

# FRIENDS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA FORESTS



## NEWSLETTER

May 2021

### A Full Calendar Ahead for the Aspen Team

The Aspen Team's work schedule for 2021 is bursting with new projects, many familiar construction opportunities, and the expansion of work sites into the Kaibab National Forest. 2020 turned out to be a huge year for the team while still honoring the modified Forest Service safety rules established in light of the pandemic. The team plans on embracing an even more aggressive schedule for 2021 and surpass the record number of hours and completed projects last year.

As customary in January Tom Mackin, FoNAF President, requested from Forest Service representatives in January their "wish list" of projects they'd like to have the Aspen Team address. With the uncertainty of the continued implications of pandemic restrictions in mind, project lists were compiled and the Aspen Team accepted all the requests.

In 2020 the Aspen Team focused on removal of old, non-functional fencing that better facilitated work environments for social distancing and masking. Other considerations were the limited availability of Forest Service trucks, supplies, and the restricted number of volunteers allowed at the project.

With the recent lifting of some of these guidelines by the Forest Service more diverse opportunities were made possible for 2021. Of course, the remaining rules and guidelines will be followed by FoNAF.

Below is a sampling of the projects for the Aspen Team as requested by Forest Service representatives:

- Two new aspen exclosures
- Remove old barbed wire fencing at:
  - Waterline Road
  - Shultz fire burn areas
  - White Horse Canyon
  - Lower Lake Mary
  - Landfill Road
- New log worm fences:
  - Aspen Corner at Snowbowl
  - Cinder Hills
  - VA Tank
  - Lockett Meadow
- Trick tank rebuild at Black Mountain (see article below)
- Modify barbed wire fencing to make wildlife friendly
- Mogollon Rim fence maintenance at two exclosures



# **Rebuilding Black Mountain Trick Tank**

By Tom Mackin

Originally built in 1980 by the Youth Conservation Corp, YCC, as a Forest Service wildlife water development, the Black Mountain Trick Tank had fallen into a state of disrepair and could no longer function as a dependable source of water in the arid black cinder terrain.

Black Mountain Trick Tank Before Reconstruction



Identified by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) Wildlife Manager for the 7E Game Management Unit, as an excellent location for a dependable water source, plans were soon discussed for a rebuild. Included in these discussions were the AZGFD, Forest Service Wildlife staff, the local chapter representative from the Mule Deer Foundation, a volunteer with the Coconino Sportsmen and representatives from the Friends of Northern Arizona Forests (FoNAF).

A grant application was submitted to the Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation, the recipients of funding from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Sportsmen's license plate program, and with an approximate 50% match in funds and In Kind labor, the grant was approved and materials ordered.



The first stage of the rebuild involved the removal of all of the old twisted corrugated metal, the reinforcement of the existing gutter, the cleaning out of the 3600 gallon existing water storage drinker vault and the construction of the under carriage frame for the new apron.

Over the next few days, FoNAF volunteers continued to stage new materials at the site and finalize plans for the completion.



(Black Mountain TT continued)

With 19 volunteers from the involved organizations and the AZGFD construction continued and by the end of the day, a completely rebuilt water development was ready for the first late spring rain and snow storm.



Photo by Bob Jacobs

The new 36'X48' apron will harvest approximately 1036 gallons of water from each inch of rain . In addition volunteers can supplement the rainfall if needed by hauling water to the site with 1,000 gallon water trailers. This project cost just over \$7855.00 in materials and supplies and over 350 man hours in volunteer labor.

FoNAF has been involved with these water development rebuilds for over 5 years now and the cooperation between the Forest Service, AZGFD and the various non-profit Wildlife Conservation organizations and FoNAF is a great way to ensure our local wildlife will always have a source of vital water.



## Forest Service Certifications Earned by Aspen Team Members

Keeping the Aspen Team functioning most efficiently without direct involvement from the Forest Service staff requires training, testing, and regular renewal of certifications to perform the most utilized and sometimes critical skills. Below are the certifications held by many Aspen Team members:

- Use chain saws includes the following tests:
  - Blood born pathogen
  - First aid and CPR
  - Chain saw safety
- Drive Forest Service trucks,
- Operate UTV and ATV's
- Pull and backup trailers
- Cross cut sawing

Safety is the highest priority for volunteers so the Forest Service provides in-depth training classes, written tests, field observations, and monitoring of each member's currency in these most useful skills and abilities.

When the team is planning a project the lead coordinators assess which tasks will require certified individuals. If the Aspen Team had to rely on Forest Service employees to come to the work site to cut trees or drive a UTV, project completion would be heavily impacted. By having our own members certified project completion rates are record breaking every year.



(“Certifications” continued)

Below is the current number of team members certified in each discipline:

- ✓ FS Driver’s License: 11
- ✓ Trailer, UTV, ATV: 4
- ✓ Chain Saws: 4
- ✓ Crosscut saw 1

Thanks to all our certified volunteers and for the extensive time they’ve given learning the skills and then completing the testing processes. FoNAF appreciates the extra effort to make our Aspen Team so effective and functional.

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*The following article is a reprint from a previous newsletter. With spring upon us it contains useful information for owners of aspen trees.*

## **“Oystershell Scale” Killing Aspen Trees**

by Bob Dyer

The Aspen Team builds exclosures to protect aspen saplings from external threats like elk and deer, but within the exclosure there’s a very invasive disease we are finding all too often: oystershell scales. Since I have also found this disease on my own trees around our home, I thought it might be useful to provide more details about the scales and most importantly understand how to remove them.



A short definition of oystershell scales is “tiny insects that feed on the bark and branches of aspen trees.” Large populations can affect the health of the trees and make them susceptible to other problems. These insects may be scraped off the trees by hand or water spray. If heavily infested, pruning branches might be best.

The insects overwinter in eggs beneath the female scale covering. Upon hatching in May or June, the young insects crawl all over the bark and begin feeding. Some may be carried by the wind to other trees at this time. This stage is called the “crawler stage,” and they are active for only a few days.

Below is a short summary for identifying the disease and treatments:

### **Description**

- Developing oystershell scales feed by sucking the fluids of cells underlying the bark, often killing the cells at the feeding site. In high populations, oystershell scales may cause limb dieback and ultimately the tree dying.
- As “crawlers” the oystershell scale is highly vulnerable. There is one generation of oystershell scale produced per year in May or June. The newly emerging crawlers are generally pale yellow and visible to the naked eye.



(“Oystershells” continued)

### **Removal**

- **Manual removal.** Wipe the scales down with a cloth or sponge, if the infested areas are small and within reach. Or if out of reach, spray with a strong jet stream of water from your hose. Do this once a week during May/June while the crawlers are emerging and vulnerable.
- **Crawler sprays.** As stated above, the crawler period in the life history of the oystershell scale is highly vulnerable, as it lacks the waxy protective cover. A great many insecticides commonly used on trees and shrubs can be effectively used to control oystershell scale if they are applied to coincide with the egg hatch/crawler period.



### **“UTV Needing a Good Home” Request Results (in last Newsletter)**

Our last newsletter included a solicitation to all readers about donating a UTV to FoNAF for the Aspen Team’s benefit.

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. It will be a tax write-off for some lucky person.

Please keep us in mind should a possibility arise. Oh, we’ll also need a trailer to haul the UTV. Are we asking too much?

#### **FoNAF Board of Directors**

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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/>