

TRAIL OPERATIONS REPORT

Passage 1, Southern Terminus and Huachuca Mountains – ATA has developed a plan to replace a section of the wire fence at the border monument with a 4' pedestrian gate and new wire fence at either side to improve current conditions which require hikers to fumble through the barbed wire to snap a selfie from Mexico. Volunteer Vacation scheduled for May 23-27 to perform routine maintenance and corridor clearing at the Crest Trail from the Wilderness Boundary to Bear Saddle.

Passage 3, Meadow Valley – Amid many reports of confusion at two track junctions, passage stewards, Zay, Lee, and Zach, cleared tall grasses, killed about a mile of catclaw, and closed errant cow paths to Down Under Tank. Additional clearing and wayfinding will be needed all the way to Red Bank Well. ATA has had initial conversations with Nogales Ranger District Staff to work toward removing the trail from about 3.5 miles of additional doubletrack in the area which would solve many of these issues.

Passages 3-4, Temporal Gulch Reroute Project – awaiting USFWS concurrence that the project will have no adverse impacts to threatened and endangered species. ATA has been working with Wildlife Corridors LLC. to procure legal easement and an encroachment permit from ADOT to cross through Big Casa Blanca Canyon.

Passage 5, Little Fish, Kentucky Camp, Greaterville, Oak Tree Singletrack – ATA has developed conceptual maps and proposals, submitted to the Coronado NF, for future planning and NEPA to remove the trail from approximately 8 miles of doubletrack and other congested forest roads, to be replaced by about 10 miles of sustainably designed multi-use non-motorized singletrack. This will be completed in 4 segments, linking existing singletrack and eliminating some unappealing dirt road walks.

Passage 6, Sawmill Fire Trail Stabilization – AZCC completed 4 weeks of routine maintenance including stabilization at many washed out fall-line sections of trail, to close out the BAER funding.

Passage 7, Las Cienegas – Gate improvements at the Lakes Rd., Highway 83, I-10 including tread stabilization at the north / west exit of the I-10 culvert. Volunteers cleared the equestrian bypass of tall grasses, catclaw, and mesquite.

Passage 8, Rincon Valley – Segment stewards, ATA staff, and Arizona Endurance Series – AZT Jamboree riders installed two rollover gates; one at Pistol Hill Rd. crossing and one just south of Rincon Creek, and repaired the kiosk at Pistol Hill Rd which had been knocked over by a vehicle.

Passage 9, Saguaro National Park – Plans to hike the passage with park staff and AZT stewards in April to develop plans for volunteer work projects this year, likely at the north side access from Italian Trap.

Passage 10, 11 and 11C, Pusch Ridge Wilderness and Bypass – NCCC crew performed routing maintenance clearing all 3.5 miles of Green Mountain Trail and 2.5 miles at Molino Basin to West Spring. They repaired approximately a mile of tread between Molino Saddle and West Spring. ACE crews have started routine maintenance between Romero Pass and Hutch's Pool. AZCC crews will continue in May and will finish a total of three hitches in the fall with invasive oleander removal.

Passage 12, Oracle Ridge – Volunteer work events scheduled for April to clear deadfall and overgrowth above Dan's Saddle.

Passage 17, Alamo Canyon – Volunteers moved the cache box from FR 4 to just north of Picketpost TH.

The LOST connector trail is complete and the traditional wooden signs are in process.

Passage 19, Superstition Wilderness – Woodbury Fire – Roger Smith organized crews and replaced the trail signs through the fire scar. AZCC crews completed stabilization and initial flood remediation between Rogers Canyon Junction and Reavis Ranch. ACE provided a free crew, AZCC also completed a rockwork training there (free work), and ATA staff and stewards completed multiple volunteer work events to repair tread between Rogers Trough TH and just beyond Reavis Saddle which was hit hardest near the epicenter of the Woodbury Fire ignition point. Roger and Rob Bauer are working with the Tonto to replace the spring box at Walnut Spring with an aluminum box, mortared with local stone to provide a clean reliable source at this location. Two additional AZCC crews are scheduled to complete stabilization at the Big Dip, between Walnut Spring and Two Bar Ridge, starting in April. After a southbound thru-hiker documented unprofessional and sub-standard work in the post-fire remediation zone, AZCC spent additional staff time and organizational resources to repair the work and bring it up to standard.

Passage 22, Saddle Mountain – Working with Mesa Ranger District of the Tonto National Forest, the BLM Field School and ATA volunteers installed 1,000 feet of fence and two ATV-barriers at the former DPS site near Cross F TH. This will limit ongoing resource damage from ATV abuse. The site now provides ample equestrian trailer parking as well as camping areas within a quarter-mile of the AZT, all on paved road access about 30 minutes north of Fountain Hills.

Passage 23, Mazatzal Divide, Passage 24, Red Hills – Four Conservation Corps hitches are scheduled for this spring to address disappearing bench and tread located 4-5 miles north of Mt. Peeley, and serious drainage and rock conditions south of Brush Spring.

Passage 25, White Rock Mesa – Volunteers installed a gate and rollover, and removed trashy gates and fences near Bradshaw Tank about a quarter-mile SW of Pine, AZ.

The Alder Ridge project to build 6.7 miles of trail across the NE corner of the Mazatzal Wilderness, replacing 8 miles of road and 2 miles of trail, is progressing. FS has cleared and approved the project; ATA has applied for \$115k in State Parks RTP funding for the new construction.

ATA has also applied for \$50k for 4 Conservation Corps hitches to complete 6.5 miles of maintenance between the East Verde River and the Alder Ridge connection point. State Parks has an abundance of funds and staff has been very positive as to our chances of being fully funded for both of these grants.

Passage 26, Highline – The all-encompassing, area-wide list of projects initially requested for the Rim Country Trails Initiative appears to have been shelved in favor of more immediate focus on the Highline Trail. FS has asked for a list of projects to make the Highline a prime recreation destination. With that direction we are developing the wish list that will include several realignments, two spring rehabilitation efforts, possibly a bridge or two, extensive maintenance and other projects once thought to be rather pie-in-the sky.

The washed out culvert at Geronimo Spring remains on the list. We coordinated a plan with the FS that was cleared but are awaiting clearance so we can use State funding.

Volunteers are tackling serious brush conditions extending east for about a mile from a point just west of Pine Spring.

The next Rim Country Trails meeting is March 31 and the ATA will remain involved in the regional trail planning process.

Volunteers installed 2 salvaged ramadas at Pine TH in conjunction with P-S Fuels Reduction group's TH redevelopment.

Passage 28, Happy Jack Singletrack Project – Volunteers will install the five bike rollovers and a few more signs when the roads reopen. Prior to the roads closing last fall an Eagle Scout candidate showed interest in pulling excess carsonites over 5 miles of the trail that were not re-routed. If he does not re-engage volunteers will remove these.

Passage 30, Anderson Mesa; Passage 31 Walnut Canyon – Volunteers will install two donor-funded gates near Marshall Lake when the roads open. FS has given verbal approval and we expect written approval soon.

Passage 35, Babbitt Ranch Singletrack Project – Five miles of trail remain to be finished with a big push to engage volunteers to open the singletrack route this summer. Trail construction specialists will also be hired to do the heavy lifting in this remote setting. The current trail will be signed so northbound thru-hikers can begin using the finished segment this spring.

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.

Passages 40, 41, 42 (Kaibab Plateau) – Laura White secured \$10K in funding for the North Kaibab Ranger District. We are discussing the list with Allison and will schedule a small crew for late August. Projects being considered include fencing one more small parking area, four panels of artwork for two locations, ~10 steel emblem signs, removing the varnish from the 20+ redwood trail signs we installed 4 years ago (nothing withstands the AZ sun), scouting and design for a possible half-mile reroute, and scouting a 3.5 mile road for possible reclamation to singletrack.