

## **July 2019 AZNST Administrator's Report**

### **Budget**

We received some encouraging news on the 2020 budget recently. Projections show similar funding for national trails as we received in 2019. You may recall I reported that our 2019 funding was not earmarked and it was left to the discretion of the region as to if and how much would be allocated to the national trails. The preliminary 2020 budget we received last month does show the funds broken out from the rest of our trails funding so we are hopeful that Forest Service leadership and Congress are responding to requests from national trails supporters that the funding be allocated separately.

### **Woodbury Fire**

I'm sure you are all aware of the 123,875 acre Woodbury Fire that encompassed nearly the entire Superstition Wilderness Passage of the AZT. Justin Eddinger (Pablo Burghard's replacement) has almost completed calculating how much of the trail is in the high, medium and low burn severity categories. He is out for a much needed rest and will return July 11. The Tonto National Forest is attempting to get Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation funds for the trail and an accurate inventory of trail conditions will help with this, as well as improve chances of obtaining future funds. I am talking to the forest about using a tablet based app to inventory trail conditions. I hope this will make it easier for volunteers to help with inventory and monitoring.

### **Change in Leadership**

My supervisor, Francisco Valenzuela, Regional Director of Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness, will be retiring in early August. A send-off celebration was held for him in Albuquerque and attended by several close partners. Wendy Lotze was there to represent the ATA and presented Francisco with a nice award which he was very pleased to receive. He shared his intention to hike the entire AZT. We do not know who will be coming in to replace Francisco but we are assured that entreaties from partners that his replacement be someone who is innovative and partner oriented have been heard.

### **Comprehensive Plan (CP)**

There is one section in the CP that Francisco has had a desire to work on himself – visitor capacity. With his demanding schedule we have not been able to finish this but he will be here for a few days this week to work on it with me and our recreation planner, Stephanie Valentine. We will also be meeting with colleagues from the National Park Service and BLM. I had planned to have a draft CP for your review with this update but I think it would be more meaningful if we can get a little more into the visitor capacity section before sending it to you. With that in mind, I am currently planning to send it toward the end of the week and will plan to meet with ATA representatives after there has been time to review it.