

# FoNAF News

## Friends of Northern Arizona Forests



Issue 6

Fall 2013

### ***Aspen Team Helps Antelope Cross Hwy 180***

At the January 2013 FONAF Board meeting, we received a proposal from the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) and Coconino National Forest (CNF) to assist with modifying the ADOT Right of Way (ROW) fence and a section of CNF allotment fence in Kendrick Park on Highway 180 about 30 miles NW of Flagstaff. As explained by AZGFD, pronghorn antelope are not crossing HWY 180 in this area due to the current ROW fence alignment adjacent to the highway. In addition, there is a 5 strand grazing allotment fence that was built prior to wildlife fencing standards being adopted. The proposal



was for FONAF to assist in building approximately 3 miles of new wildlife friendly fence about 100 yards back from either side of the highway and to modify the allotment fence to conform to current standards.

On June 4, FoNAF's Aspen Team began work and during the next two weeks, they put in 43 man days, over 320 hours, working on this project. Additional assistance was provided by a 20-man contingent from a Department of Corrections Winslow fire crew, members of the American Conservation Experience, AZGFD, CNF and the AAF. On Saturday June 15<sup>th</sup>, work was completed.

We have asked for future information from AZGFD on telemetry studies with pronghorn that are collared with GPS transmitters in the area. Biologists from AZGFD and CNF hope that with the fence modifications in place, pronghorn will be able to successfully cross Hwy 180, improving genetic diversity as well as access to forage, water, fawning and resting areas.

*Aspen Team member Tony DeCou attaches new wire to t-post.*

*—by Tom Mackin*

## ***Changing of the Guard at FoNAF***

Ralph Baierlein, the founder and first president of FoNAF, has retired to the status of an elder statesman. Over the past four years, Ralph acquired nonprofit recognition for us, initiated projects, secured grants, built our website, and did a good share of manual labor in the forest. He will be missed as an officer, but he'll remain as a member of the board and the Aspen Team.

Stepping in to fill his boots as president is long-time Forest Service volunteer Tom Mackin. Tom is a retired technical specialist who took care of the 911 system, office communications and computer equipment of the sheriff's office. He also brings a good deal of outdoor knowledge to FoNAF, having volunteered over the years with other organizations such as Game and Fish, the Nature Conservancy, the Arboretum and the Arizona Wildlife Federation. We welcome Tom as the new president of Friends of Northern Arizona Forests.



### ***Here's Tom:***

*Since volunteering with FONAFA in 2010, I've been in awe of our accomplishments. I enjoy every work project and each day we spend in the field, whether it's planting aspen, mending fences to protect saplings, working on wetland restoration or fixing fences to help antelope cross the highway. We work very well together, sharing our knowledge and experiences and always assisting one another to accomplish our formidable tasks. I'm looking forward to serving as the new Board President and getting to know each of you a little better.*

## ***Calling Helpers Early for Snowbowl Opening***

While writing this on a beautiful fall morning with an expected high of 65 degrees, I am finding it hard to think about snow. But I know it is coming, and with it is our commitment to assist the Forest Service issue backcountry permits. The folks at Snowbowl have already announced that they will open November 29<sup>th</sup> with artificial snow if necessary, so we will soon be looking for volunteers to staff the table at Snowbowl on weekends and holidays.

The Forest Service requires skiers and snowboarders who plan to venture outside the bounds of Arizona Snowbowl to get a backcountry permit. The permits are free and can be obtained at local Forest Service offices. Recipients are required to carry them on their persons when they go outside the boundaries of Snowbowl as the permits contain info on whom to notify in case of injury (or worse). On winter weekend mornings, 9:00-11:30, when Snowbowl is open, FoNAF volunteers issue permits at Agassiz Lodge, but first we provide applicants with information on the dangers they face related to weather and avalanches, and on essential equipment they should bring. We who issue the permits and provide recipients with appropriate warnings may never know if we are responsible for saving a life or two, but we probably are.

If you are interested in becoming a backcountry permit issuer, please contact me at [downes@haas.berkeley.edu](mailto:downes@haas.berkeley.edu) or 928-522-9207. You do not need to be a skier or a snowboarder, nor do you need to have ever been outside the boundaries of Snowbowl in winter – you just need to be willing to commit a few weekend mornings to a rewarding activity.

## *Volunteers Restore Wetland Meadows*



In mid-July, several FoNAF Aspen Team members traveled to the area of Buck Springs and, working in conjunction with the Arizona Elk Society, we joined forces with over 150 other volunteers to do much needed meadow restoration.

At least 5 different teams were tasked with clearing small encroaching pines, building up rock and log structures to reduce drainage cutting, repairing enclosure fences to minimize damage to several springs and seeps, and other varied tasks. These efforts were all coordinated by USFS

silviculturists and hydrologists as part of a long term effort to restore these wetland meadows.

On the following weekend, several of us returned to complete the fencing near Buck Springs and then we went about 8 miles to the Merritt Springs area where we had repaired several enclosures in 2012. We made minor repairs to 4 enclosures and were pleasantly surprised to see the aspen and Bebb's willow regeneration in these previously degraded meadows.

## *Aspen Team Put in a Busy Season*

The Aspen Team began the work season with 12 members – Ralph Baierlein, Ed Clark, Tony DeCou, Dave Downes, Bob Dyer, John Holmes, Jim Hoyne, Maynard Keenan, Curt Knight, Tom Mackin, Bill Rahr and Scotty Scott – and we quickly added two more, Dave Hall and Bill Kluwin. In June we welcomed Shawn Martin as the new silviculturist at the Flagstaff Ranger Station and began introducing him to the 50+ aspen enclosures that we maintain.

During the 2013 work season (April through October) Aspen Team members spent more than 1400 hours in the field. Some 300+ of those hours were assisting on the pronghorn project (p. 1). The remaining 1100 hours involved making major repairs to seven existing enclosures, including one in the Mogollon District, and building two new enclosures – one for the Aspen Propagation project and one for the protection of Bebb willows. We also spent many hours making minor repairs on enclosures due to falling trees, heavy snowpack and other causes.

Over the winter, we will monitor as many of the enclosures as we can access and we will plan for the 2014 work season. If you are interested in knowing more about the aspen fence project, go to our web site <http://www.friendsofnazforests.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1504705> and if you would like to become involved, contact me at [downes@haas.berkeley.edu](mailto:downes@haas.berkeley.edu) or 928-522-9207.



*Silviculturist Shawn Martin (L) joins Dave Downes and the Aspen Team.*

*-- Dave Downes, Aspen Fence Project Coordinator*

## ***Searching for Elk Resistant Aspen***



After July's rains had moistened the soil, a crew from the Coconino Rural Environmental Corps (CREC) planted our aspen saplings on the north slope of the Hochderffer Hills. Here, Stacey Keahon compresses the soil around one of 250 "test" saplings. When the cones and mesh sleeves are

removed next July, these saplings will be exposed to browsing by elk and deer.

In contrast, the 130 saplings behind the fence will be protected for years by the enclosure and will serve as the control group.

By October 2014, we'll begin to know if we have found browse-resistant aspen.

*--Ralph Baierlein*

## ***FoNAF Board Members***

Tom Mackin, President  
Marty Lee, Vice President  
Bob Dyer, Secretary  
David Downes, Treasurer  
Mary Natali, Newsletter Editor  
Ralph Baierlein  
Bruce Belman  
Ed Clark  
Keith Greenwalt  
David Hall  
John Holmes  
Bill Kluwin  
Curt Knight  
Anthony Quintile  
Bill Rahr  
Sheila Walsh

Justin Loxley is the Flagstaff Ranger  
District Volunteer Coordinator

**Check us out at [www.friendsofnazforests.org](http://www.friendsofnazforests.org)**



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