

## **TRAIL OPERATIONS REPORT – Autumn 2021**

**Passage 1, Southern Terminus and Huachuca Mountains** – The southernmost mile of the AZT remains closed. ATA plans to use a roving conservation crew from American Conservation Experience to clear oak overgrowth and conduct general maintenance from the Miller Peak Wilderness Boundary to Sunnyside Canyon starting in October.

**Passage 2, Canelo Hills East** – Conservation corps are scheduled to complete work to fix a badly eroded segment north of the high point this season.

**Passages 3-4, Temporal Gulch Reroute Project** – Construction on this project resumes October 1. Plans include completing 3.1 miles near the Wilderness boundary this season, and with any luck another three miles in the Spring to include installation of trail gates and signage. We also plan to have a machine and conservation corps construct the 4-mile Temporal Gulch Connector Trail, and Arizona Trail Vets will construct 1 mile over a period of many weeks of focused effort.

**Passage 5, Santa Rita Mountains** – Signs advocating responsible shooting within the AZT corridor have been installed throughout this area with help from ATA staff, the Nogales Ranger District and SCA Trail Crew. This will increase safety of trail users within a popular target shooting area.

**Passage 6, Las Colinas** – Conservation crews will work to improve drainage, remove catclaw acacia and prickly pear overgrowth throughout the passage using money from the Arizona Trail State Fund.

**Passage 7, Las Cienegas** – Extensive damage occurred during 2021 monsoon to the trail leading in and out of Davidson Canyon. Arizona Trail Vets in coordination with Trail Operations spent two days completing rehab at the south and north slopes to reestablish trail tread, remove overgrowth and repair drainage.

**Passage 9, Rincon Mountains** – SAGU recently recertified local stewards to continue general trail maintenance within the park throughout this passage. A small crew of volunteers is working their way through the wilderness with loppers as we speak. The Park has a lot of dedicated funding from the Great American Outdoors Act to improve trails, so expect great things in the year ahead.

**Passage 11C, Pusch Ridge Wilderness Bypass** – Butterfly and Green Mountain trails have experienced significant erosion and overgrowth as a result of the Bighorn Fire. Volunteer events on both trails are helping to keep this route viable. Conservation Corps will continue the effort to punch through the overgrowth on Butterfly and repair significant storm damage on Green Mountain through October and November.

**Passage 12, Oracle Ridge** – ATA has scheduled a volunteer project in conjunction with National Pride Day for November to remove locust and complete conduct general trail maintenance for the uppermost 1.5 miles.

**Passage 13, Oracle State Park** – Significant erosion and grass growth this monsoon has obscured the trail throughout the park. Stewards, volunteers, and staff will be working with the park to clear the trail ahead of trail running events coming up this winter.

**Passage 14, Black Hills** – New passage steward is working diligently to complete assessment and general maintenance along this remote passage of the AZT.

**Passage 15, Tortilla Mountains** – Pinal County funded 40 steel emblem signs to replace fiberglass posts along the existing passage. ATA staff will be working with stewards and other volunteers to get these installed this season.

**Passage 17, Alamo Canyon** – ATA staff and stewards completed a full assessment and recommendation for repair of damage to the trail as a result of the Telegraph Fire. ATA may be able to use light machinery to help complete this work on the Tonto National Forest and BLM.

Florence hiking group contacted us regarding installing the two ramadas that we salvaged from Tonto Basin. These are stored at Pima Co. yard. Volunteers will assist with painting and installation when FS gives the go-ahead.

**Passage 20, Four Peaks** — Volunteers installed the first of several 3-panel kiosks to go on the AZT and important connector trails at Mills Ridge TH. FS purchased several of these from Rob Bauer. Artwork is in progress.

Volunteers scouted a potential realignment north of Pigeon Spring, taking advantage of the open terrain following the fire. One potential route was explored but an archeological site appears to block it.

**Passages 21, Pine Mountain** – USFS has approved the Pigeon Spring rehabilitation project. Volunteers expect to get started in October/November. ATA to host a Volunteer Vacation in October to begin addressing overgrowth and erosion issues near Boulder Creek.

**Passage 22, Saddle Mountain** – Working with Yavapai-Apache Tribe on a new trailhead sign at Mormon Grove Trailhead to include indigenous place names and more culturally relevant information.

Volunteers installed a new Wilderness Portal sign at Mormon Grove to replace the one that was stolen. Sign is located a short distance inside the Wilderness, out of sight of the TH.

**Passage 23, Mazatzal Divide** — Volunteers installed a 3-panel kiosk at Barnhardt TH, artwork is in progress.

**Passage 25, Whiterock Mesa** – A new homeowner in Arrowhead Estates objected to the ATA bike route crossing his property; there has never been official authorization. ATA and FS staff explored alternate routes and met with another local landowner. After considering the limited alternatives, the bike route has been moved.

FS requested preliminary work on a short realignment on the south edge of Pine, AZ, to move the trail off a road and to connect a potential new campground. Volunteers scouted it and provided the “line on the map.” No immediate indication of where or when this will move forward.

**Passage 26, Highline** – FS Decision Memo approving the Highline improvements and reroutes signed September 5. The approval includes several other smaller reroutes on passages 25, 22, and 21.

Volunteers began the groundwork with a day pin-flagging the route and another day of clearing the corridor for a short new alignment near Camp Geronimo.

**Passage 27, Blue Ridge** – Route-finding on the East Clear Creek crossing is complete and a proposal to FS is in the works to remove the AZT from a forest road and create a more sustainable grade on the north side of East Clear Creek.

**Passages 30, Anderson Mesa** – Route-finding on the Anderson Mesa reroute to remove the trail from dirt roads and improve the scenic quality of the trail through this area is complete. Proposal will be submitted to Coconino National Forest next month.

**Passage 31, Walnut Canyon** – Approval received from FS and NPS to install trail signage acknowledging the trail within the park and the rich history, geology, biology, and archaeology of the area. Two short reroutes that will remove the AZT from old roads needs to go through tribal consultation process before it can move forward, so the Forest has bumped potential trail construction dates to next year – probably late Spring of 2022.

**Passage 33, Flagstaff** – In collaboration with Flagstaff Biking Organization, a minor reroute was completed on National Trails Day to remove the AZT from a forest road near Orion Spring. Fresh trail is well-built and more aligned with the AZT experience on the Flagstaff Ranger District.

**Passage 34, Maverick Singletrack Project** – Final layout and design is complete for 25-mile reroute to remove the AZT from dirt roads and to improve overall scenic quality of the trail between Kelly Tank and Babbitt Ranch. Proposal will be submitted to the Forest next month.

**Passage 35, Babbitt Ranch** – 3 miles of trail to complete the Babbitt Ranch Singletrack Project will be built this season to eliminate the road between Cedar Ranch and AZT west of Tub Ranch. Funding from the Arizona Trail State Fund will allow a machine and conservation corps to get the work done.

**Passage 39, Grand Canyon - North Rim** — Volunteers removed approximately 20 large deadfall, and installed ten steel AZT emblem signs to replace deteriorating fiberglass signs on the passage at the annual north rim work event.

**Passage 40, Kaibab Plateau South** — Volunteers moved a steel AZT emblem sign, installed a 3-panel kiosk and water cache box at Telephone Hill TH, and installed a cache box at FR610 TH.

**Passage 41, Kaibab Plateau-Central** – ATA and FS staff finalized a 1-mile Orderville reroute to remove the AZT from a dirt road south of Orderville Trailhead.

**Passage 42, Kaibab Plateau-North** – ATA and FS staff finalized the Mangum Fire Reroute. Volunteers installed a cache box near the AZT/Navajo trail junction. Back roads in the area hit hard by summer rain flooding. The AZT remains rerouted along a detour of forest roads between Orderville Trailhead and Winter Road Trailhead.

**Passage 43, Buckskin Mountain** –ATA met with BLM staff to discuss Pine Hollow Fire restoration plans to include mastication and reseeding in the area. ATA requested a half-mile buffer to the AZT and for the work to not cross the trail with heavy machinery. BLM agrees.