

FoNAF News

Friends of Northern Arizona Forests



Issue 9

Spring 2015

Help the Hikers of Humphrey's

Do you like to hike? Do you like to talk to people? Maybe you're just tired of building fences? We have the volunteer opportunity for you! This summer Friends of Northern Arizona Forests is partnering with the Forest Service to provide a new Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR) program on the Kachina Peaks Wilderness. Every year visitors from across the world come to hike the beautiful trails meandering around the mountains above Flagstaff, and every year some of them have to be rescued.

FoNAF will spearhead an effort designed to educate visitors about the unique challenges that hiking strenuous trails at high altitude can encounter. Volunteers will be present at popular trailheads like the Humphrey's and Kachina trails during peak use periods such as weekends and holidays. They will be dressed in official uniforms and conduct outreach at information tables as well as patrol points. They will provide information on proper gear to be worn and on recognizing altitude sickness, staying hydrated, bringing food, and being aware of weather conditions, especially the possibility of lightning. Volunteers will also provide general information about the area including less challenging alternative trails, general wilderness information and 'Leave No Trace ethics.'

If you love to hike and like to engage and educate people, please consider volunteering. We are looking for commitments on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from mid-May through Labor Day. If you are interested in volunteering please contact John Holmes at jeholmesaz@npgcable.com, (928) 814-2282.

John Holmes, Coordinator of the Trailhead Project

Joseph Maatman, NAU School of Forestry Student



John Holmes, Coordinator of FoNAF Trailhead Project

Tips for Hiking the Trails of the San Francisco Peaks:

- expect steep elevation gain and weather changes
- be aware of loose and slick rocks
- stay on the trail with a map
- share travel plans with someone trustworthy
- stay hydrated and fueled with energy

The President's Corner

Now that spring has officially arrived, we're gearing up for the work season. Very soon we'll receive reports from our aspen exclosure stewards, but with the mild winter and below normal snowfall we anticipate minimal repairs being required. At our March meeting we confirmed that there will be additional planting on the Shultz Fire site and many opportunities for volunteers to be actively involved.

One of the most exciting items we discussed, explained here on the front page, is the start of a new program on the Kachina and Humphreys trails every weekend and holiday from May to September. As the hundreds (thousands?) of hikers start on these trails volunteers will greet them and describe general preparation and equipment needed for an enjoyable and safe venture into these wilderness areas. This is a collaborative effort between the Forest Service, Northern Arizona University, the Coconino County Sheriff's Department and FoNAF. Please be sure to check out our website, www.friendsofnazforests.org, if you're interested in assisting with this effort.

These additional volunteer opportunities will also be available: assisting with efforts to make grazing allotment fences safer for wildlife, continuing visits on the Mogollon Rim District to survey and inventory existing aspen exclosures, and building at least two new aspen exclosures near Wing Mountain and another aspen propagation exclosure for new seedlings. Again, please visit our website or watch for email notices as these plans develop.

I would like to remind members that if you know of someone who has an interest in these activities, please suggest that they consider becoming a member of FoNAF. We've struggled a bit with membership the last two years and would certainly welcome new hands and hearts. The most effective program to recruit new members is an invitation by an existing member.

We hope to see you this year during one of our many events.

Tom Mackin, President



FoNAF Member Bill Waters (L) and President Tom Mackin do backcountry permit duty at Aspen Lodge, Snowbowl.

Editor's note: Our very busy President Tom Mackin, who has volunteered for many outdoor organizations over the years, was named Conservationist of the Year 2014, by the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

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Justin Loxley is the
Flagstaff Ranger District
Volunteer Coordinator

The Aspen Team Gears Up For a Busy Fencing Season

Once the Forest Service opens their roads that have been closed for the winter, 16 FoNAF members will be visiting the aspen exclosures for which they are stewards to determine if they have been damaged by snow pack or winds. They will report needed repairs to me so I can coordinate visits by the fence team to make them to prevent the exclosure from being visited by animals wanting to snack on young aspen. Given the relatively mild winter, our hope is that damage is minimal and days needed for repairs are few so we can move on to major projects.



The Aspen Team fixes fences.

And our list of large projects is long and growing. We plan to build three new exclosures – two at the base of Wing Mountain and one near La Negrita Tank. We need to build a new exclosure to accommodate the third year planting of aspen seedlings that is part of the Aspen Propagation project. We have been asked to help construct a new exclosure at Buck Spring on the Mogollon Rim District (MRD) that will provide protection of a large meadow that is being damaged by herds of elk and deer. We know of at least four existing exclosures that need fencing raised to at least 7 ½ feet, the minimum required to prevent animals from jumping over them. We hope to continue visiting the MRD to survey and document the condition of many exclosures for which no current documentation exists. And finally we have agreed to assist in rebuilding many miles of pasture and right-of-way fences to insure that they are pronghorn friendly, i.e., the bottom strand of wire is smooth (not barbed) and 18” above ground.

We can use your help. We have several aspen exclosures that do not have a steward. Our Aspen Team is always happy to have more hands whether it is just for a single outing or on a regular basis. More information about both opportunities can be found on our website <http://www.friendsofnazforests.org/>. Click on *Mission and More* and then look at the left sidebar for specific pages.

Dave Downes, Aspen Fence Project Coordinator, dhdownes@gmail.com

Preliminary Schedule for Aspen Fence Team 2015

April/May	Check all existing exclosures and determine needed repairs
May	Construct a new exclosure for the Aspen Propagation Project (APP)
May	Construct a new exclosure at Buck Spring (MR District)
June	Construct two new exclosures at the base of Wing Mountain
July	Construct a new exclosure at La Negrita Tank (west of Mormon Lake)
July	Assist in the planting of aspen seedlings at new exclosure (APP)
April – Sept.	Make repairs to existing exclosures as required; raise to 7 ½ ft. where needed
April – Sept.	Rebuild pasture & right-of-way fences to be pronghorn friendly
April – Sept.	Survey, document & make repairs on exclosures on MR District

**Exact dates will depend upon the extent of repairs needed to existing exclosures, weather, and team members' availability.*

FoNAF Helps the Forest Service in So Many Ways

When I landed here on the Flagstaff Ranger District 5 years ago, I had little notion of what or who FoNAF was, just another government acronym I thought. Quickly I found out FoNAF was famous for their Aspen Fence work!

I've since come to know FoNAF well and know they help the forest in so many different ways. I oversee the Winter Sports Program here on the district, including issuance of the backcountry permits. FoNAF has become the cornerstone of the program making contact with winter sports enthusiasts to ensure they know the hazards they may encounter in the Kachina Peaks Wilderness, including avalanches. Every winter weekend FoNAF provides a friendly (or stern) volunteer to work at the Agassiz Lodge at Arizona Snowbowl to make available this important information and issue the required educational permit. This year alone FoNAF donated 175 hours issuing 351 permits in a pretty dismal, low, dry, and warm snow year. It's hard to say how many lives FoNAF may have saved. Every winter season the Forest Service and the Coconino County Sheriff's Office are involved in winter search and rescue missions on the Kachina Peaks; most of the missions involve a victim who never obtained a permit or had the pleasure of meeting with a friendly (or stern) FoNAF member. That's got to say something.

This summer, with FoNAF's help, we are providing similar information to visitors to the Kachina Peaks. I'm looking forward to working with members interested in helping the Forest Service in yet another way. We are calling this the Wilderness Stewardship Program. I hope to see you there.

Pat McGervey, Recreation Planner, Flagstaff Ranger District



Check us out at www.friendsofnazforests.org



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