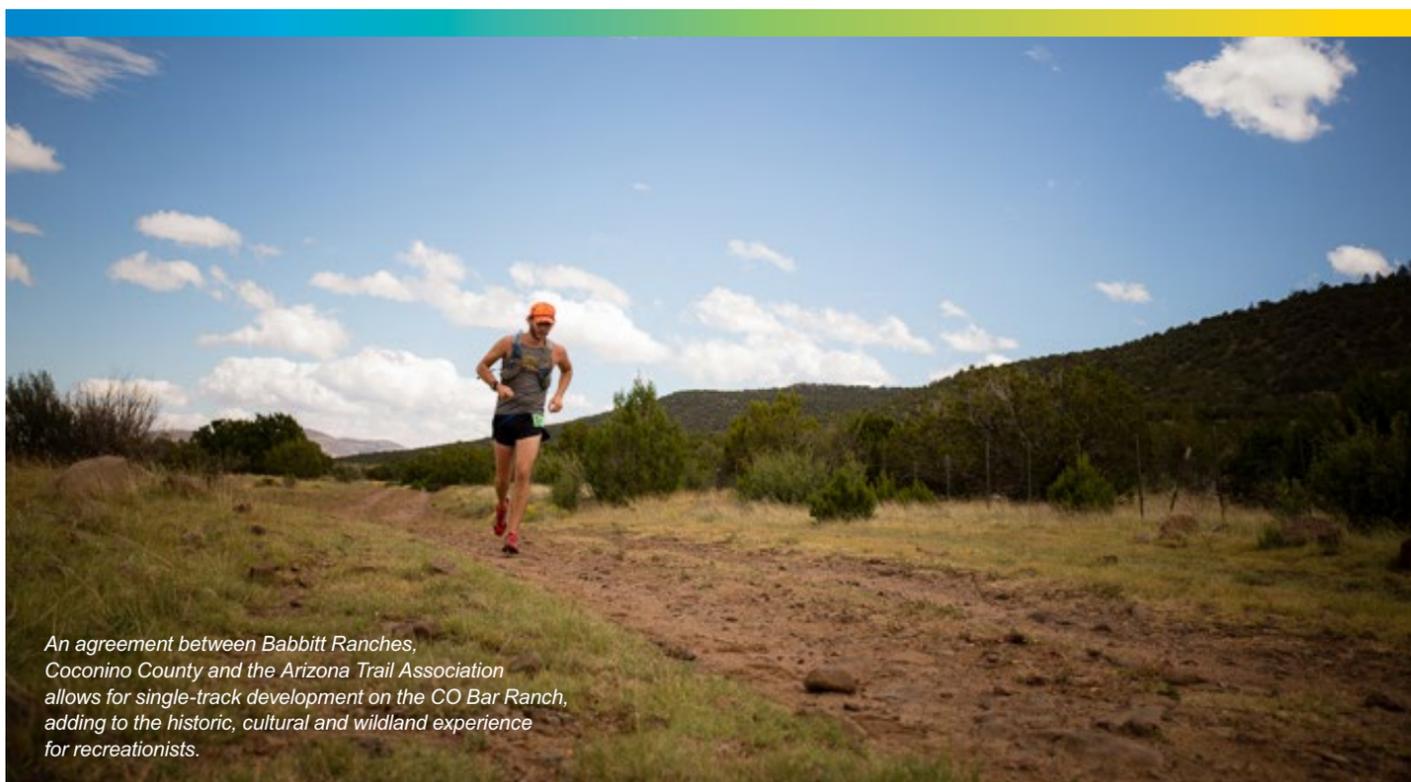


BABBITT TIMES REVIEW FootNotes



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Footnotes is an online newsletter extension of *Babbitt Times Review*, the annual newsletter for and about the Babbitt Ranches Community.



An agreement between Babbitt Ranches, Coconino County and the Arizona Trail Association allows for single-track development on the CO Bar Ranch, adding to the historic, cultural and wildland experience for recreationists.

Enhancing the Journey along the Arizona Trail

Efforts are aligning to improve the outdoor experience for hikers, bicyclists and equestrians seeking to discover northern Arizona's wide-open spaces. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Babbitt Ranches, Coconino County and the Arizona Trail Association (ATA) grants permission and identifies resources to move forward with single-track trail development and maintenance along an 11-mile segment of the CO Bar Ranch.

Of the 800-mile Arizona Trail (AZT) that stretches from Utah to the Mexican border, the Babbitt Ranches Passage is the only portion on private land. Currently, it connects the Coconino and Kaibab National Forests with a two-track dirt road.

"We are so honored that Babbitt Ranches allows the Arizona Trail to pass through their ranch lands, and now the opportunity to enhance that experience through trail construction shows the strong commitment that Babbitt Ranches, Coconino County and the Arizona Trail Association all have in working together," said Arizona Trail Association Executive Director Matthew Nelson.

"The trip through CO Bar Ranch is already a beautiful one, but a separate, non-motorized single-track trail provides a more intimate experience, allowing recreationists an improved opportunity to interact with nature," said Babbitt Ranches Recreation Manager Evan Reimondo. "The revised route will still tie into Tub Ranch Camp, which was important to Babbitt Ranches and helps tell the history of the region and show that these are still working lands."

Following Historic Stagecoach Line

The Babbitt Ranches Passage also aligns with the Stagecoach Line, northern Arizona's original tourism excursion.

"The whole stagecoach route is like a step back in time," said Neil Weintraub, Kaibab National Forest archaeologist, distance runner and Arizona Trail volunteer.

In a 2013 interview, Flagstaff historian, the late Judge Richard Mangum, explained that most of the stagecoach trips of the early 1900s left Flagstaff in the morning and arrived at the Grand Canyon in the evening. Travelers could purchase the excursion for about \$15 when they bought their train



tickets at stations in Chicago and other big cities on their way to and from Los Angeles. Guests rode in, and on top of, elegant Concord coaches.

"These were the stagecoaches you'd see in old Westerns," he said. "They were considered quite elegant, with wood finish and plush, upholstered seats. The ride was probably fun for about the first hour. Passengers were dealing with intense sun, rain at times, bugs flying into their eyes, and a lot of dust. Also, the wheels were wooden and suspension was just non-existent. You felt every bounce in the road. You can imagine by the time they got to the Grand Canyon after 12 hours in a stagecoach, they were whipped!"

Connecting San Francisco Peaks and Grand Canyon

Nelson says trail users are amazed by the biodiversity of the area, from aspens and ponderosa pines to juniper trees and rabbitbrush and ultimately, one of the world's most impressive canyons.

"It's situated between two of the most iconic features in northern Arizona: Grand Canyon and San Francisco Peaks. If you're going southbound across this section, you can see across huge distances, but the first thing you notice is this beautiful mountain looming in the distance."

The MOU states that work is anticipated to begin in May 2019 and be completed by September 2021. It commits county funds, "an amount not to exceed \$30,000," toward construction of the new trail segment.

Reimondo looks forward to the opportunities ahead. "As a trail runner, I will always be excited about new single track! I'm also excited for us to work with the county and ATA in dreaming up and building a new piece of trail that will help to get more people out to experience the ranch lands. For Babbitt Ranches, it's an important stepping stone toward building other recreation business and infrastructure, and sharing its land management and recreation ethos."

Nelson has long acknowledged the Babbitts as "wonderful stewards" of the land. "They intentionally manage the landscape for healthy, wide-open spaces. People see wildlife, cattle and active ranching, but for the most part, nobody else is out there. There are no structures. It's away from powerlines and pipelines. It feels wild."

Arizona Conservation Corps, similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps that built National Park trails in the 1930s, will likely be tapped to provide labor for the new 11-mile trail.

"The initial phase of construction will be with light machinery to carve the trail bed, then conservation corps and volunteers will get to work creating the trail tread with hand tools," said Nelson. "The Arizona Trail Association will host a variety of trail work days so we can get this segment built to the highest standards of sustainability. Trail work is a lot of fun, we reward volunteers with lunch and Arizona Trail swag, and it's a wonderful way to give back to the trail that positively impacts the lives of so many people."



"The Arizona Trail is an incredible gift that has been given to our state," said Coconino County Supervisor for District 1 and Board Chair Art Babbitt upon signing the agreement. "The dedication and collaboration of organizations, agencies, government, businesses and thousands of individuals, has built an asset that will serve our communities and future generations. The landscapes that the trail winds through are as diverse, rugged and spectacular as the communities and citizens of Arizona. On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, I want to extend our appreciation and gratitude to all the advocates and stewards of the AZT!"

Those interested can sign up by visiting www.aztrail.org and clicking the Volunteer button. "We find that people who are involved in trail building, who get their hands dirty, are forever connected to that piece of land and will be the ones who help maintain and protect the trail in the future," said Nelson. "All we need is folks with a willingness to work hard and we provide the rest."

Cowboy Essence creates that peace of mind that comes from knowing our heritage and that we are at our best.

Through our efforts of learning and understanding, Babbitt Ranches, a family business and pioneering land company, raises livestock, manages natural resources, promotes science and participates in the broader community in order to join, share and do the very best we know how.

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