Trail Work Events

(2016)

Reports from the Field

This page contains older reports on trail work events and other special events. They are in calendar order with the newest at the top. You can click on the links immediately below to jump directly to a particular event, or you can just scroll down the page. Clicking on a photo will bring up a larger version of it.

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Passage 19 - Superstition Wilderness
December 11, 2016

The Old Spanish Trail Association lead by Earl Fosdick (Steward) went out on December 11th with others from Old Spanish Trail Association and put in place a new carsonite directional sign to help N. bound trail users not miss a trail junction. If users miss the turn they will continue down a dirt road and miss the beauties of the Arizona trail. Only one picture was supplied and that is the newly placed carsonite.

C. Gregory
Passage 19 - Superstition Wilderness  
December 11-12, 2016

On Dec. 11/12 Blair McLaughlin (Steward) and a friend went out to Reavis Ranch to put in a directional AZT wooden sign and updated the post that holds the sign. When hiking N. bound you turn right to leave the ranch area cross a meadow and before Reavis Creek crossing the only thing to help guide you was a cairn and old fence post. They changed out the fence post with a wooden tree post and added a directional AZT wooden sign. Before and after pictures provided below.

C. Gregory

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Passage 18 - Reavis Canyon  
December 6-7, 2016

The Usual Suspects have now installed 34 of the iconic steel gates on the Arizona Trail (and five more in Arnett Canyon on the Legends of Superior Trail), numbers 33 and 34 going in over a two-day effort. It doesn’t usually take two days to install two gates but it does when both locations are nearly a mile from vehicle access.

Tuesday the group assembled and hauled materials and equipment to both locations. Rob had fabricated the gates in pieces, to be assembled on-site, which allowed them to be carried in on a wheeled carrier of his design. ACE, the youth crew from Flagstaff, loaned their power hauler, a tracked, walk-behind machine that can carry up to 600 pounds over very rough terrain. By the end of the day all supplies were staged for installation the next morning.

Wednesday the group reassembled and got after it. Hard digging in native rocky soil took some time on the southern-most gate, but that is the norm. A full crew made the work go well. The second gate, located nearly a mile north of Reavis Trail Canyon TH required some cactus-logging; an ancient saguaro had come down quite recently at the site. Soils were much more cooperative at this location and the holes were soon dug and the gate installed. A south-bound thru-hiker happened along as the crew was finishing up, and he was quite appreciative of the effort. He remembered the many gates he had already seen.

As the trail has become more popular, it is now unusual not to see a hiker on these events. After hauling the tools and old gate back to the vehicles at the TH—a lengthy task because while the power hauler is convenient it is not fast—and some trailer shuffling, everyone met up at Porter’s in Superior for a very late lunch.

Thanks to John M., Richard D., Joe L., Lee A., Tom K., David R., Zach M., Roger S., Bill H., Craig G.

S. Redfield
Passage 17 - Alamo Canyon
December 3, 2016

AZT gate number 32 found a permanent home about a mile north of the Passage 16-17 boundary, due to the collaboration of the USFS, American Conservation Experience youth crew, Tonto Recreation Alliance and the ATA. Located in remote back country, the site was accessed only with the help of modified 4WD vehicles, a tracked hauler and lots of person-power. Even with a few equipment challenges and a long day that went well after dark everything ended well. Thank you all.

S. Redfield

Passage 28 - Blue Ridge
November 17-18, 2016

As the Trail Steward, J, John Swain spent November 17 and 18 working on Passage 28b. I hiked the whole passage twice and was able to remove any brush that was encroaching on the trail as well as one deadfall about one mile north of East Clear Creek. I also removed a lot of the lose rock on the trail. A deadfall remains approximately 1/4 mile north of FR751B that I was not able to remove using a bow saw. The coordinates of this deadfall were passed on to the Forest Service contact at the Blue Ridge Ranger Station. I was also able to build two cairns where the trail crosses FR 751B. There is a little water in Elk Tank that is very murky, and that is the only water on this passage at this time.

Passage 18 - Reavis Canyon
November 5, 2016

Today I, Craig aka Steward, went out and hiked from Reavis Canyon TH to where we left off on Montana Mt. From there cut back the vegetation from Montana Mt. back to Reavis Canyon Mud Spring Trough. I had already done the two miles from Reavis Canyon TH to Reavis Canyon Mud Spring. As of today the corridor is clear, there might be one or two here and there I might of missed or running lo on stamina/time. I kept seeing tracks in Reavis Canyon and looked like deer, but seemed small for a deer. Well, found out what it was a herd of Javelina. They as much as me got spooked and is the only pic I have from this trip.
Passage 17 - Alamo Canyon  
November 2-4, 2016

Too Many Gates!

ATA partnered with the Globe District, Tonto National Forest, on major improvements and rerouting of the Legends of Superior Trail - LOST - that connects the AZT to the Gateway Community of Superior. The ATA was instrumental in completing the original LOST, so when we learned that the US Highway 60 improvements would require rerouting the LOST, ATA was concerned.

The new LOST follows Arnett Canyon - a very pleasant surprise if you haven't seen it - under the north side of Picket Post Mountain on its way to Superior. ATA's part was to help with the five gates required to exclude livestock from the scenic canyon. The heavy steel gates have become an icon along the AZT and the powers-that-be liked them so much they wanted similar ones for the LOST. The problem was that the farthest site was nearly two miles from vehicle access. Rob, who makes the AZT gates, fabricated these in modular style so they could be transported by hand into the canyon.

Pablo Burghardt with the Globe District arranged for a double youth crew to assist with hauling the gates and material. The youth crew installed the first gate on Wednesday with ATA supervision and assistance. Thursday and Friday the youth crew and ATA volunteers installed the remaining four gates, including one in bedrock at the top of a steep hill. A couple hours of work Friday morning were in a steady rain, which exposed hundreds of Apache Tears along the steep road to this location.

With the Passage 14 gates on Tuesday, these made 7 gates for the week, admittedly taxing the "seasoned" volunteers. A special thank you to the AZCC youth crew, Pablo, Joe L., Roger S. and John M.

Shawn Redfield

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Passage 14 - Black Hills  
November 1, 2016
One of the original "Cs" of Arizona history, cattle ranching survives along Passage 14, northwest of Mammoth, AZ. Rancher Gregg Vinson, long a friend of the Arizona Trail from his experience with the A-Diamond Ranch on the Gila River, and his friendship with long-time AZT enthusiast John Randall, recently took over the ~36,000 acre grazing allotment that surrounds much of the passage. Gregg raises and sells grass-fed beef through Jojoba Beef Company. He is cross-fencing the allotment to improve grazing management, and when he realized the new fence would cross the Arizona Trail at Camp Grant Wash he called to coordinate.

What better opportunity to improve the trail, display the AZT logo, and work with a critical partner than to place an AZT super gate in the new fence? And while inspecting the site we decided the gate east of Mountain View tank could be updated as well. The wire gate there was functioning but since the crew and equipment were going right past it, and getting there is more than half the effort, we decided to replace it as well.

The only problem was navigating the soft sand in desert washes, which is how you get around in that country. Gregg showed us another route to near Mountain View tank that avoided the deep sand in Capgidge Wash but we still had about half a mile of it between there and the site in Camp Grant Wash. The group met in Mammoth and headed out, and about 45 minutes later all was going well at the first site, including a visit from two northbound hikers—this trail is getting busy! Ninety minutes later the gate was in and we were heading down the wash. The biggest fear was getting bogged down; there is no place for a tow vehicle to get traction to pull you out. So the technique is to go fast and hope! It worked.

The site at Camp Grant Wash was much easier digging, and the fence crew is going to connect the fence so all we had to do was set the gate. All went well and quick, but we had to get out. Same technique—full speed ahead and don't slow down or stop. The route back out crosses the trail again, and two more hikers were taking a break on the edge of the wash. Busy Trail! No way to stop, they had to hear us coming, so we barreled on by. Sorry we couldn’t chat. Back on hard ground everyone relaxed a bit and headed to a late lunch at Tortillas Mi Pueblo in Mammoth. These were gates 30 and 31 along the AZT.

Thanks to Lee, Scott, John, Joe, Roger, Zach, Rob, and Bill for another gorgeous and productive day on the AZT!

S. Redfield

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Passage 13 - Oracle
October 26, 2016

The SaddleBrooke Hiking Club made an impressive showing of 24 volunteers for the October Work Event on the Arizona National Scenic Trail in Oracle State Park. Regional trail steward Jeff Bridge brought tools and helped supervise work. Gary Faulkenberry, park ranger at Oracle State Park, provided guidance on a hazardous portion of the trail. Dave Corrigan operated a weed whacker to trim grasses growing over the trail. Ray Peale led hardy workers on widening the trail tread in several places. Co-Stewards Mary Croft and Elisabeth Wheeler led groups removing grasses, trimming shrubs and building a sign cairn. Even though it was a warm day everyone reported they were satisfied with the work that was accomplished. Mary Croft, Sandra Sowell and Susan Hollis provided beverages, fruit and treats to celebrate a successful work event.

The next SaddleBrooke Hiking Club Work Event on the Arizona Trail will be Wednesday, November 16, leaving SaddleBrooke at 7:30 a.m. You are invited to join the fun of working together on the Arizona National Scenic Trail by calling Mary Croft, 825-3804, or Elisabeth Wheeler, 818-1547.

Elisabeth Wheeler
Passage 18 - Reavis Canyon
October 22, 2016

I had 4 brave hearty souls come out and meet me (Craig aka Steward) at 6:45 am at Queen Valley road to make the drive up to Montana Mt. Today we have Dennis, Duane, Mike, Scott, and myself. Once we got to Montana Mt we unloaded and started working our way down Montana Mt. cutting back anything that was impeding the trail or corridor. Weather for most of the morning was nice, but as we got closer to the early afternoon it started to warm up. With the 5 of us we made it almost to the bottom missed it by 1 mile. A win for me and the trail for these 4 gents did a heck of a job less that I have to do on another day. A job well done for a day on Montana Mt.

Passage 26 - Hardscrabble Mesa
October 15, 2016

The Pine trailhead on the outskirts of the classic trail town of Pine, AZ, is a focal point on the AZT. Once a homestead, it has become a popular trailhead for day hikers, backpackers and equestrians. With recent trail improvements to the east, mountain bike traffic is picking up as well. Over the years several arrangements to the facilities have been implemented, the latest calls for grouping the signs on the east side of the parking area. The iconic steel AZT sign and sign-in box had to move.

A scant but hardy crew, augmented by power tools, took on the job. While there, and at Forest Service request, they also installed a Utah-Mexico milestone sign, and replaced the fiberglass trail markers near the highway crossing with attractive steel mini-emblem markers. The dry soil made it more of a chore than expected, so lunch afterwards tasted especially good.

Thanks Joe L, and John M.

Shawn Redfield


Passage 30 - Mormon Lake
September 10, 2016

The Arizona Trail continues to attract interest from Scouts preparing for their Eagle Scout rank, which involves public service work, so stewards were polled for potential projects on the segments they care for. Sean Murphy of Coconino Forest, and AZT segment steward said he’d like a connector trail built between Pine Grove Campground and the AZT, so we called dibs on it, and quickly had two project on the calendar. The first was Eagle Scout candidate Nathan F, who mustered a hardy crew on a gorgeous autumn day and built the first half.
The new trail contours south from the loop trail that leaves the campground area near the amphitheater parking lot, through open forest of tall pine trees and grass. With few rocks and gentle terrain construction went rather smoothly until entering rocky areas near the south end. By the end of the day the new trail extended half the distance to the AZT.

Thanks to Nathan F. of Boy Scout Troop 323, his friends and family, and Segment Steward Doug P., and buddy Girja P. for all the hard work and great results.

Shawn Redfield

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Passage 29 - Happy Jack
September 5, 2016

Not all meaningful improvements on the AZT require a huge crew and lots of sweat. Section hikers recently commented that the wires holding a couple gates closed were twisted and difficult to close. A short length of chain with a carabiner, snap hook and lag bolt for each gate, plus a short hike on a gorgeous Labor Day, made for a quick permanent fix.

The carabiner connects the snap hook to one end of the chain and the lag bolt driven through a middle link of the chain into the back c the wooden post holds it all fast so it doesn’t wander off. The chain wraps around the post and the upright of the gate, and the snap hook closes the loop, holding it closed. A cordless drill made driving the lag bolt into the post quick and easy.

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Passage 13 - Oracle
August 15-26, 2016

For many years one of ATA's wished-for projects was to move the Arizona Trail off the powerline road in Oracle State Park. The road route takes the trail up steep, eroded fall-lines along and under two-pole powerlines with guy wires clad in yellow reflectors. A scenic trail experience it is not. Off-and-on discussions had occurred over the years but the project was not simple and limited resources were focused elsewhere.

In February we met with Jennifer, Oracle State Park Manager, to reopen discussions exploring the idea. She remembered John Rendall's work and discussions picked up where they had paused. No roadblocks surfaced. Matt and Fred indicated we could perhaps afford to use a machine for construction. We laid out routes on computer maps, and in March made some initial field trips over a possible route. Working trail-south to trail-north from the windmill in Kannally Wash, the suggested route makes a gentle climb heading west up the ridgeline, passes over a high saddle with great views of Mount Lemmon, contours into and back out of a large valley, then rolls over an open area to the next wash and reconnection to the existing trail. The final few hundred yards pass through an interesting field of large rocks, then drops down to the wash.

Jennifer and Park Ranger Gary accompanied us on several trips to refine the route, and then forwarded the map and track to State Parks for review and archeological clearance. A quick 30+ days later—sometime in mid-summer when temps were over 100 every day—we were cleared for construction!

ATA contracted with Rob Bauer of AZT super-gate fame and excavation company owner in another life to do the machine work. He rented the machine in Tucson and showed up August 15th to begin. At the last minute we borrowed VOAR's power brush cutter to work...
ahead of the machine. This was a Godsend! We had underestimated the amount of cats claw to be cleared and without the machine we would never have been able to keep ahead of the excavator.

Rob had a helper for the first four days, and Gary and others showed up to help with McLeod work behind the machine and provide a safety factor. Working from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM (and later a few days) work progressed nicely, slower where heavy benching was required and faster on the more level ground. Volunteers rotated days behind the machine—thank you Tom, Lee, Ray, Gary and Bill. One day the crew spotted 3 rattle snakes, two very healthy 4-footers.

The afternoon of day 9 the machine reached the large rock pile near the north end. The rocks make for interesting trail but construction through them was tricky and slow. Rob collected rocks to hold the downhill side of the trail and slowly created the tread. One very narrow passage between two rocks required the trail to be built up so the machine could get through, then leveled out for the permanent tread.

About 11:00 AM on day 10 Rob worked the machine down the slope into the wash, around a couple trees to the junction with the existing trail, and the project was complete! RFF is sponsoring a large work event Oct 7 to do finish work—dispersing brush, deepening drains, rock armoring some crossings, etc. but the route is open for business.

By any measure, 7 months from initial discussions to 1.7 miles of completed new trail is remarkable. Before getting too excited about this accomplishment, it would do well to remember the efforts of the early Arizona Trail supporters who created and assembled the resources that make this possible. These visionaries laid the ground work of the organization, built the necessary relationships, and did the on-the-ground work when results were not so clear or assured. These kinds of projects are the direct result of those early founders foresight, initiative and hard physical labor. THANK YOU!

And THANK YOU to everyone involved in this project — Bill H., Gary F., Jeff B., Jennifer R., John R., Lee A., Ray P., Rob B., Tom K.

Shawn Redfield

Crew walking the route.

This is happening!

So it begins.

Bring it right through here.

This makes short work of grubbing roots.

We'll just put this rock over here.

Views ahead . . .

... and behind.

Lunch spot, now and future.

Views east.

End of day 7.

First trail customer appears to approve.

Finding the way through the rocks.

Taking it slow.

It's taking shape.

This is gonna work.

Tricky spot.

End in sight.

One last challenge.

And Done!

Signed and delivered.
August 6-7, 2016

On August 6th and 7th volunteers gathered to do much needed trail maintenance south of the Grand Canyon. This area experienced a fire along the Coconino Rim in July. About 2 miles of the Arizona Trail just south of the Grandview Fire Tower was burned. The trail also had many downed trees and rocks which had landed right on the trail itself. Many small pines and oaks were “leaning” across the trail, encroaching on the corridor. These were cut out and removed to clear the tread.

Interestingly, the trail tread is still clearly visible in spite of the fire and in some instances actually was used by the fire crews as a 'fire break'. The Tusayan based fire crews did an outstanding job of preserving the trail and signs along the trail. Good job Kaibab fire crews! We appreciate your fine job of preserving the signs and trail for the Stagecoach Ultra in September. Three AZT carsonite signs that did burn were replaced. There will undoubtedly be a lot of work needed next summer to restore the trail and repair water egress areas where the fire burned.

Many thanks to the volunteers and to Neil Schalk from the Tusayan Kaibab Rangers office for getting this trail work completed.

Tom Coulson

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Passage 22 - Saddle Mountain
July 21, 2016

A few of the frequent volunteers ventured out in the heat to replace the trail sign at Cross F trailhead. We had rescued the old one from behind a tree a few years ago when the steel AZT sign was moved across the road following the fire and flooding, but it was fading and on the list for improvement.

A temperature of 103 was predicted but we figured if we got an early start and hustled a little we could be done before it became unbearable. (The thermometer in the ATA Toyota read 95 as we pulled away.) We met up at Shea and the Beeline, then met Joe L. at the site. Joe saved us from the “we can dig the holes with rock bars” foolishness and brought a jackhammer and generator. (ATA’s hammer is in for warranty work.) A couple of the crew took off looking for posts and after a short search found two well-dried, ready-made juniper posts in the debris from when APS clear cut under the powerline. By the time these were brought to the site, the rest of the crew had the machines set up and were removing the old sign. A couple guys started chiseling the two post holes and others prepped the poles and attached the sign.

The site was on bedrock so the hole digging took a while. Once they were deep enough we set the posts, tamped furiously, and dusted off the new sign. A little rock piling around the posts and we were done.

Next on the list is a similar effort 14 trail miles south at the AZT/FR422 junction.

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Passage 40 - Kaibab Plateau South
June 6-10, 2016

Once again it was time for a great team of AZT volunteers to remove deadfall from this passage. Thanks to Tom Kimmel, Joe Longbotham, Dan Shein and Scott Casterlin who removed 10 down trees on this passage including one monster that measured 28.5 inches in diameter and was stretched out on the trail, not across it! Thanks also to my wonderful husband Rick who drives us close to the offending trees so the guys don’t have to carry their heavy gear too far.

http://www.aztrail.org/reports/event_reports_2016.html#
1/12/2018

ATA - Trail Work Event Reports

Special thanks to anonymous trail bike riders who removed some smaller deadfall on their own. Always good to see trail users helping to maintain the trail.

Liz Good
Steward, Passage 40b

Passage 40 - Kaibab Plateau South
June 5-9, 2016

Homing in maybe just a little on Passage 40b Steward Liz Good’s annual work event, several ATA volunteers replaced twenty trail sign along the AZT. Thank you Liz for sharing. The old signs were installed in the early 1990’s and were showing their age. Additionally, they predated the AZT so made no mention of it; the new signs proclaim it proudly.

Over the winter and spring, woodworker extraordinaire Gary Hohner constructed the sign blanks of high-grade redwood. ATA had the lettering added by computer-controlled router at Heather and Fred Studios in Tempe—a very trail friendly couple whose day job is building incredible custom furniture for high end homes in the valley. Then back to Gary’s for three layers of paint on the letters and eight (yes 8) coats of finish to protect the signs. The AZ elements are brutal and we are seeking a long-lasting finish.

The crew hauled the signs and a truck load of gear north Sunday, making the six-hour drive in time to set up the assembly shop at the Orderville TH. Klabab National Forest supplied the 40 + posts but the crew had to peel them. Some got a coat of stain before the gallon out. Work resumed bright and early Monday morning, with more peeling, staining and prepping the posts so the signs could be bolted on. By noon enough were finished to start installation. The ATA Toyota was pressed into service to haul the signs out along the trail. With the signs being 7 feet long, the tailgate had to be left open, making for a dusty ride.

The jackhammer, generator and a willing crew made short work of digging the post holes, and shortly the first three signs were installed. Tuesday the FS trailer was commandeered to haul the signs—it doesn’t take this crew all week to get smart—making for a much more pleasant ride to the sites. With 20 to practice on, the crew soon became quite proficient at setting the signs, and the completion count grew quickly. By mid-morning Wednesday only the most remote locations remained. Accessing the Tater Canyon site required a bit of faith, but the road continued all the way to the sign. A pair of equestrians with several dogs trailing along was passing the old sign just as the crew arrived. The hounds were quite interested in the trucks and jumped in to explore, and a little untangling ensued before sign work could start.

Back out the long two-track and on to Sourdough Well, another navigation adventure. With a little white-knuckle driving the crew arrived at the site and quickly set the last sign of the trip. Then back to the ranch to sort tools, load up the peeled bark and other trash, break camp and clean up the site. The stalwart volunteers who remained met for a fine dinner and one more round of trail talk at Jacob’s Lake Lodge Wednesday evening.

http://www.aztrail.org/reports/event_reports_2016.html#
Passage 19 - Superstition Wilderness
May 28, 2016

Went out today for a hike from Rogers Trough to Reavis Ranch to put up some new directional signage to help our thru hikers find their way. Was a nice day out on the trail. Did run across a beehive adjacent to the trail in a tree. Once I returned home got that reported and added to the trail app. See pictures below of the work and some critters I saw along the way.

Happy Trails
Craig Gregory
Regional Steward 16-19 & Section 18b Steward

http://www.aztrail.org/reports/event_reports_2016.html#
Passage 23 - Mazatzal Divide
May 24-25, 2016

Perfect weather and four seasoned ATA members made for a productive two days on the south end of the Mazatzal Divide passage. Sunny and breezy with daytime highs in the low 70's and nighttime lows in the high 40's made for a comfortable work environment. After meeting at the Mount Peeley trailhead on day 1, we hiked 2 miles north to the Mazatzal Wilderness boundary. Lucky for us, a dead 9' tall Juniper tree with no remaining bark was located close by and harvested for the sign post. After confirming the precise location of the wilderness boundary along the trail using GPS coordinates, we dug the necessary hole, mounted the existing sign to the post and celebrated the completion of our first task.

We then worked our way back towards the trailhead brushing as we went. It has been some time since this part of the trail has been brushed, so there was much to do. Fortunately, the crew had the right combination of tools, experience and energy to make steady progress. At 4pm we all agreed it was time to head back to the trailhead and relax before dinner. Cold drinks and appetizers were followed by a main course of steak/mashed potatoes/peas and turtle cream pie for dessert. Hard work deserves to be rewarded!

On day 2 the group left camp at 6:30am to continue brushing where we left off. Sometime around mid-morning, we were treated to a fly by of three A-10 "Warthogs" flying single file and slow below/between the peaks. What a dramatic distraction! After working hard in the sun all day, we were ready to wrap up this work event at 2pm and head back to the trailhead. We managed to brush a total of 1.5 miles over the two days.

Thank you Joe, Bill and Doug!

Roger Smith
Section 23a Co-Steward

Passage 16 - Gila River Canyons
May 21, 2016

Today we (James, Tony, and Craig) walked 3 miles to the end of 15a and worked on cutting back the corridor high and wide. The first area we worked on opened the corridor in the low area close to the trestle bridge. This work included pruning and cutting back the trees over head to allow our equestrian/bike riders to clear the area with ease. Next we cut back the vegetation growing into the corridor at the ground level. We worked our way back from the 3 mile mark towards the vehicles. Due to time we decided to hold off on some of the switchback work and drain work and just focused on the corridor growth. Overall, we had a great day on the trail doing some maintenance.

Here are a few pictures from our workday.

http://www.aztrail.org/reports/event_reports_2016.html#
Passage 12 - Oracle Ridge
May 15-16, 2016

Who would have guessed? We planned on a 3 day 2-night work event along the Wilderness of Rocks in the Catalina Mountains for Friday April 8-10. As the dates approached the weather forecast turned cold with rain and snow. So with great reluctance we rescheduled the event for May when the weather in and around Tucson is always sunny and warm.

Last week as the new dates approached, it was, as Yogi Berra once said, Déjà vu all over again! The forecast was for cold, rain and wind. So again we had to cancel the overnight. But this time, we pushed it back a day and turned it into back to back day work events.

Six amazing volunteers joined us at 5:45 as we headed up the mountain. Sunday was the day for saywering. We drove to the top of the mountain and came down the Mt. Lemmon Outlook trail to hit Wilderness of Rocks close to the middle. From there we headed west to the last known deadfall. Along the way part of the group stopped to clear out a dammed up portion of Lemon Creek that had created a pond on top of the trail last fall. The rest of the group continued and cleared out a difficult ponderosa that was hanging a few feet above the trail.

Reunited, we headed back to the east, brushing along between deadfall and sawing out over a dozen large deadfall. We returned to the mountain on Monday with 4 dedicated volunteers and made a sweep from the top of Mt. Lemmon, down the Mt. Lemmon trail, across Wilderness of Rocks and up the Lemon Rock Lookout trail. About 10 miles and 3,000’ elevation gain. We cleaned up the areas missed on Sunday. Mostly just brushing with no new deadfall found.

Thanks again to all my hard working volunteers.

Passage 23 - Mazatzal Divide
May 1-7, 2016

ATA Volunteer Vacation Event Report

Project: May 2016 Volunteer Vacation Passage 23
Project Leader: Wendy Lotze, ATA Volunteer Coordinator
Location: Mazatzal Wilderness, Tonto National Forest, AZ Trail Passage 23
Days worked: 6
Volunteers Engaged: 12
Total Volunteer Hours Contributed: 511
Crew Leaders: John Mattson, Regional Steward; Roger Smith, Steward 23a

Project Overview:
A team of 9 trail volunteers hiked almost 10 miles into the Mazatzal Wilderness on May 1st to begin a 7 day volunteer event aimed at clearing brush from the Arizona Trail in the heart of the Mazatzal Wilderness. Supported by Bill and Sara Vicary and their 3 horses Rocky, Sugar and Spice, the team was able to clear logs, overgrown vegetation and other natural obstacles from over 6 miles of trail along the rugged Mazatzal Crest. The most significant achievement was beating back thick manzanita, oak and locust overgrowth along 2.5 miles of trail south of Horsecamp Seep. Many of the bushes within the trail tread were grubbed out, and growth along the trail boundary was cut back at or below ground level to achieve a longer-term corridor. Crew Leaders scouted the trail north of Horsecamp Seep to the Park to identify potential problems for future maintenance projects.

Overall, the tread itself is in very good condition in this area. Though there are some short sections of trail where the tread contours back into the tributaries of Deadman Creek where re-benching will be required at some point, for the majority of section 23b the trail is stable and easy to follow. Overgrowth of vegetation is still a problem for approximately 3/4 of a mile between Chilson Camp and Horsecamp Seep. The crew also removed some of the more significant vegetation barriers along the Barnhardt trail to make passage easier for the stock on their return trip for the year.
Passage 18 - Reavis Canyon  
April 18-19, 2016

It's no secret that the Arizona Trail folks are a bit obsessed with big, heavy, permanent gates. Gates number 28 and 29 went in this week north of Superior near Happy Camp. The two locations were not accessible by vehicles, and at many hundred pounds each, plus 800 pounds of concrete, plus tools, these installations stretched capacity more than a little. Without the enthusiastic support of FS staff at the Globe Ranger District, this wouldn't have happened.

Paul "Pablo" Burchard, Globe District Recreation and Trails, and general super hero, arranged for the Globe Fire crew and the Globe Hot Shots to handle the heavy lifting. This worked out well because they are in their twenties, and . . . well . . . the ATA volunteers are not.

So ATA delivered the gates and concrete mix to the site Monday morning. The youngsters showed up in fancy vehicles with lots of equipment, the leaders checked the two locations, developed the plan, conducted the safety briefing and made short work of putting the gates, concrete mix and water at each location. Tuesday morning ATA's usual suspects blew into town before 8:00 and headed out FR 650 to Happy Camp. The biggest challenge was getting the generator up the hill, too bad we didn't have a few Hot Shots to help. Then digging began and hole number 2 immediately hit a large rock. Thanks yet again to the donors for the jack hammer and generator, this stuff doesn't happen with hand tools.

The first gate was in by 10:30 and the crew took a quick snack and water break. Temps were rising. Then they hauled the gear and materials to the second location and the process repeated, a little quicker because the location is closer to vehicle access and the digging went better. By 3:00 everyone met in Superior for lunch, then changed Tom's tire and headed home.

Thanks to Joe, Roger, Tom, Bill, David, John and Scott.

Shawn Redfield

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Passage 25 - Whiterock Mesa  
April 16-17, 2016

A common comment (complaint) from AZT hikers is the difficulty navigating portions of Passage 25, north of the East Verde River. This portion of the AZT gets lite use so it is not well worn. The area is an ancient volcanic plain, littered with uniformly colored dark red rocks, which don't wear down to a distinct tread in some areas. The cairns that mark the way are the same color as the surroundings making them difficult to see. In wet years the vegetation all but hides them. The plan was to enlarge the cairns, adding a few where necessary, and to replace the well-worn sign at White Rock Spring.

Following a one-week weather delay that thinned the ranks of participants, a team of volunteers assembled at the Twin Buttes TH early Saturday, April 16, checked gear and supplies one more time and headed south. Thru hiker number one showed up quickly, a few hundred yards from the vehicles. He was looking forward to a meal and beverages at That Brewery. He also reported no major concerns with the now-notorious Mazatzals. It's largely a matter of perspective sometimes.

The cairn rehabilitation started right off, with the first one being just south of the rock gabions marking the Wilderness boundary. Early enthusiasm resulted in a rather tall cairn, and the group moved south, continuing with several more. The rocky terrain does indeed hide the trail in many spots, so in spite of concerns of over-doing the cairns, there was plenty to do.
At a rest stop about a mile and a half from the start, Tracy asked, "How are you going to replace that sign post at the spring without a digging bar?" Oops! Clearly the equipment check didn't go quite as it should have. So the crew continued the effort south while their disorganized leader hustled back to the ATA Toyota for the bar, what's another couple miles?

Thru-hiker number two passed; he was doing half the trail this year and had done the south half last year. Two horses and riders followed on quickly, with one reporting the rocky trail was a problem for the horses. There isn’t much to be done about rocks in AZ, but we do need more involvement from equestrians in reporting conditions and making the "equestrian perspective" known. Volunteers are welcome!

A couple hours after lunch the group decided to head for the spring for water and camp, there was 3½ miles to go and no shortage of work to do. The plan was to water up, replace the sign, camp, then work our way back in the morning. Whiterock Spring has been refurbished with new pipes and tank, and water was clear and plentiful, as the hikers and riders had reported. It just felt a little too far south at the end of the day. We watered up and started looking for a sign post to harvest. Upon closer inspection the existing post looked to be in very good condition, and the consensus was to just use that instead of cutting and setting a new one. And the digging bar was for what?

As the sign work was getting started three excited and thirsty dogs blew through the work site. They were followed shortly by Mary Ann and crew and at least four pack animals—horses and mules, I didn’t count which. Mary Ann, LF Ranch owner and segment steward, was headed out to do some fencing. She provided local information about goings on in the area, and took the group photo around the new sign for us. Then she took the animals east of the spring and we went back up the rim to one of the most impressive camp sites on the entire AZT.

Just above the rim, east of the trail, a path into the trees leads to a flat, soft, semi-open area with fantastic views south along the east slope of the Mazatzals. The setting sun and scattered low clouds made for quite a show as the group set up camp and cooked dinner. Next morning the crew obliterated a meandering unofficial reroute and re-opened the official trail through encroaching trees. Then working north a few more cairns were built, several narrowing corridor sections opened and a few hundred yards of cats claw removed. There was little if any evidence of previous maintenance, but the trail is in very good condition considering how remote it is and the little use. Crew members wondered aloud if the trail predates the AZT designation or if it was built for the AZT. Checking the 1930 topographic map reveals that it indeed does predate the AZT; this is not a new trail.

By noon the trip objectives were complete and everyone was ready to be heading back. The march north was uneventful, except for the new hill that had risen during the night — funny we didn’t hear or feel it. Well, that’s what it seemed like. Back at the vehicles the group jettisoned packs and tools and made our way to That Brewery in Pine for a post-trip meal. The ice cream sundaes were a great topping for an enjoyable and productive trip.

Thank you Otto, Joe, John, Roger, and Tracy.

Shawn Redfield

 passage 18 - Reavis Canyon
April 2, 2016

Today we were blessed with some great weather. Had a total of 7 volunteers come out and pitch in to do some trail work. I want to thank each of the volunteers; Gordon, Rick, David, Duane, Mike, Tasha, and Keegan. With their help we were able to do a piece of trail maintenance on about 0.1 mile of trail and fortify a trail crossing a gorge area. See attached pictures of the work completed and the crew.

Thank you all - Craig Gregory.
Passage 13 - Oracle
March 16, 2016

Twelve SaddleBrooke hikers along with Shawn Redfield (Arizona Trail Director), Jeff Bridge (Regional Steward) and Gary Faulkenberry (Oracle State Park) did significant work on the Arizona National Scenic Trail at the #77 Underpass going into Oracle State Park on March 16. A permanent water storage box and cement were delivered by Shawn Redfield. The water storage and re-supply box for thru-hikers was cemented into place. Besides general clean-up of the trail north of #77 to the Tiger Mine TH, hardy hikers removed sand from the #77 underpass down to the concrete. A 3 foot wide, 3 foot deep trench was carved through the sand towards the wash drainage. At least 8 Gator loads and 20 wheel barrow loads were dug out and hauled away from the underpass. This was a strenuous effort and should help horse riders using the underpass. Afterwards a celebratory lunch was held at the Patio Cafe. The SaddleBrooke Hiking Club will resume Arizona Trail work days in October.

Elisabeth Wheeler & Mary Croft, Co-Stewards

Passage 22 - Saddle Mountain
March 12, 2016

Austin Fairbanks, a Life Scout with Troop 649 in Scottsdale, Arizona completed the field work for his Eagle Scout project near the Mormon Grove connection to the AZT. For approximately a quarter-mile both north and south of the junction the trail has eroded badly leaving a rock field to the north and a deep ditch to the south. The area burned in the 2012 Sunflower Fire, making a bad erosion situation worse.

Austin’s project included construction of numerous “rubble dams” across several hundred yards of the eroding ditch that parallels the trail just south of the connector. These dams will slow the water and trap sediment, allowing native plants a chance to start. The crew hauled hundreds of bucketsful of rock to build small dams.

North of the connector junction the trail lies on a rocky bench road, left over from mining days decades ago. Erosion has exposed large areas of loose, softball-sized rocks which made footing treacherous. The crew raked the rock into mini-dams to slow the erosion, opened drains, chipped out some encroaching brush and generally re-defined the tread.

Additionally, two deep gullies have formed in the trail approaching the connector from Mormon Grove TH. The crew gave theseuts the rubble dam treatment as well. Many hands make light work, and the 23 participants finished up in good time. Austin provided lunch at the trail head, and each scout received an AZT bandana.

Thanks to John Matteson for assisting with technical oversight, and all the scouts and Dads who made the project a success.

S. Redfield

http://www.atrail.org/reports/event_reports_2016.html#
Passage 15 - Tortilla Mountains
March 8-10, 2016

We had a small group spend the better part of three days working on the Boulders segment of the Tortilla Mountains passage. Almost 3/4 of the passage was worked under sunny, warm skies. Camp was just off of Freeman Road about 2 miles from the Freeman Road Trailhead - a spot used by this group many times in the past.

Workers present included Charlie, Bill, Joe, Wayne, Carl and David.

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Passage 9 - Rincon Mountains
Centennial Saguaro Survey
March 5, 2016

On March 5th, a team of 25 Arizona Trail volunteers stepped off the trail and became citizen scientists for a day in Saguaro National Park. The goal: to learn how these iconic cacti adapt to the stresses of disease, urban encroachment, climate change, and dramatic weather conditions. The tools: a tape measure, measuring stick, clip board and a clinometer (a device for measuring height based upon angles).

The first saguaro survey was initiated in 1933, when rangers in the newly established Saguaro National Park noticed a decline in saguaros in the park’s Cactus Forest area on the east side of Tucson. Scientists created a one square mile test plot called Section 17 and counted and measured all of the saguaros alive in that section in an effort to determine why the cacti were dying. In subsequent decades, additional plots were added to the survey, and the goals of the study were expanded. Today, the saguaro survey is one of the longest running vegetation surveys in the NPS and provides nearly a century of data on this unique species. To celebrate the Park Service centennial in 2016, the NPS opened the survey to groups of volunteer citizen scientists. Since more than 18 miles of the AZNS is within Saguaro National Park, and many more miles are through saguaro-studded Sonoran upland, it was a great match to partner with the ATA for one of the survey events.

ATA participants included members of the Seeds of Stewardship Program, local hikers and a family of section hikers from Tempe. The plot selected for our study was one of the older plots in the survey, including saguaros that have been tallied periodically for over 30 years. Perched on a crumbly hillside, our saguaros patiently waited as we learned how to measure their height, count their arms and assess their overall condition. We learned how to identify conditions such as insect and frost damage, cavities and wounds and what “purpling” means (even if scientists are still debating what causes it). At the end of the day, we’d counted, measured and evaluated over 200 cacti. Results of the day will be posted on the Centennial Saguaro Survey website.
Passage 18 - Reavis Canyon
February 27, 2016

I want to say thank you to the two guys, Christian and Keegan, which joined me on this work day. We all got up early to meet out at Queen Valley road to make our way up to the top of Montana Mt. Once we made it to the top we headed down to the base of Montana Mt. First we laid out red flags to mark a possible reroute from the base of Montana Mt. going south to bypass the canyon wash. This will allow our travelers to stay on continuous single track trail. After we finished this we then widened out a corner at the base of Montana Mt. that was worked on last year. The rain proved where we needed to make some adjustments. After we finished that we headed up a short ways and started working on the 4 areas pre-marked to sweep, build some drains, and knock off the berms. With the three of us we were able to get all 4 sections that were pre-marked completed and two extra corners worked on.

Again want to thank the two gents that came out and hope to see them again in April. Below are some supplied photos of our work day.

Craig Gregory

Before #1

After #1

Before #2

After #2

Hard at work

Christian making a new drain

Keegan adding finishing touches to a new drain

Passage 7 - Las Cienegas
February 20, 2016

Another warm day of trail maintenance...almost too warm, but we managed to brush about a mile of trail and do some minor trailwork repair. The trail has held up extremely well in this area. Laddie Cox joined us and what a pleasure it was to see him hike on the trail. We spotted a few desert marigolds and some fairy dusters in bloom as well as, surprisingly, leaves budding on the ocatillos.

Thank you to my hard-working crew: Lee, Gerry, Chris, Scott, Tom and Laddie!

Next work event on 7A scheduled for 3/19, if the weather isn’t too warm!
Passage 13 - Oracle
February 17, 2016

The SaddleBrooke Hiking Club is making a significant difference on the Oracle Passage of the Arizona National Scenic Trail. On February 17 volunteers removed overgrowth, widened the trail corridor and improved tread for a more enjoyable trail experience between the American Flag Ranch House and Oracle State Park.

Front Row: Jackie Hall, Mary Croft, Candy Patrin, Kathy Gilsh, Marilyn Smith.
Photo by Sandra Sowell

Passage 7 - Las Cienegas
January 23, 2016

We were a small but tenacious group, coming out for the warmest day of the year, so far! We cleared about a mile of trail, which included what seemed like literally tons of prickly pear. We were happily greeted by two groups of mountain bikers, a pair of hikers doing the passage and a group of 7 horseback riders. Truly a multi-use trail experience!

No creepy crawlies were out, but the birds were singing. Thanks to my 3 volunteers for such a wonderful, exhausting day!

Next work event on 7A will be 2/20/16 - check the calendar for details!

Tasha Pontifex

Passage 13 - Oracle
January 20, 2016

Our SaddleBrooke Hiking Club is a proud partner of the Arizona National Scenic Trail through our club membership and volunteer hours. On January 20 hiking club members collectively contributed 45 hours of trail work on the Oracle Passage of the Arizona National Scenic Trail. Significant trail and drainage improvements were made by 15 volunteers followed by celebratory hot cider, coffee and cookies made by Sandra Sowell. It’s satisfying to work side-by-side on the Arizona National Scenic Trail and see immediate results of moderate physical effort. Come and join us at our upcoming 3 hour work events on Wednesday, February 17, and Wednesday, March 16. To sign up call Mary Croft - 651-270-1660.

Elisabeth Wheeler

http://www.atrail.org/reports/event_reports_2016.html#
SMITH, RAY PEARL, MONICA WHITE, ENRIQUE WHEELER,
Jan Springer, Shawn Redfield, Tom Kimmel
Front Row: Chuck Kaltenbach, Mike Wolters, Ruth
Leman, Jackie Hall, Mary Croft, Kathy Gian, Fred
Norris. (Photo by Sandra Sowell)