

Arizona Trail Association Volunteer Program Report

April – July 2020

Volunteer Hours Reported: 2,759

Volunteers Engaged: 146



Key Events and Programs

Trail Skills Institute: 5 volunteers attended the first official group activity hosted by the Volunteer Program on June 20-21 since the COVID-19 shutdown. While participation was light due to the increase in the severity of the outbreak in Arizona, we were able to keep our volunteers safe and still give solid trail skills instruction thanks to the care and dedication of our trainer, Matt Roberts of Flagline Trails. The training and trail work was held near Mormon Lake.

Trail Skills Institute Video Series: On June 11, Arizona State Parks and Trails announced the ATA Volunteer Program was awarded their second consecutive Safety and Environmental Education Grant to develop 5 videos of a 10 video series teaching volunteer trail skills. The video series is intended to supplement in-person training rather than to replace it. The video series will help first time and novice volunteers improve their skills, and its universal accessibility and availability will help move forward our goal of increasing the diversity of our volunteer corps. The videos are being produced by Outdoor Evolution's Darwin Rakestraw, content is being developed by Matt Roberts of Flagline Trails and Mark Loeth of American Conservation Experience. Mr. Loeth is the instructor onscreen with Wendy as backup and doing the voiceover work. The target is 10 videos of no more than 6 minutes in length to maximize attention span and engagement. Using a variety of filming techniques and modern social media cues, we hope to establish a film series which will be fun to watch as well as informative. Filming began in early June.

ATA COVID-19 Epidemic Protocols

Mirroring work done by other National Scenic Trails, Conservation Corps and volunteer focused organization, the ATA has developed our own field safety protocols for volunteer operations. The result is an exhaustive document detailing plans for keeping staff and volunteers safe while conducting field operations for the ATA. A shorter summary was designed to be shared directly with volunteers and covered during tailgate safety briefings.

Both documents can be found on the ATA's [COVID-19 Resources page](#) and the [Resources for AZT Stewards Page](#).

New Stewards

Chris and Janice Dunn (40b); Beto and Shannon Villegas (1d); Chad Brown (3b); Karl and Kathy Faust (24a)

I'd also like to be sure to share with the board my gratitude to Daniel Snyder who has moved on from his position as Regional Steward for the Lower Colorado Plateau since May 2017. He'll be focusing now on Flagstaff regional projects with Shawn and Zach.

Upcoming Events

In our hope of returning to hosting even more small scale group events on the trail, we are looking to ramping up in late August and early September. As our volunteer hours indicate, work is still happening on the trail – stewards and trail operations teams are out there keeping the trail open and moving projects along. However, extensive wildfires, forest closures, record setting heatwaves, socio-political upheavals, and continued COVID concerns are not only hampering efforts to host events on the ground but even making it difficult to find bandwidth to promote such activities to a broader public. Continuing to engage our existing volunteers and putting in place resources to welcome new volunteers when the time is right is the primary focus of Volunteer Program activities at this time.