

Trail Operations Report

April – July 2023

In addition to routine maintenance along the entire Arizona National Scenic Trail, here are some important improvements, completed projects and other updates for the AZT:

Passage 1: Volunteers hiked up to the Huachuca Crest to clear deadfall, disperse fire rings and perform routine maintenance on this very remote section of trail.

Passage 3: At the request of the District Ranger, three rollover gates were removed and replaced with swing gates. These had to be specially designed and fabricated to work with the H braces originally installed for the rollover design.

Passage 4: Temporal Gulch Reroute Project - New trail is connected and open, but additional finishing work is needed before it's "complete," particularly in areas with substantial backslope. Adam Milnor at the Coronado NF assigned new trail names for new sections so they could be recorded in the Forest Service's data system. Additional conservation corps hitches and volunteer activities are planned in October to continue addressing the finish condition. Passage 4 name was changed from Temporal Gulch to Casa Blanca Canyon.

Passage 11: Volunteers have been busy clearing deadfall from this passage. And after more than a year of work, the Coronado finally released the [Santa Catalina Trail Plan](#). The plan includes projects to diversity trail opportunities, improve sustainability, create new trail connections, and boost trailhead access. Included in the plan is a diversion of the Arizona National Scenic Trail off Oracle Ridge Trail between Summerhaven and Dan Saddle, utilizing instead the Red Ridge and Catalina Camp Trails. Please see the attached map showing how the AZT (now in yellow) connects from Marshall Gulch to Red Ridge Trailhead to Catalina Camp and back to Oracle Ridge. This route eliminates 1.5 miles of dirt road at Marble Mine which now shares the trail with mining trucks. It also eliminates 0.5-mile of road on Catalina Highway. It does result in a net gain of 2.4 miles and an additional climb as the trail returns to Oracle Ridge from Catalina Camp.

Passage 12: AZT Super Gates were installed at remote locations on the northern half of Oracle Ridge.

Passage 20: Work was completed to rehabilitate Pigeon Spring. Thanks to funding from the US Forest Service and a generous individual donor, ATA staff and volunteers worked with Tonto National Forest staff to get approval to help restore this vital water source after it had been negatively impacted by wildfires and flooding, and crumbling infrastructure. Article with details from the [May 19, 2023 Enews](#).

Passage 22: An Eagle Scout candidate project with over 50 participants built drains and erosion control structures just north of Highway 87.

Passage 26: We were able to institute just a couple of projects with the 2022 allocation of the Arizona Trail Fund before the fund expired - one project was to address drainage and overgrowth on the section of trail north of Washington Park as it climbs toward the Mogollon Rim. An AZCC crew addressed routine maintenance issues in this area.

Work on the final AZT Segment of the Highline Restoration Initiative Phase 1 is underway. ATA volunteers cleared the corridor this spring, and Matt Roberts of Flagline Trails is building new trail this summer. Anticipated completion of these new segments in 3-4 weeks. Additional volunteer efforts have focused on two rock work projects to stabilize the trail southbound from Washington Park.

At the Forest Service's request, volunteers designed and flagged a 1.15-mile reroute south of Geronimo Trailhead to avoid steep grades. This is planned to be included in the next round of environmental studies for the Highline Restoration Initiative.

Passage 27: Another project funded by the 2022 Arizona Trail Fund included drainage work on the Blue Ridge Passage south of the campground.

Passage 34: - The third and final project for the 2022 Arizona Trail Fund supported staff from Flagline Trails for six days doing much needed drainage work on the slopes of the San Francisco Peaks north of Snowbowl Road. Due to Mexican spotted owl restrictions, machinery was not allowed during this time of year. Flagline and ATA are working on a plan for more involved maintenance once restrictions are lifted.

Passage 39: Our annual volunteer event in partnership with Grand Canyon National Park cleared ~40 trees from the AZT within the Park. As happened last summer, volunteers made quick work of the deadfall and spent the second day assisting Park staff with clearing other system trails including the Widforss and Point Imperial Trails.

Passage 43: Volunteer vacation removed old logs lining the trail, restored drainage, repaired stone masonry, reinforced a culvert, and trimmed vegetation around the obelisk to improve visibility. Re-used many of the timbers from the trailside to define parking area and protect the northern terminus obelisk from vehicles. This included distributing several tons of gravel and stone.

Other Projects

Gateway Community Kiosks: Gateway Community Kiosks were installed by volunteers at Green Valley park in Payson; St Andrews Park in Sierra Vista; and at the town center in Kearny. Thanks to ATA volunteers and teams of committed locals who helped to make this happen. Still working on locations and/or clearances for the kiosks for Flagstaff, Superior and Oracle. These four-panel structures are sponsored by a grant from the Arizona Office of Tourism and include one panel celebrating Arizona Trail Gateway Communities statewide; a map of all trails within the region; local history and indigenous culture; and local information that is determined by the community.

Flagstaff area camping ban: We worked with GIS Director [Aaron Seifert](#) to have the new camping ban boundaries included on the FarOut App and all ATA resources to inform thru-hikers where to camp near Flagstaff.

