

Celebrating “A Dream Come True” with Friends

It is sweet that Dale Shewalter’s dream of a pathway from Mexico to Utah is finally achieved. The fulfillment of that vision defined this year’s Arizona Trail Association’s annual meeting, the largest ever for the ATA, held in Tempe, Arizona on February 4.

“Celebrating the Arizona Trail: A Dream Come True,” was attended by over 250 ATA members and supporters, including Dale’s wife Madeleine and their son Zane; special guests Lattie Coor, former president of ASU, and Lisa Schnebly-Heidinger, author of *Arizona: 100 Years Grand*.

Newly appointed executive director Matt Nelson was welcomed and offered comments on the future. “Now that the trail is complete, we face the toughest challenges yet—to maintain, promote, protect and sustain the Arizona Trail for future generations,” he said. “I look forward to leading the Arizona Trail Association into its next phase of greatness, but I can’t do it without your help.”

Trailhead talks, information tables and interactive presentations gave attendees opportunities to have input on the future of the trail and hear others’ experiences while learning and laughing about all things trail related.

After lunch, author Schnebly-Heidinger recounted her memories of Dale. As a television reporter for KGUN-TV in Tucson, she accompanied Dale while filming an Arizona Trail special. It was his gift to link up “so many small places that some find hugely significant” and call it a trail, she said.

To conclude the day, Matt Nelson, Dave Hicks and Larry Snead performed a “rope trick.” One by one, agency personnel, stewards, volunteers, hikers, bikers, riders, and everyone in the room was invited to join in holding a rope that ran around the perimeter of the pavilion. In a very tangible way, all were united by the rope – symbolic of the trail.

A short video of Dale singing his Arizona Trail ballad was planned as a grand finale, but technical



Arizona Trail members and supporters are symbolically linked by a single rope, much in the way that the Arizona Trail unites them.



Dale’s family (l-r): Alison, Zane and Madeleine

difficulties prevented the audio from playing. In that silent “uh-oh” moment, Schnebly-Heidinger dashed onto the stage to perform it from memory.

Amazing how deeply the little things about this trail get ingrained in our beings. A smell, a sight, a sound, a song.

The Arizona Trail Our Vision ...

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

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Dear Friends of the Arizona Trail,

There's nothing like springtime in Arizona. Wildflowers have been blooming throughout the Sonoran Desert and will continue to paint beautiful colors across the Mogollon Rim, Northern Arizona and the Arizona Strip over the next few months. And now that we have a continuous path from Mexico to Utah, there has never been a better time to head out for an adventure on the Arizona Trail.

As the new Executive Director I am very excited to put my energy and experience into the incredible trail that connects deserts, mountains, canyons, communities and people. My focus is that of sustainability — for the trail, the organization, our gateway communities, and the partnerships necessary to make it all happen. That's where I need your help.

You'll be receiving information about a lot of exciting Arizona Trail happenings throughout the year, including Trail Days events and outdoor festivals, running and mountain biking events, trail maintenance parties, and the occasional fiesta where we just get together to celebrate the greatest trail in the West. Volunteers built the trail and continue to build the organization, so please make time to volunteer whenever you can. Remember, this is your Arizona Trail.

Enjoy the flowers, the miles of sinuous trail, and the experiences that only occur while out in the wilderness. These are among life's greatest rewards.

Cheers,



Matthew J. Nelson

Executive Director & Outdoor Adventurer

An Evening on the Mountaintop

Come join us for a fun evening Saturday, April 28 at the Summerhaven Community Center in the mountains northeast of Tucson. We had scheduled this event for last November, but the weather got the best of us. April 28 will be a perfect time to be on Mt. Lemmon! It's a casual gathering.

At 4 PM, if you'd like, participate in a geocaching demonstration, do a GPS treasure hunt, or go on a naturalist-led hike. Or you can sit on the patio of the center and visit with friends. At 5 PM, bluegrass music accompanies the silent auction action. (Bring your checkbook--there are some great items like shuttle service from one trailhead to another; a private cooking lesson; and a weekend at Ventana Canyon Resort!) We'll then enjoy dinner catered by the Iron Door at 6 PM. During dinner we will be honoring the Tucson Saddle Club and Chad Brown for all their contributions to the Arizona Trail.

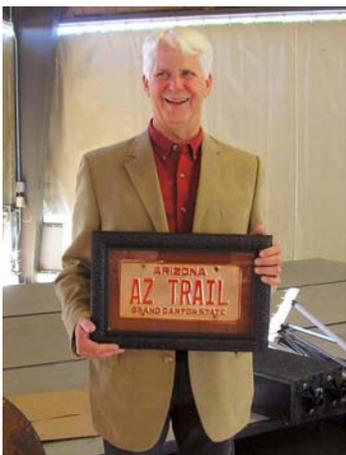
You can register on-line at aztrail.org. Tickets are \$45. See you there!

Celebration Event

February 4, 2012



(l-r) Megan Gray of CREC, Jean Hickman and Kamilla Hoban, of the Southwest Conservation Corps.



Dave Hicks, outgoing Executive Director, with the part of the AZT Bronco that he cherished most.



Executive Directors, past and present(l-r): Matt Nelson, Larry Snead, Denise Meredith and Dave Hicks.

The Arizona Trail

In the land of Arizona
Through desert heat or snow
Winds a trail for folks to follow
From Utah to Old Mexico.

It's the Arizona Trail
A path through the great Southwest
A diverse track through wood and stone
Your spirit it will test.

Some will push and pedal
And some will hike or run
Others will ride their horse or mule
What else could be more fun?

Oh, sure, you'll sweat and blister
You'll feel the miles each day
You'll shiver at the loneliness
Your feet and seat will pay.

But you'll see moonlight on the borderlands
You'll see stars on the Mogollon
You'll feel the warmth of winter sun
And be thrilled straight through to bone.

The aches and pains will fade away
You'll feel renewed and whole
You'll never be the same again
With Arizona in your soul.

Along the Arizona Trail
A reverence and peace you'll know
Through deserts, canyons and mountains
From Utah to Old Mexico.

Dale R. Shewalter
February 1, 2003



2012 Member Rendezvous October 5-7, 2012

Make your plans to be in Mormon Lake for the 2012 ATA Members' Rendezvous! The first weekend in October, Mormon Lake Lodge graciously hosts the ATA for another "party in the pines" get-together. NOTE: Make your room reservations RIGHT NOW! Other events at the lodge are already booking up the accommodations, so don't wait to reserve a room. Call Mormon Lake Lodge, 928-354-2227. Let them know you're with the Arizona Trail Association to receive the special ATA 10% discount.

Just Around the Bend!

In addition to these special events, check the ATA events calendar page for volunteer opportunities across the state for this summer: aztrail.org/calendar.html

April 20-21, Earth Fest, Patagonia Trails and Earth Day Celebration. This is the third annual celebration of trails and sustainable living in the green town of Patagonia. Join in this National Trails Day event along the Arizona Trail. Learn more about the events at www.patagoniaaz.com and www.aztrail.org/patagonia.html

April 21, Pine Arizona Trail Day. Mark your calendars for Pine Strawberry Trail Days on Saturday, April 21st at the Pine Community Center off of Highway 87. There will be a variety of fun outdoors-related events and vendors as well as music and guided walks and hikes. Pine and Strawberry are two gorgeous little Arizona Trail Gateway Communities beneath the Mogollon Rim, so come on out and play!

April 28, Evening on the Mountaintop. Enjoy fun and entertainment in Summerhaven on Mt. Lemmon near Tucson. See all the details on page 2.

October 5-7, ATA Member Rendezvous, Mormon Lake Lodge: Reserve your rooms now, 928-354-2227.



Support The Arizona Trail, Win A Nissan Leaf

The Arizona Trail Association is participating in a raffle that supports various Arizona non-profit organizations. By buying a raffle ticket for \$25 (or 5 tickets for \$100) you could win a Nissan Leaf SL from Jim Click Nissan. And the best part is that 100% of your contribution will support the ATA!

The entry deadline is April 20, 2012. The raffle ticket drawing will be held on April 27, 2012 at a location to be announced.

You can use your credit card and PayPal to purchase raffle tickets on AzTrail.org. You do not need a PayPal account to pay.

You have the option of ordering multiple tickets and you will receive a confirmation email from PayPal for the transaction.

After ordering your ticket(s), the ATA will mail them to you at the address you provide on the PayPal order form. Include your phone number for fast notification if you win. Please allow 1-2 weeks for them to be processed and mailed.

Gabe Zimmerman Trailhead Dedication, January 4, 2012

Over 150 people gathered on a hilltop parking area with glorious views of the Rincon Valley east of Tucson to dedicate the Gabe Zimmerman Davidson Canyon Trailhead on January 4, 2012 and to remember Gabe, an ATA member and volunteer, who was killed in the January 8, 2011 shooting at a Tucson shopping center and served as an aide to U.S. Rep.



A night-blooming cereus was planted in memory of Gabe by his father Ross Zimmerman (l) and Gene Joseph (r).

Gabrielle Giffords.

The event officially opened the expanded Arizona Trail access point. Amenities not always found at trailheads are available here, including a



(l-r) Emily Nottingham, Gabe's mother and Board President of the Arizona Trail Association, joins Gabrielle Giffords and her husband Mark Kelly in a walk on the remembrance trail.

ramada, a short ADA-accessible trail to a contemplation bench, and horse-trailer parking for equestrian access to the trail.

Pima County assisted in construction of the trailhead along with Toefel Construction, artist Steve Farley, Arizona Trail cyclist and welder Lee Blackwell, architect and Arizona Trail Association board member Doug Whitneybell, as well as the numerous volunteers whose labor built the trail and trailhead.

A cactus-planting was performed in memory of Gabe by his father Ross Zimmerman and Gene Joseph.

Gateway Community Spotlight: Oracle

The small town of Oracle is one of the many Gateway Communities found near the Arizona Trail. Although it's only a short drive north of Tucson, the charm and pace of life in this 3,500-person community is a world apart.

In addition to having immediate access to the AZT, Oracle is well known to hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians for its miles of adventurous trails and roads. It's nestled in the northern foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains at an elevation of 4,500 feet – where the oak trees meet the prickly pear.

Oracle is also a gateway to Oracle State Park, Biosphere 2, Peppersauce Cave and the San Pedro River Valley. Its colorful history includes characters such as Buffalo Bill Cody and Edward Abbey.



The town of Oracle is an ideal resupply and relaxation center for thru-hikers and bikers, and offers groceries, restaurants, lodging and massage therapy. It's also a great place to begin your one-day Arizona Trail adventures. Trailheads for the Oracle Passage (#13) are at American Flag Ranch, south of town, the Oracle State Park parking lot on American Avenue, and at Old Tiger Road, north of Highway 77.

Once you get to know Oracle you'll probably be back for more. There are numerous events that happen throughout the year, including Glow – An Art and Music Festival by Moonlight; the Calabazas Festival; Oracle Run; and the Oaks Festival and Car Show.

Learn more at www.oracletown.com.

Digital Topo Maps Now Available

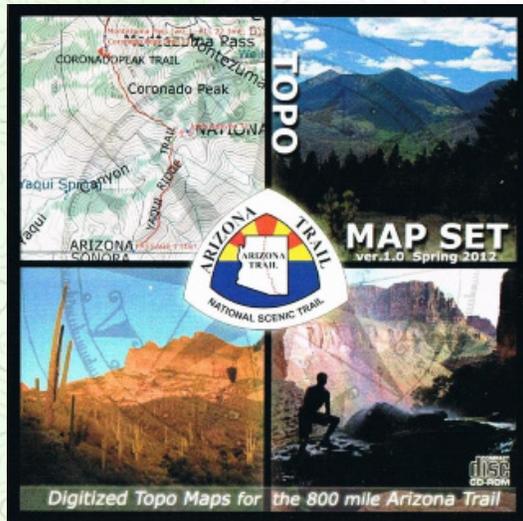
The Arizona Trail Association has been working with Brett Tucker (Blister Free) and the innovative mapping technology of Postholer.com to produce a digital mapset for Arizona Trail hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, runners and outdoor adventurers. We are pleased to announce that it's now available, just in time for the spring season!

With this CD you can print 130 digitized color topographic maps (1:24,000 scale) that cover the entire Arizona Trail from Mexico to Utah. If you're going out for the day, you need to print one. If you're planning a cross-state adventure, then print the entire mapset. It's an economical alternative to purchasing paper topographic maps (which would total over \$375 and would not include the 800 data points specific to the AZT).

Some of the exciting features of these maps include:

- 3D hill shading
- Detailed elevation chart on each map
- Accumulated trail mileage every mile (great for thru-hikers)
- An easy-to-follow trail trace overlaid on each map
- Maps include GPS grid marks for compatibility with your handheld GPS unit
- 800 data points including water sources, gateway communities and more
- 8.5" x 11" format for easy printing from PC or Mac computers
- PDF data book and easy instructions for use

Each CD comes in a jewel case with artwork celebrating the Arizona National Scenic Trail. These will sell for \$25 at retail outlets throughout the state, but are available to members of the Arizona Trail Association for only \$15 plus \$5 for shipping and handling. Purchase yours today at www.aztrail.org.



Hikers near the San Francisco Peaks in Northern Arizona. Make plans now to attend a work event in cool high country like Flagstaff this summer...find work events on the ATA website calendar page!



Photo: Bill Gibson

Bill Gibson with granddaughters Christina and Hannah in Grand Canyon.

Steward Training at Oracle State Park, January 2012

To help maintain the Arizona Trail as a world-class outdoor experience, volunteer trail stewards participated in a two-day training at Oracle State Park in January.

Twenty-five stewards learned hands-on trail grubbing, clipping and grooming, as well as the why, how and what they need in their leadership toolboxes. Bruce Weidenheimer presented the classroom portion of the training, assisted by regional trail stewards and experienced stewards. Oracle proved a hospitable location, with great weather, an historic facility and food and fun at the Oracle Inn on Saturday night (no one ended up in the hoosegow).



Photo: Sirena Dufault

Near Picketpost Mountain, Superior, Arizona.

Double the Fun on the AZT

We hiked 28 miles round-trip in September 2011 on the North Kaibab Trail to the Colorado River. This took care of 14 miles of the AZT's 800+! Our twin granddaughters, Christina and Hannah were (by far) the youngest people on the trail during our three-day trip.

We met people from the Midwest, East Coast and Canada. Hannah took several close-up wild-life shots. The weather treated us well—it was clear and warm all three days. The night sky was spectacular—the Milky Way was clearly visible.

Grandpa spent his 62nd birthday in the bottom of the Grand Canyon. It was an unforgettable experience for all of us. We later learned that at least three of the six bridges that we crossed were funded by Heritage Grants. —*Bill Gibson*



Legends of Superior Trail Canyon Segment Officially Open

The Town of Superior recently celebrated a grand opening for the Canyon Segment of the Legends of Superior Trail on February 18, 2012. This is the second segment that the Town and their LOST partners have completed and opened officially. This grand opening celebration included an eco-tourism fest, history luncheon and guided hikes throughout Superior, the LOST, and the Arizona National Scenic Trail.

The LOST committee hopes to continue to plan similar events to help promote the LOST and the Arizona National Scenic Trail.

—*Mila Lira, Town of Superior*



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ATA Membership Benefits....

It's easy to join or renew your membership online at www.aztrail.org. And the list of membership benefits continues to grow! Members receive online access to: Map and GPS Data, Passage Access Maps, 16 Navigational Maps of the Trail, Trail Data Book, Loop Route Maps and Information, decal with annual special edition color newsletter, newsletters - via US mail or online, and 10% Discount at Summit Hut Stores/Online.

*Your membership supports the Arizona Trail.
Every individual, club and business member is appreciated.*