



## Arizona Trail Running & Hiking Series

The Arizona Trail Association is partnering with On Your Left! Fitness to offer a series of events for trail runners and hikers in 2013. This unique series will feature some of the best segments of the Arizona National Scenic Trail in spectacular natural settings. Distances vary with each event, and the Vail and Mormon Lake courses have two distance options.

Each event is on the singletrack of the Arizona Trail and small sections of dirt roads. Routes have been intentionally designed for their scenic nature, not for their speed. Trail-specific running shoes are highly recommended, as these are highly adventurous courses.

### Arizona Trail Running and Hiking Series Schedule

April 27: Gabe Zimmerman Trailhead, Vail. 13 miles/6 miles

May 18: Pine Trailhead, Pine. 9 miles

September 29: Mormon Lake Village, Mormon Lake. 15 miles/5 miles



The Las Cienegas passage of the Arizona Trail features a mostly downhill course through lush Sonoran Desert vegetation near the Gateway Community of Vail, just south of Tucson.

Due to the nature of the trail and our desire to minimally impact the land, each event will be limited to 250 runners/hikers. Race registration opened January 31 on [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) and will remain open until a few days before each event. Participants have the option of registering for individual events or for the entire series, and a \$5 per event discount is offered for those registering for all events.

Included with event registration are food, refreshments, prizes, timing, transportation (for point-to-point events) and Arizona Trail merchandise...in addition to unforgettable experiences along the Arizona National Scenic Trail. Proceeds support the ATA's mission to build, maintain, promote, protect and sustain the Arizona National Scenic Trail as a unique encounter with the land.



The Highline Trail along Passage 27 is one of the featured routes of the Arizona Trail Running & Hiking Series.

Andrew Pielage Photo ([www.APizm.com](http://www.APizm.com)).

For more information, visit: [www.onyourleftfitness.com](http://www.onyourleftfitness.com) and [www.aztrail.org](http://www.aztrail.org).

To register for one or all of the events, visit [www.active.com](http://www.active.com).

## **The Arizona Trail Our Vision ...**

*... a continuous, non-motorized trail traversing 800+ miles from Mexico to Utah, linking deserts, mountains, canyons, communities and people.*

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Dear Friends of the Arizona Trail,

The snow is melting rapidly in the north and the desert is covered in Mexican gold poppies – signs that Spring has arrived. This is the time of year when record numbers of hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers and other trail enthusiasts head out for adventures on the Arizona National Scenic Trail. Whether they're out for a day or a few months, each will have experiences that profoundly affect their lives. Your membership support benefits all who use the trail, and your generosity helps ensure the health of the AZT into the future. On behalf of all whose lives are enriched by the trail, thank you.

Inside this edition you will find a wealth of information about interesting people, places, programs, events and more. Members of our trail community are as diverse as the geography traversed by the cross-state trail, and if you have a personal story to share, please get in touch. Telling your story is an important part of the history of the Arizona Trail.

We've got some amazing events happening this spring, and you are invited to join in the fun. There are also some volunteer opportunities that give you an opportunity get more involved with the Arizona Trail.

One of the ingredients for sustainability of the ATA and the Arizona National Scenic Trail is increased membership. Our goal is to add 500 new members by the end of the year, and we need your help. Encouraging your friends, coworkers and trail companions to support the ATA is the best way to grow our numbers so we can continue to put resources back into the trail. We've expanded our benefits for both individual and business members, so please help spread the word that the Arizona Trail is a wise investment.

Enjoy the wildflowers, the shimmering streams, and every moment spent out on the trail.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Nelson  
Executive Director & Outdoor Adventurer

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### **Go Paperless!**

Want to receive the Arizona Trail newsletter by email and save paper and postage?  
Email the ATA office at [ata@aztrail.org](mailto:ata@aztrail.org) and let us know!

# Regional Stewards Pass the McLeod\*

For every mile of the 800+ mile Arizona Trail there are a few volunteers that can be thanked for the perpetual care of the trail. Over 100 volunteer segment stewards regularly give their time and labor to maintain the trail we all love. These dedicated individuals are guided by regional stewards – five amazing volunteers who oversee trail activities for large portions of the state. This season, we are excited to announce two new developments within the northern and southern regions...

## Northern Region

Andrea Michaels has accepted the prestigious position as regional steward from Gary Hohner, who is dedicating more time to the ATA as president of the Board of Directors. Andrea is a long-time Arizona Trail enthusiast; she and her husband David are co-stewards of Passage 31a in Walnut Canyon.

Andrea's energy and love of the trail will help keep passages 28-43 in great condition. She's looking for a few good stewards, too. There are currently no active trail stewards for Passages 29a (Happy Jack), 37a (Grand Canyon-South Rim), and 39a Grand Canyon (North Rim). Check out [www.aztrail.org/at\\_stewards.html](http://www.aztrail.org/at_stewards.html) for more information.



**Andrea Michaels**

A heartfelt thanks to Gary and Gay Hohner for their contributions to the Northern Region of the Arizona Trail, including the "Close the Gap" project, which resulted in the completion of 20.6 miles of new trail construction through some of the most breathtaking country in the state.

## Southern Region

For many years, Bernie "Traildog" Stalman has been the Southern Regional Steward, managing trail work events and volunteers from Mexico to Oracle. Bernie recently decided to relinquish his stewardship responsibilities in order to spend time with family and his other civic duties around Sierra Vista. Bernie brought years of trail experience to the AZT from his work on the Appalachian Trail, and has been a huge contributor to the care of the southern passages. Bernie will remain on the ATA Board of Directors, but leaves

some big boots to fill as Regional Director. The ATA is currently accepting letters of interest from anyone who would like to be considered for the position.

The Southern Region includes Passages 1-6 and 9c-12, which is all within the Coronado National Forest. There are currently 14 stewards and a strong need for many more in this region. Regional stewards recruit, guide and assist segment stewards in their care of the Arizona Trail. They work with the managing agencies, the ATA Trail Director, other Regional Stewards, youth corps organizations and volunteer groups and individuals in all aspects of maintaining the trail.

Position requirements include a love of the outdoors and an appreciation that the Arizona Trail is an incredible asset to hikers, bicyclists and equestrians, as well as the state and nation. Successful regional stewards possess the communication and interpersonal skills necessary to recruit and lead a cadre of volunteer segment stewards. They have or will quickly acquire a thorough working knowledge of the trail in their region.

The Regional Steward is a volunteer position; compensation is limited to a profound sense of accomplishment and contribution as he or she joins like-minded, dedicated individuals to preserve and protect the 800+mile Arizona National Scenic Trail.

Time requirements and work schedule are unspecified and determined by the individual; however, successful Regional Stewards

report that the time commitment is not inconsequential.

If you want to take your involvement with the Arizona Trail to the next level, please contact Fred Gaudet ([fgaudet@bossig.com](mailto:fgaudet@bossig.com)) or Shawn Redfield ([traildirector@aztrail.org](mailto:traildirector@aztrail.org)).



**Bernie "Traildog" Stalman**



**\*"What's a McLeod," you say? It's the tool that built the trail!**



## Gateway Community Spotlight: Florence

The town of Florence is located along the Gila River near Arizona Trail Passages 15-17. Among Arizona's oldest towns, Florence was founded in 1866 and became the Pinal County seat of government in 1875. There are over 140 historic buildings in Florence, many of which are constructed of adobe brick. The district contains a mix of architectural styles from early Territorial times through the post-World War II building boom.

Nine miles west of Florence is Casa Grande Ruins National Monument, where a preserved Hohokam farming community and "Great House" are preserved. Abandoned in 1450 and one of the largest prehistoric structures ever built in North America, its exact purpose remains a mystery. The visitor center has a collection of artifacts from the site.

One of the more interesting ways to access the

Arizona Trail Passage 15 from Florence is by way of the Florence-Kelvin Highway. The highway east of Florence is paved for the first 10 miles, and then it turns to a graded dirt road for the next 20 miles, offering incredible views of the Sonoran Desert. The Florence-Kelvin Trailhead is among the most recently constructed in Pinal County, and provides immediate access to the northern end of Passage 15.

Easy access to the Gila River can be found off Cochran Road, which heads north from the Florence-Kelvin Highway. After crossing the river and heading east for a few minutes on a primitive road, you will encounter the Arizona Trail along Passage 16, where it leaves the Gila River and heads north toward Alamo Canyon. Depending on the season, the river might be dry, a mud wallow, knee-deep, or a raging torrent only passable with a kayak. Check county stream flow data online before attempting a crossing.

The town of Florence has just about everything you need before or after an Arizona Trail adventure, including groceries and basic supplies and excellent Mexican food. Mount Athos, the local Greek restaurant is outstanding!

More information on Florence and other Gateway Communities is available at [www.aztrail.org](http://www.aztrail.org).

## Arizona Trail Volunteers Can Qualify for a Complimentary National Parks Pass

The National Park Service recognizes that without volunteers, our forests, parks and other public lands would not remain the vibrant resources they are today. That's why when you volunteer for any or all of the five federal land agencies (National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, and Reclamation) you can earn a special Volunteer Pass to parks and Federal Recreation Lands.

Who qualifies for the Volunteer Pass?

The Volunteer Pass will be issued free of charge to volunteers who accrue 250 volunteer hours.

Do I have to accrue the 250 hours in one year?

No. There is no specific timeframe in which volunteer hours must be accrued. Hours can be accrued over one, or several, calendar years.

How will volunteer hours be recorded and tracked?

Work with your local Federal recreation site supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator/Manager to track your hours.

Whatever format you use to track your time, be sure to keep copies for your records.

What happens when a volunteer reaches the 250 hours?

Once the 250 hour requirement is reached, a pass is issued, and the volunteer's "pass hours" are reset to zero and the count begins again.

Can I accrue hours on lands managed by more than one Federal agency, or am I only able to accrue them by volunteering with one agency?

You can accrue 250 hours by volunteering on Federal recreation lands managed by one or all of five agencies. For example, you can volunteer 100 hours for each of the five agencies and earn a pass.

For more information, visit <http://store.usgs.gov/pass/volunteer.html>.

# Arizona Trail Events

There's a full season of events on and around the Arizona Trail. Check your calendar and let us know if you would like to participate, volunteer some time, or just stop by and help us celebrate!

## **April 14-17 International Trails Symposium**

Join trail professionals and enthusiasts from around the world at this landmark symposium, held at the Fort McDowell Resort and Casino east of Fountain Hills. Guided hikes, workshops, expo, speakers, and much more. Check out [www.americantrails.org/2013/](http://www.americantrails.org/2013/) for details.

## **April 18th (10 am – 2 pm) Earth Day at the Sierra Vista Farmer's Market**

Check out the southernmost gateway community and all it has to offer. Volunteers are needed to help staff an Arizona Trail information booth.

## **April 20 (9 am – 6 pm) Patagonia Trails Day and EarthFest**

Visit the gateway community of Patagonia for their annual celebration of the Arizona Trail and the unique natural resources found nearby – Santa Rita Mountains, rolling grasslands, Harshaw Creek, and much more. Guided hikes, interpretive talks, great local food, and much more await.

## **April 20 (10 am – 4 pm) Oaks Festival in Oracle**

Located just north of Tucson, Oracle has numerous trails, trailheads and interesting characters. The Oaks

Festival is one of their annual events that is not to be missed! Volunteers are needed to help staff an Arizona trail information booth.

## **April 27 (7 am – 11 am) Arizona Trail Run & Hike**

Choose between half-marathon (13 miles) or 10K (6 miles) distances in this running and hiking event to benefit the ATA. Volunteers are needed to help along the route or at the finish line at the Gabe Zimmerman Memorial Trailhead.

## **April 27 (9 am – 4 pm) Arizona Trail Day in Pine/Strawberry**

Head for the Mogollon Rim for a hike along the Arizona Trail (llamas have been known to outnumber people) and a celebration in this amazing gateway community – home of THAT Brewery & Pub where you can taste Arizona Trail Ale. Volunteers are needed to help staff an Arizona Trail information booth.

## **May 18 (9 am – 12 pm) Arizona Trail Run & Hike**

Pine is the destination for this beautiful 9-mile run (or hike) along the Arizona Trail through breathtaking Mogollon Rim country. Volunteers are needed to help at the finish line (Pine Trailhead).

**Check the Events page at [www.aztrail.org](http://www.aztrail.org) for up-to-date information.**



# Calling All Outdoor Clubs

If you are a member of a hiking, horseback riding, running, backpacking, mountain biking, and other outdoor club in the state of Arizona, we've developed a special membership program just for you! Here's how it works...

Become an Official Club of the Arizona Trail by organizing at least two outings along the Arizona Trail per year. Ask Club members to donate a specific amount (to be determined by your Club) to the Arizona Trail Association for participating in these outings. Funds from these will help sustain the trail into the future. This can be as simple as organizing a hike and passing the hat around; or planning a major overnight adventure with food, entertainment, etc. It's up to your Club membership to decide how you'd like to do it.



**Members of the SaddleBrooke Hiking Club enjoy a hike along the Gila River (Passage 16) of the Arizona Trail.**

Many clubs are already enjoying the Arizona Trail, and this new membership program allows them to give something back to the trail we all love. And if members of your Club aren't already devoted fans of the Arizona Trail, organize an outing and

show them what an incredible resource we have throughout our entire state. There is no minimum amount to participate, and Official Clubs will receive:

- Website promotion through [www.aztrail.org](http://www.aztrail.org) (7,500 weekly visitors), with your Club's name and logo on the Arizona Trail Outdoor Clubs page, with a link to your website.
- Announcements about your Club and its events through eNews, quarterly newsletter, and website – helping connect outdoor enthusiasts with your club.
- Assistance in organizing your Club's trail events and outings.
- Professional speakers that can give presentations to your Club upon request.
- Letter acknowledging donations to the ATA, a 501(c)(3) organization.
- Invitation to Annual Meeting and Arizona Trail Rendezvous events.
- Free Arizona Trail products (T-shirts, hats, water bottles, patches, pins, etc.) to help encourage participation in your Club's fund-raising events.
- Association with a progressive non-profit organization who is helping to bring together outdoor enthusiasts from throughout the entire state, and sustaining a National Scenic Trail for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Copper State Trail Riders are among the first to embrace this Club Membership, and experienced a successful trail ride in February. They rode, camped, and enjoyed life for three days, raising over \$700 for the Arizona Trail Association. Their donation will help fund future equestrian facilities at AZT trailheads and maintain the trail for safe riding conditions.

If you would like more information on how to get your Club signed up as an Official Outdoor Club of the Arizona Trail, please contact Sirena at [gateway@aztrail.org](mailto:gateway@aztrail.org) or (602) 571-6439.

Together, we can enjoy, explore and sustain the Arizona Trail.

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## Like Us on Facebook!



Have you joined the Arizona Trail on Facebook yet? "Like" the Arizona Trail Association's page on Facebook to get updates on trail events, share your tales and photos from the trail, and participate in giveaways of Arizona Trail merchandise!

[www.facebook.com/Arizona.Trail.Association](http://www.facebook.com/Arizona.Trail.Association). And follow us on Twitter at AZTRAIL.

# The Big Hike for Multiple Sclerosis *by Sirena Dufault*

Shawn Feliciano Garber's life changed in an instant in August 2009 with an impersonal voicemail from a neurologist telling her "You have MS."

Multiple Sclerosis is an autoimmune disease that attacks the central nervous system that affects 400,000 people in the U.S. Just a month away from her wedding, she was uncertain what the diagnosis meant for her future and how long she had before the disease made her unable to do the outdoor activities she loved.



Over time, Shawn adjusted her life to accommodate her condition. "After going through many trials and tribulations I gathered the strength to continue my life as I was living before the MS diagnosis. In fact, living it more fully," she said.

Shawn had an idea – to do something big that would bring awareness about Multiple Sclerosis and give hope to those struggling with the disease. That idea turned into The Big Hike for MS, a southbound thru-hike on the Arizona Trail.

After a year of planning with her husband Bob, countless hours of training, scouting out the trail, making endless lists and charts, and dehydrating every food in sight, Shawn started the trail southbound from the Utah border on September 11, 2012. Initially she hiked with a partner, but when her partner had to leave the trail because of injuries, she ended up hiking some of the trail solo. "Not the original plan," she said, "especially for one who started out with no sense of direction."

Others stepped in to join her on her trek, including her dad, Jose, and brother Brandon. For 80 days Shawn rose to the various navigational, emotional, physical and spiritual challenges of the trail. Often she wondered if she would be able to make it all the way to Mexico. Her husband Bob multitasked as support crew, cook, driver, writer of sonnets, solver of problems, and even managed to hike over 300 miles himself. On November 30, Shawn triumphantly reached the Arizona Trail's southern terminus at the U.S./Mexico border.

Now that she has finished the trail, Shawn reflected, "I started the hike in order to raise awareness about Multiple Sclerosis, knowing that it was a disease that few know so little about. More importantly, I also wanted to encourage and inspire others who suffer from MS. But, in actuality, it was I who was inspired and encouraged."

Most cherished are the messages Shawn has received from people with and without MS who have been inspired by her trek to become more active or even tackle a couple of passages of the Arizona Trail.

You can read all of the journals from Shawn's inspiring journey and still donate to The Big Hike for MS at <http://hiking4ms.org> or send checks to Hiking for Multiple Sclerosis, 43 East 200 South, Springville, UT 84663.

And look for Shawn and Bob's Arizona Trail driver's guide – coming soon! This resource will assist anyone who is supporting long-distance trail users by vehicle, complete with detailed directions, road conditions, and more. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the ATA, and will be a must-have guidebook for anyone wanting to access the Arizona Trail by vehicle.



# What's Happening in Gateway Communities Along the Arizona Trail

The Arizona Trail travels near many friendly, scenic towns throughout the state, and these “Gateway Communities” offer resupply opportunities to long-distance trail users and serve as excellent destinations for day trippers. In addition to the Gateway Community Map available on the [aztrail.org](http://aztrail.org) website, there are now complete profiles on each of the 20+ communities, with information specifically for Arizona Trail enthusiasts.

We've put together a comprehensive list of grocery, lodging, laundry and internet facilities, not to mention where to find the best Mexican food, high octane coffee, and locally brewed beer.

Click on any of the communities on the online map at [aztrail.org/gateway/gateway.html](http://aztrail.org/gateway/gateway.html) and you'll find all the information you need for planning your next weekend adventure or cross-state epic, including:



- Population
- Elevation
- Post Office location(s)
- Public internet location(s)
- Laundry and shower facilities
- Grocery
- Great food
- Lodging
- Outdoor gear store(s)
- Bike shop(s)
- Feed and tack store(s)
- Massage
- Coffee
- Area Attractions

Coming soon...Arizona Trail maps for each of the Gateway Communities, showing how to find the nearest trailheads, recommended segments of the AZT near the community, and other area trails to put together loop hikes, rides, and other adventures.

## Courteous Trail User Tips for Mountain Bikers

Remember, even though you are moving faster than hikers and equestrians and they are likely to yield the trail to you, mountain bikers should always yield the trail to other users. We need more conscious and courteous riders on the trail, and coming to a complete stop and letting others go by is a great way to positively represent mountain bikers. When riding in areas where you are likely to encounter equestrians (look for horse trailers at the trailhead, or hoof tracks along the trail) attach a small bell to your stem to alert horses in advance of your approach. Each rider in your group should talk to the horses as they pass by.

Enjoy your ride!





# Sharing the Arizona Trail with the Next Generation: Seeds of Stewardship Outings are a Success

Since its inception in November of 2012, the Seeds of Stewardship program has been successfully introducing youth from gateway communities to the natural wonders found along the Arizona Trail. The goal of Seeds of Stewardship is to inspire youth to be the next generation of responsible trail users and land managers through a three-tiered approach of experience, education and service projects/internships.

At Buffalo Park in Flagstaff, Kristen Widmark led teenagers from Ponderosa High School on hike where trail builders and ecologists shared their knowledge and love of the forest with students. Kristen is looking forward to a service project with Northland Academy as soon as the snow melts, as well as future educational outings with Ponderosa High.

In Southern Arizona, Deborah Oslik has organized outings with Pima Partnership High School and Vail Blended Learning. Students have hiked various segments of the Arizona Trail while experiencing diverse hands-on learning opportunities. On a recent outing, middle school students from Vail Blended Learning conducted plant surveys and learned about the importance of riparian areas with a visit to the Cienega Creek Natural Preserve. Service projects in Saguaro National Park are planned for this spring, and an overnight adventure is also in the works.

Schools in Miami and Pine have also been contacted, and outings are currently being planned for this spring. Eventually, every gateway community from Sierra Vista to Fredonia may have a Seeds of Stewardship program. Because of its similar mission to the US Forest Service's "Children's Forest" the Coronado National Forest is interested in partnering with the ATA in order to implement its Sky Island Children's Forest; Arizona Wilderness Coalition may recruit graduates of the Seeds of Stewardship for their

Wilderness Stewards program; Coconino Rural Environment Corps (CREC) is identifying ways to link their Youth Conservation Corps Crews to the Seeds of Stewardship; and some federal land management agencies are expanding their internship opportunities to youth through a formal partnership.

Seeds of Stewardship is currently funded by two grants from Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) and Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation, but the future of the program will be determined by its funding through business and private contributions. Helping youth connect with nature, bringing school curricula on to the trail, and providing service learning opportunities and job skill training through internships are just a few more reasons to support the ATA.

Upon learning about the Seeds of Stewardship at the Annual Meeting in

February, one member created a special membership challenge for other ATA supporters that care about this important initiative: she will give \$100 per month for two years if five other members do the same. If you are among the six individuals who support this program and step up to this membership challenge, you will receive trip reports and photos from all Seeds of Stewardship outings for the next two years. Your dollars can make a huge difference in the lives of youth throughout Arizona.

Monthly payments can be made online through the ATA's secure website (via PayPal), checks can be mailed to our post office box, or the entire amount can be paid at once (or annually) – it's up to you.

The Seeds of Stewardship will only receive the generous offer of support from the member making the challenge if five others come forward soon. Could it be you? For more information, please contact Matthew Nelson at [matthew@aztrail.org](mailto:matthew@aztrail.org) or (520) 404-7992.



# The Complete Guide to the Arizona National Scenic Trail to be Published This Year

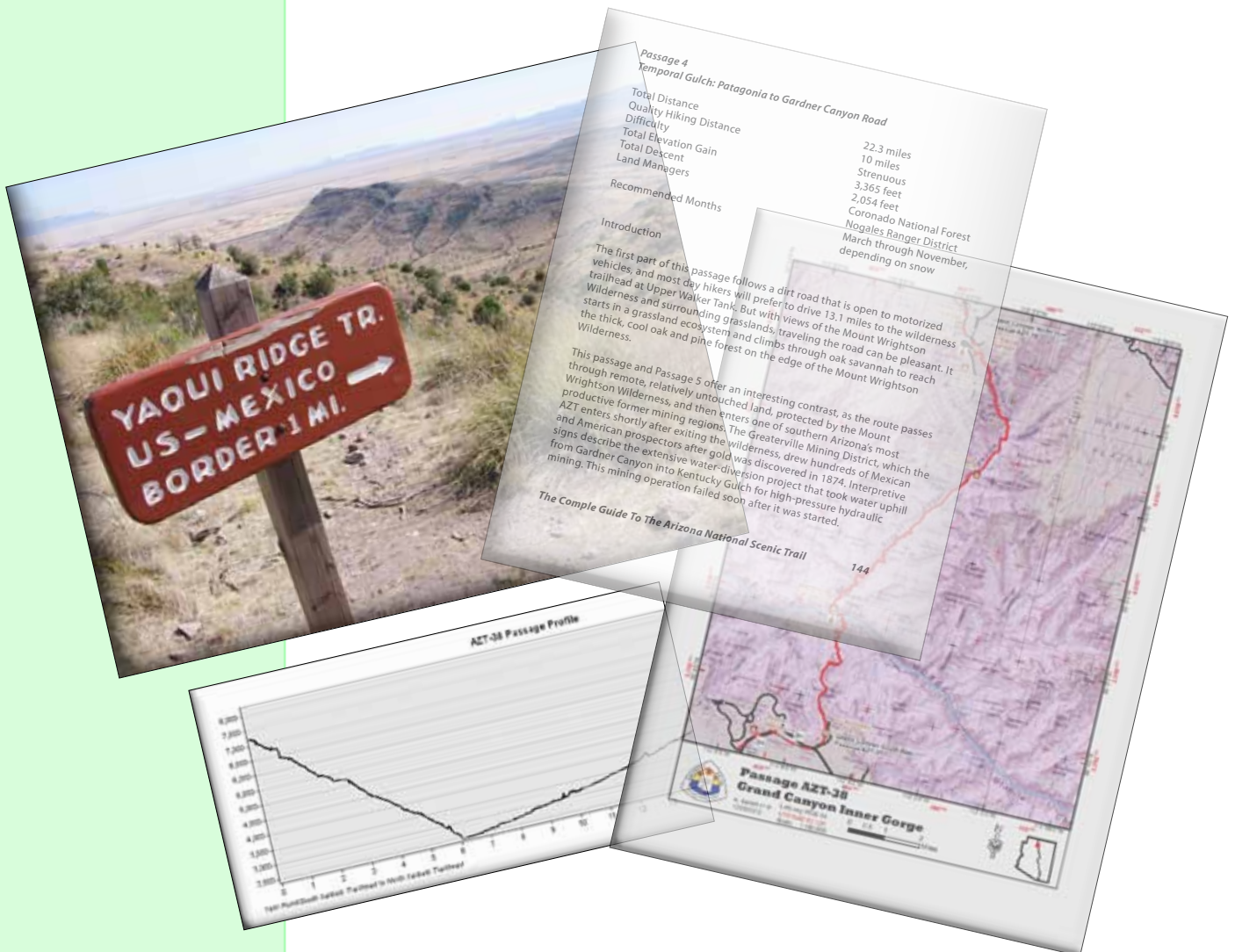
“When are you coming out with a new guide-book?” is among the most frequently asked questions by trail veterans and newbies alike. The previous version was written before the trail was complete, and so much has changed since it was published in 2005 that it’s considered obsolete (not to mention it’s been out of print for some time). If you are among those hungry for a fresh guide to the Arizona Trail, we’ve got great news for you!

The ATA has been working with Wilderness Press to publish the most definitive guide to the Arizona Trail ever written. The book will include passage descriptions with detailed directions for navigation; brilliant color photographs; topographic maps with the Arizona Trail trace and trailheads; elevation charts for each passage; gateway community profiles; chapters on the geology of Arizona; and a special

chapter on the botany you’ll see along the Arizona Trail from Mexico to Utah.

If you would like to be among the very first to receive *The Complete Guide to the Arizona National Scenic Trail*, a special batch is being reserved for ATA members who join or renew at or above the \$100 level beginning May 1, 2013. The guidebook will be mailed to you as soon as it’s published in November. The guidebook will be a “thank you” gift in addition to all of the other great benefits associated with membership.

After 100+ members receive their first-run copies, the guidebook will be sold through the ATA website and made available at retail outlets throughout the Southwest. It will be among the most coveted guidebooks in your library, and will inspire many future adventures on the Arizona Trail.



# WANTED Dead: Sahara Mustard

Invasive species to the Sonoran Desert have wreaked havoc upon the landscape, including tamarisk along riverbanks and buffelgrass to the upper Sonoran zone. Just when you thought it couldn't get worse, it has.

Sahara Mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*) has been seen along portions of the Arizona Trail, and is among the many Old World mustards that have invaded North America. Sahara mustard is a robust, fast-growing, drought-tolerant winter annual that prefers sandy soils. The nearly leafless flowering stems branch profusely and grow to a height of about two feet, creating the appearance of a shrub from a distance. The small light yellow flowers are self-pollinating, so each of the thousands of them sets a seed pod. Large plants produce up to 16,000 seeds. Dried plants break off at the base and tumble like



Russian thistle (tumbleweed, *Salsola tragus*), spreading seeds rapidly across the landscape. When wet, the seeds are sticky with mucilage and can be transported long distances by animals and trail users.

## Why is it a Threat?

This weed grows very fast, smothering native herbaceous plants and competing with shrubs for light and soil moisture. The famous wildflower fields of the sandy valleys of Lower Colorado River Valley Sonoran Desertscrub are in grave danger. In the winter-spring of 2005 about three-quarters of the most famous wildflower areas in California and Arizona were overrun with Sahara mustard.

In wet years Sahara mustard covers the ground almost 100% and can carry fire when it dries. It is a frightful thought that hyperarid desert, including sand dunes, can burn because of this weed. Most desert plants

cannot tolerate fire; burned areas become wastelands of nearly pure exotic weeds.

Plants have a high oxalic acid content, so they may be toxic to desert tortoises and other native herbivores.

## Habitat

It is most abundant in Lower Colorado River Valley Sonoran Desertscrub and lower Mohave Desertscrub. It's currently uncommon in Arizona Upland Sonoran Desertscrub, and rare in chaparral and desert grassland. It favors sandy, disturbed soils at low elevations, but its range is expanding

rapidly into undisturbed soils including rocky hillsides. The literature lists its elevational range as 250 to 2800 feet, but it has recently been found above 4100 feet and there is one record from 7000 feet. It has been



documented along the

Arizona Trail near the Gila River (Passage 16).

## What Can Be Done

One of the first tasks is to document the extent of the invasion and the impacts on the environment. This helps to convince land management agencies of the magnitude of the threat and spur action. If you see it, notify the Regional Steward and the Land Manager, both of which are listed under the Steward page on the ATA website.

In small areas Sahara mustard can be eradicated by pulling plants before they mature seed. This is most effective in new invasions where a seed bank has not been established. Even where there are established populations, hand-pulling greatly reduces the following wet year's crop. A weed pulling party will be organized in the springtime along Passage 16.

Other Common Names: Asian mustard, Moroccan mustard, desert mustard, southwestern mustard, Mediterranean mustard, Mediterranean turnip, wild turnip, prickly turnip, turnip weed. Spanish: mostaza del Sahara, mostaza del desierto.

For more information, please visit the Invaders page at [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org).

Help stop the spread of Sahara mustard along the Arizona Trail by documenting where you see it, and pulling it out before it goes to seed!



Arizona Trail Association  
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THAT Brewery  
The Granola Guy  
Tucson Saddle Club  
Western Spirit Cycling

### 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 maps and elevation profiles; Trail Data Book; Mountain Bike Data Book; Loop Routes; AZT decal; 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!