



Arizona Trail News

News and Information from the Arizona Trail Association

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Warrior Hike

Walking Off the War Along the Arizona Trail



In 1948, Earl Shaffer told a friend he was going to “walk off the war” to work out the sights, sounds, and losses of World War II. Four months later, Shaffer became the first person to hike the entire length of the Appalachian Trail from Georgia to Maine. Following in Earl Shaffer’s footsteps and in recognizing the therapeutic effects of long distance hiking, Warrior Hike has created the “Walk Off The War” program, designed to support combat veterans transitioning from their military service by thru-hiking America’s National Scenic Trails. During their long distance hike, veterans have the opportunity to decompress from their military service and come to terms with their wartime experiences while learning to use the outdoors as an alternative form of therapy.

Historically, military units would experience a lengthy journey home after fighting a campaign abroad. During this journey home, warriors would process and come to terms

with their wartime experiences. But in today’s age of modern transportation, military personnel can find themselves home within a few days of serving in a combat zone. Since 2001, over 2.5 million veterans have returned home from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan but many of them have never transitioned from their experiences. This is evident by the recent report from the Department of Veteran Affairs which states that over 20% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

In 2012, after returning home from three combat deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, Warrior Hike founder Sean Gobin hiked all 2,185 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Recognizing the therapeutic effects of long distance hiking, Sean created the “Walk Off The War” program. He has assisted many veterans share in the same experience on many of America’s great long-distance trails, including the Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail and Continental

Divide Trail. And in the spring of 2015, Warrior Hikers will experience the Arizona Trail, Florida Trail and Ice Age Trail.

“The Arizona Trail Association is very proud to be able to partner with Warrior Hike in support of their mission,” said Matthew Nelson, the ATA’s Executive Director. “With the number of veterans in Arizona and the remote wilderness experiences found along the Arizona Trail, I can’t think of a better place for combat veterans to ‘walk off the war’ than along the AZT. We are honored to be part of this program and look forward to supporting the Warrior Hikers as they walk between Mexico and Utah.”

Veterans participating in the AZT Warrior Hike will receive support before, during and after their thru-hike, including necessary equipment, supplies and navigational resources. Working together, Warrior Hike and the ATA will coordinate trail town support with the numerous veteran organizations and gateway communities along the way. Trail town support includes transportation, food and lodging in addition to providing the opportunity to socialize with veterans from past wars and local community groups.

Warrior Hikers will experience their journey with the camaraderie of other veterans who understand the challenges of transitioning from military service to civilian life. Interaction with members of trail town veteran organizations and local communities facilitates

veterans’ reintegration into society, restores their faith in humanity, and builds a network of life-long friendships and relationships. From Sierra Vista to Superior to Page, local veterans within Arizona Trail gateway communities are already looking forward to the arrival of their military brothers and sisters.

A total of four Warrior Hikers are expected to participate in this inaugural walk along the Arizona Trail, and Gobin has carefully interviewed and selected individuals for this endeavor. They should start from the southern terminus along the U.S./Mexico border sometime in March and plan to spend 50 days on the trail.

“It is our hope that this year’s Warrior Hike encourages recently returned combat veterans throughout Arizona and America to experience the Arizona Trail for many years to come,” said Nelson. “Whether as part of the Warrior Hike or on their own, veterans participating in this type of activity is one of the reasons the Arizona Trail and the ATA exist.”

Donations to support the Warrior Hike can be made online at

www.aztrail.org
and
www.warriorhike.org

If you would like to volunteer to help with Warrior Hike gatherings and support in gateway communities, please email Sirena:

gateway@aztrail.org



Warrior Hikers and local veterans enjoy time together in trail towns during their long-distance hiking expeditions. *Warrior Hike Photo*



Dear Friend of the Arizona Trail,

Winter paints many beautiful scenes across Arizona. This year has seen snow fall at almost every elevation between Mexico and Utah, if even for a few hours. I was fortunate enough to walk along Passage 1 in February after a recent storm and trudging through thick snow banks and swirling fog was a unique experience. I arrived at the high point of the Huachuca Mountains just in time to watch the sun begin to emerge from behind a seemingly impenetrable wall of grey clouds. Within a few minutes all of the clouds were gone, revealing the golden glow of the grasslands below and the snow-capped sky island mountains of Arizona and Sonora. It was a vivid reminder of what incredible places the Arizona Trail can take you.

Seasons in Arizona are unlike anywhere else: dramatic and unpredictable, and sometimes over before you can recognize they've even begun. Winter is probably the most important season in Arizona. The rain and snow we receive between November and February will have much to do with how much water is flowing in March and April when thru-hikers from around the world embark upon their AZT adventures. Thus far it's shaping up to be a pleasant Spring, and wildflowers have already begun to show their faces in the lower elevations.

If you attended the Annual Meeting of the Arizona Trail Association in February then you know we've got big plans for 2015. The number of projects and initiatives we're taking on is impressive, and is only possible with your support. Whether you're a member, donor, business partner, volunteer or general Arizona Trail enthusiast, we hope you're proud of what the ATA has done and continues to do. And we invite you to get more involved this year. Working together, we can accomplish some truly amazing things.

Enjoy this issue of the Arizona Trail News, then get out there and enjoy the trail.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Nelson
Executive Director

To Print or Not to Print?

Want to receive the Arizona Trail News by email instead?

Send us an email at ata@aztrail.org and we'll email directions on how to read the full-color version of the newsletter online. The "paperless" option saves the ATA printing and postage expenses so we can direct more resources toward the trail.

Arizona Trail Association

PO Box 36736 | Phoenix, Az 85067 | 602-252-4794 | www.aztrail.org

The Arizona National Scenic Trail

Our Vision...

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

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Pulliam Trust Sustains the Seeds of Stewardship

In December, the Arizona Trail Association received the exciting news that the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust had decided to support the ATA's Seeds of Stewardship program with a grant for \$100,000. Just as winter rain fell from the sky upon the thirsty desert, this generous grant will provide vital resources to a program that encourages the next generation to enjoy and protect the Arizona Trail through outings, educational opportunities and stewardship projects.



The mission of the Seeds of Stewardship is to provide educational and meaningful outdoor experiences that empower youth to become the next generation of stewards of Arizona's wild landscapes. The program was initiated in 2012 to foster a connection between youth and the natural resources that exist near their hometowns, utilize the Arizona Trail as an outdoor classroom, and engage youth in service projects to benefit trails, parks and public lands within close proximity to home. This successful three-tiered approach helps plant "seeds of stewardship" within youth.

"The support of the Trust is perfectly timed to help the Arizona Trail Association expand our successful environmental education program," said Jan

Hancock, ATA Founding Board Member and youth advocate. "The financial support will thrust this program forward in a truly meaningful way, and our work to provide this unique stewardship program to youth throughout Arizona will now be offered to hundreds more students and their educators in 2015 and beyond."

Funding from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust will be received over a period of three years, allowing the program to grow sustainably and attract other funding sources over time.



A student from Superior High School makes a fritillary friend while on a Seeds of Stewardship outing. ATA Photo

Introducing our Seeds of Stewardship Leaders



Sabrina Carlson,
Northern Arizona Youth Outreach & Education Coordinator

Sabrina is an avid trail runner, mountain biker, adventure yogi and general outdoor enthusiast. As a certified Montessori Teacher, she spent 12 years teaching children in a classroom and finding creative ways to take them outside for as much of their learning as possible. During this time, she developed a unique talent for finding ways to adapt almost any learning goal to include a hands-on, outdoor, and place-based component.

In 2012 Sabrina left the classroom to focus on teacher education, working for the Bioregional Outdoor Education Project. In her position as AZ Regional Coordinator, she had the privilege of sharing with other teachers her strategies for getting students connected to their surrounding communities and spending more time outdoors. After taking a little time off in 2013/2014 to welcome her new son, Sabrina is super excited to be back with the kids and teachers and once again empowering educational leaders to take kids outside! She looks forward to a spring filled with outdoor adventures and learning opportunities on the Arizona Trail with the students and teachers of Northern Arizona.



Rebecca Patterson-Markowitz,
Southern Arizona Youth Outreach & Education Coordinator

Rebecca has been in love with the Sonoran Desert since childhood. Growing up hiking with family in Tucson she experienced outdoor education and stewardship at an early age. She seeks to share with the students an appreciation for the natural world as well as an opportunity for self-knowledge that can come from working together on the trail and pushing beyond previously known boundaries.

As passionate about travel as she is her desert home, Rebecca has spent time living in Guatemala and Argentina, where she has taught English and worked with an after school tutoring program. Her work in Central and South America has made her a flexible and resourceful teacher who enjoys incorporating many different kinesthetic and visual teaching styles into every lesson and outing.

In addition to her involvement with the Seeds of Stewardship program, Rebecca currently works as a substitute teacher and volunteers with Watershed Management Group and the Pima County Attorney's Office Victim Services Division.



Gateway Community Spotlight: Kearny

by Sirena Dufault

From the Tortilla Mountains ridgeline on Passage 15, a fan-shaped town is visible on the banks of the Gila River in the saguaro-studded valley below. The Gateway Community of Kearny (population 2,030) was named after mid-1800's frontier General Stephen Kearny and calls itself the Heart of the Copper Basin. The town was established in 1954 to accommodate nearby mine operations and is seven miles south of where the Arizona Trail crosses the Florence-Kelvin Highway.

There are many beautiful places to explore nearby such as the White Canyon Wilderness, Pinal Mountains and the Arizona Trail along the Gila River in Passage 16. Mayor Sam Hosler believes that the Arizona Trail is a wonderful way to showcase



Not far from Kearny you'll find some of the finest miles of trail in the state of Arizona. ATA Photo

the striking desert near Kearny and is proud to be a part of our Gateway Community Program. There is a grocery store and hardware store in town for resupply and trail users have the option of staying at the General Kearny Inn or at a free campground at 13-acre Kearny Lake. If you're looking for a spinal tune-up Kearny Life Center offers chiropractic adjustments. For an unforgettable experience, the four-bedroom A Diamond Ranch vacation rental is available right

on the Gila River within walking distance of the Arizona Trail.

For a complete list of services available nearby, check out

www.aztrail.org/gateway/coppercorridor.html

Old Time Pizza is a favorite stop for trail users, volunteers and folks just passing through the area. Owners Gary and Lorraine Birkett are enthusiastic about using as well as promoting the trail and will accept resupply packages.

If you're lucky, Gary might get out the guitar and sing you one of his songs! Originally from the Gateway Community of Sierra Vista, they have operated Old Time Pizza for the last 20 years, helping folks refuel with tasty hand-tossed pizzas, a salad bar, catfish and sweet potato fries, and the best iced tea in all of Kearny. They even have a giant Arizona Trail banner displayed in the restaurant and invite anyone who hikes, bikes, or rides the AZT to sign their names.

On Saturday, March 14 Kearny celebrates its 55th Annual Pioneer Days Parade, and you're invited to attend. The festivities get underway around 10 a.m. downtown and locals from throughout the area are expected to be there to celebrate. If you ever wanted to immerse yourself in the history and culture of Kearny, this could be your chance. For more information, contact the Copper Basin Chamber of Commerce at (520) 363-7607.

Grand Canyon Raft Trip Raffle

Experience the adventure of a lifetime for only \$20!

Near the top of every outdoor adventurer's bucket list is a float trip down the Colorado River through the heart of Grand Canyon. Experiencing this natural wonder from the river is unlike anything else, and has been described as "the adventure of a lifetime."

Thanks to Arizona River Runners and Grand Canyon Whitewater, the Arizona Trail Association is pleased to offer raffle tickets for a dream trip down the river. The lucky winner will receive a

\$2,500 gift certificate that can be used for an individual or group for a variety of itineraries (from 4-13 days) with Arizona River Runners & Grand Canyon Whitewater during their 2015 or 2016 seasons.

Tickets are \$20 each or 6 for \$100 and can be purchased on the ATA raffle page

www.aztrail.org/raffle.html

Raffle tickets will remain on sale until a winner is selected

on April 1. One-hundred percent of proceeds from ticket sales will benefit the Arizona Trail Association.

Arizona River Runners & Grand Canyon Whitewater are professional Grand Canyon expedition companies that guide people from all over the world on the Colorado River. These sister companies have an enduring passion for sharing the unique environment of the Grand Canyon with guests and preserving it for future generations of

adventurers and families to discover. Enjoy views of lofty canyon walls, Native American ruins, wildlife encounters, astonishing side canyon hikes and exciting whitewater.

For more information, please visit:

www.raftarizona.com

and

www.grandcanyonwhitewater.com



Living What You Love:

A lesson from Peter Bigfoot at the Reevis Mountain School

Article & Photographs by Natalie Muilenberg

"This is it. This is home," Peter "Bigfoot" Busnack said, gazing upon a secluded spot within the Superstition Wilderness back in 1979. With a year-round creek, two underground springs, good soil, and mild weather, the former Upper Horrell Ranch would soon become the Reevis Mountain School.

It is in this remote desert oasis off Hwy 188 near Globe that Peter shares his passions of living off the land and being your own chef, gardener, farmer, doctor, stone mason, and carpenter. It is located a short distance from the Arizona National Scenic Trail (Passage 19-Superstition Wilderness), and the Reavis Gap Trail connects the AZT to the Reevis Mountain School. It's perfectly positioned between the Superstition and Four Peaks Wilderness areas, and is becoming a destination for thru-hikers and as a starting point for explorations along the AZT.



The Reevis Mountain School's organic garden.

After purchasing the ranch in 1979 with the help of Phoenix attorney John Goodson, Peter and several others established an orchard of 125 fruit and nut trees, an organic garden, living quarters, a mini hospital and a school.

Today the Reevis Mountain School boasts over 70 chickens, several turkeys, ducks, solar systems, swimming holes, a greenhouse, orchards with fig, persimmon, peach, pear and



Peter Bigfoot and one of the resident turkeys.

apricot trees, and a cat named Max. Peter, an experience survivalist having trekked 85 miles in 15 days in the Sonoran Desert during one of the hottest and driest summers without any food or water, has 73 years of wisdom not only about harvesting herbs, healing wounds with raw honey, and building stone houses, but also about life.

"What we love is what we are here to do," he says. "What we love is our true self. And because of that, we often feel too vulnerable to live what we love because of the fear of loss, failure, and ridicule. But by having the courage to live what we love, we are not only fulfilling ourselves, but others as well."

Peter's love of the outdoors and self-reliance started as a young boy hunting and fishing in the forests of New Jersey. Growing up, he was very aware of the world's suffering—needless suffering.

"I've seen my parents die of cancer and so many people suffering from so many illnesses," he says. "That impacted my life. I learned from observing nature while growing up that there were simple, effective remedies for nearly all of the suffering. We just have to learn from the natural world how to do it. For most of my life, I've been learning how to heal myself and others with herbs, diet, oriental acupressure, and attitude. My greatest joy is teaching people how to heal themselves with simple natural remedies."

Peter and his small team of interns and staff share their knowledge in classes at the School, like wilderness survival, oriental acupressure, wild edible medicinal and useful plants, off-grid homestead living, stone masonry, and herbal pharmacology. To see a full list, dates, and prices, visit

reevismountain.org/calendar.html

By attending the School's courses, you'll learn firsthand how to identify food or medicine in the wild and how it use it.

"When we learn about plants, bushes, and trees and what they can do for us, this wilderness

Upcoming Classes at Reevis Mountain School

Wilderness Survival

April 3-5\$238

Wild Edible & Medicinal Plants

April 24-26\$178

May 10-12\$178

Off-Grid Homestead Living

May 1-3\$178

Stone Masonry

June 6-11\$143

Oriental Acupressure

Oct 22-25\$238

Herbal Pharmacology

Nov 13-15\$178

becomes a nurturing friend. You'll feel more at home in the wild knowing you can handle bites, stings, illness, and injury from what can be found in the wild. This will enrich your life and your experiences on the trail."

To learn more, visit:

reevismountain.org



Stone masonry is one of the many important skills you can learn at the Reevis Mountain School.



Making the Most of Hiking with Your Dogs

by Crystal Blaker

My interest in working with dogs began in high school while working at a local boarding and daycare facility in the east valley area of Phoenix. This interest led to me choosing to study Animal Science at the University of Arizona where I graduated with a B.S. degree in 2007. The majority of my work life since graduating from the U of A has been spent as both a full-time and part-time employee of the Humane Society of Southern Arizona (HSSA). My last position with the HSSA was as their Animal Enrichment and Behavior Coordinator.

The more I learned about dogs and how they behave, the more I noticed that exercise, specifically structured exercise or “work” contributed in a positive way to their health, behavior and overall well being.

I remember well when my husband Michael and I took our dog on her first hike and he suggested that we let her off her leash on the trail. I was very nervous. I thought what if she runs away and never comes back, what if she doesn't listen to us and doesn't have fun?

Michael felt confident that everything would be okay, so we took off her leash, and off we went with Wrigley carrying her own doggy backpack. To my surprise she stayed right behind us hiking the entire time at our pace. Never once did she try to run away, she was attentive, had a blast and was just as tired as we were at the end of the hike!

Hiking with your dogs makes both of your lives more enjoyable. Using a doggy backpack for your dog helps them get structured

exercise or “work,” tiring them out both mentally and physically while carrying their own food, water and supplies.

Most families struggle with taking their dogs out for walks on a consistent basis for many reasons, but one of them being because their dogs aren't well behaved. They are either pulling on the leash, chasing cars, or barking and lunging at anything that moves. One way to help your dog focus more during a hike is to put them to work.

Most dogs want a job to do and putting a backpack on them gives them one. You can add around 10 percent of their body weight to the backpack without causing too much strain. You can also have them carry their own treats to help encourage them to stay near you.

One Size Does Not Fit All

You can find a doggy backpack for just about any size dog. It took us a while to find out what type of doggy backpack fits best for our three dogs because they vary greatly in size and shape.

Our smallest dog, Larry, a Miniature Poodle that weighs 12 pounds, wears a backpack from Sierra Dog Supply. This backpack is great because it is small enough for his size and streamlined so the pack doesn't bulge on the sides too much and hit rocks.

Our medium sized dog, Wrigley, a Goldendoodle that weighs 55 pounds, wears a backpack from Mountainsmith. This backpack is much larger, bulkier, has load straps, and a bungee strap on

top to easily store your leash or other item that you want for a quick grab.

Our largest dog, Calvin, a Standard Poodle that weighs 65 pounds, wears a backpack from Sierra Dog Supply as well. This pack fits him well because it allows for his deep chest, yet adjusts to fit his narrow waist.

Top Pack Picks for Pooches

If you want to carry lots of supplies, I would recommend the Mountainsmith Dog Backpack as they have more room to store items, have load straps, additional pockets, and are very durable. There are a total of four straps with clips on the Mountainsmith backpack; two that go around the ribs of the dog, one that clips in the front of the chest and then an additional one that clips from the front of the chest strap to the rib strap to prevent the backpack from moving back on the dog too much.

The Sierra Dog Supply backpacks are more aerodynamic with a pocket on each side of the pack which makes it light enough

and easy for a small dog to carry. There are a total of two straps with clips on the Sierra Dog Supply backpack; one that goes across the front of his chest and one that goes around his ribs.



Put your dog to work on the trail by outfitting them with a pack. *Ruff House Photo*

What Makes a "Good" Trail Dog?

Most hiking areas prohibit off leash hiking for safety and other reasons, yet you can tether your dog to your waist and have them follow behind you. Hiking with

your dog can help develop trust and build a stronger bond. Like walking, hiking with your dog is another great way to provide exercise dogs need. As the saying goes "a tired dog is a well behaved dog."

When you have a stronger bond with your dog you can teach them many behaviors like "come" when called, loose leash walking, "stay" and "leave it," to name a few, which are all extremely important when hiking with your dog. These commands are even more important if you are hiking off leash with your dog because not all dogs are dog friendly, and you want to be able to call your dog to you when hiking off leash if you see another dog approaching.

"Leave it" comes in handy when hiking off leash because there are all kinds of things that can harm your dog like cacti, wild animals or even trash on the trail.

Ruff House

I started Ruff House Dog Training & Behavior Modification part-time in 2011 and serve as Director of Training. After deciding to expand the

business in 2014, my husband Michael joined the team full-time as Director of Marketing & Operations. At Ruff House we teach basic and advanced dog obedience and help dog owners eliminate problem behaviors like leash pulling, digging, chewing and barking. We perform our training in private one-on-one settings and offer group classes for puppies and adult dogs.

When we are not training dogs you will find us hiking and mountain biking on many of Southern Arizona's trail systems. Our favorite Arizona Trail section is Passage #38 - Grand Canyon - Inner Gorge from the South Kaibab Trailhead to Phantom Ranch. We hiked this section of the trail as part of our one day, round-trip hike to Phantom Ranch from the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

Crystal Blaker is the Lead Trainer and Owner of Ruff House Dog Training & Behavior Modification. For more information about specific dog backpacks and dog training, visit www.ruffhouse.biz or call (520) 820-7252.

Dogs on the Arizona Trail

Hikers often bring their canine companions on day hikes and extended backpacking trips along the Arizona Trail, but should be prepared for a lack of water, rocky terrain, cactus forests and poisonous wildlife. Day trips and well-planned overnight adventures in some areas are possible, however dogs are not allowed on trails within the following segments of the AZT: Saguaro National Park (Passage 9); Pusch Ridge Wilderness (Passages 11-12); Grand Canyon National Park (Passages 37-39).

Just like with humans, finding (or carrying) ample water for your Arizona Trail adventure is most important. Planning a trip with your pup requires identifying water sources in advance. Consult the water source databook online or *Your Complete Guide to the Arizona National Scenic Trail* for more information.

Most passages of the Arizona Trail are rocky and can tear a pooch's paws within a few miles. A well-conditioned dog is necessary to survive an extended outing on the AZT, and training them to wear

dog boots in advance of your hike is wise. Ruff Wear is among the many companies that specialize in dog boots for rocky, sandy and challenging terrain.

Cactus, specifically, cholla is a concern for hiking with dogs in the southern portion of Arizona. These often end up in feet or legs, but the dilemma begins when your dog tries to remove the painful pricklers with their mouth. The spines lodge deep within their cheeks, tongue and gums, and cholla have asphyxiated many dogs. Carrying a plastic comb for swift removal of cholla is vital. Needle nose pliers are also a good tool to add to your kit for removing large spines or if the cholla ball ends up in your dog's mouth.

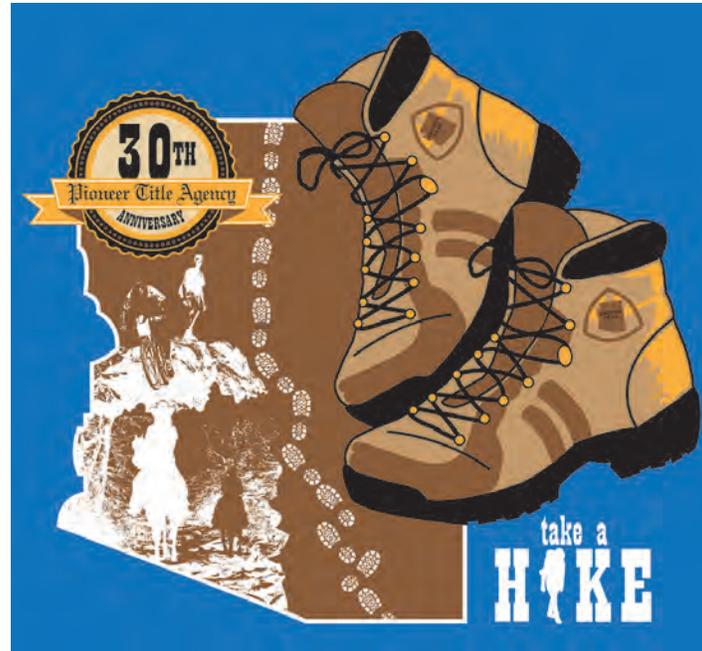
Poisonous wildlife, especially rattlesnakes, can also be lethal to your pet. Keeping your dog leashed will minimize this potential hazard. Rattlesnakes are prevalent on the Arizona Trail, especially south of the Mogollon Rim. Black bears are also a concern, and are found throughout the state – including the Huachuca, Santa Rita, Rincon and Santa Catalina Mountains in the south.

Pioneer Title Agency Celebrates Thirty Years by Taking a Hike on the Arizona Trail

Pioneer Title Agency is an Arizona-based, family owned business that has operated under the philosophy of 'Commitment to Service' since its inception in 1985. With their 30th anniversary happening this year, Pioneer leadership wanted to celebrate in a big way. Instead of a party in the grand ballroom of a prestigious resort, Pioneer is encouraging the health and wellness of their employees and local communities through a partnership with the Arizona Trail Association.

Pioneer's team of more than 300 individuals will collectively hike, bike, run or ride all 800 miles of the Arizona Trail between February and June. Families, friends, customers and associates will also be invited to participate. In addition to the wellness benefits associated with time spent on the trail, this initiative will encourage everyone to explore a segment of the Arizona Trail that they likely haven't seen. The planning process of a point-to-point hike, overnight camping trip, or longer distance effort on the AZT will encourage collaboration, critical thinking and camaraderie, too.

"This project – which many of our offices will be undertaking together – is one of many volunteer and fundraising activities happening in 2015 that our folks will be involved in," said Keith Newlon, co-founder and president of Pioneer. "In fact, our team has a statewide community relations program, *Pioneer Title Agency in Action*, which focuses on giving back both time and



Pioneer Title Agency
COMMITMENT TO SERVICE

money to hundreds of local causes across Arizona. While our "Take A Hike" Trail program is special for our 30th anniversary, giving back at the hyperlocal level is something each and every team member in all 55 branches is encouraged to do each day.

"The Trail initiative is really two-fold," continued Newlon. "While raising money for the Arizona Trail is important we want to also raise awareness to all the Trail offers – it's a unique giant playground for us all to enjoy and we want to spread the word."

Perhaps not coincidentally, the concept of the Arizona Trail began about 30 years ago when Dale

Shewalter sat atop Coronado Peak near the U.S./Mexico border and shared his dream of a cross-state trail with others. The nearest town to this historic location is Sierra Vista, the home office of Pioneer Title Agency.

"One of our goals for this challenge is that more Arizonans will fall in love with the natural wonders that exist along the Arizona National Scenic Trail," said Matthew Nelson, Executive Director of the Arizona Trail Association. "Pioneer's commitment to covering the entire length of the trail is admirable, and means that many individuals will get to experience some of the least traveled areas in our state."

Pioneer Title Agency is encouraging their team members and associates to raise money to support the Arizona Trail, with a cumulative goal of at least \$30,000. This will greatly assist the ATA's trail operations program and directly fund some of the exciting trail projects planned to improve the AZT in 2015.

"It seems very fitting that Pioneer Title Agency, being a local Arizona company with such a wide reach across the state, become involved with something as special as the Arizona Trail," said Paul Jordan, VP – Area Sales Manager for Pioneer. "Arizona is a place where we live and raise our families, a place where we work and serve our local communities and also a place where we play. Getting out on the trail and connecting with people, our families and friends will be a wonderful, exciting and memorable experience."

Pioneer Title Agency is a recent Arizona Corporate Excellence honoree for its dedication to the community, and their "adoption" of the Arizona Trail will have profoundly positive effects for everyone who participates.

When you see hikers, runners, mountain bikers and horseback riders on the trail this spring and summer wearing Pioneer T-shirts, please tell them "thanks" for their commitment to service.

To learn more about Pioneer's Arizona Trail Challenge, watch their progress, and see photos from the trail, visit:

www.aztrail.org/pioneertitle/pioneertitle.php

Volunteer Profile

Rhinos Work Hard on the Arizona Trail

Team Rhino, a bicycling club based in Tucson, has joined the ranks of Arizona Trail Stewards, teaming up with the Tucson Saddle Club to take care of Segment 8-b. This is a heavily used segment of trail in the foothills of the Rincon Mountains, between Pistol Hill Road and La Posta Quemada Ranch in Colossal Cave Mountain Park. It's a popular destination for hikers, runners, mountain bikers and equestrians alike.

While some parts of the country experience conflict between equestrians and mountain bikers, on the Arizona National Scenic Trail this is not the case. The two groups share trails with mutual respect and courtesy, and problems are extremely rare. They also work together on the ground, which strengthens the bond between the two user groups.



Team Rhino rides and races throughout Arizona, and can regularly be found maintaining the Arizona Trail near Vail. *Team Rhino Photo*

Team Rhino was formed in 1997 by a group of friends who like to ride bikes, and grew from a small family to an extended family with 51 members. They ride competitively and to raise funds for various charities.

When construction of 40 miles of the Arizona Trail began in Pima County in 2004, Team Rhino went all in, sponsoring events and playing a significant role in completing the trail.

“When Team Rhino came to an event, I knew a lot of trail would get built,” said Mark Flint, Chief Regional Steward who was volunteer coordinator and event organizer for the Cienega Construction Project. “They welcomed the challenge, and the tougher the work the better they liked it. They were a huge help.”

The club turned out 25 members for a December 2014 work event, which represents nearly half their membership. “Most organizations are happy if they can get 10 percent of their members out,” said Flint, “but Team Rhino answers the call with this kind of response every time.”

For more information on Team Rhino, or to send them a “thank you!” please visit

www.teamrhino.us

Wilderness Partners

From March to May 2015, Brian Stultz and Julie Polovitch will hike the entire length of the Arizona Trail. Their mission is to support the Arizona Wilderness Coalition as they prepare for, explore, and document the hike. They will keep a backcountry blog with aims of connecting others to their experience, to the places they'll be visiting, and to the unquantifiable value of Wilderness.

Upon their return to the front country, the duo will compile, edit, and supplement their entries into a book, sharing stories of

their trek and histories of the region's people, flora, and fauna. They are raising funds and collaborating with fellow stewards, backpackers and Arizona Trail Association (ATA) members to make this project possible.

Proceeds will go towards food and gear and will benefit the Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC), a 501c3 non-profit organization that works throughout the state to permanently protect and restore Arizona's wilderness and other wild lands and waters for the

enjoyment of all, and to ensure that Arizona's native plants and animals have a lasting home in wild nature. Seeking advice and support, they say, “We are looking forward to connecting with kindred lovers of Arizona.”

To learn more about Brian and Julie's project, visit their website:

www.aztrailwild.com



In 2015, the ATA and AWC will work collaboratively to support each other's wilderness stewardship programs by sharing volunteers and resources, and working to improve the AZT within each of the eight wilderness areas between Mexico and Utah. Since some wilderness areas are among the most neglected along the AZT due to their remote nature and AWC's "Wild Stew" volunteers specialize in this kind of terrain, everyone is excited about the partnership.

ATA and ACE Offer Training Sessions for Trail Work Volunteers

Are you interested in learning more about properly monitoring, maintaining and constructing trails? Are you a steward of the Arizona Trail or are you interested in helping out with trail projects? Do you like to get your hands dirty while learning valuable skills at the same time? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then make your reservations today for the upcoming trail trainings!

This collaboration between the Arizona Trail Association (ATA) and American Conservation Experience (ACE) is intended to teach valuable skills to volunteers, including those who have been involved in trail projects for many years. Drawing upon thousands of hours on the trail and in the classroom, including some of the most daunting trail projects you can imagine, ACE staff will inspire, educate, and give you the skills you need to be an effective steward and trail volunteer. From learning more about arid lands hydrology and how it relates to trail sustainability, to building rock check dams and realigning portions of poorly built trail, these sessions include time-tested techniques and innovative principles.

Each two-day training will take place entirely outdoors, with a focus on experiential learning. While there will be talks and demonstrations, the instructors have found that classroom time is never as valuable as time on the trail and a PowerPoint is no replacement for a pick mattock. Discussions will also happen around the campfire since participants are encouraged to camp together and immerse themselves in the experience for the weekend.



Dates for Trail Trainings:

March 7-8	Oracle
April 18-19	Pine
Sept. 19-20	Flagstaff
Oct. 17-18	Patagonia

Each training session is designed to benefit veteran trail dogs and first-timers alike. This is accomplished through various modules presented within the trainings:

Module 1: Seeing the Trail

- ✦ Learn how to see the trail in the context of the surrounding landscape.
- ✦ Study the terrain to identify where the water is coming from, what it does once it reaches the trail, and the potential effects to the trail and landscape.
- ✦ Learn how to identify and to mitigate potential erosion problems.
- ✦ Learn how to assess and to document trail issues for future work.

- ✦ Participants will receive an overview of desert and arid lands hydrology and soils in the context of trail work.

Module 2: Trail Corridor and Maintenance

- ✦ Learn trail corridor theory to gain a sense of why trail work matters.
- ✦ Learn about standard brushing limits and proper techniques for heavy brushing and long-term plant health.
- ✦ Learn about earthen drainage features, when to use each one and how they act on the trail.
- ✦ Participants will learn the nuances of trail closures and rehabilitating user-created trails, and the psychology of keeping people on the trail.

Module 3: Stone Maintenance Structures

- ✦ Learn about why stone structures become necessary.
- ✦ Learn dry stone masonry principles and how they relate to trail work.

- ✦ Learn and build rock check dams.
- ✦ Learn and build backed water bars or armored drain pans.

Module 4: Re-route Design and Trail Layout

- ✦ Learn the principals of trail design and deciding between switchbacks and climbing turns.
- ✦ Learn the regulations and environmental laws behind constructing new trail.
- ✦ Learn why a trail needs to be realigned, and how to do that with minimal impact.
- ✦ Learn GPS route planning, corridor, and tight flagging to learn how to design a trail that any crew can see as you do.
- ✦ Other important elements integrated into the trainings include event planning; tool maintenance; leadership, inspiration and motivation; limbing and bucking using wilderness tools; and “The User Experience: How trail workers can add or detract from the experience.”

Registration for the two-day trainings is only \$125 per person and includes professional instruction, a Trail Assessment Handbook, four meals and lots of fun! Space is limited so please register today by going online to:

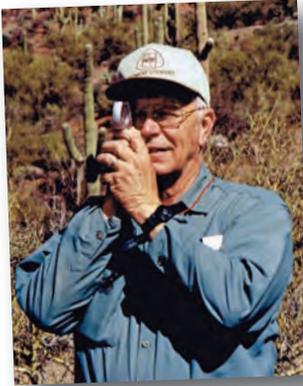
www.aztrail.org/volunteers/training.html



A Tribute to Jim Martin

ATA's First Central Arizona
Regional Steward

by Jan Hancock



Jim Martin uses a clinometer while surveying a remote area that would someday become the Arizona National Scenic Trail.

If your travels along the Arizona National Scenic Trail have carried you over the challenging terrain and sweeping landscapes of Pinal County, your presence there will be a tribute to the founding volunteer stewardship efforts of Jim Martin, a beloved member of the Arizona Trail Association community. Jim passed away on December 4, 2014 at the age of 78.

Jim was featured in the Spring 1997 issue of the *ATA News*, testimony to the early 1990's trail work that was getting underway on the planning and construction of the Arizona Trail between Oracle and Superior. Jim was a Charter Member of the Arizona Trail Association and a member of the Board of Directors. When Jim discovered the biggest gap in the Arizona Trail plan was in Pinal County, Jim's home for 25+ years, he decided to do what he could to put the trail on the ground. Jim adopted Segments 17 and 18 of the Arizona Trail; these two segments combined encompassed nearly 73 miles of the trail.

Jim and his family loved the outdoors, hiking and horseback riding. As a fourth-generation Arizonan, Jim embraced his life

in Coolidge and the surrounding communities. His contributions to his community, his church, and protecting people in his 21-year career as an officer with the Arizona Department of Public Safety and his work in developing the 911 emergency systems for the Pinal County Sheriff's Office clearly defined his character.

Jim also served his community through leadership in 4-H, the Fraternal Order of Police and the Elks Club. He spent many years bringing compassion to his volunteer work in the Prison Ministry at the Florence Prison for his church, the Spirit of Joy United Methodist Church. Jim and his wife, Jean, have four daughters who actively supported Jim's volunteer work on the Arizona Trail, and they are extremely proud of the legacy he leaves for so many of us to enjoy.

One of the Arizona Trail leaders who knew Jim the best was former Arizona State Parks Trails Coordinator and Arizona Trail Association Board member, Eric Smith, who shared his thoughts: "Jim and I became good friends, and we spent many days bushwhacking between Oracle and the White Canyon Wilderness. We'd comment that the topography north of the Gila River was certainly intimidating. Jim was instrumental in co-coordinating Dean Prichard's three-day, 70-mile exploratory horseback ride in 1995, which allowed us to traverse the desired alignment, GPS the route, and identify water sources in preparation for working with the Arizona State Land Department and affected lessees.

Jim would tell me great stories of his days as a highway patrol officer, and it was a pleasure to spend time with him. Jim had the tough task of "smoothing over" the grazing lessees who were initially very opposed to the Arizona Trail, yet he persevered. Jim never gave up in his quest to establish the Arizona Trail in Pinal County; Dale Shewalter and others certainly appreciated his efforts."

Former ATA Executive Director and Trail Director Larry Snead, also worked closely with Jim over many years, and he shared his memories of their times together: "I worked extensively with Jim as we located the route the Arizona State Land Department had marked as the pathway and then scheduled work events. We started building trail at the Tiger Mine Road heading north. Then we reached what we called 'Rabbit Ear Wash' and found a route up the wash to stage our work events from that location. We continued doing that for 50 miles and along the way recruited some great people like Kent Taylor to be the trail steward to help us build the trail but also to help keep it maintained. Jim was active with us building trail for a while but then had to stop doing trail construction because of commitments to his church. He was a fine man and will be missed."

Kent Taylor, an Arizona Trail Segment Steward and the Director of Open Space and Trails with Pinal County, was the first to share the news of Jim Martin's passing. He shared his thoughts about Jim: "He was one of the early supporters of the

Arizona Trail in Pinal County, and Jim was the Regional Steward when I first became involved with the ATA. Many of my first work events were with Jim, and they are times I will never forget."

Jim's legacy will be preserved in the history and the future of the Arizona National Scenic Trail, and those who knew him will forever honor his leadership and his commitment to the Arizona Trail.



Mexican gold poppies bloom along the AZT's Passage 16 near the Gila River. ATA Photo



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