

Trail Operations Report

Passage 1, Southern Terminus and Huachuca Mountains – Two miles of AZT remain closed for border barrier construction. Blasting, clearing, and construction of the service road is well underway. Nine volunteers and the trail steward spent three days, two nights on the Crest above Bathtub Spring. They maintained about 10 miles of trail from Sunnyside Canyon to just below Miller Peak. Improving way finding, corridor, and trail tread drainage along the way.

Passages 3-4, Temporal Gulch Reroute Project – Rob Bauer and a Tohono O’odham Ancestral Lands Crew with AZCC, ATA, and Coronado NF support will continue construction on the second half of the 6.1-mile segment south of Highway 82 starting October 19. Construction of the next 9-mile segment on the Nogales Ranger District will begin in November and carry over into February/March of 2021 utilizing AZCC crews finishing behind Rob and his machine. Construction of the next 1.5 miles at Wildlife Corridor LLC property will begin in January 2021 to be completed by Spring 2021 with local and ATA Volunteers.

Passage 6, Las Colinas – High school mountain bike NICA team maintained trail south of the Lakes Road.

Passage 7, Las Cienegas – Maintenance was completed to repair flood damage in the drainage north of concrete culvert at I-10.

Passage 9D, Italian Trap – ATA completed maintenance between Redington Road and Italian Trap. Using funding from the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance grant we hosted a dozen volunteers in two groups to maintain 2.8 miles of trail. One group hiked south from Redington Road clearing brush. The other group drove in using UTV’s and worked north from Italian Trap. We have another one-day work event scheduled for October 24 to work south from Italian Trap and a multi-day event scheduled in October to work toward the Saguaro National Park Boundary.

Passage 10, 11, 11C - Pusch Ridge Wilderness and Bypass, and Passage 12 – (Bighorn Fire) Passage 10 was not burned or heavily affected by suppression measures or flooding and has been re-opened. Passage 11 from Molino Basin to Hutch’s Pools also was not affected and is open. The rest of Passage 11 through Wilderness of Rocks is still off limits. ATA has just completed fire and trail stabilization assessment at Oracle Ridge and Marshall Gulch. Other groups are working on assessments at Incinerator Ridge and Green Mountain. We expect to have access to the remainder of the Wilderness Bypass and Passage 11 into Wilderness of Rocks by November. So far much of the trail fared pretty well. We can’t say as much for other parts of the mountain.

Passage 16, Gila River Canyons – BLM representatives, Rob Bauer, Zach and Shawn toured the project area and developed the plan to limit ATV intrusion on the AZT. Two-track trails will be gated and barriers will be installed. The project is funded, contracting is complete and Rob will fabricate the gates and barriers in late October/early November.

Passage 17, Alamo Canyon – ATA will be completing one year of rainwater sampling this month, at the Rainwater Collector we installed last summer. Early results indicate the collector remains near full capacity with no issues. We anticipate to have water quality data by the end of the year.

Passage 19, Superstition Wilderness Woodbury Fire – With horse pack support from Bill Vicary, Roger Smith and other volunteers replaced the spring box at Walnut Spring. They report a moderate flow, sufficient for stock and the anticipated conservation corps. Water quality is acceptable but appears to contain quite a bit of ash, requiring a strong filter.

Youth crews began the one-mile Cottonwood Canyon extension September 29. Zach and John Matteson have both checked in with them and report good progress. They will return for a short hitch October 12-16, and anticipate completing the project. If not, the area is well-suited for short volunteer events.

Passages 20, Four Peaks and 21, Pine Mountain – The Bush Fire burned over most of these two passages, much of it at a high intensity. The Tonto has allocated \$50K for initial repair. ATA and AZCC staff completed fire and trail stabilization assessment the first week in October. We just submitted reports to the Tonto and have crews scheduled to begin work October 27 through December 2020.

Passage 22, Saddle Mountain – ATA's contractor graded and surfaced the parking lot at Cross F, greatly improving the access, appearance and utility of the area. Volunteers moved, and painted, the two-panel kiosk from Pine TH to the site. Artwork will be ready shortly. Additional signage will be installed along the highway to the site and at Bushnell Tanks TH when the FS resolves access questions within the Bush Fire area.

Volunteers scouted and mapped a 2.5-mile reroute to move the AZT off dirt road north of Sunflower. Mesa Ranger District staff will complete the archaeological field work and the project will be joined with the larger NEPA effort for the Highline/Pine area trails. Being proximate to the Phoenix Metro area, this is an ideal volunteer project.

Passage 25, White Rock Mesa – The Alder Ridge project is underway. Rob Bauer will likely complete the machine portion by October 15; volunteers will install a gate and AZT reassurance emblem signs later this month. Conservation corps began construction of the Wilderness portion on September 28. Project completion is expected in Spring 2021. *The Payson Roundup* published an article on this, and upcoming projects along the AZT and in Pine area.

Passage 26, Highline – The contract for archeological surveys has been awarded, with funding from the USFS and surveys are underway. ATA staff and volunteers accompanied the archeologist on most of the AZT portions last week, and others will address the remaining two-mile segment later this month. Additional surveys have been, and will be, completed as part of the larger project.

Payson Ranger District received a \$50,000 maintenance grant for work on the Highline between North Sycamore Creek and FR 32. FS is encouraging machine work as part of this grant, and State Parks has no objection. Volunteers will accompany the machine operator later this month to determine what sections are suitable for machine work and which sections will require hand work.

Passage 28, Happy Jack Singletrack Project – Volunteers installed five bike rollovers funded by MBAA, in late August. A Boy Scout family assisted ATA volunteers install a wooden trail sign and a steel AZT reassurance emblem at the Cabin Loop/AZT junction north of General Springs

Passage 30, Anderson Mesa – An effort is underway to remove the AZT from the rutted doubletrack across Anderson Mesa and replace with a sustainable singletrack alignment. This project was identified as a priority within the Flagstaff Trails Initiative comprehensive planning effort, and is being studied by northern Arizona stewards and Matt Roberts from Flagline Trails.

Passage 31, Walnut Canyon – ATA organized two work events to complete the reroute project to remove the trail from badly eroded logging roads onto singletrack between Marshall Lake and Walnut Canyon. Nine volunteers hiked in from Sandy Canyon for a one-day work event to rehab one-

half-mile of the old road and open the new trail. Our Veteran's crew spent a subsequent weekend fine tuning about 2.5 miles of trail which was machine built but never really finished. Until now.

Passage 35, Babbitt Ranch Singletrack Project – The completion celebration in August for 15 miles of sustainable new singletrack trail which replaced those ranch roads was a hit! Lots of media coverage on this important improvement.

Passage 37, Kaibab Reroute – ATA staff met with the new park Superintendent, Ed Keeble in August. He is appreciative of the work we do and supportive of more involvement from the ATA and volunteers in the park. He is receptive to entrance, gate, signage, and trail improvements including the proposed reroute between Grandview Lookout and the Rim Road near Yaki Point. We have shared maps and tracks with them and will continue to advocate for this improvement to take the AZNST off pavement and doubletrack roads within the park and North Kaibab NF.

Passages 40, 41, 42, Kaibab Plateau – In peak fall color conditions, volunteers built log fences around two small parking lots at the AZT/FR 241 crossing (Telephone Hill) and installed 10 of the steel AZT emblem signs between the Park boundary and Orderville TH. They also refinished most of the wooden signs installed in 2016 to remove peeling varnish. While it looked great when new, the finish was not standing up to the AZT sun. They also removed many of the badly deteriorating fiberglass posts along the trail. Unfortunately, reassurance signs that we anticipated did not arrive in time to be installed at this event.

Due to the Mangum Fire, FS the AZT in Orderville Canyon is now re-routed onto FS roads to avoid dangerous conditions. The Kaibab National Forest is amenable to rebuilding this segment when conditions stabilize, anticipated to be at least another year or two.

Passage 43, Buckskin Mountain – This 10-mile passage has been closed since the Pine Hollow Fire burned over 6 miles of the AZT. The ATA offered to do conditions assessments, but the BLM has been non-communicative. The trail was recently re-opened by the BLM (they didn't communicate that either) despite frequent outreach from ATA staff.