



FRIENDS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA FORESTS

NEWSLETTER

November 2017

2,140 Volunteer Hours by the Aspen Team

We now have 20 FoNAF volunteers serving on the Aspen Team and on most of our outings we can count on 8 to 12 of them coming out. All told, the team generated 2140 hours of labor in support of the mission of the Forest Service. During this past season we have undertaken two new types of projects.



- We built a new “trick tank” – a weird name for a system built to capture rain and snow melt to provide water for wildlife.
- We removed several miles of old fencing that was no longer serving any purpose but was a danger to wildlife – one area was at Leroux Springs and the other was an old pine plantation off FR193 at the base of Kendrick Mountain.

We began the year by building a new aspen exclosure at Archies Tank (west of Mormon Mountain) and we are already seeing lots of new aspen shoots inside the fence that are protected from browsing by elk, deer and cattle. We began clearing a two-acre site at Sheep Spring and even set some 60 t-posts in preparation for the construction of a new exclosure that will be completed next spring.

In addition we:

- Removed more than a mile of sheep fence, replacing it with a strand of smooth wire, on various pasture fences to allow pronghorn to safely pass under them,
- Dismantled most of a large (>20 acres) exclosure that had outlived its usefulness and replaced it with a new fence to protect a healthy aspen grove,
- Repaired more than 20 aspen and riparian exclosures and log-worm fences on both the Flagstaff and Mogollon Ranger Districts,
- Monitored some 72 fences on the FRD and another ten on the MRD.

The team will soon begin its winter hibernation but we will come back in April to check our fences for any damage and then begin the repair and new construction process all over again.

Dave Downes
Aspen Team Coordinator
dhdowens@gmail.com

Pronghorn Migration Improves with Modified Fences

Beginning in the summer of 2012, Arizona Game and Fish and the Arizona Antelope Foundation began a project to address pronghorn unfriendly fences throughout the open range north of I-40. Specifically, the major factors are “habitat fragmentation and genetic isolation.”

Pronghorn in Arizona do not jump fences but will go under the fence if there is enough space and there is no risk of injury. Therefore, a pronghorn “unfriendly fence” has barbed wire as the lowest strand and is less than eighteen inches above ground. Another fence-barrier occurs when the right-of-way fence along highways is very close to the road.

Moving Cattle Fences

A group of partner organizations including Coconino and Kaibab National Forests, Babbitt Ranches, National Park Service, National Forest Foundation, ADOT and NAU and began to adapt fences in an area to the north and east of Kendrick Mountain. FoNAF has become a partner in this effort in the past several years, first assisting with moving the right-of-way fence away from the pavement along Highway 180 in Kendrick Park.

Replacing Barbed Wire with Smooth Wire

At the request of Cary Thompson, Wildlife Biologist for the Flagstaff RD, the Aspen Team has spent many hours north of the peaks modifying cattle fencing to make it pronghorn friendly. Existing cattle fences have four barbed wires, and since pronghorn go under fences the lowest wire is dangerous for them and a deterrent for herd movement. By removing that bottom wire and replacing it with a smooth wire the problem is resolved.



Since that first workday in June of 2013 our team of fence-fanatics has spent numerous work days in modifying range fencing to become pronghorn friendly. In 2017 alone, we removed the lower barbed wire strand and replaced it with smooth wire on approximately four miles of fence. It's hard work demanding lots of walking, bending over and avoiding barb-cuts, cow patties and cactus spines. The benefit to the pronghorn herds north of I-40 has proved the effort worthy since Arizona Game and Fish data now shows animal movement across Highway 180 and through areas formerly inaccessible.

951 Hours from FoNAF Volunteers for PSAR This Year

In mid-May 20 volunteers began delivering on our mission of increasing visitor and hiker safety through awareness and improving the "experience" by providing information on the Kachina Peaks Wilderness Area. By the end of the season, FoNAF volunteers spent 951 hours at the Humphrey's Trail Head providing hikers with "know before you go" information.

A special thank you goes out to FoNAF's PSAR Coordinator Bill Waters for his dedication, expertise, and most of all the endless hours spent on the peak during the summer. Brian Poturalski, Recreation Staff Officer for the Flagstaff Ranger District in 2015, founded PSAR on the Kachina Peaks, and Dr. Marty Lee, NAU Forestry professor and a FoNAF member facilitated the development of hiking guidelines and safety materials by NAU students.

PSAR's focus on "Education, Engagement and Safety" has made for a better experience for the more than 10,000 visitors who visit or hike the trail each summer.

Riparian protection required geographical expansion

Protecting riparian (wetland) fields and meadows from over grazing has become a significant part of our Aspen Team's projects. Over the past season a total of 172 hours was spent repairing fences designed to protect such areas, many of which are beyond the immediate geographical areas of Flagstaff:

- Fence at Hoxworth Spring (Flagstaff Ranger District)
- Two exclosures at Merritt Draw (Mogollon Rim District)
- Exclosures at Buck Spring & McClintock Draw (MRD)
- Fence at Babbitt Spring (Flagstaff RD)

Working on riparian areas was integrated with maintaining, checking and repairing aspen exclosures and rebuilding pasture fences to make them pronghorn friendly, mostly all near Flagstaff.



New Season for Issuing “Back Country Permits”

Winter and snow is almost here and FoNAF will again be issuing “Kachina Peaks Wilderness Access Permits,” also known as “Back Country Permits” at the Snowbowl every weekend from the first snow fall (natural or man-made) until it melts next spring. Volunteers sit in the bar (without a libation) at the Agassiz Lodge while issuing permits.



While the same permit is available weekdays from both the Peaks Ranger District and the Supervisor’s office in winter, FoNAF provides an opportunity for recreationists to obtain a permit on weekends at Snowbowl. Our commitment is to staff a table at Agassiz Lodge with two volunteers from 9am to 11:30am both Saturday and Sunday.

A Little Background

Kachina Peaks Wilderness Access Permit has been supported by FoNAF for five years and the opportunity exists for us to do so again this winter. Our encounters with the public are informational and designed to promote safety awareness.

In winter months access to the Kachina Peaks Wilderness by snowshoes, cross-country skis, snowboards, downhill skis and even by foot requires a permit. The permit is free and is designed to help inform snow recreationists that wish to travel outside the boundaries of the Arizona Snowbowl and Snowbowl Road about travel hazards such as avalanches, hypothermia and the fact that there is no routine safety patrol.

Purpose of Permit

Typically, in the process of issuing a permit the opportunity exists to review the hazard warnings thereupon. This can be and often is sufficient to make the permittee reflect, if only briefly, about the risks involved. Our hope is that this moment may be exactly what is needed to introduce the element of caution that might save a person’s life.

Volunteering is Simple

No specific training is required, only a desire to engage the public in a friendly and outgoing manner. We would love to have as many volunteers as possible this year. An email will be circulated soon with details about how to sign up for this activity.

If you have any questions please call or text Bruce Belman, BC Permit Coordinator at 928-856-8969 or email at svaileen@hotmail.com. See ya’ on the mountain!

And the Rest of the Story about.....

Mark Nabel



Silviculturist Coconino National Forest

“Go west young man” is a quote often spoken to inspire adventure and rewards. Mark Nabel took it to heart and is a living example of that advice, and FoNAF’s Aspen Team is especially glad he did. While growing up his family’s goal was to visit all 50 states on vacations, and that’s when he discovered Flagstaff and knew he wanted to make it his home one day.

His roots in Flagstaff actually started at NAU as a freshman. Even though his mother took him to five universities, he knew he wanted NAU for its forestry school and being in Flagstaff. He’s had “zero regrets” for his choice, even now, or maybe especially now because not only did he get a degree he found his wife Cassandra. They have two children, 8 and 5 years old, and Cassandra has a growing cake decorating business, Flagstaff Cake Company. FoNAF members can attest to how wonderful her amazing cakes are.

Between being a very active dad and a dedicated steward of the forest, Mark is also an accomplished marathon runner. Continuing the “50 state” family tradition, Mark has a personal goal of running a marathon in each of the 50 states. It’s still early but he’s well on his way with 9 so far. And by the way, Mark is also an avid backpacker, camper, and local team sports participant. Time for sleep is not on Mark’s agenda.

As a forestry professional in today’s world of budget cutting, Mark becomes frustrated with trying to secure the funds for all the work that needs to be done. Big money programs like 4FRI suck up all the air in the room making it extremely difficult to find resources for the smaller, equally important projects. He is staying focused on making the case FoNAF type projects because he understands their importance.

Mark’s involvement with FoNAF and the Aspen Team has been particularly rewarding and keeps his spirits high. He especially appreciates the contributions, friendships, and dedication of FoNAF in addressing the needs of the local forests and particularly aspen preservation.

Mark received a BS in Forestry from NAU (2002) and an MS from Oregon State University (2007).

Annual Meeting and Board Member/Officer Elections

On October 11, 2017, FoNAF held its Annual Meeting and first Board Meeting of the new fiscal year. Below are highlights of the presentations and discussion.

State of the Organization:

President Tom Mackin provided an overview of FoNAF's accomplishments over the last year and our continuing efforts to move toward more diversification in geographical and project interests beyond fences in the immediate Flagstaff forests.

He acknowledged the following focus areas:

- assisting with pronghorn fence modifications,
- building log worm fences,
- protecting sensitive riparian meadows,
- re-building wildlife water catchment (trick tank) north of the peaks,
- removing old wire fencing that is dangerous for wildlife and humans,
- PSAR continuing to provide hiking guidance at the Humphrey's TH,
- Back Country Permits having its second highest number issued.

Dave Downes announced that FoNAF contributed over 4200 volunteer hours this year to a variety of events and projects. He also explained that the dollar value for each hour is estimated at \$21 by the Forest Service, which represents a significant savings for the Forest Service in payroll expenses.

It was noted that approximately **50%** of the FoNAF membership are active volunteers in our projects and community service activities. The consensus was that this is a very high percentage for a volunteer organization such as FoNAF.

Tom said it was another productive year for FoNAF and he is proud of our many contributions. He is very pleased with the renewed support of the Forest Service through the efforts of Mark Nabel and Paul Dawson, the Arizona Elk Society, Arizona Game and Fish, Arizona Antelope Foundation, CCSO-SAR and the Snowbowl.

Treasury and Membership Reports:

Dave Downes, FoNAF Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's report, indicating FoNAF has a cash balance of \$13,073.33 as of September 30, 2017. Other than the general fund, Dave provided an overview of the three funds he's set up to keep track of allocations.

As Membership Coordinator, Dave also provided the status of the current memberships at 43. As of 1/1/17 we had 40, 4 new members were added, but one death brings the total to 43.

Bylaw Changes:

With many changes going on within the FoNAF organization and some departures from its original context, Tom realized it was a good time to review the bylaws and make any changes to bring them more in line with current mission and complexion of the group.

With little discussion and overall satisfaction expressed by several board members, the board voted unanimously to approve the bylaws as recommended.

Officer and Board Member Election Results:

Tom asked for a vote on the slate of officers as recommended by the executive committee; all were approved by a unanimous vote as shown below:

- Tom Mackin, President
- Bruce Belman, Vice President
- Bob Dyer, Secretary
- David Downes, Treasurer

Three board nominees were unanimously approved: Jim Hoyne, Jim McGeorge, and Dave Downes.



Our Facebook Page has Current News and Photos

Bruce Belman, FoNAF's Facebook Captain, diligently maintains our Facebook page with new photos and commentary about events. His updates fill in the gaps between Newsletters, providing photos from outings and other recent events.

To get a Facebook account (if you don't have one), the process is simple. On your browser search for "Facebook.com" and it will walk you through the start up steps, only a couple, 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.

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/>

Update on Ralph Baierlein: “So we're in good shape”

As most know, Ralph Baierlein recently relocated to Santa Rosa, California. Not long after moving a series of wildfires devastated the area in and around Santa Rosa. He and his wife Jean evacuated their home but returned October 20 to find everything untouched and as they had left it. We are all glad for this good news.