

FoNAF News

Friends of Northern Arizona Forests



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Ralph Baierlein, President

Our 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.

The President's Perspective

In your imagination, return to April 2009. The Forest Service had invited fifteen volunteers to a meeting at the Peaks Ranger Station. The purpose? To ask them to form an organization similar to Sedona's Friends of the Forest. Five volunteers showed up. A bleak start.

Yet, by August 2009, Friends of Northern Arizona Forests (FoNAF) had been incorporated under Arizona law and had received tax-exempt status from the IRS. We had adopted bylaws and elected officers. We were in the field: staffing the Woody Mountain fire lookout tower.

In November 2009, we ran our first public workday to protect young aspen by repairing "exclosures:" fences seven feet high that exclude elk, deer, and livestock from stands of young aspen.

The winter of 2009-10 saw us issuing backcountry permits at Snowbowl. FoNAF coordinated the effort and provided most of the volunteers—and we did the same during this past winter.

In April 2010, a year after the first meeting, FoNAF received its first grant, \$1000 in matching funds, for the Greater Hart Prairie Aspen Protection Project. We completed that project by November 2010 and, with other volunteers from the public, went on to work on exclosures elsewhere, repairing and raising *six miles* of exclosure fences. The value to the Forest Service can be estimated at \$35,000.

In January 2011, FoNAF received its second grant. The Arboretum at Flagstaff joined us in a ten-year project to propagate aspen clones that can flourish *without* the protection of fences. All of us can be proud of what FoNAF has accomplished in just two years.

What lies ahead? You can expect FoNAF to coordinate the volunteer effort to replant the Schultz burn. Moreover, FoNAF is coordinating a Trail Ambassador program to greet, assist, and educate the public on trails. Look to our website for more about these projects.

Ralph Baierlein

P.S. One more achievement which falls on FoNAF's second birthday is the publication of this, the first issue of FoNAF News, a newsletter to keep members and the public informed of Flagstaff's Friends of Northern Arizona Forests' activities and plans.

-Mary Natali, Editor

Join us.....

Protecting Aspen

Northern Arizona, as well as much of the west, is losing its population of mature aspen to disease and insects. However, aspen clones are able to regenerate themselves with suckers that sprout from their extensive root systems. The challenge is to prevent browsing of the aspen saplings by elk, deer and livestock; this is done primarily by fencing in areas of aspen to keep out the browsers until the saplings reach maturity. There are more than 40 of these “exclosures” in the Flagstaff Ranger District and FoNAF has assumed responsibility for more than half of them. They extend from the northern part of Hart Prairie to well south of Mormon Lake. Our responsibility includes frequent checking of each exclosure and making all repairs needed to maintain their integrity. Here is where we can use some help.

Beginning in May, we have designated five Saturdays when we will assemble a group of volunteers to make major repairs to a specific exclosure. Typically this entails removing old fence clips, stretching and raising the fence, installing some new t-posts and wooden stays, and clipping the fence to the posts and stays. We begin at 8:30 and are usually done by 3 PM. **These are the dates, all Saturdays: May 14, July 30, September 24, October 22, and either November 5 or 12, weather permitting.**

In addition, on **June 25th** we are going to build a new exclosure in an area just west of Mormon Lake Lodge. This is our first effort at building a new one so we could use a lot of help. If you are interested, please contact me at downes@haas.berkeley.edu or 928-522-9207 and let me know which dates you can make.

*Dave Downes
Aspen Fence Project Coordinator*

Hiking the Trails

Beginning in April you may notice something a little different about Flagstaff Ranger District’s trail system: friendly volunteer patrols from FoNAF and other local outdoor groups fanning out on foot, on mountain bikes, on horses, and in motorized vehicles to cover the some 75 trails in the district. These volunteers, called Trail Ambassadors, aim to greet, assist and educate trail users as well as aid in the upkeep of the trails themselves by reporting current conditions and trail maintenance problems back to the Forest Service. And because lack of preparedness is an ongoing problem among general trail users, we expect the knowledge and advice provided by experienced Trail Ambassadors to be a welcome service to the public.

Prospective Trail Ambassadors will need to be members of FoNAF or be covered in some other way by a volunteer agreement with the Forest Service and will need to have attended a three-hour certification hike with a previously trained Ambassador. Depending on weather and trail conditions we expect to lead several certification hikes in the coming weeks for those who have not already attended a previous training session. For those interested in patrolling on horseback, mountain bike, or OHV, we will periodically be offering certification rides as well.

If you think you would like to participate in this exciting new volunteer opportunity, contact me at dlaplander@gmail.com.

*Dave Laplander
Coordinator of Trail Ambassadors*

Issuing Backcountry Permits

FoNAF offers an inviting volunteer opportunity for those who enjoy winter on the slopes. The Forest Service requires skiers and snowboarders who venture beyond the bounds of Snowbowl to obtain a backcountry permit which helps the FS keep track of who might be out of bounds. During the process of getting the permit, these adventurers are given information on equipment they might need and precautions they should observe related to weather and avalanche dangers in the backcountry. During the week the permits are obtainable free of charge in local FS offices, but weekends, 9:00 to 11:30, they are given out in Agassiz Lodge right at Snowbowl by a pair of volunteers. Once morning duty is over, volunteers may (but are not required to) assist on skis or snowshoes with patrol and other duties on the mountain. If you are interested in joining us on the mountain, contact me at mary_natali@hotmail.com

Mary Natali

Backcountry Permits Coordinator

Schultz Rebirth

A mere two months after the Schultz fire killed the large aspen boles in the background, the roots sent up this healthy youngster. Aspen are great survivors of fire—provided the saplings subsequently are protected from excessive animal browsing.



This sapling may be at one of the sites where the Forest Service will cut down the dead trees to make a tangle of fallen

logs. Why? To deter entrance by elk and deer which rely on flight for their safety and hence avoid areas where they cannot run. The Forest Service expects to “jackstraw” on 300 acres of former aspen stands below the Waterline Road.

In 2012, FoNAF will coordinate a volunteer effort to plant ponderosa pine seedlings along Schultz Pass Road (FR 420). Last year, the Forest Service gathered cones from pines growing in the appropriate elevation band elsewhere on the Peaks; the seedlings will be ready for us next March-April.

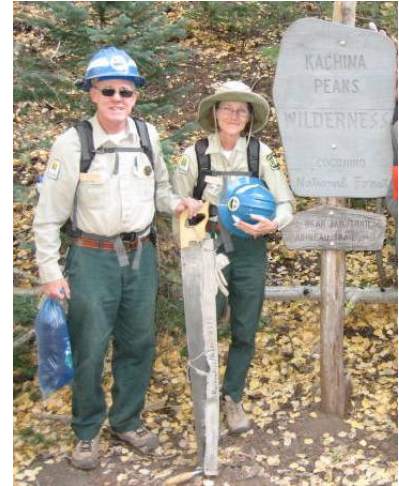
Meet Ace Volunteers - Jim and Pat McGeorge

Among the most dedicated Forest Service volunteers are Pat and Jim McGeorge. They put in one to four days a week helping with trail construction projects, collecting trailhead sign-in sheets, reporting on the condition of trails, and, with a crosscut saw, cutting trees that have fallen and removing them from the trails. If anyone doubts that trail work can be woman’s work, one look at petite Pat should dispel those misgivings.

In winter when the trails are covered with snow, Pat and Jim go up to Snowbowl to issue backcountry permits and to educate winter sports’ enthusiasts on preparation

and precautions to take when venturing out of bounds. Afterwards, they often patrol on snowshoes.

Their contribution is appreciated. Says Forest Service Trails & Wilderness Coordinator Sean Murphy, “Pat and Jim are the consummate volunteers. I can consistently count on their judgment and their strong backs. They have become a vital part of our recreation program.”



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**Coconino County Search & Rescue
recommends these 10 Essentials
for Backcountry Hiking:**

- 1. water**
- 2. food**
- 3. extra clothing**
- 4. map, compass, GPS**
- 5. headlamp/flashlight**
- 6. first aid kit**
- 7. shelter material/space blanket**
- 8. fire starting kit/matches**
- 9. pocket knife/multi-tool**
- 10. cell phone/whistle/signal mirror**

Justin Loxley is the Flagstaff Ranger District Volunteer Coordinator.

Friends of Northern Arizona Forests is a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

**It's easy to become a member ... check out our website at
<http://www.friendsofnazforests.org>**



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