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Passage 7 - Las Cienegas December 10, 2013

Uber-gate installation. Tuesday, December 10, the usual suspects gathered at the AZT/Sahuarita Road crossing to install another heavy steel gate. These over-the-top gates are becoming an AZT icon. Built by artist/welder Rob Bauer, they are really works of functional art that accommodate bikers, hikers and equestrians but block ATV's and resolve gate issues for all time. Bernie bought the power jack hammer from the Coronado NF in case we hit hard pack; we didn't want to be there all day. Rob brought the gate and stayed to help install it; Rob's wife Michelle came along to photograph the work. All went according to plan, everyone pitched in digging the holes; the whole group muscled the gate off the trailer and walked it in from the road. Steve, Tom and Shawn mixed the concrete; Lee, Rob, David and Gerry added rocks down hole to increase the mass holding the gate in place. A quick clean up, followed by the requisite group photo, and everyone was off to Vale, an AZT Gateway Community, for lunch.





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Isn't this fun!

Everyone helps with the digging.



Let's try this.



No, it's not deep enough yet.



Mix the concrete.



Make it level.



Looking good!



Thanks everyone!

Passage 22 - Saddle Mountain November 14, 2013

The sign installations continued on Thursday, November 14. Today it was the Cross F connector trail junction on Passage 22. The three quarter mile connector trail runs east-west and meets the AZT at a small saddle in a perfect setting for one of the "really cool signs" from AZT-friendly artist/metalworker Rob Bauer.

The three-quarter mile haul posed a challenge for the install crew. The heavy concrete premix and water would have to be hauled in. Fortunately, Segment Steward Bob Brawdy is a "packer," and new volunteers Cisco and Rosy proved very helpful getting the materials to the site.

Joe, John, Jim and Shawn hauled the digging tools in and selected the spot. The big unknown installing anything along the AZT is the soil —will it be possible to dig the 30-inch hole necessary to install the sign or will it be rock? Luck held today, the ground at the saddle was hard but workable; the jack hammer was the ideal tool for the job. A few hits with the slide hammer at each placement and the soil gave way and slowly but steadily the hole grew.

Bob arrived with Rosy and Cisco carrying the cement, the mixing tarp was laid out and the concrete mixed and poured around the sign. Jim hammered small rocks into the cement, increasing the mass around the post. John kept a watchful eye on level. With no straight lines in the setting eyeballing it wouldn't work; the only way to ensure the sign was straight was with a bubble level.

The cement poured and the sign leveled, the crew took a short lunch break in the sunshine and perfect temperatures and solved world problems. The four-legged crew members seemed to be enjoying themselves as much as the two-legged variety. After lunch what remained of the hole around the sign was filled and contoured, the disturbed earth was "naturalized," and we all headed out.

Thanks to Bob, John, Jim, Joe, Ruby, Cisco, Rosy and Shawn. Yet another great day on the AZT.

Shawn Redfield



Passage 17/18 - Alamo Canyon/Reavis Canyon



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November 13, 2013

The AZT's north exit/entrance to the Picket Post trailhead has always been a little obscure; hikers unfamiliar with the area have trouble spotting it. This looked like a good location for one of the "really cool signs" that trail-friendly artist/welder Rob Bauer has been making for the trail.

Rob made the sign; all that remained was to plant it. Pablo with the FS arranged for some mechanical assistance from Thom on the Fir crew; John and Shawn brought the sign and materials; Bill and Nancy showed up to help as well. All convened at 9:30 and got to it. Previous installations at the trailhead encountered bedrock a few inches below ground. Thom recalled installing the perimeter fence and the steel AZT sign when the trailhead was constructed. He had to rent a back hoe-mounted hammer to break up the rock for the holes. Luck ran with the crew today, just hard-packed rocky dirt that broke up fairly easily, especially with the electric hammer. The hole was dug, the cement was mixed on the tarp and poured around the sign, and everyone was on their way by 11 AM. Thanks to all, another great day on the AZT!



This is one way to do it.



This is the other way to do it! That little machine made quick work of digging the hole.



300 pounds of concrete and it's all done! Thanks John, Thom, Pablo and Shawn.



Highlights and dresses up the parking lot exit.

Passage 5 - Santa Rita Mountains November 9, 2013

After the kiosk at Kentucky Camp received its new coat of paint, the wooden directional signs through the camp were really showing their age. And the steel sign at the gate was out dated, with distances that were no longer correct. So the sign crew took on the project. Jan and Mike Pengelly built new redwood directional signs and Rob Bauer—the AZT-friendly artist/welder—made another of the really cool signs with the Reuleaux triangle emblem (there had to be a better name for the National Trails symbol than "pregnant triangle").

The project culminated November 9 when the Friends of Kentucky camp and a few of the usual ATA suspects met at the camp to install the signs. The ATA took on the steel sign at the gate, digging the old sign out of the concrete and installing the new one. Bernie borrowed the Douglas Ranger District's gas powered jack hammer which made pretty quick work of the concrete base. No one was expecting concrete under that one. The new sign was hardly in the ground when a couple who are section-hiking the AZT came through and posed for a picture. The usual suspects also gathered for a shot, with Mt. Wrightson in the background.

The Friends of Kentucky Camp were making good progress with the wooden signs, but two remained, so the ATA folks went down to the camp and installed the one by the kiosk and a new one near the barn—the adobe walls next to the road/trail into the camp area.

Thanks to Bernie, Tom, Lee, David, Shawn and the Friends of Kentucky Camp.



Digging out the old sign. No one expected to find a concrete base under it. Thank you Coronado NF for the jack hammer!



Two friendly section hikers were the first to come by the new sign.



New direction signs! Thank you Jan and Mike Pengelly.



Passage 11/12 - Pusch Ridge Wilderness Bypass November 5, 2013

Tom's Sawyers continued clearing trails and installing the new Wilderness Bypass signs on Mt Lemmon today. As always, the group convened at Tom's at 7 AM, this time including a strong northern contingent who, lured by rumors of a monstrous log blocking the trail all got up way before breakfast and made the drive in the dark.

Tools were quickly loaded and everyone headed up the mountain. The trail of choice this day was the Crystal Springs trail, with a sign to be installed where it meets the Control Road. Tom made quick work of that while everyone else was loading packs with saws, loppers, gloves, jackets, water, etc. for the one-and-one-half-mile hike and saw trip. The group left the trailhead at 8 AM sharp, and headed



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south. Several smaller deadfall were quickly dispatched, as were a few more serious trees that took some thought and several minutes clear safely.

The group reached the main event at precisely 10 AM—a 36 inch behemoth blocking the trail and extending a considerable distance on either side. Fred had scouted this log and after seeing the group's enthusiasm was concerned he may have over-sold it. No chance! The bugger was huge!

With seven sawyers there was ample opportunity to rotate the two men on the saw. The log laid at the perfect height for cutting, which made for good progress. The leviathan required two cuts, but it laid well and the sawyers had good cutting positions. The wedges were pounded in as soon as the blade allowed, ample application of bug juice (WD40) kept the saw slippery, and the sawdust piled up on either side. In 40 minutes the first cut was through; the log cracked and creaked, but did not move when the saw went through. With careful setting and prep the second cut was underway. When the saw went out the bottom the huge block held steady. Now was the time to be extra careful—there would be no "little" accidents with this heavyweight.

The guys set blocks to keep the log from rolling where it wasn't intended. As the center block was moved ever so slightly it was clear the high side log was unstable, so that one went first. With great care everyone assembled on the high side and pushed; and the log rolled down across the trail and settled in the low spot below with a delicious thud. The center block quickly followed, coming to rest a good ways off the trail.

Self-congratulations all around, followed by a quick snack and the walk back to the trucks, then lunch at the Sawmill in Summerhaven. Another satisfying and rewarding day on the Arizona Trail! Thanks to Tom, Fred, Joe, John, Lee and David.



Passage 15/16 - Tortilla Mountains/Gila River Canyons October 31, 2013

Sixteen trail enthusiasts gathered in perfect weather on Halloween to put finishing touches on a couple popular AZT trail heads. The opening acts included fence mending and a resupply box installation. The group made quick work of the re-supply box, placing it below the parking lot just beyond the south entrance of the large Florence-Kelvin trailhead. The volunteers, still fresh, chopped four holes into the rocky soil, then leveled the steel box over the holes with the legs extending down into the holes. They mixed and poured a bag of premix concrete around each leg, securing it in place. This box will help minimize trash from deteriorating containers and provide a storage spot for hikers' resupply packages.

A couple of the folks helped Jim from Pinal County mend the boundary fence. They stabilized two posts and strung new cable on the west end of the lot to replace the stolen one. Jim brought the materials and an ingenious sledge hammer-operated shear to cut the tough cable—a task that had frustrated previous cable installations. The right tool is a wonderful thing!

The main event was the installation of two large kiosks, one at the Florence-Kelvin trailhead and one at the BLM access portal on Centurian Road in Kelvin. BLM brought their power auger and jack hammer, which could almost handle the rocky soils. Several volunteers weighed in with digging bars to break out the compacted soils and rocks for the 30-inch-deep post holes. Another group bolted the kiosks to the installation jig, and then everyone helped lower the whole kiosk carefully into the holes. The sharp-eyed ones got it all level and the concrete crew mixed up 6 bags on the tarp and poured it around the legs.

The productive morning was capped by an ample and delicious lunch provided by **ATA Business Partner Old Time Pizza from the Gateway Community of Kelvin!** A key component of the ATA work events is the socializing and "connecting" that the trail promotes, and how better to do that than over a great lunch served off the tailgate of a pick-up truck out in the Arizona fresh air and sunshine. Thank you Lorraine at Old Time Pizza!

The afternoon was a repeat of the kiosk installation from the morning. The auger made quick work of one hole, but exactly 55 and 1/2 inches north of it the soil was mostly rock, requiring much more time and effort. But with the many hands the hole was soon 30 inches deep, the kiosk assembled, the concrete mixed and poured. A few volunteers hung around till the concrete set, then removed the installation jig and installed the display board before heading home to return the rented trailer and unload.

Thank you Lee, David R., Steve C., Carl, David B. William, Joe, John, Don, Steve S. & Bernie.



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Preparing to install the re-supply box.



Working on the holes for the legs.



Ready to pour the pre-mix.



The finished re-supply box.



The power auger in action.



Working with a jack hammer.



Finishing the hole manually.



Assembling the kiosk.

Passage 16 - Gila River Canyons October 28, 2013

Lionel Diaz and Fred Gaudet arrived at Cochran at 8:30. The Gila River was brown but only calf high. Our first stop was Red Mountain Seep to check on the monitoring bucket. Since it was dry—and had been all spring and summer—it was moved about 15' closer to the small pond/puddle from the seep. We walked up the wash to meet the trail on the old Red Mountain mine road. Continuing north on the trail, any cholla spines were 'swept' off the trail. After stopping for lunch the saguaro crossing the tread was less than 100' further up the trail. Removing it was easy since it had thoroughly dried during the late summer/early fall. During the almost five mile hike back to the Gila, we removed five small teddy bear chollas shedding on the trail plus one big multiple arm cholla. There are probably another dozen chollas to remove plus some minor water damage to address, but that will be addressed at a later work event. Perhaps a side trip to the coke ovens can be included as part of the next outing.

Passage 34 - San Francisco Peaks October 5, 2013

When asked to make a trail sign, AZT-friendly welder Rob Bauer came up with an amazingly artful design, which was an immediate hit. The first to be installed now stands proudly at the Bismarck Trail/AZT junction on Passage 34. Andrea, David, Mike, Ian, Pete, Eric, Aaron and Shawn met at the Bismarck TH on a bright and windy Saturday to lug the sign, concrete, water and tools the mile to the junction. Colors on the mountain were near prime, drawing many hikers and bikers out on this incredible stretch of the AZT; several came by while the project was underway. Material was hauled in on Aaron's bike trailer, two wheel barrows and some human power. The soft soil made for quick digging, the three bags of concrete were mixed on a tarp, and the sign was soon installed and leveled. A little clean up scattering the dirt and sod and the job was done. Many hands making light work was never more true.



Sign planting crew - Pete, Ian, Andrea, Aaron, Eric, Shawn, David; photo by Mike.



If you are spending your Saturday working on the AZT, this is a pretty good location to do it.



All Done!

Passage 18 - Reavis Canyon September 11, 2013

There were reports of ATV abuse at the Reavis Canyon TH. Apparently someone had moved the barriers and were going past the TH and up the non-motorized Arizona Trail. We considered steel barriers but that would require a lot of time, expense and effort. It may come that but we felt the most bang for the buck was to just go roll the rocks back into place and recreate the barriers that filter out ATV's but allows horses, hikers, cattle and bikes through.

We met at the Hewitt Canyon road at 8:30, consolidated tools and people into the vehicles and made our way up the surprisingly dry F 650 to the trailhead. It was rough but certainly no problem, the rain the Phoenix area received the days before did not reach this area. The original plan was to use rock bars to roll these back into place. Rolling these monsters would not have been possible, we would have been lucky to get one or two moved. Bill showed up with his winch, rigging and experience with same and that made all the difference in the world.



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Temps rose a bit quicker than expected, but the crew still managed to get all the rocks that were within range moved and bedded where they will protect the trail. On the way back the group rebuilt the AZT/FR 650 crossing. It had eroded down to a steep embankment, so ramp and rip rap with rock were added.

A great day on the AZT with great folks! Thank you Gary, Pablo, John R., John M., Don, Bill and Nancy!



The winch sure beats trying to roll this with rock bars!



Moving a biggun!

Passage 36 - Coconino Rim August 24, 2013

The ATA Sign Brigade convened at Moqui Stage station Saturday, August 24, 2013, to install new signs. Ian Torrence, trail steward for Passage 36a, recruited a fantastic bunch of folks to come out for the day. Thank you Joel, Scott, Ian, Rob, Emily, Tom and Keith! The FIVE! dogs seemed to—mostly—have a great time.

The toughest holes were the ones for the "MOQUI STAGE STATION .25 MI." sign. The hole turned to rock at about 18 inches, the crew moved 20 feet and hit it again. So these two posts are cemented into the rock, hopefully they last the 30 years that the ones tamped in the dirt did; no one is overly concerned. All the rest were mounted in 30 inch holes, with two 60-lb bags of cement on each leg. Like fencing, it is impossible to over-build signs.

The rain cooperated all day, the crew drove in drizzle between work sites but while they were working it held off. Some of the old signs were salvaged, if anyone has any ideas of what to do with them, please let the Trail Director know. It seems a shame to just trash them. As the Kaibab National Forest was one of the first entities to recognize the Arizona Trail, these are probably some of the oldest signs on the trail.

Thanks to all involved!



Passage 36 - Coconino Rim August 3-4, 2013

August 3rd & 4th was trail maintenance on the Arizona Trail south of Grandview Fire Tower near the Grand Canyon. We had 15 volunteers divided up into 3 teams doing annual trail maintenance (rock clearing, drainage's, weed removal and tread brush-up) in this beautiful area, just south of the Grand Canyon. The trail-head starts at the Grandview Fire Tower Lookout on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and proceeds south 10 miles. Then the A.T. Crosses FR 310 at the head of the Russell Tank wash. This entire section is pristine, with great views of the East Rim and Painted Desert. Great for hiking, mountain biking or a nice picnic.

This section of the Arizona Trail is one of the 1st completed sections, with volunteer trail builders including The Arizona Boys Ranch and Coconino fire crews building it between 1987 and 1995. This section was special to Dale Shewalter himself and he personally layed out the corridor and installed many of the 4X4 posts with the original "Arizona Trail" brand burned into the wood.

Though the brand is worn down and the posts are looking haggard we felt Dale's spirit as we worked on this stretch he helped build, along with Tusayan Ranger District Ranger Joel McCurry. Joel McCurry as District Ranger coordinated and managed the efforts to build 40 miles of new Arizona Trail back about 23 years ago. It represents a major step forward in creating a legacy. Their efforts were and still are very much appreciated

Many thanks to the diverse and strong volunteer crew who helped with the project. We also appreciated having Shawn Redfield and De and Andrea Micheals support this effort and make it so much fun.





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Tom Coulson, Segment Steward, 36b

Passage 31 - Walnut Canyon July 27, 2013

Segment 31a is an excellent example of a beautiful passage with some great new tread and some rocky, rutted unsustainable trail. So jumped at the offer by Joey Hudek of ACE to have a cooperative work event and complete the marked reroute not quite finished July 1 when we turned our efforts to maintenance on Segment 30e.

Joey and his colleagues needed some public service hours to complete their contract, and we needed assistance! After a nearly 3-mile hike in, an impressive group of strong, hard workers from ACE, from CREC, from ATA and the Flagstaff community moved rocks, bent and put the finishing touches on the last of the USFS-approved reroute. Further approvals are required before we get to reroute any more tread. Besides providing hearty lunches, ACE / Matt Roberts brought out the ATA tool trailer and a van full of helpers. What a terrific day! Muchisimas gracias, a todos! Y'all come out and enjoy our efforts.

Andrea Michaels



Passage 30 & 31 - Mormon Lake & Walnut Canyon July 13-14, 2013

An enthusiastic group of 40 volunteers at Marshall Lake continued the 31A reroute begun last year and did some serious maintenance on 30E going up to the Observatory. A monsoon rain only dampened the terrain, but not the spirits on Friday evening, leaving Saturday's work day, potluck and Sunday nice and dry till camp was broken. A HUGE amount of trail was built or improved, and this year one crew was designated as "maintenance in-service class" for stewards and potential stewards. Led by Matt Roberts of ACE (American Conservation Experience) and Bernie Stalman of ATA and formerly of ACE (Army Corps of Engineers) the crew learned the finer points of creating sustainable trail in the field from the "pros." There's nothing like actually building a trail to reinforce classroom concepts!

With USFS permission, workers were shuttled to a spot just a mile or so from the worksite, where we later gathered for lunch (but forg the group photo). Event sponsors Gay and Gary Hohner, Andrea and Dave Michaels, Marlene and Mel Bettani give a great, big shout out THANKS to all who joined us!





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Passage 39 - Grand Canyon - North Rim June 10, 2013

As part of segment steward Lynn Maring's annual North Rim work event, several ATA volunteers spent a day installing two of the iconic AZT steel cut-out signs, one across the road from the North Kaibab trailhead, and another at the Highway 67 crossing.

The signs consist of a steel panel in AZ's classic silhouette shape and two bolt-on anodized aluminum panels. The larger panel is the same for all of the signs across the state, the smaller one is unique to the land managing agency where the sign is placed, in this case Grand Canyon National Park. No agency-identifying panel for the park was made when the signs were obtained years ago so two had to be fabricated—an expensive and lengthy process. The contractor delivered four days before they were installed.

The Peaks Ranger District stores the few remaining signs in Flagstaff; two were taken to the welder in the weeks before the event and 4-inch square steel legs were welded on. ATA segment steward Bruce Belman picked them up and stored them until the installation crew passed through Flagstaff on the way to the North Rim. Bruce loaned his trailer for the trip as well.

Grant Rust, NPS North Rim Maintenance Manager, was on hand Monday morning to put the mark on the ground where the signs would go. The spots, especially at the Kaibab trailhead, were ideal for the signs. The crew made quick work of digging the two 30-inch holes for each sign. This is often the most difficult part of installing the signs; rocks or hard soil really slow the process.

Once the holes were dug and level, the crew lowered the heavy signs into place and leveled them. Concrete was mixed and poured around the posts, all the while the crew kept a close eye that the signs remained level. While the concrete was setting, the aluminum panels were bolted on. The pre-drilled holes are never a perfect fit so they were reamed to a slightly larger diameter.

Then dirt from the holes was scattered and the site manicured to look like the "sign had been there 100 years" per Grant's instruction. Both signs were finished and passed his inspection by noon, so the crew enjoyed lunch at the North Rim restaurant.

Thanks to Patrick McLaughlin, Dee (for dog), Tom Kimmel, Mike Gasperek, John Matteson, Jim Goman, Tracy Fleming and Shawn Redfield.



The crew gets after it.



Tom gets into the work at hand.



Getting started on sign #2.



We don't need no wheelbarrow!



Fill up the hole.



Bolting the panels on.

Passage 40 - Kaibab Plateau South June 7-14, 2013

My annual work event was the best ever attended and with such great help and experience 40B was given more attention to provide a sustainable trail in parts experiencing erosion. This year had the least amount of deadfall compared to years past thus also allowing me to focus on brushing, signage and rock cairns. My work event not only involved 40B but also included Liz Good's adjoining segment 41. Liz had recruited some of the famous Tom Sawyers. Needless to say, the work continued onto 40A as sitting around isn't in their vocabulary.

My sincere thanks to all who came: George and Judi Hay, Joe Longbotham, Pat McLaughlin, Jim Goman, John Matteson, Bernie Stalman, Dan Shein, Tom Kimmel, Liz Good, Rick Krahn, Casey Grimes (from Etna, WY), Sallie McCutcheon, Shawn Redfield, Tracy Fleming, Gary and Bonnie Slaten, Andrea Micheals and Mike Gasperek. Honorable mention: Daisy, Dottie, Dee, Dreamer, Skip, Smiley Otis, and Misty.



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Passage 20 - Four Peaks Winter and Spring of 2013

Over the course of winter and spring of 2013, thirteen AZT miles from Mills Ridge TH to Pigeon Spring TH of Passage 20-Four Peaks-we completely rebuilt. AZ State Parks provided \$40k in what turned out to be seed money; Southwest Conservation Corps provided a wee of free crew time, Coconino Rural Environmental Corps donated 8 hitches (!) of crew time and completed some fantastic trail structure: American Conservation Experience youth crews donated a couple hitches and did the \$40k worth of work. Steward Bob Bruce of REI ar some hardy volunteers completed many work days as well. To supply water to the dry reaches of the passage volunteers hauled collapsible "cubies" in to Buckhorn Creek and filled them, and they were packed in to the campsite by horses and by a Forest Service F Crew from Payson. Payson Hotshots packed in tools one day. Paul "Pablo" Burghard, Tonto National Forest, did an incredible job managing this whole project and it went off without a hitch. The segment was featured at the International Trail Symposium held in Fountain Hills in April.

For all the details and lots of photos, check out the [ACE project report](#).

Passage 41 - Kaibab Plateau Central May 4-5, 2013

Trail Steward Mark Shuler invited family and friends to join him for a weekend of trail maintenance in early May. He enlisted his uncle, cousins, nieces and a friend or two. They hiked his 8 mile section and some additional. They cleared downed limbs and trees and repla signs. It helps to make trail maintenance a fun event for everyone. The teenagers who came long loved their time in the forest and learned a lot from a friend who knows a lot about the northern Arizona forests. They submitted a report to their schools for this trip.



Passage 1 - Huachuca Mountains April 6, 2013

Six members of the Huachuca Hiking Club spent two days working on a quarter mile relocation of a nasty fall line eroded trail just to th south of Scotia Canyon and before entering Sunnyside Canyon on the west side of the Huachuca Mountains. Under the leadership of Steve Saway, HHC members Rod Crick, Paul Phillips, John Severn, Steve Scheumann and Bernie Stalmann moved lots of dirt, rocks an logs to improve the trail mostly for mountain bikers and equestrians. The photos show the work headed south to north.

Bernie Stalmann





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Passage 22 - Saddle Mountain February 13-19, 2013

Saddle Mountain Passage, between the Cross F connector trail and the Mormon Grove access point, lies on the fringe of the 2012 Sunflower Fire; parts of the trail burned and other parts were unscathed. With no vegetation to hold the soil, the land that did burn is eroding badly. Unfortunately, the AZT passes through this area. One particular section is a series of switchbacks up a steep slope, now after a season of rains it is little more than a talus slope. Another fall-line stretch is suffering as well.

American Conservation Experience, a youth corps out of Flagstaff, is spending two weeks working these sections. Part of the reason the switchbacks are eroding so rapidly is that they were built with rocks that are too small to withstand the increased water flows following the fire. Using grip hoists and rock bars, the crew moved huge rocks in to define and hold tread way.

The AZT is fortunate to work with several youth corps who are keeping the trail building skill set alive. These young people take on the jobs too far from trail heads or too technical for volunteers, the AZT couldn't exist without them.

Shawn Redfield



Passage 21 - Pine Mountain February 11, 2013

I just had to check out passage 21 this morning in the rain (my favorite time to be on the trail) to see flood damage. The access trail from Bushnell tanks is holding up fine, but I was surprised to see snow, three or more inches on the trail. It snowed pretty hard for the three hours I was on the trail and was still snowing at noon.

John Matteson



Passage 22 - Saddle Mountain January 19, 2013

In anticipation of flooding following the 2012 Sunflower Fire, the FS removed the iconic steel AZT sign from the Cross F trailhead on the banks of Sycamore Creek. This is a connector trailhead; the AZT is three-quarter mile west of the former Beeline highway here, but it's popular access point for the AZT and other trails in the area. Nine volunteers met up Saturday morning to re-install the sign, this time the other side of the road in a much more prominent location.

The holes were chiseled out of the rock with a gas powered jackhammer on loan from the Coronado National Forest—Bernie Stahlman received the long-distance award by bringing it from Sierra Vista. Everyone gathered to carry the sign from the truck on the road up the short hill to the holes, and it was carefully lowered in. Getting these straight and level is always a challenge so the group took special care to ensure all bubbles were centered.

John M. found a wooden FS sign post and sign hidden in the bushes, so the group re-installed that up around the corner from the trailhead while we had the machine and manpower available.

Rick E. prepared lunch of burgers and hotdogs for everyone, a huge improvement over the usual fare at these events—Thanks Rick! Fire touches were applied and everyone headed home by 2 PM. Thank You!

Shawn Redfield



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Passage 21 - Pine Mountain January 17, 2013

Another great day on the trail. Joe, Jim, Pat, Rick and I along with Ruby and D our four legged canine friends, drove into a mid point close to the trail and brushed north from Sycamore creek to the spot where we left off last Thursday. The section from the AZT sign near Highway 87 south to Sycamore creek is now completely brushed and looking good. We even got the carsonite uncovered on the north side of the creek. Or more accurately Joe, Jim and Rick removed several large broken branches hanging from a tree and obscuring the sign, I just watched. Thank you to everyone who has helped out and supported us so far. We hope to complete bushing and tread restoration before the heat of summer sets in, only 6½ miles to go!

Passage 16 - Gila River Canyons January 6-7, 2013

Andy Claus (Garlic) and I arrived at Cochran south of the Gila River about 9 AM on January 6. The water in the Gila was lower calf deep, running clear from the run off upstream—the water from San Carlos dam was still off. After hiking about four miles to a camping area with almost two gallons of water each, an early lunch was welcomed. Two McClouds and a lopper were tools of the day. We then hiked another five miles north to the end of the segment—16e Red Mountain-Ajax Mountain—and started brushing and doing minor tread work. We made it a little bit south of the 'high saddle' and decided that we had better beeline back to camp before darkness arrived. After eating both of us were in our tents before 7 PM. Sure is nice to have almost 12 hours of tent time after a long day. Beautiful, dynamic scenery for our hike—only drawback was carrying McClouds and lopper.

The next morning we hurried left camp in order to leave the cold sink—about 20 degrees—in order to warm up and get back in the sun. Breakfast on the trail in the warming sun was enjoyable. An hour and a half on the trail brought us back to our ending location. Andy wielded a McCloud and Fred lopped mesquite, palo verde, ocotillo, and whit thorn bushes. Back in camp about noon allowed for lunch then the hike back to the Gila. Along the way all teddy bear cholla were removed from the tread along with some brush. Additional tread work and brushing await another trip.

Fred Gaudet

Update from January 13: The Gila had ice but still low and clear. Starting at the camp area, Fred brushed and did tread work going south back to Rincon Road.



Andy looking for a potential water cache site.

Passage 21 - Pine Mountain December 20, 2012

Today was Thursday, lopping day on AZT Passage 21b, south of Sunflower, AZ. John, Pat, Deke, and I met up at the Bushnell Tanks gate at 8:30, walked down the road to the tool trailer to pick up lopper and saws, and set off across Sycamore Creek to the trail.

The creek was flowing strong, dirty and cold, with ice on the exposed rocks, making for tricky rock hopping. (The trick was to step only on the slightly submerged ones.) We made it across with all dry feet except Deke. There was a helicopter operation going on out of Sunflower, with two aircraft coming and going overhead most of the morning, heading east past Mt. Ord and returning rather quickly.

We reached the end of the work from last Thursday and set to it. The tread is in very good shape but the brush is encroaching. We lopped on and made good progress till a short lunch break, then returned to the loppers. About 1:30 John headed south to the Sycamore Creek crossing to scope out future work (these events are scheduled for every Thursday). The workday ended about 2:00 as we returned to the cars. Approximately a mile of the trail has been brushed between last week and today, but there's plenty more to do



TRAILWORK EVENT ARCHIVE - 2011-2013



Cold and dirty Sycamore Creek.



Air Operations overhead.



Before . . .



After. Pat got a lot done but Deke wasn't a lot of help.

Passage 9 - Rincon Mountains November 28, 2012

On Wednesday morning, employees from Summit Hut gathered to work on the Arizona National Scenic Trail within Saguaro National Park. As part of Summit Hut's commitment to the Arizona Trail and promoting volunteerism within our community, Summit Hut employees were paid their regular hourly rate for time spent working on the trail. Everyone met at 8 AM at the Loma Alta Trailhead, and after a safety talk and work plan, the group mountain biked along the Hope Camp Trail to quickly access the Quilter Trail. Two NPS trail crew members and one Summit Hut employee walked in to the work site.

The group gathered at the "slickrock draining" approximately 1.5 miles north of the intersection of the Hope Camp and Quilter Trails. A trail crew demonstrated techniques for safe and effective brushing (ocotillo, palo verde, artemisia, jatropha, grasses); grubbing acacia; and light tread work using a variety of tools and techniques. A total of 0.61 miles north of the drainage was positively affected from the 5+ hour effort. The corridor was brushed to accommodate equestrians (6 ft. wide x 10 ft. high) and tread was improved to encourage proper drainage and limit damage from erosion.

It was a beautiful day to be working outside, and red tail hawks screamed overhead. Thanks to Victor Cactus, Chris Pruden, Emily Gindlesparger, Logan Lichtenhan, and Jeff and Adam from Saguaro NP.

Matthew Nelson

Passage 12 - Oracle Ridge October 31, 2012

A few years ago the ATA and the Forest Service moved the AZT from Canada del Oro to the Wilderness of Rocks trail. This left one of the iconic steel Arizona Trail signs an orphan out on the nose of Mt. Lemmon, southwest and downhill from the towers. There are two models of these signs, the oldest are in the Coronado National Forest and have "The Arizona Trail" cut out at the top of the heavy steel plate with artwork under Plexi-glass on the face of the sign. The newer models, installed north of the Salt River, have "Arizona Trail" cut out, and include attractive plaques bolted to the steel.

Last year the Forest Service allowed a group of hardy ATA volunteers to clear and drive the fire road down to rescue the sign for placement elsewhere. Marshall Gulch, the popular trailhead just south of the AZT Gateway Community Summerhaven, proved an ideal location. With FS approval, volunteers planned the installation for October 31st.

Because the site included exposed bedrock, and no one wanted another "gate-from-hell" experience, we rented a jack hammer. At 8 AM the group was on site and hard at work. Specifications require that the signs are to be planted three feet into the ground, and the jack hammer made short work of the rock. We learned that jack hammers come in several sizes; the 90-pound version was a bit much to wrestle in and out the holes — next time we'll opt for the 60 pound model.

Holes dug and leveled, the sign was muscled into place, leveled and concrete mixed and poured in. Extra rock in the wet concrete increased the weight and anchored the sign. A quick tool clean-up, pack up, and the crew was off to lunch at Sawyer's Run — Summerhaven's newest eatery. With a little duff at its base, the sign looks like it's been there forever. New artwork will be added as funding becomes available, hopefully next spring.

Thanks to Bernie Stahlman, Lee Allan, Steve Chaffee, David Rabb, and Joe Longbotham.





TRAILWORK EVENT ARCHIVE - 2011-2013



American Flag & Tiger Mine Trailheads September 30, 2012

The wooden signs at American Flag and Tiger Mine trailheads were showing their age after years in the Arizona sun and wind. The iconic archway signs over the trail at these southern trailheads were made of large planks with routed and painted lettering. They had dried, faded and cracked and were looking pretty rough. Answering an email blast call for volunteers, Jan and Mike Pengelly took on the project. They removed all three signs and took them to their shop to refurbish them. One of the big signs from American Flag Ranch trailhead was too far gone so they replaced the plank, applied some fancy router work to recreate the lettering and painted it--and painted it--and painted it. Jan says it took six coats of FS-specified paint to get the right coverage and color. The sign from Tiger Mine trailhead was made of sturdier stuff--hardwood--and cleaned up nicely with several coats of clear finish. Thank you Jan and Mike!



American Flag East Before



American Flag West Before



Tiger Mine Before



American Flag East After



American Flag West After



Tiger Mine After

Pine Trailhead September 29, 2012

Enthusiastic Arizona Trail volunteers built several large water diversion structures near the Pine Trailhead at ATA's 2012 National Public Lands Day event. Rain comes fast and hard in the Pine area and the resulting erosion was beginning to show on the trail. While the Army Corps of Engineers probably doesn't worry about competition, the hardy Arizona Trail fans picked, shoveled and "Mcloud'ed" drainage ways across the trail to divert water that was eroding the tread. Rachel Hohl of the Forest Service Payson Ranger District welcomed the group and gave the safety briefing. Rain, lightning and mud shortened the event slightly but plenty of work was accomplished, new friends were made and old friends seen again. Thanks to Bob Brawdy, Scott Davidson, Joe Grant, Pete Joyce, Joe Longbotham, John Matteson, Pat McLaughlin, Jim Quinton, Windy Quinton, John Rendall and Shawn Redfield.

Orderville Trailhead August 27-28, 2012

A few Segment Stewards from trail segments on the North Rim and the Forest Rangers from the North Kaibab Ranger District gathered at the Orderville TH on August 27 to refinish the historical AZT sign. This sign was originally erected to celebrate the completion of one of the first segments of the Arizona National Scenic Trail. This was in the summer of 1988. Over the years the sign had weathered and it needed refinishing. We took the sign down and the Forest Rangers reset the legs while the Segment Stewards refinished the sign. It was a two day process and we dodged monsoon rain showers each day. The sign was reinstalled and should be good for another 25 years. Thanks to all volunteers and special thanks to the Rangers from the North Kaibab Ranger District for their support.

Gary Hohner



Orderville TH sign refinishing.



Refinished sign.



TRAILWORK EVENT ARCHIVE - 2011-2013



Putting up the sign.

Passage 31 - Walnut Canyon June 23-24, 2012

The weekend's work was to complete the last part of a reroute project. The old trail had descended approximately 180 feet in elevation down a fall-line slope into the bottom of a tributary of Walnut Canyon and had climbed out a similar slope; this situation had created constant maintenance problems. New trail was designed by Sean Murphy to provide a more sustainable trail. Part of the reroute was done with a hired crew (CREC); ATA volunteers plus FS staff produced about 0.35 mile of new trail on the west side of the canyon and restored about 0.75 mile of abandoned trail on both sides of the drainage.

The detailed planning of event leaders Andrea and David Michaels produced a fun and successful weekend. Over 50 volunteers signed in on Saturday morning. Many returned to work on Sunday morning, and some enjoyed a hike as well. After a raffle and a delicious potluck Saturday evening campers enjoyed a debut performance of mandolin and banjo music. We hope to hear a repeat of the Chuck Williams and Bruce Blackburn duo soon.

As always, there are many unsung heroes who contribute to a successful event. Some examples are enthusiastic volunteers and crew leaders, all those who do prep work on Friday, those who automatically help with clean up, those who step up to solve unexpected problems (like a tool trailer lock that decided not to unlock). Teamwork produces good results. That's how the Trail will continue to be maintained and improved! Thanks to each one of you. Thanks for the support of the Arizona Trail Association and the Flagstaff Ranger District.

Thanks to [Chuck Williams](#) for these photos.

Gay Hohner



Lunch break.



Two-mile hike to work site.



Passage 41 - Kaibab Plateau Central May 16-17, 2012

This passage is in a burn area and is prone to numerous down trees. On May 16 and 17 rangers from the USFS North Kaibab District and volunteers from the Southwest Conservation Corps Veterans Fire Corps cut down and removed 22 down trees in a one-and-a-half mile area. Debris was cleared from the trail. On May 17 USFS rangers and volunteers from Amazing Earthfest in Kanab, Utah reseeded the area with native seeds. Many thanks to chainsaw wizard Brian Gold and his SCC team of veteran volunteers who worked with a great deal of energy and good spirits. Thanks also to the volunteers from Amazing Earthfest who are working to raise awareness of the Arizona Trail.



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Finally, a big thank you to USFS rangers Melissa Spandl and David Sanders for their dedication to keeping this passage clear and passable for all hikers, bikers and equestrians who wish to enjoy it!



Passage 19 - Superstition Wilderness February 26-28, 2012

Passage 19 received some much-needed attention Feb. 26 to 28. This popular route leads to Reavis Ranch, an historic farm and ranch high in the eastern Superstition Wilderness. USFS Mesa Ranger District sponsored a volunteer effort in advance of a Southwest Conservation Corps crew. Joe Longbotham and Shawn Redfield spent three days helping identify needed maintenance, dispersing old fire rings, building cairns and cutting back the brush. John Rendall blew in to check on the work and install several carsonite signs. The last day started out cold and overcast, with a touch of snow and clouds descending to the camp site at Rogers Trough TH. The adage, "trail are hiked by the mile but built by the foot" proved true - two and half days of brushing cleared a length of trail that can be hiked in two minutes.



Before trail work . . .



. . . and after.

Steward Training January 28-29, 2012

The ATA held the annual Steward Training at historic Kannally Ranch, Oracle State Park, Jan. 28-29. Saturday, veteran trails instructor Bruce Weidenhamer, the ATA Regional Stewards, and passage 31a co-steward Andrea Michaels presented the fine points of trail construction and maintenance in the classroom and on the trails near the ranch house. The ATA provided pizza lunch in the group camp site ramada and John Rendall demonstrated the joys of carsonite sign installation.

On Sunday the stewards learned the tricks of successful event organization, trail segment assessment, working with land managing agencies and the inner workings of the ATA. Special thanks to Terri Gay for handling breakfast, coffee and lunch for the 30 students and instructors. If you missed this training, watch the calendar for another session in Pine later this year.



Passage 16 - Gila River Canyons - Trail Completion Dedication December 16, 2011



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The ceremony was a small one but the occasion was monumental. The Arizona Trail, a continuous 817 mile path from Mexico to Utah, was completed on this day. The ceremony was held high on a remote mountainside, overlooking the Gila River, in the Gila River Canyon passage of the Arizona Trail, not far from tiny Kelvin, Arizona.

"This trail connects mountains, desert, rivers, and canyons - but what it really connects is people" said Arizona Trail Association president Emily Nottingham. Many agency partners and volunteers worked together to complete this path used by hikers, bikers, and equestrians. 26 years ago, Flagstaff teacher Dale Shewalter walked from Mexico to the Utah border to scout out a route that would ultimately become the Arizona Trail. Shewalter died in 2010 but founding member of the Arizona Trail Association Jan Hancock said, "Dale's spirit was felt today".

Several long-time Arizona Trail supporters and activists constructed the final stretch of trail, followed by installation of a commemorative Bureau of Land Management brass cap monument set in concrete.

Photos by Mike Bieke.



Passage 16 - Gila River Canyons - Penultimate Gap Closure December 12, 2011

As Arizona Trail Passage 16 was finished along the Gila River and north towards Red Mountain, an uncompleted 150-foot gap heading to a two-track trail was discovered. Inquiries revealed it had been left undone to prevent users from accessing an unconnected section of trail; but it was forgotten as the three other trail construction projects were underway. With plans moving swiftly to celebrate the "Cop Stake Moment," when ALL gaps in the Arizona Trail would be closed, this would not do!

So, not-so-bright but early Monday morning seven volunteers gathered in a light drizzle at Battle Axe road and headed west. Battle Axe road is tough going and runs through several washes, so everyone kept at least one eye on the clouds as the vehicles crept over the steep, rocky road. The trail route was staked and flagged so, eventually, finding it was no problem. The crew quickly chopped out the brush, rolled away rocks, and cut in a wide bench. Two carsonite sign posts were hammered in and appropriate decals attached to ensure users navigate the road-to-trail, or vice versa, route. Project completed, the crew headed home over somewhat more squishy road.

Thank you to John Rendell, Fred Gaudet, Lee Allen, Tom Kimmel, David Rabb, Andy Claus, and Shawn Redfield.



Building the last piece.



Smoothing out the tread.



Inspecting the work.



TRAILWORK EVENT ARCHIVE - 2011-2013



Packing up the tools.



Brand new trail ready for use.



Group shot.

Passage 34 - San Francisco Peaks June 25, 2011

June 25 "Close the Gap" was the final volunteer event in the four-year series to complete the San Francisco Peaks Passage. The serious planning began early in 2008, and the result was a focused, cooperative effort of Arizona Trail Association members, the Flagstaff Ranger District and a core leadership group of ATA Trail Stewards. We more than met our goal of 50 volunteers for the first event, and contagious enthusiasm kept us on track over the next four seasons. Volunteers came from all over the State and beyond and represent many organizations. Flagstaff Biking and Northern Arizona Trail Runners joined in the leadership of the July events each of the four seasons. Arizona Outdoor Travel Club regularly sent volunteers and was an important part of that inaugural event in 2008. This season June 25 event was an exciting conclusion to a successful team effort.

Chambo and Beverly Chambers were the event leaders for June 25, and once again their experienced leadership produced a great event. Another piece of the "Gap" was built and a gate was installed. A celebration lunch was served by the Flagstaff Ranger District's summer resident volunteers to about 80 appreciative workers. A departure from the usual work weekend routine, instead volunteers on Sunday morning enjoyed the new trail. There were bike rides, and hikers enjoyed the stunning view from the "overlook" on Segment 34B. The June 25 "Close the Gap" was bittersweet, as many did not want these events to end. Never fear! There will always be trail maintenance and improvements to do.

The Peaks Passage is complete. It is time to say "thanks" to the hundreds of volunteers, the leadership of ATA Trail Stewards, and especially to the focused efforts of the Flagstaff Ranger District. AZ Trail users are now able to go from Schultz Pass to Utah on the Arizona National Scenic Trail.

Other missing links of the AZ Trail have been completed also as of December, 2011; all volunteers at the many work events (both maintenance and new trail building) all up and down the State can be very proud, as well as the many supporters of the Arizona Trail. Each one can truly say that "I helped complete the Arizona Trail". It is time to celebrate.

Please plan to join the celebration on February 4. Celebrate Dale Shewalter's "dream come true", and continue his legacy of teamwork we maintain and improve the AZ Trail. Thanks again to all our old friends and new friends and to each and every volunteer.

"Dale's dream came true", but volunteers will continue to make the Arizona Trail happen! When you support the ATA or volunteer to maintain and improve the AZ Trail, you sustain a lasting icon for Arizona and for trail users to enjoy. Camaraderie, new friends and a sense of accomplishment are fringe benefits.

Thanks to [Chuck Williams](#) for these photographs.

Gay Hohner



Celebration lunch group June 25.



"Gate" crew.





TRAILWORK EVENT ARCHIVE - 2011-2013



Sunday hikers on the new segment 34B trail
June 26, 2011.

Passage 34 - San Francisco Peaks June 4, 2011

This year's National Trails Day brought 177 volunteers to help "Close the Gap". This was a team effort of the Arizona Trail Association, Flagstaff Biking Organization, and many other community groups directed by the Flagstaff Ranger District. Flagstaff's NTD continues to be a popular community event and also draws a lot of state-wide volunteers. Some other supporting groups included: American Conservation Experience (ACE), Arizona Outdoor Travel Club, Coconino County Parks & Recreation, Coconino Horsemen's Alliance, Coconino Rural Environment Corps (CREC), and Coconino Trail Riders. A lot of progress was made to "close the gap."

Volunteers appreciated the morning coffee from Kick Stand Kafe, and they were treated to a grilled lunch served by the Elden Camp summer volunteers from the Flagstaff Ranger District. A fun conclusion to the day was the raffle; the numerous raffle prizes included some very nice donations from REI.

Thanks to [Chuck Williams](#) for these photos.

Gay Hohner



177 volunteers at Safety Meeting.



Off to work.



Off to work.



Many hands shape the new tread.



Coming home - view to the Peaks
from 34A.



VIP's.

Passage 34 - San Francisco Peaks May 21-22, 2011

The fourth and final year of "Close the Gap" events began the weekend of May 20-22. The event leaders were trail stewards Andrea and David Michaels and Gay and Gary Hohner. Saturday there were 64 volunteers, and Sunday there were 39. The volunteers plus the Flagstaff RD crew made a good dent in the "Gap" with about another mile of new trail built. Thanks to the Flagstaff Ranger District for their leadership and support and for the continued enthusiasm of all our volunteers.

As has become traditional, the campers enjoyed a fun social time, and the Saturday evening pot luck was a feast. Thanks to Andrea M. for her delicious soup and to everyone who brought food and pitched in to make it happen. Thanks to Wildflower Bread Company who supplied morning treats.

Special thanks to Dave Burkett who spent all day Friday on the site to sharpen all the tools in the ATA tool trailer.

Thanks to [Chuck Williams](#) for these photos.

Gay Hohner



FS leader and volunteers, morning
organization meeting.



Safety lecture.



Find your crew leaders.



TRAILWORK EVENT ARCHIVE - 2011-2013



Off to work.



Carsonite crew.



Clearing and shaping the trail.



CREC volunteers - serious rock work.



Volunteers, rock bars and more serious rock work.



Saturday workers at lunch break.



Snow-capped Peaks - May 21, 2011.

Passage 32 - Elden Mountain July 30, 2011

The team effort of NATRA, FBO and ATA under the guidance of the Flagstaff Ranger District accomplished a lot of restoration work along "Little Elden" segment 32B in a short time. Thanks to each of the 64 volunteers and to our Forest Service crew. Thanks everyone.

The Schultz Fire plus flooding did extensive damage last year, and the "Little Elden" work site was in a closed, restricted area. The work was among scorched trees and evidence of debris flow. Volunteers rebuilt tread and installed erosion controls. The AZ Trail between Highway 89 and Schultz Tank remains closed to the public until repairs and restoration are completed.

Thanks for the leadership of ATA trail stewards Anthony Quintile of Flagstaff Biking Organization and Neil Weintraub of Northern Arizona Trail Runners. Thanks to FBO event sponsors Camelbak, Fratelli Pizza, and Kick Stand Kafe. Lucky volunteers took home raffle prizes supplied by NATRA.

We were pleased to welcome 15 REI employees and friends from the Paradise Valley and Tempe stores; it was fun to have them with us at the work event and at the camp site. Thanks also to that enthusiastic group of Boy Scouts from troop 742, Lake Pleasant District. We are grateful to each and every one of the 64 volunteers; each of you made this event successful.

Thank you Neil for these photos. More photos are available at [Neil's Gallery](#).

Gay Hohner



Morning meeting among scorched trees.



Climbing up the hill.



Reclaiming the trail. Some scorched trees, but lush understory.





TRAILWORK EVENT ARCHIVE - 2011-2013

Logs came in handy.



Many hands and many rocks to contro erosion.

Large rocks needed to stabilize the trail.
