

FRIENDS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA FORESTS



NEWSLETTER

July 2021

Let the Work Begin—Again!

The Aspen Team is 100% engaged in making 2021 a highly productive year in spite of the external forces working against them. Unforeseen events keep getting in their way. Early this spring the remnants of the pandemic restrictions put in place by the Forest Service were lifted allowing more flexibility for planning projects in a somewhat business-as-usual way.

Shortly thereafter the team was gaining full momentum and looking forward to a full work schedule and the completion of all our planned projects, and more. Not so fast all you dedicated volunteers. Another work break occurred when the Forest Service closed all the forests due to forest fires restrictions which closed all our work sites in early June.

On July 6 after much needed monsoon rains, the forests were reopened and the Aspen Team was back in the field with boots on the ground. After a brief time to re-assess potential projects, notify volunteers, secure trucks and obtain supplies, we were again fully operational.

Below are the projects completed through mid-July:

- Built new aspen exclosure across from the Nordic Center on Highway 180
- Modified range fence south of Mountaineer on Forest Road 235
- Removed old barbed wire fencing at:
 - ✓ Newman Hills in Kaibab NF
 - ✓ Shultz fire burn areas
 - ✓ White Horse Canyon
 - ✓ Lower Lake Mary
- New log worm fences:
 - ✓ Cinder Hills HOV (FR9143E)
 - ✓ VA Tank
 - ✓ Forest Road 237, Loop 3 near Oak Creek Canyon overlook
- Removed old wooden fence at Aspen Corner on Snowbowl Road
- Trick tank rebuild at Black Mountain



Aspen Corner after removal of old wooden fence

More photos of 2021 Projects So Far



Barbed Wire fence removal at Lower Lake Mary

Log worm fence construction at Cinder Hills



UTV Request Fulfilled

The last two FoNAF Newsletters unabashedly asked readers to help the Aspen Team acquire a UTV and trailer, preferably as a donation. Here's the last request:

“UTV Needing a Good Home” Request Results

Guess what? We still don't have one of those most desirable vehicles.

There may be a UTV sitting in a driveway needing a new home. Please keep us in mind should a possibility arise.

Surprisingly, a former silviculturist for the Coconino National Forest and a lady the Aspen Team worked very closely with made it possible for us to have most favored access to a UTV. Her name is Patty Ringle and she currently works for the Tonto National Forest in Payson.

Patty gets the newsletters and read about our search for a UTV. Her knowledge of equipment assigned to Tonto NF brought to mind a UTV/trailer combination not being used there. She made contact with her colleagues thinking a transfer to Coconino NF may be possible. It was and the deal was made. Thanks to her coordinating the paperwork and obtaining the necessary approvals, we now have priority access to a UTV here in Flagstaff. It is available to other Forest Service agencies and personnel for other purposes.

Clearly FoNAF, and in particular the Aspen Team, are very grateful to Patty for thinking of us and for facilitating the reassignment of the UTV. We very much appreciate having quick access to this very useful vehicle.

Below are photos of Tom Mackin and Bob Dyer's trip to Payson to pick up the UTV. Two photos are of its first Aspen Team outing at Lower Lake Mary used to carry retrieved barbed wire from the lake to the dump truck, a very undesirable task now made easy with the UTV.

UTV with Patty Ringle, Tom Mackin, and First Outing at LLM



Watering Young Aspen Seedlings

Mark Nabel, Silviculturist for Coconino National Forest, frequently asks members of the Aspen Team to water 300 newly planted aspen seedlings along Highway 180 in two exclosures. These exclosures are at section of the highway communally called aspen curve and were identified by Mark for restoration after significant die off of mature aspens.

Naturally the team has fulfilled Mark's requests. In addition to our volunteers Mark has provided help from Forest Service seasonal employees. Here's Mark's request from October 2020 that helps to clarify the importance of this task and the analysis required to assure the health of the young saplings:

“First off, a big thanks to you and the aspen team for what by my count is the 10th watering of our aspen seedlings since they were planted almost exactly one year ago. This is clearly not quite what we envisioned when we planted them, but there’s no doubt in my mind that the vast majority of these seedlings would be dead if not for all of these waterings...including the ones during and after our non-soon.

I’m optimistic (as always) that we’ll get some moisture over the next 3 weeks and some seasonal temperatures by mid-November (i.e., cold), but in anticipation that it may stay warm and dry (current prediction through Nov. 5th is mostly highs in the 60s with very little moisture after this weekend’s storm), it may be a good idea to get one more watering on the schedule for mid-November. From what I’ve read, it’s best to have good moisture in the soil up until high temperatures are in the low 40s and lows are well below freezing (at which point the ground stays pretty frozen and the trees are good through the winter).”

This spring and early summer when dry conditions were unrelenting volunteers made two separate 500 gallon deliveries to the small trees. Each tree received 2 to 3 gallons per trip. Fortunately the rains came soon after and watering has been halted for now.



Tom, wake up!

Aspen Exclosures Steward Fulfill Essential Duties

Building new and repairing existing exclosure fences are the primary objectives for the Aspen Team each season. A secondary, yet very important role for individual team members is regularly checking on the condition of each exclosure.

To provide consistent monitoring of the aspen and riparian exclosures each site is assigned to a steward – a FoNAF member who has volunteered for this duty. He or she visits their assigned exclosures(s) at least two times a year – early spring after the snows have melted and late fall before the snows arrive. If a steward observes minor damage, he or she may make the needed repairs immediately. After their site visits a written report is prepared and sent in to the Fence Coordinator.

In the case of more severe damage, such as when a tree has fallen on the fence, the steward will immediately report the problem to the Fence Coordinator for resolution. If the damage is deemed to compromise the integrity of the exclosure then a “strike team” of volunteers is formed and immediately sent to the site for repairs.

The photos below show the damage a large “snag” can create when it falls across an exclosure fence. Once the tree is removed the fence is then rebuilt to its original standards.





Sawyer Certified Tom Mackin vs. Snag

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for mid-October. As usual a FoNAF Board Meeting will immediately follow the Annual Meeting. An election of continuing and new board members will be held just prior to the meeting. Assuming Covid-19 restrictions will remain lifted, the meetings will be at the Flagstaff Ranger Station.

FoNAF Board of Directors

Tom Mackin, President
Bruce Belman, Vice President
Bob Dyer, Secretary
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Coconino National Forest information:

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