FRIENDS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA FORESTS

NEWSLETTER

June 2019

Power T-Post Pounder Welcomed!

Who could have imagined a power tool could be designed to replace pounding T-posts with muscle power. The Aspen Team, our group of volunteers that do the fencing work, entered the 21st century this summer when we purchased a gas powered T-post pounder.

After borrowing a power pounder last year from Arizona Game and Fish to determine how useful one could be to the Aspen Team, the results indicated driving T-posts using a heavy metal pounder was surpassed in efficiency by roughly two posts to one, and in some areas maybe more.

Speed is not the only advantage since there's nothing worse than hitting a "surprise" rock that sends vibrations throughout the arms, shoulders, and back of the person at the top of the ladder pounding away. The new power pounder eliminates that unhappy surprise as well as

improving the fence building process.

The FoNAF membership extends our sincere appreciation and thank you to Bill and Liz Rahr for purchasing the new pounder for the Aspen Team. It arrived in May and has already been in action at two new fence exclosure builds.

Power T-Post Pounder's Case with Plaque

PSAR 2019 at Humphreys Trailhead

With the abundant snowfall this winter season, spring-time hiking on the Humphreys Trail has been a challenge for all but the most prepared climber. Conditions in early June consist of mud, slush and ice from about mile 2.3 to mile 3.8 (the saddle). Crampons or spikes and hiking poles are almost a mandatory set of accessories and the unprepared are suffering.

FoNAF volunteers in conjunction with US Forest Service volunteers Jim and Cheryl Webster are attempting to mitigate potential disasters by informing peak-bagger wanna-bes of these conditions on weekend days.

Typically we provide two volunteers at the trailhead kiosk. There is a weather information board, information brochures and maps available and as hikers pass we discuss with them what they might expect. Sometimes they

make better choices if they are not well prepared. A third volunteer hikes the trail and provides information and assistance as needed along the way.

Photo courtesy of Jimmy Webster

As the summer progresses and the number of hikers increases, the need for good information about trail conditions and weather, especially regarding lightning, will multiply.

Our volunteers are an integral part of this effort on the part of the Forest Service to promote hiker safety on the trail to the highest peak in Arizona. It's a great way to spend a weekend morning if you enjoy talking with forest visitors.

We can always use more help. Contact Bruce Belman (bwb1443@gmail.com) if you would like to be a part of this important program.

FoNAF Assisting with Brolliar Park Cabin Restoration (Part 1)

Below is an overview of the Brolliar Cabin restoration project provided to us by Jeremy Haines, District Archaeologist for the Flagstaff Ranger District. Since FoNAF will have ongoing participation over the summer, this is the first in a series of articles describing the progress. Our volunteers have already assisted with transporting logs, clearing fencing, and removing debris.

The Flagstaff Ranger District, in partnership with HistoriCorps, is performing critically needed preservation work on Brolliar Park Cabin, a historic homestead cabin – the last standing homestead on the Flagstaff RD.

The cabin was built around 1911 by early Flagstaff pioneer Dave Brolliar – who received his homestead patent in 1920, courtesy of President Woodrow Wilson. The CNF acquired the homestead in 1975, but has performed no maintenance since that time. As a result of human and environmental forces, the cabin has been at risk of collapse unless stabilizing preservation work was soon performed.

Preservation work includes replacing structurally failed/failing logs, filling wood voids, replacing buried sills over a stone foundation, and roof installation. All proposed work was developed in consultation with the Arizona SHPO. A 3D

photogrammetry scan of this building prior to initiating work is available at***sketchfab.com*** – search Brolliar Cabin.

The long term goal of stabilizing the cabin is for visitation and interpretation to the public – and saving a National Register eligible property (a big part of my mission on the forest). The cabin has for been under the watchful eyes of the Arizona Site Stewards program, and is visited regularly by the public.

We hope to add interpretive information about the cabin, Dave Brolliar, and of course the efforts involved in saving this cabin, which FoNAF has played a critical role. So far FoNAF has:

- Transported/delivered logs for the project
- Opened up fencing for delivery access
- Picked up and delivered roofing
- Loaded and transferred 2 dump truck loads of building debris
- Removed ~1/4-1/2 mile of fencing on the south side of Brolliar Park
- Helped HistoriCorps with the cabin project.

I sure appreciate all the work! I do not think the project would be a success without their help.

-Jeremy

Loading reclaimed logs at Lake Mary

Logs delivered at cabin

Research Exclosures at Mogollon Rim Added to Aspen Team's Scope

Since the 1980's the ***Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit*** of the University of Montana has conducted ecological research on the Mogollon Rim. As part of this endeavor, the university built three, 22-acre exclosures. The research project has now concluded and the Forest Service wishes to maintain the exclosures in good repair. FoNAF has agreed to monitor and help maintain them as part of our Mogollon Rim responsibilities.

Background Story

During the 1990's the university researchers noted a decline in bird population and in native plants and trees. This decline occurred during a period of warmer and drier weather on the Mogollon Rim. The warmer weather and the decreased snowfall permitted browsing animals to remain longer in the high country, thereby lessening the winter recovery time for flowers, shrubs, and trees.

In order to better assess the health of this high country riparian ecosystem three study plots were built by the university in fall 2004. The study plots have 8' fences around the perimeters. Each exclosure is built on a ridge surrounding a canyon and each plot drains from the ridge down the canyon.

Study Findings

The results of building the exclosures were dramatic for plants, trees, and birds. Before the study plots were built there had been little aspen regeneration for the last 35 years. Within six years after building the exclosures some new aspen growth reached a height of 18 feet. Canyon maple within the exclosures demonstrated a similar, positive response. During this time period, the number of browsing animals on the Mogollon Rim actually decreased; so the University researchers determined that the lack of moisture and limited plant recovery time was having a significant, adverse affect on tree and plant health.

Birds within the exclosures also were positively impacted. The forest understory of woody plants quickly recovered creating more cover for nesting birds. The plant understory resulted in a greater population of bird predators, such as red squirrels, grey-necked chipmunks and mice, but the nesting populations of birds increased due to better forest density. This density also made it more difficult for a Cooper's Hawk to hunt its small bird prey.

Looking Forward

The maintenance of the three exclosures will allow these study plots to continue to serve as a barometer of the overall health of the Mogollon Rim's flora and fauna. The exclosures will also be available for future research and study. The maintenance of the exclosures is also consistent with FoNAF's work on the Mogollon Rim with respect to Bebb Willow protection, spring improvement, and meadow restoration.

Note: This article was written by Bill Kluwin, board member and avid nature expert. He has spent many hours seeking information about these three exclosures and we appreciate his contributions to this effort and for the excellent summary.

FoNAF Participating in Flagstaff Trails Initiative

The Flagstaff Trails Initiative (FTI) is a collaborative community building project that's looking to take Flagstaff's trails from good to extraordinary. As a planning group the efforts to date include an ongoing inventory of area trails, an education and outreach effort and integration of the steps to form an organization to sustain the program into the future.

FoNAF is one of the organizations participating in FTI planning with representation in the education and outreach subgroup. Our goal here is to assist in the production of effective public information regarding the experiences to be found on Flagstaff trails.

To date we have produced a set of radio spots promoting Flagstaff area hikes that is on Yavapai Radio, developed to the concept level a set of foldable pocket maps promoting different types of trail experiences and will soon have considerable presence in social media such as Facebook.

If you would like more information on FTI you might visit their website at flagstafftrailsinitiative.org or contact Bruce Belman at bwb1443@gmail.com Bruce is FoNAF's representative on FTI.

Photos of Recent Exclosure Builds

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Coconino National Forest information:

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