to the request.

In turn, I'm now asking for a volunteer or two from within our membership to adopt one or both of the plaques. Please send me an email at Ralph.Baierlein@nau.edu.

FoNAF Volunteers Join Cooperative Effort to Fix Fences and Clean Critical Wildlife Corridor

As Northern Arizona's population grows we risk squeezing out our forest friends – elk, deer and other wildlife – a major reason many of us enjoy living here in the first place. The Arizona Game and Fish Department and other partners have found the corridor between the San Francisco Peaks and the Rim above Sedona to be one of the most critical areas for wildlife foraging, water and migration. This year six areas were identified along this stretch between A-1 Mountain and Rogers Lake for improvement.

FoNAF members have joined other volunteers to work on the corridor which was degraded by off-road vehicles, trash and years of shooting in an old quarry and nearby wooded areas. The volunteers rebuilt livestock fences installing gates, removed more than seven tons of trash and old fence materials, weeded several acres of invasive plants, and placed educational signs at many sites. In the spring, native grass will be planted.

This effort is unique as it involved the cooperation of the City of Flagstaff, Coconino County, the Forest Service, Game and Fish, Northern Arizona University, the Arizona Wildlife Federation, Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation and, of course, FoNAF.

Tom Mackin
President, Arizona Wildlife Federation
Secretary, Friends of Northern Arizona Forests

AZ Elk Society Donates \$2000 for FoNAF Fence Fixing

Last year, I was approached by Jim DeVos of the Arizona Elk Society (AES) to see if FoNAF would be interested in rebuilding several exclosures at Merritt Spring just above the Mogollon Rim. I negotiated a contract with AES that would give FoNAF \$2000 plus expenses for rebuilding an exclosure, installing fencing around Bebb willows at another exclosure, and making some needed repairs to an aspen exclosure about a mile away.

Members of the Aspen Team (Tony DeCou, Bob Dyer, Curt Knight, Ed Clark, Dave Downes, and I) plus a friend, Clair Harris, spent June 18th and 28th working on the project. FoNAF now has an additional \$2000 in the Aspen Project Fund, and the Mogollon Ranger District has two improved exclosures to protect Aspen and Bebb willows for the coming years.

-- Tom Mackin

FoNAF Offers Special Winter Volunteer Opportunity

You are probably not thinking about snow yet, but it's on the way soon enough. And with snow come thoughts of skiing, snowboarding and, at FoNAF, of backcountry permits. The Forest Service requires skiers and snowboarders who plan to venture beyond the bounds of Arizona Snowbowl to get and carry a backcountry permit, which contains info on whom to notify in case of injury (or worse). The permits are free and can be obtained at local Forest Service offices. On winter weekend mornings, 9:00-11:30, when Snowbowl is open, FoNAF volunteers issue permits at Agassiz Lodge. Before issuing a permit, we provide applicants with information on the dangers they face related to weather and avalanches, and on essential equipment they should carry. After hearing our presentation, a few applicants change their mind about venturing outside the boundaries. Most others proceed, but with a lot more knowledge about the risks involved and the precautions they should take. We who issue the permits may never know if we have saved a life or two, but we probably have. If you are interested in becoming a backcountry permit issuer, please contact me at downes@haas.berkeley.edu or 928-522-9207. You do not need to be a skier or a snowboarder – you just need to be willing to commit a few weekend mornings to a rewarding activity.

-- Dave Downes, Backcountry Permits Coordinator

FoNAF Board Members

Ralph Baierlein, President
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David Downes, Treasurer
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Curt Knight
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Marty Lee, Vice President
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Anthony Quintile
Bill Rahr
Sheila Walsh

Justin Loxley is the Flagstaff Ranger
District Volunteer Coordinator

Check us out at www.friendsofnazforests.org

Trail Etiquette

Respect the land

Leave natural features unmarked. Do not carve trees.

Respect wildlife

Give them space. *Leash your dog.* Not only is it the law in Coconino County, off-leash dogs disappear every year.

Leave artifacts undisturbed

Look but don't touch. Disturbing artifacts on federal land violates the Federal Antiquities Act.

Pack out your trash

This includes toilet paper. Bury solid human waste at least six inches deep and well away from trails.

Respect other users

We come to the outdoors as a celebration of nature. Allow everyone that chance. Show courtesy and generosity. Observe the precedence of the trail: Move to the side and allow passage. Equestrians always enjoy right of way. Cyclists yield to other users.



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