

Planting the Seeds of Stewardship Along the Arizona Trail A Youth Outreach, Education & Stewardship Initiative

Starting in November, the Arizona Trail Association is excited to launch a youth outreach, education and stewardship initiative. Since we are committed to protecting the Arizona National Scenic Trail into perpetuity, we know that engaging youth is among our most important responsibilities. Thanks to two grants from Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) and Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation, this project will encourage youth participation in the Arizona Trail through a three-tiered approach: experience, education, and stewardship. The intention is to empower the next generation to take an active role in the enjoyment, development, and protection of the Arizona National Scenic Trail as well as other parks, trails, and public lands throughout the state.

Deborah Oslik and Kristen Widmark, the ATA's Youth Outreach & Education Coordinators, will work with schools, clubs and organizations within Arizona Trail Gateway Communities to identify groups of youth to participate in the program. Students will be led in small groups to various forests, canyons, mountains, and exciting realms of the Arizona Trail, all within close proximity to home. This supports the place-based educational model (youth are more inclined to learn about what is immediately nearby) and helps connect youth, families and communities with the natural resources that exist in their own backyard. Among the Arizona Trail experiences will be day trips (hiking, mountain biking and

horseback riding), followed by overnight camping adventures.

After youth have experienced the Arizona Trail through exploration and enjoyment, educational components will be integrated into the outings. These will be presented through a variety of on-the-trail lessons based in ecology, botany, biology, geology, and other earth sciences. Most of the educational material will be presented in an experiential (hands-on) style, with activities, materials and instruction for participants of all learning abilities. Beyond earth sciences, educational lessons will include STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and

Mathematics) based curricula, as well as adventure education and team-building opportunities.

Through the educational component, youth will get to know their local trail and its biotic communities more intimately. Not only does this foster a greater appreciation for the natural systems in place, but often helps develop critical thinking skills; introductory concepts of interconnectedness; and helps youth find their own place within the natural world. Just as the

Arizona Trail connects the Grand Canyon with Mogollon Rim, and the Gila River with the Sonoran Desert, youth will learn how they, too, are connected to all of these places and people throughout Arizona.

Once youth have successfully completed the first two components of the program, the third step will give them an



Youth have played an active role in building the Arizona Trail. Now, we're empowering teens from Gateway Communities to be stewards of the trail through an exciting new program.

The Arizona Trail Our Vision ...

... a continuous, non-motorized trail traversing nearly 817 miles from Mexico to Utah, linking deserts, mountains, canyons, communities and people.

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Good Times at the Rendezvous

More than 125 friends, supporters and members of the Arizona Trail Association assembled at Mormon Lake Lodge during the three-day festival of trail activities on October 5-7. The Voluntary String Band from Flagstaff kicked off the party on Friday night, with live bluegrass to get everyone in the high mountain spirit. That Brewery served Arizona Trail Ale to thirsty trail enthusiasts, celebrating the freshly brewed beer that is wild and adventurous enough to share a name with the Arizona Trail.

Saturday morning started with a big breakfast before heading out on the trail. A few dozen volunteers devoted their morning to repairing the Navajo Spring Trail, a vital link from the Arizona Trail to Mormon Lake Lodge. Others explored the Trail by horse, bike and boot. Isabelle, from Guardian Medical Transport, led two classes on hands-only CPR (cardio cerebral resuscitation), a technique that has proven successful in saving lives throughout Arizona. Bob and Muriel, from Adobe Mountain Wildlife Center, shared their knowledge and passion about Arizona's wildlife along with their feathered and scaled friends. Their presentation had a packed house inside the Kachina Room.

The party continued on Saturday night with exciting presentations from Kurt Refsnider, Arizona Trail mountain bike record holder, and Brian Stark, whose accomplishment of running the Arizona Trail is almost as impressive as the 28 other states he has run across. Long-distance hikers were acknowledged, and presented with emergency supply gift packs. A Silent Auction generated over \$1,600 for the ATA – a giant thank you to everyone who contributed items, goods and services!

Sunday saw more food, great conversations, and lots of folks enjoying the Arizona National Scenic Trail. It was an incredible gathering of people, and we are already looking forward to next year.

Mark your calendar for September 27-29, 2013 when the Rendezvous returns! Next year we plan to add a trail running event to Saturday's activities, as well as more festivities for kids, families and trail enthusiasts alike. See you there.

Save the Date!

American Trails is hosting an International Trails Symposium at the Fort McDowell Resort on April 14-17, 2013. It's the biggest gathering of its kind in the world, and among the many things you'll find at the conference are prominent speakers; state-of-the-art exhibit hall; mobile workshops out on the trail; seminars and multi-day classes; dozens of sessions and panel discussions; and unlimited opportunities to meet other trail professionals, advocates and enthusiasts.

More information is available at www.americantrails.org

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opportunity to play an active role in maintaining, developing, and protecting the Arizona Trail through service projects. From basic trail maintenance and construction to removal of invasive species, youth will learn how they can leave a positive impact on their environment.

Working alongside professionals from the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and the Arizona Trail Association, youth will



The first step in building a new generation of trail stewards is to introduce youth to the wonders that exist in their own backyard.

participate in a series of hands-on projects that leave them with a sense of ownership of the trail and their public lands; and learning firsthand what it means to be a “steward.” Service learning has been proven to be among the most effective ways to teach responsibility, encourage self-esteem, and create civic-minded individuals.

After a year of experience, education, and service learning, youth will feel that the Arizona National Scenic Trail is *their* trail.



Youth from Gateway Communities will experience hiking, mountain biking and horse-back riding along the Arizona Trail.

Deborah will manage the Southern Arizona region, and will begin working with youth within the Gateway Communities of Vail, Tucson and Superior. She has already begun organizing outings with Vail Blended Learning and Pima Partnership High School. Kristen will work with youth from Mogollon Rim country to the Utah border, and will begin with schools in the Flagstaff and Pine-Strawberry area. A former teacher and administrator with Ponderosa High School, Kristen already has her former students excited about upcoming adventures on the Arizona Trail.

Do I Need a Permit?

One of the most frequently asked questions about the Arizona Trail, is “do I need a permit to use the trail?” The only time a permit is necessary is if you are camping overnight within Grand Canyon or Saguaro National Park. Overnight permits can be obtained from each park’s backcountry office.

On Arizona State Land, no permit is needed as long as you stay within seven feet of the trail while traveling and camping. If you venture beyond the 15-foot right-of-way, then a State Land Permit is required. They can be obtained online (www.land.state.az.us) or by calling (602) 542-2119. Individual permits are \$15 for one year or \$20 for a family, and allow you access to over 9 million acres of State Land.

The ATA has worked hard to ensure the Arizona National Scenic Trail is open 365 days a year and is free to everyone.

Hope Camp Trail Open to Mountain Bikes

After years of hard work and patience, the Arizona Trail Association is pleased to announce that the National Park Service has passed a special regulation allowing bicycles to use the Hope Camp Trail, connecting the Arizona Trail to Saguaro National Park's Loma Alta Trailhead. The final rule was passed in October, and after being published in the Federal Register, went into effect on November 2.

"The public comments were overwhelmingly in favor of making this a multiple-use trail," according to Darla Sidles, Superintendent of Saguaro National Park. "It is one more way we can connect with our Tucson community and encourage a healthy activity in their national park."

For years, mountain bikers on their way north of Rincon Creek (Passage 8) met a fence prohibiting them from going any further. This is in compliance with NPS rules of "no bicycles outside of developed areas." Saguaro National Park made national news when they opened the Cactus

Forest Loop to bicycles a decade ago, and is one of only two National Parks in the country that has worked to incorporate bicycles into their trail management plans. The announcement of opening the Hope Camp Trail to bicycles will make history once again.

"We are excited to see the new set of regulations announced by the Park Service to provide a better process to allow bikes on trails by allowing more local control from NPS superintendents and their staff who know the conditions on the ground," said Zach MacDonald, President of the Sonoran Desert Mountain Bicyclists. "The Hope Camp Trail provides a key singletrack connection for bikepackers and other user groups traveling the Arizona Trail, and is a great option for day riders to experience some of the wild places within Saguaro National Park. SDMB is grateful for the ATA's mission to include all non-motorized users on the AZT and connecting trails," he said.

The Hope Camp Trail is a 2.8-mile-long trail that originates at the Loma Alta Trailhead and travels east through the southwestern portion of the Park's Rincon Mountain District to the Arizona State Trust Lands boundary beyond Hope Camp. The trail traverses relatively even terrain and rolling hills, and is lined with an abundance of desert trees and shrubs. The trail is not within eligible, proposed, recommended, or designated wilderness.

Prior to the National Park Service acquisition in the mid-1990s, the land was part of a privately-owned ranch, and the trail route was a graded dirt road used to support ranching operations. The former owner also



allowed the route to be used for recreational purposes, including hiking, equestrian, and bicycle use. Shortly after acquiring the land, the NPS closed the route to motor vehicles and bicycles. Although closed to vehicular traffic, the route remains approximately 14 feet wide, allowing

adequate room for two-way passage of diverse user groups.

"This is great news for Saguaro National Park, the ATA, and the entire mountain bike community," said ATA Executive Director Matthew Nelson. "Mountain bikers were instrumental in restoring this trail, and allowing them to ride here opens up a network of connectivity that will encourage more folks to ride to the Arizona Trail, not just on the Arizona Trail," he said.

Scott Morris, trail builder, bikepacker and organizer of the AZT 300 commented that, "Opening Hope Camp to mountain bikers provides a key connection for bikepackers traveling the Arizona Trail. The number of paved miles with high speed traffic on Old Spanish Trail can be significantly reduced, and mountain bikers can enjoy more of what they came for: a quiet, non-motorized and wild experience – the essence of our beautiful Arizona Trail."



Gateway Community Spotlight: Vail

Originally a Southern Pacific railroad town, Vail is a growing community east of Tucson in the shadow of the Rincon Mountains. Just a short distance from the trail you can find delicious Mexican food, and basic necessities for your trail adventures. This “town between the tracks” is also home to Colossal Cave Mountain Park and the Gabe Zimmerman Memorial Trailhead.

The Arizona Trail goes through Colossal Cave Mountain Park, but to see the cave itself requires a detour of two miles. The cave and surrounding areas have been in use since around 900 A.D. when

Hohokam formed a thriving community, farming in the valley below Colossal Cave and using the cave itself for shelter, storage, and as a shrine. This area contains remnants of a historically extensive *cienea* system, defined by springs and marsh areas. Cienega Creek contains critical habitat for many wildlife and plant species, including threatened and endangered species.

You can access Cienega Creek from the Gabe Zimmerman Memorial Trailhead. Gabe Zimmerman, a 30-year-old aide to U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords, was killed along with five others in the January 8, 2011 Tucson shootings that injured Giffords and a dozen others. This trailhead and interpretive trail celebrates his life and love of the outdoors and the Arizona Trail.

Visit in December to hike, bike, or ride beautiful singletrack through golden-leaved cottonwoods. You can learn more about Vail’s businesses and services through their community webpage: www.vailaz.com.

Triple Crown Started with the Arizona Trail

Fred Gaudet, ATA Board Member, Vice President of Trail Operations and Water Source Manager, recently hiked his way into the record books when he became one of the few individuals to ever complete the Triple Crown of Long Distance Hiking. This summer, Fred was honored by the American Long Distance Hiking Association-West (ALDHA-West) for completing the Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail and Continental Divide Trail. He was among the 174 hikers who have ever accomplished the Triple Crown. For perspective, there are approximately 3,200 people who have summited Mt Everest, or about 18 mountaineers for each Triple Crowner.

His obsession with long distance hiking began in 2002 with a thru-hike along the Arizona Trail. Although it was the driest year on record, he was instantly hooked. The following summer, he started the Continental Divide Trail. A stress fracture caused him to abandon the thru-hike, and he returned the following year to finish the journey. A dangerous bout with giardia landed him in the hospital for four days, and a snow storm at 13,000 feet postponed the hike again. He finished the 3,200-mile adventure during the summer of 2006.

The Pacific Crest Trail was the next logical challenge, so Fred started the following year (2007) to hike from Mexico to Canada. The 2,600-mile endeavor was filled with beauty and a few mishaps, and he took three years to complete the trek in stages.

The oldest and most prestigious of the nation’s trails remained, so in 2010 Fred started the Appalachian Trail, hiking from Maine to Georgia. Just 20 miles in, he tore his meniscus and abandoned the trek. He returned the following year and started from the south. Unfortunately, Hurricane Irene ripped across the east coast, and the trail was officially closed. Fred is not afraid of foul weather, but the \$5,000 fine for hikers found on the Appalachian Trail was enough to convince him to return home. He finished this summer, completing the 2,150-mile trail over a three-year period.

Fred has also hiked the Wonderland Trail in Washington and the West Coast Trail on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, and is working on another crossing of the Arizona Trail in segments. He’s got over 10,000 miles on his boots (multiple pairs, actually), and isn’t slowing down. His positive energy is contagious, and his knowledge of the trail is second to none. And some of the best images along the Arizona Trail have come from Fred. Check out www.fredgaudetphotography.com, and drop him an email congratulating him on the Triple Crown.

Buffalo Park Bench Honors Shewalter Family

If there has ever been a perfect place to enjoy the Arizona National Scenic Trail for the day, it's Buffalo Park in Flagstaff. The views of the peaks are outstanding, and the sinuous trail through the ponderosa pine forest invites hikers, runners, mountain bikers and equestrians to head deeper into the woods to explore all of the natural wonders that await. Visitors to Buffalo Park will now have a place to rest their tired legs after a long day on the trail, or a quiet place to sit and contemplate, in the form of a stone bench.

The bench is made from Mayer onyx, one of the most beautiful of Arizona's precious stones. Its creamy golden color and texture are absolutely incredible. The bench is unique in that it honors Dale Shewalter, as well as his parents, Richard and Margaret. Although Dale is most often credited with being the "father of the Arizona Trail," he recognized that his love of wild places and sense of adventure was merely a continuing path of energy from his parents.

At a memorial service for Richard in January of 2000, Dale said, "My earliest trail experiences were when dad peeled kernels off ears of corn for us kids to follow through forest preserves. We felt magic and wonder in the oaks and maples. What a thrill it was to follow the corn to dad's hiding place. For my part, I believe the seeds for the Arizona Trail were literally planted then and there."

"At the heart of these childhood experiences was freedom. Freedom to roam. Freedom to dream. I dreamed of trails to the West, wide-open spaces, and big country."

The Shewalter Family was proud to install this beautiful stone bench in Buffalo Park, and hopes many generations of trail users will enjoy the Arizona Trail and take a moment to remember its founders. Laurie Martin, Dale's sister, said, "What this bench represents to our family is the beginning of the Arizona Trail with these two amazing people, our parents Richard and Margaret Shewalter. They gave us the gift of spirit and freedom to be ourselves!"



Laurie is grateful for all of the people that made this memorial bench possible, including Pete "the miner" Incardona and Vince Vusone, who designed and fabricated the bench; the Hanleys, who created the bronze plaque; and Steve Zimmerman from Flagstaff Parks & Recreation Department.

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Remembering Richard Kane

On October 30, The Arizona Trail Association lost a great friend when Richard Kane passed away. Richard is an Honorary Trail Steward for Passage 10, and was the driving force behind many miles of trail work that helped make the dream of an Arizona Trail become reality. Richard will be remembered by ATA volunteers, trail stewards, members of the Southern Arizona Hiking Club, and everyone who ever had an opportunity to hike or ride with him.

We asked a few of Richard's friends to share some memories about him. Like many who have contributed to the Arizona National Scenic Trail but who are no longer with us, Richard Kane will forever be memorialized by the trail he helped build.

Richard was an inspiration to me. He often gave great support and good guidance to me and others while we were very heavily engaged in learning and doing extensive trail construction and maintenance. The very existence and effective functioning of the Arizona Trail are very much the results of Richard's dedication, hard work and professionalism.

—Laddie Cox

Richard was the only outdoorsman that I ever ran across who said "I would rather work on trails than hike them." He had about 15 or so of us on his invite list to maintain trails and he regularly got ten to twelve of us to respond. I always did because his e-mail invite had the same force as a subpoena for me. He was just that kind of guy who could motivate each of us to give up our Saturdays to improve our trail system.—Larry Bagley

Richard volunteered frequently on the new trail construction in the Cienega Corridor and Las Colinas, in addition to maintaining his own segment. I enjoyed our conversations, and his love for the Arizona Trail was infectious. When his illness prevented him from doing much work his positive attitude and joy at being in the

company of fellow trail volunteers was inspiring. I had the pleasure of riding horseback with him a couple years ago from Italian Trap south into Saguaro National Park. Along the way he pointed to distant mountain ranges and told me of hikes he'd done there. I felt very privileged to hear his stories and descriptions. It's a day I will never forget.

—Mark Flint



Richard Kane (July 8, 1941 – October 30, 2012) and Wyatt.

I recruited the Southern Arizona Hiking Club and Richard Kane to become a Trail Steward in the early '90s. The thing that I remember most about Richard is that he had a very strong interest in helping the Arizona Trail and he participated in work events through the State. When Chuck Horner and I were the Trail Stewards for the Blue Ridge passage, Richard Kane would come up all the way from Tucson to help us with work events and bring some other members of the hiking club with him. He is a true pioneer in the development of the Arizona National Scenic Trail and will be missed.

—Larry Snead



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ATA Membership Benefits....

800+ miles of trail that you can hike, bike or ride any day of the year, knowing that you help make it happen! Other membership benefits include online access to Interactive Map; GPS data; Passage Access maps; Trail Data Book; Mountain Bike Data Book; Loop Routes; window decal (new design!); invitation to the Members Rendezvous (Autumn), Annual Meeting (Spring) and other Arizona Trail events; biweekly eNews; seasonal newsletters; 10% discount at Summit Hut; 20% discount at REI (for \$50+ members); two-for-one-pint coupon at That Brewery; and other discounts exclusive to ATA members.

Your membership helps to build, maintain, promote, protect and sustain the Arizona National Scenic Trail. Every individual, club and business members is just as important as the trail itself!