

FRIENDS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA FORESTS

NEWSLETTER

November 2021

FoNAF Recognized by Arizona Game and Fish Commission



Award ceremony in Williams (L to R): Dave Downes; Bob Dyer; Larry Phoenix, AZGFD Region 2 Supervisor; Tom Mackin; and Leland "Bill" Brake, Commission Chairman, AZGFD

“Commission Commendation of Achievement”

On Friday August 6th, at the Grand Canyon Railroad Hotel in Williams, the 5 member Arizona Game and Fish Commission presented this prestigious award to the Friends of Northern Arizona Forests.

The commendation is given annually to an organization or individual demonstrating dedicated service to protecting and enriching wildlife in Arizona. The text of the award acknowledges the high standard of service Arizona Game and Fish Department seeks to recognize.

The Friends of Northern Arizona Forests is a diverse group of volunteers from all age groups, walks of life, and backgrounds; each member bringing unique skills and abilities, yet all share the love of being outdoors and protecting and enhancing our forests. They are dedicated to assisting natural resource management agencies (like the Arizona Game and Fish Department) in maintaining, protecting, and restoring the natural and cultural resources and the scenic beauty of forest lands for the enjoyment and use of present and future generations.

As an example of their commitment to wildlife conservation, the Friends of Northern Arizona Forests completed over 4,000 hours of volunteer work over the last year.

For the continued partnership, stewardship, and commitment to wildlife conservation, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission is honored to present this Commendation of Achievement to the Friends of Northern Arizona Forests.



Heritage Fund Grants Program

For more than 20 years the Heritage Fund has made a difference not just to wildlife conservation efforts but also to the state's economy, public access, environmental education and outdoor recreation. The fund provides up to \$10 million each year from Arizona lottery proceeds to the Arizona Game and Fish Department for the conservation and protection of the state's wildlife and natural areas.

Working with the Forest Service in late 2019 FoNAF submitted a grant proposal to purchase pressure treated logs to build three log worm fences on the Coconino National Forest. These three fences were designed to protect two wetland areas and the third will assist in preserving a wildlife corridor in an area heavily used by Off Highway Vehicles (OHV's).

FoNAF was successful in securing one of these grants, the logs were ordered and construction commenced in late 2020. Near the end of the 2021 work season all three projects had been completed. Descriptions of these projects are below:

Cinder Hills

Our next project was to limit unauthorized OHV travel in an important wildlife corridor adjacent to the Cinder Hills OHV area. Over the course of several workdays and with the frequent assistance of local residents, FoNAF constructed over 6500' of new fencing.





More photos from Cinder Hills



Oak Creek Canyon Overlook

The final project was at VA tank east of Oak Creek Canyon in an area with very heavy visitor impacts during the spring through fall. At this site another 1100' of fencing was constructed, supplemented by several Forest Service No Camping signs.



Lower Lake Mary

The first area for protection was adjacent to Prime Lake, an ephemeral wetland on Anderson Mesa overlooking Lower Lake Mary. At this location we removed old fencing and other debris and constructed over 800' of new log worm fencing.



For further information on the Heritage Grant Program, visit <https://www.azgfd.com/Wildlife/HeritageFund/Program/>.

State of the Organization 2021

By Tom Mackin, President

Another outstanding year for FoNAF and the Aspen Team in spite of ongoing precautions resulting from the pandemic. Maintaining a project schedule of two outings per week allowed for another record year of volunteer hours and projects completed. I'm very pleased with our accomplishments, member enthusiasm, and our working relationship with the Forest Service. Below is the report I presented to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting on October 20, 2021:



It's been another outstanding year for our group on many fronts. For the second year we efficiently and safely navigated around the Covid pandemic, with most members getting their vaccinations early and maintaining a common-sense approach to interpersonal activities. We continued our support of the Forest Service with twice weekly outings throughout the work season, often teaming up with Forest Service staff, especially the Recreation and Wildlife folks. We weathered a short complete Forest closure and then worked around a good Monsoon season with very few project dates getting cancelled.

Our accomplishments were many and varied, just as we like them, with a major emphasis this year on resource protection through the construction of over 8,000 linear feet of log worm fences on the district, with thanks in part to a \$16,000 Heritage Fund Grant from the AZGFD. In addition, we completed construction on two additional aspen exclosures as well as monitoring and maintenance of over 70 existing exclosures mainly here on the Coconino NF but also several on the Kaibab NF. While many of our efforts occurred on the FRD, we did have 3 team visits to the MRRD and continued our maintenance on several important exclosures on that District.

Never a group to leave old fencing on the ground, we again cleaned up and recycled over approximately 12 tons of abandoned wire and T-posts. We also improved several miles of fencing, enhancing wildlife access and reducing the chances of injury or worse not only for wildlife but for livestock as well. Speaking about wildlife, partnering with the AZGFD, Mule Deer Foundation and the AZSFWC license plate fund we rebuilt two Forest Service trick tanks, providing a more dependable source of water in these two locations. Our impacts on wildlife provided the impetus for the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to recognize us

with a Commission Commendation of Achievement award at their August Commission meeting.

In summary with over 4600* total organization hours this year, a 10% increase over last year's record-breaking numbers, it was easy to classify our efforts as both efficient and effective. Our organization is alive and well, active on many different tasks and our reputation and accomplishments are recognized not only locally but on a statewide basis as well.

Aspen Team Continues to Focus on Removing Old Fencing

by Dave Downes

In early 2020, the Aspen Team decided to focus on removing old fencing from the forest in order to practice recommended social distancing as well as to improve the habitat for wildlife. Before the 2020 work season ended, we had removed more than ten tons of scrap metal. Early this season we decided to continue with this effort realizing that these old pasture fences were not only a hazard to wildlife but, in many cases, a blemish on the landscape.

Our 2021 efforts have met even more success, with the team spending more than 900 hours removing old fencing, loading it into trucks and hauling over fourteen tons of scrap to the recycler.

Power winder used to reel in old barbed wire



Our work sites have varied from areas north of the San Francisco Peaks (along Forest Roads 418 and 420) to both sides of Lower Lake Mary to Schoolhouse Draw (east of Mountainaire off I-17).

The Aspen Team is aware of the many miles of old, unneeded and dangerous fencing remaining on the Coconino National Forest and we look forward to helping with its removal in future years.



This photo illustrates why removing old fencing is so important. Two bucks are tangled in barbed wire and will ultimately die there unless human intervention is present. In most situations that intervention never comes, making preventative actions essential.

Board Member Election and Officer Appointments

Our combined Annual Meeting immediately followed by a Board of Directors meeting occurred on October 20, 2021.

Annual Meeting

Bob Dyer, Secretary, reported 25 FoNAF members voted (approximately 50% of membership) and all voted in favor of the slate of nominees put forward by the Nominating Committee. There were no write-in votes.

The newly and re-elected board members for three years are:

- Tom Barberic (new)
- Curt Knight
- Barry Brenneman (new)
- Tom Mackin
- Bob Dyer
- Doug Shepard (new)

Two openings were created due to the resignation of Tony DeCou and Bill Waters.

Board Meeting

Tom announced that Bruce Belman did not want to continue as vice president. Bruce was presented with a FoNAF coffee cup and thanked by Tom for his service as VP and contributions on the Executive Committee.

To fill the VP vacancy the Executive Committee selected Bob Dyer, current FoNAF Secretary, as the candidate to replace Bruce. The slate of officers presented to the board for next year's term are:

- Tom Mackin, President
- Bob Dyer, Vice President
- Dave Downes, Treasurer and Membership Chairman

The board gave unanimous approval for the slate of officers as presented. A replacement for the Secretary position will be addressed during the winter break.

MORE TO KNOW ABOUT.....

Dave Downes



Dave with his buddy Kata

The newsletter often features a person from FoNAF or the Forest Service we work with or hears about frequently due to his/her sustained contributions or position. Dave Downes is the definition of a fixture in our organization, but many don't know his background, family, or motivation for contributing so much.

Some background information on Dave:

- Dave grew up in Salisbury, MD and attended Johns Hopkins University majoring in industrial engineering and earning a commission as a second lieutenant in the Army through ROTC.

- He spent almost five years in active service, three and a half in Germany and a final year as an advisor in Vietnam.
- Leaving the military in 1967, Dave completed an MBA at Dartmouth and deciding he liked being a student and immediately began a PhD program in economics at Cornell University, graduating in 1975.
- His first academic job was at the University of California, Berkeley, where he spent the next 30 years, the last ten serving as the director of the MBA Program.
- Having had enough of the Bay Area, Dave and Jane moved to Flagstaff in 2004, mostly to be closer, but not too close, to Jane's mother who had retired to Sun City West.

From Dave:

Here's a brief look into his story with some answers to those questions, in his words:

"My involvement with the Forest Service began in 2008 when my wife, Jane, insisted I get out of the house more. Early on, I helped clean the Fernow cabin each week and did some trail work when the Volunteer Coordinator informed me of an upcoming meeting to organize a volunteer support organization.

I was unable to make that meeting but made the next one where Ralph Baierlein, the primary driver of the effort, was delighted to learn that I had a background in accounting and asked if I would serve as treasurer. I reluctantly agreed as I had no idea what would be involved.

Shortly thereafter, the Membership Coordinator announced her departure from Flagstaff, so I agreed to add that task since it involved a lot of coordination anyway. And then her husband, who was organizing a few of us to rebuild some old aspen exclosures asked me if I would continue with these efforts after his departure. Once again, I said yes not knowing what this would eventually lead to. The conclusion: it's all Jane's fault.

Working with FoNAF and the Aspen Team has been the highlight of my time in Flagstaff. My two daughters from my first marriage, which ended with the death of my wife in 1980, do not live near (Belarus and California) so my time with them and my two grandsons in Belarus is limited to infrequent visits and lots of Skyping and FaceTime.

This gives me more time to spend in the forest and I cannot imagine a better group of people to share it with than the members of the Aspen Team.

Twelve years ago, I had no idea what a “come-a-long” or a “post pounder” or a “cowboy” or any number of tools were. Now at least I have learned what they are and soon I may even learn how to use them. The team members have been very patient teachers and I always enjoy our outings and conversations. I even get some pleasure from maintaining the organization’s books (yes, I am a nerd).

I am greatly pleased with the organization’s growth and accomplishments over its first twelve years and look forward to even more in the future.”



Tom Mackin adds a personal note about Dave:

Dave has been an outstanding contributor to all things FoNAF since he first joined and that legacy continues today. Just a small example of the contributions that Dave has provided, when Dave had to step back from his role as project Coordinator in late 2020, it took a huge effort by 6, that's right, 6 other FoNAF "Coordinators" to cover some of the tasks Dave handled all by himself for many years. Dave is truly a cornerstone of this organization and we're very fortunate to have him as a very active member.

FoNAF Board of Directors

Tom Mackin, President	Ed Clark	Curt Knight
Bob Dyer, Vice President	Jim McGeorge	Barry Brenneman
Secretary (TBD)	Jim Hoyne	Doug Shepard
Dave Downes, Treasurer	Bill Kluwin	Tom Barberic
	Bruce Belman	

Coconino National Forest information:

District Rangers: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/coconino/about-forest/offices>

Website address: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/coconino/>



Lunch at Landfill Road project