

TRAIL OPERATIONS REPORT - JULY 20, 2019

TRAILHEAD AND ROAD SIGNS

Pine Trailhead – ADOT installed two signs on Hwy 87 for the Pine Trailhead, with “Arizona National Scenic Trail” and hiker, mountain biker and equestrian symbols included. We are working with the District Supervisor to address priority sign and safe road crossings within ADOT rights-of-way.

Grandview Lookout Tower – new navigational sign for Grandview Lookout Tower Trailhead on the Kaibab National Forest has been designed and printed and will be installed in July.

Aspen Corner – tribal consultation continues for the Aspen Corner sign that includes Native American perspective of the San Francisco (Kachina) Peaks, as well as names of the Peaks in 9 native languages. Anticipated date of fabrication and installation is August. Once completed, this will be the first interpretive sign on the Coconino National Forest that includes tribal involvement.

Canelo Hills – two new signs have been designed and fabricated to replace the former, outdated trailhead signs at Harshaw Road and Canelo Pass. Installation is anticipated for August.

Tusayan Parking Lot – after five years, a sign has finally appeared within the kiosk at the Tusayan parking area. It includes language about the Arizona Trail. Thank you Grand Canyon National Park! The Kaibab National Forest kiosk panel remains empty, and we have proposed the ATA develop a navigational and informational panel for this location.

TRAIL PROJECTS

Passage 1, Huachuca Mountains – Volunteers cleared 7.5 miles of trail from Bear Saddle to Sunnyside Canyon. Zach recently replaced the spring box cover at Trough Spring and installed a wildlife ladder.

Passages 3-4, Temporal Gulch Reroute Project – NEPA Surveys complete. Tierra Right-of-Way Services is completing Cultural and Biological reports for the 32-mile re-route project which includes the 6-mile connector trail from Temporal Canyon TH and 26 miles of new trail to take the AZT off Harshaw and Temporal Canyon Roads and away from highways and the Mt. Wrightson Wilderness to allow safe passage for all non-motorized trail users, including mountain bicyclists. See map attached.

Passage 6, Rosemont Reroute Project – ATA staff have been working with Hubday, Wildlife Corridors LLC and the Coronado National Forest to begin construction of 12 miles of new trail to avoid the Rosemont Copper Mine. Zach and the archaeologist with Westland Resources have developed alternative routes to move the original proposed trail alignment where it impacted ten (10) archaeological sites to avoid unnecessary impacts, additional expense, site monitors, and other mitigation. The surveys are complete. Trail construction is anticipated for August of 2019 and should be completed by early November.

Passage 7, Las Cienegas – A \$20,000 grant from The Heritage Fund has been secured for development of the Sahuarita Road Trailhead. Pima County has not yet submitted an application to Arizona State Land Department for purchase of the land and realignment of the Arizona Trail. If Pima County’s application is denied or if the project takes longer than three years, the grant funds will be returned to Arizona Game & Fish Department.

Passage 8, Rincon Valley – Segment stewards and Pima County worked to repair flood damage where the AZT crosses Rincon Creek.

Passage 9, Saguaro National Park – In coordination with park staff, ATA has worked to develop a long term work plan for staff and stewards, and creation of volunteer agreements to maintain the AZT through the park to ATA and National Park standards. A full trail evaluation was completed along with installation of wayfinding signage at every intersection in the Rincon Mountains. SAGU has significant funding available starting in 2020-2025 to make improvements to the trail within the Wilderness utilizing conservation corps.

Passage 11C, Pusch Ridge Wilderness Bypass – Volunteers with Tucson Trail Runners and Tom's Sawyers cleared deadfall for the entire 6-mile length of the Butterfly Trail.

Passage 12, Oracle Ridge – Volunteers maintained and cleared 1.5 miles of trail from Oracle Ridge TH toward Dan's Saddle.

Passage 17, Alamo Canyon – The AZT Rainwater Collector has been fabricated, fully funded, and is now ready for installation. A volunteer event is being organized for August and the unit is expected to be installed and fully functional before September 1.

Passage 19, Superstition Wilderness – Woodbury Fire – The AZT is currently closed between Reavis Trail Canyon and Vineyard Trailhead. We have been in contact with Justin Eddinger (who has replaced Pablo Burghard at Tonto National Forest), who is also on the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team. Justin shared geotagged aerial photographs of the Arizona Trail after the fire ripped through. Trails are usually only a peripheral concern in the BAER process but have been identified as a “value at risk.” ATA and Laura White have advocated for fire crews to remove hazard trees along the trails, however summer heat makes it extremely challenging for firefighters to be in the field for more than a few hours at a time. Until we are allowed into the area after it's deemed safe, we have no more information.

ATA helped Friends of the Tonto secure a State Parks Maintenance grant for the Campaign/Reavis Gap Trail, one of the few connector trails on the passage. Fire maps and photos show much of this trail has burned, so the funds can likely be used for rehab or erosion repair.

Passage 22, Saddle Mountain – We have permission to install a gate in the fence around the former DPS site near the Cross F Trailhead. Pablo purchased the gate before he retired and it is at Goldfield Admin Site. An Eagle Scout candidate is pursuing approval for installing it as his project. A short social trail connects the gate site to trail number 244, which connects to the AZT. This provides an excellent trailhead with adequate space for equestrian trailers as well as other users.

Passage 23, Mazatzal Divide – ATA was successful in a State Parks Maintenance grant for work on a connector trail from Chilson Camp west towards Club Cabin. Work will be scheduled this fall or next spring depending on water availability. Shawn Redfield and other ATA volunteers recently hiked the passage and found it in outstanding condition, thanks to many dedicated volunteers. There is **one** deadfall whereas in 2010 there were hundreds! Bravo Joe Longbotham, and many others.

Passage 26, Highline – The segment steward reported that a culvert has washed out where the trail is on an old road a short distance trail-north of Geronimo TH, creating a dangerous—especially for equestrians—crossing. A permanent solution will be a significant project. FS is aware of the issue, and ATA has allocated funds for a conservation corps hitch if needed.

Passage 28, Happy Jack Singletrack Project – Work on this project is in full swing and has been the primary focus this spring/summer. Shawn and Zach flagged the remaining 12 miles of trail in advance of machine and conservation corps construction. ACE has completed four hitches and plans one more make-up hitch to account for short crews and time lost. A Volunteer Vacation completed 0.75-mile on the south

end. Machine work is scheduled for July 15-August 2. Volunteers installed a three-panel kiosk and hitching rail at Gooseberry Spring TH, and a hitching rail at Bargaman Park TH. Volunteers installed six gates on July 12-14. Five bike rollovers are fabricated and will be installed this summer. The two-mile-long Shuffs Tank segment had been pending final clearance but is now good to go and is planned for completion by a Volunteer Vacation this fall. Volunteers are installing signs on one- and two-day work sessions. Roughly 11 miles of trail is constructed and 7 miles remain. With some luck the project will be completed this calendar year.

Passage 30, Anderson Mesa – Melody Varner, a trail angel from Flagstaff, raised \$950 from trail users and asked that it be used to replace a particularly difficult wire gate located near Vail Lake. The gate is being fabricated; the holes are dug and the gate will be installed soon.

Passage 32, Elden Mountain – Local volunteers have been making great progress on the Little Elden Trail re-route, including a 150-person volunteer event on June 1 (National Trails Day). This re-route is a massive improvement from the previous alignment (steep, eroded, unsustainable trail unsuitable for horses and mountain bikers). Rehabilitation of the former trail will begin this summer, as part of a new Trail Skills Institute module – Trail Obliteration and Rehabilitation.

Passage 35, Babbitt Ranch Singletrack Project – Work has begun on this 13-mile project. Coconino County Parks and Recreation Staff and ATA staff and stewards have been working to finalize the route. Participants in the Trail Skills Institute completed layout for 1.4 miles of trail near Tub Ranch, currently being constructed by youth volunteers and a series of weekend volunteer events. Matt Roberts (Flagline Trails LLC) has been contracted to build trail with a machine and hand crew finish for approximately 9 miles. A crew from AZCC will finish the rough work the County has done on approximately 2 miles of trail. Paperwork has been submitted to build 1,000 feet of trail on the Kaibab National Forest, and naturalizing 2,500 feet of existing trail. The majority of this project will be completed this year, and the final miles finished in 2020.

Passage 37, Kaibab Reroute – Since the Kaibab National Forest recently opened dirt roads to motorized use, and some of those roads comprise the current AZT alignment between Grandview Lookout Tower and the Town of Tusayan, the ATA and Kaibab NF staff have been exploring a potential re-route. A proposed alignment for singletrack will be finalized this summer and submitted to the USFS for review. In addition to removing the AZT from dirt roads on the forest, this project will also integrate the proposed Ten X Campground expansion and connector trail to the AZT.