

TRAIL OPERATIONS REPORT

TRAILHEADS AND ROAD SIGNS

Pine Trailhead – Pine-Strawberry Fuels Reduction launched their remodel of the Trailhead, to include a 0.4-mile accessible trail and Fire Ecology displays, demonstrations and interpretation. ATA is partnering by installing two salvaged shade ramadas from Roosevelt Lake. This will be the third length of accessible trail on or connected to the AZT.

Sahuarita Road Trailhead – Trailhead and new alignment for AZT has been cleared by a contracted archaeologist. Now we are waiting on the State Land Department for approval. \$20,000 from Heritage Fund is secured for some trailhead construction costs...if ASLD approves.

Grandview Lookout Tower – new navigational trailhead sign for Grandview Lookout Tower Trailhead was installed on the Kaibab National Forest this summer.

Russell Tank Trailhead – new navigational trailhead sign for Russell Tank has been designed and will be installed on the Kaibab National Forest within the next few weeks.

Canelo Hills – four new signs have been installed to replace the former, outdated trailhead signs at Harshaw Road and Canelo Pass THs.

Pinal County Trailheads – four new signs were installed at Tiger Mine and Florence-Kelvin Highway Trailheads, paid for by Pinal County Economic Development and installed by Public Works.

TRAIL PROJECTS

Passage 1, Huachuca Mountains – Zach and Volunteers will be assisting the Sierra Vista Ranger District with moving the Sunnyside Trailhead about 0.1-mile west, near the Eureka Mine Trail, to avoid sensitive habitat and archaeological sites near the Miller Peak Wilderness Boundary. We will install 2 gates, about 100 ft of fencing, and will rehab the old doubletrack to singletrack where possible.

Passages 3-4, Temporal Gulch Reroute Project – Working with NEPA Specialists, ADOT permitting, Hudbay, Wildlife Corridors LLC., and AZGFD to resolve questions about private property easements and potential impacts of the AZT to wildlife corridors.

Passage 6, Rosemont Reroute Project – The entire project, including the reroute and Oak Tree Canyon Trailhead are on hold due to a federal judge's ruling which states the entire Rosemont EIS was flawed which nullifies previous FS approval of the mine. Appeals pending.

Passage 7, Las Cienegas – Private donations have funded installation of two rollover gates, near Twin Tanks and just south of the I-10 underpass.

Passage 9, Saguaro National Park – Intermittent temporary trail closures expected starting 10/15 due to aerial spraying for buffelgrass. Park staff will monitor each end of closure area and inform trail users.

Passage 11C, Pusch Ridge Wilderness Bypass – Steward and volunteers continue to improve this section. REI women's event has 30 participants signed up on 10/20.

Passage 12, Oracle Ridge – Working with SCR D to replace 4 wire gates with steel units.

Passage 13, Oracle State Park – Saddlebrooke Hiking Club has scheduled monthly work events at Oracle State Park through April.

Passage 14, Black Hills – Private donations have funded installation of a supergate at Old Tiger Road near Highway 77. ATA received permission from the rancher to install this gate and to move the wire gate at the undercrossing to an area about 100 feet upstream which eliminates that gate for AZT users altogether.

Passage 15, Tortilla Mountains – construction of the 6-mile Ripsey Wash bypass will begin in 2020, with funding from Asarco. In addition, a new trailhead near Kelvin-Riverside will replace the Florence-Kelvin Highway Trailhead. Discussions with Pinal County, BLM, Asarco and other interested parties are ongoing.

Passage 17, Alamo Canyon – The AZT Rainwater Collector was installed by Rob, Zach and crew on Labor Day Weekend. A less than stellar end to the monsoon filled only about 3” of water in the tank. It is ready and waiting for the next rain to fill it up. Special use permit needs to be applied for per USFS recommendations.

We are working with Globe RD to develop the signs for the LOST connector trail. Installing these will be opportunities to engage ATA volunteers who want to work close to Phoenix.

Passage 19, Superstition Wilderness – Woodbury Fire – Roger Smith, Craig Gregory, Kean Ruane (ACE), and Zach completed inspection for the trail stabilization report to the Tonto on September 26. AZCC began work on October 9 north of Rogers Canyon Junction to Reavis Saddle. Five additional hitches will be camped at Reavis Saddle, Reavis Ranch and Walnut Spring to clear overgrowth and flood debris at Reavis Creek and to rehabilitate the trail at the “Big Dip.”

Passage 22, Saddle Mountain – An Eagle Scout candidate and ATA volunteers installed the gate and connector trail at the former DPS yard. FS is amenable to more minor improvements to accommodate tent camping at the TH and we are meeting with them on site Oct 16.

Passage 23, Mazatzal Divide – Work on a connector trail from Chilson Camp west toward Club Cabin is scheduled for November and December. Three hitches of conservation corps work, funded by the Arizona Trail State Fund, are planned for general maintenance and a few hot spots on Passages 23/24.

Passage 26, Highline – Repair of the culvert washout near Geronimo TH will require NEPA analysis. FS has made temporary repairs and is considering options.

Payson Ranger District has engaged on the Rim Country Trails Initiative proposals we submitted. They currently favor the gate/rollover just south of Pine, and the ramada installation at Pine TH, both of which are in the works. They are also pursuing the Alder Ridge realignment to move the trail from ~7 miles of road and powerline to a somewhat more direct Wilderness route. They have not been receptive a few other minor projects, favoring instead improvements to the Highline Trail. We have submitted proposals for projects to improve four problem areas and one to rehabilitate Pine Spring.

Tonto NF reports they intend to “re-engage” on the Rim Country Trails Initiative public outreach process, expected in November.

Passage 27, Blue Ridge – Temporary detours are in place to help guide trail users around prescribed fires on the Coconino National Forest. The ATA developed official detour signs earlier this year that are mailed to land managers upon request. They can be nailed to trees or zip tied to existing sign posts (including carsonites) and have orange arrows directing trail users, along with the AZT logo and DETOUR.

Passage 28, Happy Jack Singletrack Project – Volunteers cleared the corridor ahead of the conservation corps on the Shuffs Tanks segment. On the Foot In Tree segment, machine work was completed Oct 10, and ACE completed their work the same week. The leaves 0.5-mile on the Shuffs Tank segment for the Volunteer Vacation Oct 22-27. A few additional emblems, and five bike rollovers will be installed as time permits. An Eagle Scout project to remove superfluous fiberglass signs on 5 miles of road (former trail) is scheduled for Oct 26. Aaron will ride and collect an accurate GPS track of the newly completed sections for updating all of our maps, app and other resources. We remain confident the project will be completed this calendar year.

Passage 34, Maverick (Kelly Tank to Cedar Ranch) Singletrack – discussions have begun with the Coconino National Forest to remove the AZT from 14 miles of FR 416 between Kelly Tank and Cedar Ranch. The Flagstaff Ranger District is receptive and excited to work with the ATA on this project in 2020. This will likely be our next big singletrack project.

Passage 35, Babbitt Ranch Singletrack – Numerous volunteer efforts, machine construction, and 3 conservation corps hitches have resulted in 10 miles of trail construction. Only 4 miles of trail remain to be built with a big push to engage volunteers in northern Arizona to finish this 14-mile singletrack route in 2020!

Passage 37, Grand Canyon-South Rim – The AZT between Tusayan and South Kaibab Trailhead is among the most unpleasant of the entire 800 miles. A paved pathway, road crossings, and utility corridor make this less than a National Scenic Trail or National Park experience. Once a new Superintendent is chosen for Grand Canyon National Park, ATA will re-engage with a list of priority projects, including singletrack construction from the Kaibab National Forest boundary (east of Tusayan) to the South Kaibab Trailhead.

Passages 40-41, Kaibab TH Fences – Volunteers replaced the wooden zig-zag fences at Murrays Lake and Kaibab Plateau Trailheads on the North Kaibab Ranger District on August 22-25.