

Volunteer Program Report

April – July 2023

Volunteer Hours Reported: 7,349

Despite the rumor that summer is the “slow” season at ATA, June and July have been quite busy for the volunteer program. Since June 1, ATA has hosted nine volunteer events including three multi-day trail work events, one 3-day outreach event, and one 2-day Steward Conference.

With our fearless leader involved in other endeavors, the Volunteer Program Associates stepped up to keep the program running smoothly. We were grateful the quiet summer for Gear Girls has allowed Makenzie to address post-winter trail issues around Flagstaff. She hosted one volunteer trail event and has several more on the calendar.

National Trails Day Work Weekend (June 1-4): In celebration of National Trails Day, Zach led his annual volunteer event on Passage 1. Nine volunteers participated in this four-day backcountry event focused on corridor clearing.

Trail Skills Institute – TSI instructors delivered four trainings to ATA volunteers, stewards and members of the larger trail community including Forest Service Staff and conservation corps members. Trainings included our signature (and extremely popular) Trail Structures course (Module 3), Trail Layout & Design (Module 4), Mitigation & Restoration (Module 6) as well as the foundational Module 1 course on Monitoring and Maintenance. Our partnership with Flagline Trails continues to result in professional quality instruction for stewards.

Drain the Jack for LGBT Pride (June 10-11): Continuing with the celebratory theme, Sandy Fortner (segment 28a steward) hosted a two-day event in recognition of Pride month. Nine volunteers participated in this event that was focused on drain clearing/building on Passage 28.

Steward Conference (June 24-25): At the end of June, we hosted the bi-annual Steward Conference in Flagstaff. The first day of this event was held at Fort Tuthill and covered pertinent topics including project updates, FRD camping restrictions, Avenza map instruction, and pack animal demos. After a night of festivities at the group campsite, it was off to Buffalo Park for day two. There, stewards received tool trailer orientation and participated in trail work focused on drainage and tread repair. Approximately 30 stewards attended this weekend event!

We also continue to offer remote training opportunities, including our Virtual Steward Trainings. The Zoom meeting hosted on May 18 was attended by over 25 stewards and prospective stewards.

Sawyer at Grand Canyon (July 1-4): A hearty group of 30 ATA volunteers and staff joined NPS staff on the North Rim for two days of clearing deadfall within the park. Together, the group cleared more than 90 trees from the AZT and adjacent trails.

Art in the Park (July 1-3): While the sawyers were hard at work at the North Rim, seven outreach volunteers participated in Flagstaff’s Art in the Park. During this 3-day event, new volunteers were recruited for scheduled events, over 10 pages of e-news interest were obtained, and merchandise sales were a success. There was not a quiet moment at the ATA table as volunteers engaged visitors and bragged on all things AZT.

Other ATA Hosted Volunteer Events:

Clear the Way for the Vail Scramble (4/8) • Passage 11b Annual Maintenance (4/11) • Passage 13 Saddlebrooke (4/12) • Earth Day Cleanup at Catalina Park (4/22) • Outreach at Chispa AZ’s Earth Day Celebration • Raz the Haz in the Maz (4/28) • Rincon Wilderness Trail Maintenance (5/1) • Marshall Gulch Sawyer Event (5/2) • Gardener Canyon Trail Day (5/11) • Work Day on Temporal Gulch (5/13) • Drainage Work in Walnut Canyon • Highline Corridor Cleaning (6/7) • Highline Rock Work (6/15) • Drainage and Corridor Work in Hart Prairie (7/15)

Key Happenings:

Trail Angel Virtual Meeting: In June, the first ever Virtual Trail Angel (TA) meeting was held via Google Meet. Ten TAs from throughout the state attended the meeting which included a discussion about connecting the AZT angel community, logging volunteer hours, and appropriate water caching. Per TA feedback, the next meeting will be held in the fall prior to SOBO season.

In other TA news, TA regions are being modified to match trail steward regions and TA listings now include their corresponding region(s) and adjacent Gateway Communities. With these additions, TA listings provide more specific information to trail users while supporting our efforts to engage with Gateway Communities. In many cases, trail angels provide local representation within Gateway Communities and, moving forward, we will utilize this as an opportunity to expand our presence within these communities.

Stewards: It was time to revitalize the role of the ATA's Regional Stewards. These super-star volunteers have always been seen as a first-line supervisor for the segment stewards, but over the years we have learned that Human Resources duties are seldom the rewarding opportunity that volunteers seek. Instead, the job will be focused on helping to vet new stewards and do more on-the-ground monitoring of the new, smaller, regions. You can see more about how this is shaking out on the [Resources for AZT Stewards webpage](#).

Coming Up:

Shawn's Annual North Kaibab Event: August 25-28

Grass Shack Event with Saguaro NP: October 2023

Fall Trail Skills Institute Classes:

Modules 1&2: September 9-1

Module 5: September 30-October 1

Module 3: October 28-29



Olivia Woods (Field Coordinator) and her team prove that volunteers CAN conquer big rocks!

submitted by Chrissy Fichter, Volunteer Program Associate