



FRIENDS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA FORESTS

NEWSLETTER

February 2018

Organization of the Year 2017

Awarded to “Friends of Northern Arizona Forests” by the *Arizona Daily Sun*

The announcement was in the December 30, 2017, issue of the newspaper and is considered a significant achievement for our group of dedicated volunteers who have contributed so much to our forests since 2009. We are truly honored and appreciate the community's recognition of our efforts.

On January 9, 2018, a luncheon at Little America honored Friends of Northern Arizona Forests (FoNAF) for the award and the document (right) was presented. Several members of the FoNAF board of directors attended the luncheon where “Male” and “Female” of the year awards were also celebrated.





Award presentation at Little America

The **Forest Service** honored the award with a cake and poster at the January board meeting, expressing their thanks, appreciation, and recognition of the support FoNAF has provided to them over the years.



Article from the *Daily Sun* Announcing FoNAF's Award

With permission from the *Daily Sun*, excerpts from the article written by reporter Emery Cowan are reprinted below:

They are the men and women who greet hikers at the start of Humphreys Trail, making sure they know the weather forecast and the supplies necessary to make the nearly 10-mile trip.

They are the workers building fences to protect sensitive aspen groves on the Coconino National Forest.

And they are the people who conveniently issue backcountry permits to hikers and skiers at Arizona Snowbowl on winter weekends.

All are volunteers and the common thread among them is their membership in the Friends of Northern Arizona Forests, or FoNAF. The 8-year-old organization works in partnership with the Coconino National Forest to accomplish work that the staff-and-budget-limited Forest Service doesn't have the time or resources to do on its own. In 2017 alone, FoNAF contributed more than 4,200 volunteer hours to Forest Service tasks.

For its dedication to this Forest Service support role, Friends of Northern Arizona Forests was chosen as the 2017 Arizona Daily Sun's Organization of the Year.

"FoNAF will be the reason tourists visiting the Flagstaff area will be able to see aspen in the forest now and into the future," Dick Fleishman, a Forest Service coordinator on the Four Forest Restoration Initiative, wrote in a letter of support for the organization.

When it started in 2009, the organization spent nearly all of its time repairing aspen exclosure fences on the Flagstaff Ranger District, said Dave Downes, the group's treasurer. There are more than 60 exclosures on the district, and it took four or five years to repair and reconstruct the ones that had fallen into disrepair, he said. Now, each of the 20 or so members of FoNAF's aspen team is responsible for checking on a few exclosures each spring and reporting repairs that need to be made.

With that project mostly under control, the group has expanded to more projects on the Coconino as well as the Kaibab National Forest next door. In addition to building new aspen exclosures, volunteers modify old cattle fences to allow pronghorns to pass underneath and build fences to protect wet meadows, riparian areas and archaeological sites in the forest.

The group works with the Forest Service on everything it does. Every January, FoNAF members sit down with agency staff and hear about projects that could use volunteer assistance, then decide which they might have capacity to do. More recently, FoNAF has started suggesting its own projects on the forest as well.

The friends group is a special asset to the Forest Service, Flagstaff Ranger District

wildlife biologist Cary Thompson wrote in support of the group's nomination. "We have many partners and volunteers that help us accomplish our mission but FoNAF is unique in that they are a long-term partner. They have a consistent member base with the required Forest Service training and are well versed in our culture," Thompson wrote. "They have an understanding of our challenges yet focus on solutions."

"It's very easy to see the problems with a lot of public lands and personally I view FoNAF as an opportunity to be part of the solution to correct those problems," Mackin said.

Their volunteer projects may not be flashy, but they matter quite a bit to people passionate about pronghorns, for example, or visitors interested in the area's aspen trees, Belman (Bruce) said. "We've become a tremendous multiplier for Forest Service."

Planning Meeting sets stage for expanded Fencing and Water Projects in 2018

Early in February the FoNAF volunteers met to review the list of anticipated tree, fencing, and water projects for the coming year. The foundation for the proposed projects was set at the January board of directors' meeting when Forest Service staff presented their ideas and requests for FoNAF assistance in 2018.

The planning meeting resulted in all their requests being scheduled for completion. Specific dates are yet to be determined and may change with weather conditions, available supplies, and number of volunteers. Below is the list indicting the anticipated days for completion and work to be done, not in priority or date order:

Day/Date	Site	Work Needed
Apr - May	All existing exclosures	TBD by stewards
1 day: Feb. 9	Sheep Spring	finish building new aspen exclosure
2 days	T-six Spring	rebuild & expand exclosure to approx. 8 acres
2-3 days	Existing exclosures	make needed repairs to exclosures & remove #41

1 day	Rosilda Spring (KNF)	Build 300' fence around a spring pond
1 day	Cedar Ranch area	raise/replace bottom wire on approximately 1 mile
3-4 days	Bonito Tank and along Lake Mary Road	raise/replace bottom wire
1-2 days	US 180 at Aspen Curve	Assist with replanting of aspen seedlings
1-2 days	TBD	Assist with conifer weeding w/in existing exclosures
2-3 days	FR193 & TBD	build two new aspen exclosures
June 20-22	McClintock Draw (MRRD)	build new exclosure
1-2 days	Mogollon Rim RD	Check exclosures; make repairs as needed
2 days	TBD	rebuild a trick tank
2-3 days	Ft. Valley Experimental Forest	repairing and/or replacing fences
2-3 days	Red House Pueblo	Assist in rebuilding old pueblo
1-2 days	E. Kelly Canyon/Shipping	remove approx. 1 mile of old pasture fence

The outdoor teams require lots of boots on the ground working hard the full day, except for that wonderful lunch break. So if you are interested in joining them, contact Dave Downes: 928-522-9207 dhdowes@gmail.com



Sheep Springs Fence Build 1/26/18

Weather (or lack of snow) Impacts Kachina Peaks Wilderness Access Permits

Everyone knows the unpredictable seasonal weather Flagstaff experiences, and this year's lack of snow is a perfect example. Although FoNAF volunteers have been signed up to issue wilderness permits at the Snowbowl when it first appeared hikers and skiers may be headed up the slopes, but the volume of permits issued has been way down. Some suggest our new wilderness permit coordinator Bruce Belman dropped the ball and didn't order snow soon enough, but we realize it's probably not his fault and understand he's done an excellent job coordinating the program for us.

As we approach spring, the weekend crews of two that sit at Agassiz Lodge on Saturday and Sunday mornings will probably be dropped to one. That staffing decision will change should snow arrive.

If you are interested in volunteering to issue permits, please contact Bruce. A full report of activity for 2017-2018 will be included in the next newsletter:

928-856-8969 svaileen@hotmail.com

Doug Shepard, a new volunteer at Agassiz Lodge, issuing a permit to hiker.



Protecting Bebb Willows on the Mogollon Rim

Feature article submitted by Bill Kluwin, Board Member

If botanists drew international boundaries, the Mogollon Rim would be the border between Canada and Mexico. The Mogollon Rim represents the southern-most extent of many Rocky Mountain plants. For example, Bebb Willow (*Salix Bebbiana* Sarg.) is one such plant whose range ends at the Mogollon Rim. Friends of the Northern Arizona Forests (FONAF) are working with the Forest Service to protect this southern outpost of Bebb Willow.



Bebb Willow is a species indigenous to Canada and the northern United States. It is typically a large, fast-growing, multi-stemmed shrub. It is the dominant species in the marshland area of its native range. It is a long journey from Canada to the Mogollon Rim, and the journey is only made possible by the relatively high elevation and spring-fed environment of the Mogollon Rim.

The area below the Mogollon Rim is commonly called the Mogollon Highlands. It is a biodiversity hotspot in Arizona, and in it there are plants, representing the northern range of the Sierra Madre and the Sonoran Desert. Obviously lower elevation and lower moisture represent a barrier to the further progress of a water-loving, cold-tolerant, northern plant.

Bebb Willow's reproduction methods, coupled with environmental changes on the Mogollon Rim, are some of the reasons why the Forest Service has identified it as a species needing attention. Bebb Willow seeds mature in spring, and they are only viable for a few days. The seeds have no dormancy period, but they will germinate within twelve to twenty-four hours of falling on moist ground. This characteristic may not present an issue in a swamp in Canada, but it is certainly a challenge on the Colorado Plateau. A dry spring will result in the lack of any germination in that year.

Not only has Arizona been in a 20 year drought that impacts both germination rates and growth for Bebb Willow, but the last 20 years have seen higher temperatures on the Mogollon Rim, further stressing the plant. In addition, Bebb Willow is browsed by deer, elk and cattle. With warmer winter temperatures, elk have not been moving off the Mogollon Rim so that browsing pressure is increasing throughout the year.

FONAF is helping with meadow restoration on the Mogollon Rim because the loss of Bebb Willow would represent the loss of a significant plant species. In its role in meadow restoration, Bebb Willow helps reduce stream bank erosion and it protects the aquatic environment. In addition, Bebb Willow provides cover for birds and small mammals in winter, and it provides an early source for pollen and nectar in spring, when other sources are still not available.

In Flagstaff Bebb Willow can be viewed at the Nature Conservancy in Hart Prairie. The Nature Conservancy is undertaking on the local level a project to help protect this valuable northern neighbor.

Folks to Know

Karen and Shannon Clark



When FoNAF was simply an idea back in 2008-2009, Karen was a Forest Service employee and was assigned by the Forest Service to assist with the formation of FoNAF. So it can be said that Karen is one of the original FoNAF members, establishing its mission and laying the foundation for making it the successful organization it is today.

After moving to Flagstaff from Redlands California to attend NAU, Karen and Shannon both graduated and sought work with the Forest Service. Shannon started as a seasonal in 1976, working on road and facilities engineering projects and Karen started in 1979 working on Public Information and Education tasks. This active couple remained with the Forest Service for 33 and 27 years respectively, obviously doing things they enjoyed.

Since retiring both have kept actively involved with the Forest Service, in addition to being members of FoNAF, Karen is involved with the joint Forest Service/National Park Service Interpretive Program, leading hikes, campground talks and other similar programs while also being involved with communications for the Flagstaff Watershed protection Project.

Shannon has continued to use his engineering background and experience assisting the Forest Service with renovating some of the historic cabins on Forest Service lands throughout our many National Forests for the “Rooms with a View” program. Shannon’s duties include evaluating potential sites, adding solar power to replace propane lighting, renovating the cabins and making other needed repairs and improvements, all while keeping the rustic appeal of these historic cabins.

Both Karen and Shannon enjoy skiing and travel, and Shannon has enjoyed home brewing for many year, ensuring the availability of a relaxing refreshment at the end of a busy day. Be sure to say “Hi” to Karen and Shannon the next time you see them on a FoNAF project or involved with one of their many activities.

Public Relations News

- The board of directors were pleased when an article about FoNAF appeared in the November 2017 issue of *Green Living* magazine, which is an Arizona publication from Phoenix and features progressive groups and events in support of environmental and conservation initiatives. The author, David Schaller, was very complimentary of our group, our accomplishments, and many contributions. Photographs were included. It was a very nice surprise and much appreciated. To find the article, click on this web address and then select the November 2017 issue: <https://issuu.com/greenlivingaz>
- One of our in-house artist's paintings was featured in the "Western Aspen Alliances" *Tremblings* November 2017 newsletter. Bob Dyer's aspen oil painting from FR 794 was selected and a photo printed in the article. Below is a very small version of the painting:



Our Facebook Page has Current News and Photos

Bruce Belman, FoNAF's Facebook Captain, maintains our page with new photos and commentary about events. His updates fill in the gaps between newsletters, providing photos from outings and other recent events. Here's two ways to check us out on Facebook:

- To get a Facebook account, the process is simple. On your browser search for “Facebook.com” and it will walk you through the start up steps and then you can search for “Friends of Northern Arizona Forests” and there we are. Save our site as a favorite and it’s always available.
- You do not need a Facebook account to view Facebook pages. So click on or copy the following link into your browser and it should appear:
www.facebook.com/FriendsofNAZForests

About “Friends of Northern Arizona Forests”

Mission Statement:

Friends of Northern Arizona Forests is dedicated to assisting the United States Forest Service in maintaining, protecting, and restoring the natural and cultural resources and the scenic beauty of our forest lands for the enjoyment and use of present and future generations. We are a solution-oriented volunteer group that works in partnership with the Forest Service to assist the Service in tasks it does not have the staff or the funds to accomplish on its own. In addition, we seek to connect the community and the Forest Service to the benefit of both parties and of the forest itself.

FoNAF Board of Directors

Tom Mackin, President	Ed Clark	Curt Knight
Bruce Belman, Vice President	Tony DeCou	Marty Lee
Bob Dyer, Secretary	Jim Hoyne	Jim McGeorge
Dave Downes, Treasurer	Bill Kluwin	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/>