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A CONTINUOUS, NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL TRAVERSING 800 MILES FROM MEXICO TO UTAH, LINKING DESERTS, MOUNTAINS, FORESTS, CANYONS, COMMUNITIES AND PEOPLE.



Dear Friend of the Arizona Trail,

An amigo recently asked if I could pick him up at Montezuma Pass, the southern terminus of the Arizona National Scenic Trail, as he finished a southbound thruhike. I obliged under the condition that I walk the final 1.9 miles to the U.S./ Mexico border with him. What I considered a chance to reconnect with someone who left Arizona many years ago, and returned to take a long walk on the AZT after a turn-of-life events in Washington, became something much more profound. As we rounded the last corner among golden grasses and towering agave stalks,

I watched him erupt with elation as Border Monument 102 came into view. The 800-mile goal he'd been chasing for the past 42 days, and thinking about for almost a decade, was attained. At that moment I realized I had never actually been present when someone finished the Arizona Trail. It's something I'll never forget.

After the cheers had faded and requisite photographs were taken we stared out across the magnificent landscape, allowing the heavy silence that defines the Arizona Trail experience to return to the borderlands. This warm November morning served as a vivid reminder how trails impact peoples' lives on a level that just can't be measured.

Back at the trailhead we encountered a group of women from Cottonwood, Arizona gearing up for a day hike. They were ticking off Passage 1 of the AZT over two days, with a long-term goal of hiking the entire Arizona Trail – one segment at a time. The miles they were traveling together, the towns they visited along the way, and the memories they were creating was inspiring beyond words. I observed with pride as they interviewed "a real thru-hiker" and shared stories about mountains, deserts, canyons, forests, people, water sources, lightweight gear, and sore feet. Yep, that's the AZT alright.

The Arizona Trail Association (ATA) has a long history of creating positive bonds between people and the natural resources that make Arizona unique. We do more than just build and maintain trail; engage volunteers in the stewardship of public lands; fight for access and protection; introduce youth to the wild lands in their backyard; work with communities to benefit from the outdoor recreation industry; produce maps and information so people can confidently explore the wild backbone of the state; and promote the AZT as the gem of the National Trails System. We do all that and much more every day...but what we really provide is a pathway for transformative experiences that positively impacts the lives of all who hike, run, pedal or ride on it.

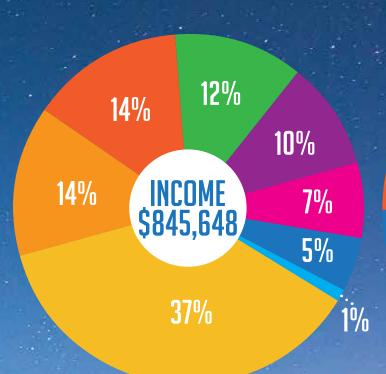
Please enjoy this Annual Report, which highlights just a few accomplishments over the past year, knowing that your support makes it all possible. You will be proud to know we grew by almost 31%, provided meaningful experiences for over 2,200 volunteers, and broke ground on a major trail improvement project to remove the AZT from dirt roads. But if you really want to understand the mission, vision and impact of the ATA, hit the trail.

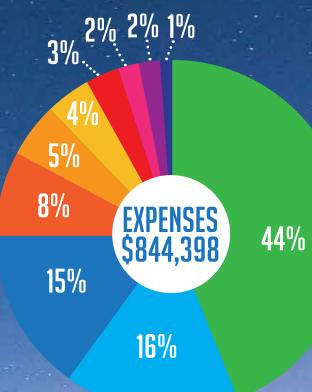
Sincerely,

Matthew J. Nelson Executive Director "WE HAVE FALLEN HEIRS TO THE MOST GLORIOUS HERITAGE A PEOPLE HAVE EVER RECEIVED, AND EACH OF US MUST DO OUR PART IF WE WISH TO SHOW THAT THE NATION IS WORTHY OF ITS GOOD FORTUNE."

- THEODORE ROOSEVELT

2017 FINANCIALS





FEDERAL GRANTS

GRANTS

SPECIAL EVENTS

BUSINESS PARTNERS & CORPORATE SUPPORT

MEMBERSHIP

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

MERCHANDISE

OTHER

TRAIL OPERATIONS

PAYROLL & GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES

SEEDS OF STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

SPECIAL EVENTS

FUNDRAISING

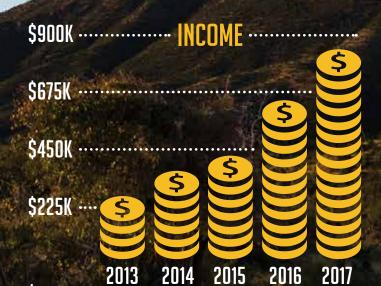
WEBSITE, MAPS & PUBLIC INFORMATION

MEMBERSHIP

CONSULTANTS & CONTRACTORS

MERCHANDISE

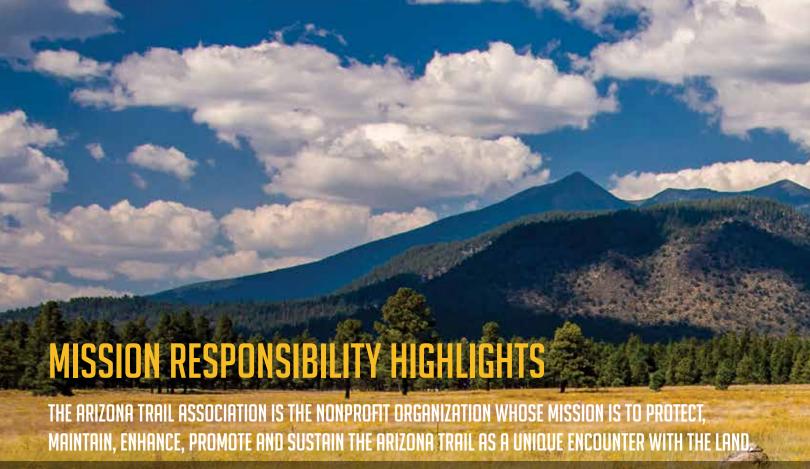
GATEWAY COMMUNITIES



MEMBERSHIP

Arizona Trail Association membership has increased steadily over the years. New memberships and renewals occur on a daily basis, solidifying the network of individuals that sustain the Arizona Trail. The ATA offers a variety of membership levels and benefits, from the \$20 Prickly Pear level up to the \$1,000 Ponderosa Pine level, with special membership premiums offered to members donating at higher levels.





PROTECT

The ATA believes that the most effective way to protect the Arizona Trail is by engaging thousands of individuals in the exploration, appreciation and stewardship of the trail. In addition to volunteer engagement, media outreach, special events, youth outdoor programs, gateway community relationship building, and promotion, the ATA worked closely with federal land management agencies to integrate long-term trail corridor protection strategies into their management plans. The ATA met with private companies whose proposed activities may have adverse impacts to the Arizona Trail to ensure impacts will be minimized and, if their project is approved, there will be a net gain to trail resources. The ATA is also partnering with other nonprofit organizations whose missions closely align with ours on specific initiatives that will protect the Arizona Trail, its natural and cultural resources, and the economies of the gateway communities that rely on the outdoor recreation industry for their vitality.

MAINTAIN

Since 1994, the ATA has trained and coordinated tens of thousands of volunteers to help build and maintain the Arizona Trail. In 2017, 2,251

volunteers contributed 22,559 hours of service, valued at \$519,449. Some accomplishments include seven Trail Skills Institute sessions, with 59 participants learning more about the art and science of trail work; two Volunteer Vacations which brought together 38 volunteers for a total of 10 trail work days; and two Steward Conferences, where 50 stewards participated. For projects beyond the reach of volunteers, the ATA hired young professionals from various conservation corps to address priority maintenance projects along some of the most remote segments of the trail. The ATA also contracted a mini-excavator operator for specific projects outside wilderness areas where a machine could work wonders when it comes to moving tons of dirt, large boulders, and intensive rockwork.

ENHANCE

Protecting and maintaining the trail is paramount, but the ATA is also committed to improving the AZT. Enhancements include improved water resources; upgraded trailhead and navigational signs; development of digital navigational resources; and replacing old gates with steel AZT Super Gates to protect the trail from motorized abuse and



accommodate the needs of all trail users. The ATA has also been working to get the AZT off dirt roads by building sustainable trail nearby, and great progress has been made on the Happy Jack and Canelo Hills Passages. One of the most impressive enhancement projects of 2017 was the installation of two steel bridges and two wooden bridges over critical waterways along the Highline Passage.

PROMOTE

The ATA is constantly promoting the Arizona Trail through development and distribution of digital and printed resources; outreach to media; coordination with gateway communities; distribution of the Arizona Trail Junior Explorer Handbook; organization of special events on the trail; presentations at community events; and much more. The ATA works closely with the Arizona Office of Tourism, Arizona State Parks & Trails, convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, and local businesses to help increase awareness of the cross-state trail. The Arizona Trail is promoted on social media, rounding out the year with over 10,402 Facebook followers, 5,779 Instagram followers, and 2,622 Twitter followers.

SUSTAIN

Creating a sustainable environment for the trail means attracting volunteers, members and partners who will repeatedly contribute time and funds to the Arizona Trail into the future. The ATA's programs and activities are funded by our 1,365 individual members, 504 individual donors, 17 Legacy Partners, 76 Business Partners, 10 Event Sponsors, as well as private grants, federal assistance agreements, special fundraising events, and retail sales. Building a sustainable future for the Arizona Trail isn't just about funds; it's also about creating awareness and providing an opportunity for exposure to the outdoors. By building relationships with 22 schools across Arizona, the ATA's Seeds of Stewardship programs allowed over 2,150 youth opportunities to connect with the trail this year. It's this connection that instills a sense of commitment to the AZT that young participants will carry with them for the rest of their lives

TRAIL OPERATIONS

TRAIL OPERATIONS

In addition to the dedication of trail stewards, volunteer organizations, hiking groups, saddle clubs, mountain biking teams, trail running groups, rock climbing organizations, Boy Scouts, gateway community members, the Usual Suspects, and myriad other collectives that helped make the ATA's Trail Operations program successful, the ATA contracted conservation corps to do some of the heavy lifting. These include young professionals from American Conservation Experience, Arizona Conservation Corps, and Conservation Legacy's Ancestral Lands Crews. Groups of up to 10 individuals camped and worked in remote settings for 80 hours at a time.

Each of the AZT's 43 passages received maintenance and improvements in 2017, but here are just a few of our proudest accomplishments:

HUACHUCA MOUNTAIN TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

The Arizona Trail within the Huachuca Mountains was transformed through the hard labor of Arizona Conservation Corps and AmeriCorps members, funded by the US Forest Service, a grant from the Arizona Horse Lovers Foundation, and donations from a variety of saddle clubs and individuals. Crews dedicated six weeks of work alongside ATA Staff and Stewards to rebuild the AZT from the Miller Peak Wilderness boundary to Bear Saddle. Corps members spent a total of 1,220 hours removing 37 downed trees and 30 overhead snags; rebuilding more than two miles of trail, including full bench tread repair; installing 10 rock step platforms; and moving or building stone structures

around a number of fairly impassable large rock pinch points. This is the most impressive equestrian safety enhancement of 2017.

ORACLE STATE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

With funding from REI Co-op and the State of Arizona, the ATA worked alongside Oracle State Park staff to design and build 1.2 miles of trail to replace unsustainably steep and eroding trail. New signs were also installed.

GILA RIVER CANYONS GATES & MAINTENANCE

Through Assistance Agreement funding provided by the Bureau of Land Management, the ATA purchased and volunteers installed 4 steel gates in remote locations along Passages 15 and 16. The Copper Basin Railroad assisted with overthe-rails transportation of materials. The ATA also coordinated a major maintenance project on 14 miles of Passage 16 using a mini-excavator and hand tools.

SUPERSTITION WILDERNESS SINGLETRACK

One of ATA's objectives is to realign the trail from roads on to singletrack. A prime opportunity was identified near Rogers Trough Trailhead, where one-half-mile of overgrown trail could be restored to replace one mile of road walk. The ATA proposed the project to the Tonto National Forest, scouted and marked the trail locations, and accompanied the archeologist in the field. The USFS directed a conservation corps to the project and they made quick work of it. The ATA purchased and volunteers installed the necessary wilderness signs on either end of the new section.



ATA volunteers installed 17 trail signs in the remote Mazatzal Wilderness, replacing signs that burned in 2004 and 2012. The signs help users navigate the backcountry and find critical water sources. Volunteers made several trips to haul the signs into the wilderness and install them on locally-harvested posts. This completes the massive Mazatzal Restoration Project started in 2016, which resulted in considerable improvements to over 40 miles of the AZT through this remote mountain range.

EAST VERDE RIVER TRAIL PROJECT

The ATA received a Recreation Trails Program grant, administered by Arizona State Parks & Trails, to rehabilitate a portion of the AZT along the headwaters of the East Verde River. Volunteers built one mile of new trail through old-growth forest to replace a road walk underneath power lines. Using grant funds, the ATA purchased two steel foot bridges and volunteers helped install them to provide safe crossings, prevent erosion, and protect the critical watershed. The ATA fabricated and installed nine new signs along the route, closed and reclaimed a deeply eroded social trail, and opened a long-neglected route around the Washington Park Trailhead. Over 1,500 volunteer hours included two Boy Scout events, an ATA-sponsored Volunteer Vacation, and numerous individual and small group work days.

HAPPY JACK SINGLETRACK

The Mogollon Rim Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest is embarking on a project to remove the AZT from 18 miles of dirt roads by building fresh singletrack. Work on this project started in 2017 with a Volunteer Vacation that completed 1.7 miles of new trail through the pine trees. The Happy Jack Singletrack Project is expected to continue for two years and will be the largest undertaking since the Arizona Trail's completion in 2011.

SAWYERING IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Twenty-five Arizona Trail volunteers traveled to the Grand Canyon National Park's North Rim to clear Passage 39 of 140 downed trees and piles of overgrowth. This was the first ATA work event allowed in the Park in as long as anyone could remember. Volunteers assessed the trail and presented facts and photos of the serious trail conditions to convince National Park Service (NPS) staff of the urgent need, documenting the downed trees (comprising 27,000+ square inches of cutting) and thousands of young aspens and ponderosa seedlings to be removed. ATA provided food and support for a volunteer weekend where two crews, assisted by an NPS trail crew, cleared the trees and brush and removed several piles of cut tree rounds left over from an old forest thinning project.

KAIBAB NATIONAL FOREST GATES

The ATA partnered with the Kaibab National Forest's North Kaibab Ranger District to replace six dilapidated gates with the iconic AZT Super Gates. ATA and the US Forest Service shared the cost of the steel gates, and the ATA provided the concrete and 370 hours of volunteer labor. Volunteers provided thousands of miles of their own transportation to the remote North Rim location.



Volunteers for the Arizona Trail Association do much more than build, monitor and maintain trail. Our corps of dedicated individuals assist with running and participatory events, cartography and graphic design, mailings and office work, fundraising, outreach booths at community events, and youth engagement. In 2017, reported volunteer hours totaled 22,559 from 2,251 volunteers – a 23% increase from 2016. Although the ATA makes a significant effort to track volunteer hours and events, the initiatives of our volunteers are often unreported. Thus, our reported numbers are believed to grossly

underestimate actual contributions for the year.

The Volunteer Program strives to go beyond hosting events and recruiting trail workers; it seeks to promote community among enthusiastic and well-trained volunteers. The ATA's Trail Steward program offers select volunteers a leadership

role within this community. The 126 Segment Stewards have made a multi-year commitment to monitor and maintain a designated section of the trail. Five Regional Stewards support the Segment Stewards and coordinate efforts on the regional level to ensure a positive experience for trail users. Twice annually, the ATA hosts a Steward Conference which serves as both a training opportunity and a team building experience. The conferences highlight various Gateway Communities and ATA Business Partners to further strengthen the network of support for the trail. In 2017, 50 Stewards attended these sessions.

The Trail Skills Institute was developed in 2014 to provide professional quality training to all ATA volunteers interested in expanding their expertise in trail monitoring, maintenance and construction. With the help of volunteer instructors from American Conservation Experience (ACE), the Trail Skills Institute offers four modules of hands-on, on-trail education including discussion of landscape context, arid lands hydrology, corridor maintenance, stone masonry techniques and re-route design. Six sessions were offered in 2017, with 59 participants attending. These courses draw trail volunteers and

professionals from all over the Southwest and they're gaining notoriety nationwide.

Our Volunteer Vacations program combines physically rewarding trail work, tight-knit community building, and in-depth skill development into an intensive one-week event. While Trail Operations may appreciate the 2.7 miles of

trail constructed through these projects, participants usually report that it's the relationships they built and the new things they learned that are the most valuable part of the experience. The Volunteer Vacation hosted in partnership with the American Hiking Society brought 14 volunteers from all over the United States. Combined, our two Volunteer Vacations contributed 1,100 volunteer hours and countless positive connections.

The ATA would like to thank all of its volunteers and stewards for their passion and hard work. With their help, the AZT gets better all the time.



The mission of the Seeds of Stewardship program is to provide educational and meaningful outdoor experiences that empower youth to become the next generation of stewards of Arizona's wild landscapes. The program was initiated in 2012 to foster a connection between youth and the natural resources that exist near their hometowns, utilize

the Arizona Trail as an outdoor classroom, and engaging youth in service projects to benefit trails, parks and public lands within close proximity to home. This successful three-tiered approach involving experience, education, and service learning helps plant "seeds of stewardship" within youth – the next generation who will be responsible for the maintenance and protection of the Arizona National Scenic Trail and other important natural resources.

In Northern Arizona, 2017 was a banner year for Seeds of Stewardship. School participation increased from 7

core school groups to 13. In total, 1,049 students collectively hiked or biked 4,801 miles and spent 1,962 hours improving the Arizona Trail. In the summertime, the ATA hosted the third annual Peaks to Park mountain bike ride, with 10 youth mountain biking from Flagstaff to the Grand Canyon on the Arizona National Scenic Trail. In late July, the ATA hosted an event with the Kaibab National Forest with 250 high school students, introducing them to the amazing resources our public lands have to offer and how the ATA and public lands managers work together to preserve these national treasures.

Autumn saw the launch of our brand new Gear Girls program, funded by an REI Co-op Force of Nature grant. Gear Girls uses mountain biking, trail work and snow sports to empower young women to be outdoor leaders and trail stewards. This program teaches them not only the practical skills needed to be trail volunteers and outdoor adventurers, but

also builds their confidence, problem solving, persistence, and team work that are much needed in the work force and the world. Gear Girls engaged 16 young women in its first season, covering 361 miles of trail and contributing 21 hours of trail work service.

In Southern Arizona, 23 classes

from 16 schools in 10 communities participated in the Seeds of Stewardship program for a total of 68 adventure expeditions into Southern Arizona's beautiful landscapes. In 2017, program coordinators guided a total of 436 students to learn, play,

restore, and grow outside. An Active Trails grant from the National Park Foundation allowed us to work with youth from Bisbee, Hereford, Huachuca City and Sierra Vista, engaging them in handson learning, exploration and stewardship within Coronado National Memorial. The ATA diversified outings by partnering with Southwest Trekking and BICAS to offer explorations of the Arizona Trail by mountain bike, giving Tucson's inner city youth an opportunity to pedal along a National Scenic Trail and engaging them in rewarding trail maintenance projects.



ARIZONA







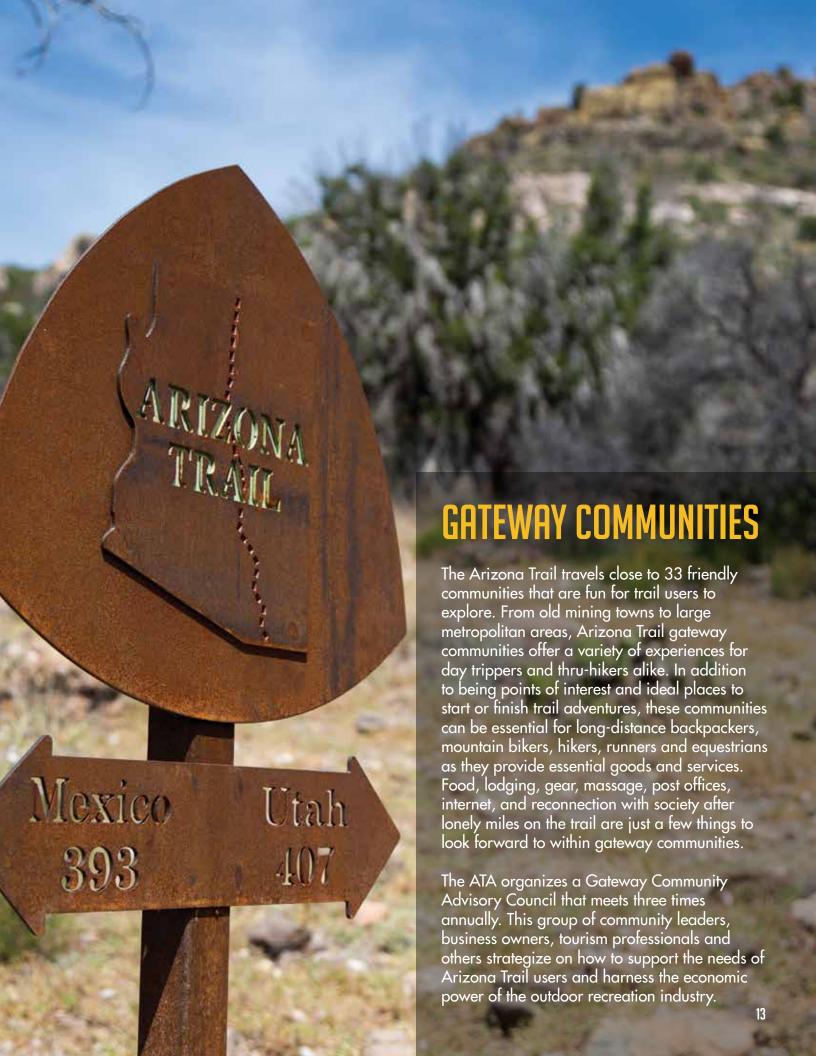








presented by Fleet Feet Sports - Tucson

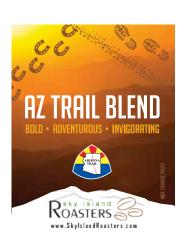




In 2017, the Arizona Trail Association expanded on the idea of partnering with various businesses to create name-brand products that promote the Arizona Trail and provide direct financial benefit – a percentage of proceeds from the sale of each product is donated to the ATA.

AZ TRAIL BLEND COFFEE

Roasted in small batches within the gateway community of Oracle, our friends at Sky Island Roasters announced the AZ Trail Blend of coffee in 2017. This official coffee of the Arizona Trail is a delicious dark roast that is bold, adventurous and invigorating.



AZT WILD MESQUITE BAR

Created by Huppy Bar in the gateway community of Flagstaff, the AZT Wild Mesquite Bar is made with Arizona ingredients, including locally-grown nuts, mesquite meal from the Tohono O'odham Nation, honey, and a pinch of chile powder. It's the official bar of the Arizona Trail, and is naturally healthy fuel for all your trail adventures.

ARIZONA TRAIL ALE

Brewed by THAT Brewery in the gateway community of Pine, Arizona Trail Ale is the official beer of the Arizona Trail. The English-style copperruby ale features a fragrant bouquet with a spicy kick. The malt has flavors of fresh baked whole wheat bread, giving way to subtle notes of stone fruit, rosehips, and black tea, with a sophisticated floral hop.

ARIZONA TRAIL APP

Working with the smartphone app wizards at Atlas Guides (aka Guthook Hikes), we were proud to help launch the Arizona Trail App in 2015. Since that time it has been refined, and is now considered the greatest navigational resource available for the Arizona Trail. Download it through the App Store or Google Play and hit the trail!



ARIZONA TRAIL DATA CARD

For anyone using a handheld Garmin GPS device, the Arizona Trail data card is the product to have. The ATA's GIS Director recently provided updated information to Garmin, and they released their second edition of this popular data card (also available as a digital download).

AZT HATS

Crown Trails Headwear makes some of the nicest hats on the planet, and they give a portion of proceeds to all of the National Scenic Trails

featured on their products. Check out their line of AZT caps, sun hats, trucker hats, visors, and much more.





ARIZONA BUSINESSES AND CLUBS THAT BUSINESS PARTNERS SUPPORT THE ARIZONA NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL I FAVE A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

LEGACY PARTNERS





























PONDEROSA PINE PARTNERS (\$1,000 DONATION)

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Emmitt Barks Cartography

Endurance Rehabilitation

Epic Rides

Grand Canyon Guru

Green Valley Recreation Hiking Club

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