

Friends of the Tonto National Forest
Board Meeting Minutes for 22 February 2021

Meeting held using Zoom. Attending were: Pete Allard, Trent Shue, Scott Wood, Susan Sridharan, Patti Fenner, Don Pike, Bert Roy, Dayan Anderson, Elizabeth Butler, Georgy Naimoli, Ann Adkins, Brian Stultz, and Urb Weidner

6:03 Call to order – Brian

President's Report – Brian

- Provided update on GSuite status. Everyone should have a friendsofthetonto.org email address.
- Use Friends email addresses (@friendsofthetonto.org) when sending emails pertaining to
- Brian volunteered to handle requests for information emails directed to Friends. Don will redirect to Brian.
- Question of grant - Brian asked Patti about status of RTP grant to maintain Campaign and Reavis trails. Patti has been communicating with John Matteson, lead on the project, who told her the crew has completed 3 stints and will be going out for their 3rd and last one March 10-17. The Forest was able to provide John a better map of the arch sites along the trails, so the crew constructed check steps and drains where they were allowed to work on the trail tread.
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Executive Director's Report – Patti

- Has begun implementing the new filing system in Google Suite. Everyone on the board or a committee has "view" access at this time. Later will be opened up to "editor" access.
- Discussed Partner vs Volunteer projects. Brooke was not able to give us criteria to use to decide if a project should be classified as a volunteer or a partner project – each project must be classified on a case-by-case basis. So we are unable to go through the list and categorize them for her, for our next meeting on Feb 26. She did answer some questions we had – can our workers call in and out with dispatch (pretty much no); if a project is a partner project, can we still get JHAs from the Tonto (yes); will the Tonto pay for our insurance, as they have indicated they would? (there is probably no money but we can ask at the May Leadership Team meeting. She would like for us to do a presentation for them then, about our accomplishments.
- There is a large multi-organization effort to do restoration in the area of the Bush Fire of 2019. The Tonto Wildlife Biologist is writing a 10-year restoration plan for the area. We are invited to participate as much as we would like. There will be some monitoring to do – that is something we are good at. In December, a 4WD club will be planting saguaro. Also, a collaborative effort is being initiated in the area of the Cave Creek Ranger District/North Scottsdale. Maricopa County and Game and Fish are involved. Invasive plant control is one of their emphasis areas and they have discussed involving FOTNF.
- 50 wildflower/butterfly field ID books have been donated by the author to Friends for use in fundraising. Value considered to be \$20 each; she recommends we sell them for \$20 each. Some could also be presented to those who have been involved in the Milkweed planting/watering project. Motion by Don to let Patti handle the distribution of the donated books however she decides. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report – Susan (Note: Susan submitted full Treasurer's report prior to meeting)

Cash & Investments:

\$ 9,081.70 Checking

\$22,704.06 Money Market account

\$20,241.51 CD's (There are three CD's – One of which is coming up on 3/29/21)

\$52,027.27 Total cash & investments of which \$18,366.75 is restricted for invasive plants

Revenue:

\$ 75.00 Donation from Bert

\$ 500.00 Fifty donated books valued at \$20 each

\$ 125.00 Memberships

\$ 10.04 Interest & dividends

\$ 710.04 Total Revenue

Expenses:

\$ 3.10 Paypal

\$ 706.94 Net Income for period of 1/25-2/20/2021

\$ 940.56 YTD2021 Net Income

Communications Committee Report – Elizabeth

- No updates
- Brian thanked Elizabeth for her handling of mailing changes.

Cultural Committee Report – Scott

- Held a 4th workday at Sears-Kay ruins doing post fire erosion control and burnt vegetation removal. Have averaged eight volunteers each time.
- For Shoofly, Scott wrote an RFQ to construct a welded pipe barrier around the parking lot..
- Will have a Sears-Kay open house on Sunday, March 7. It will be posted on the website and Facebook. Elizabeth asked that we inquire about how attendees heard about the open house.
- A \$15,000 grant from the state was received by the Cave Creek District for use at Sears-Kay, They told Scott they want to devote most of it to a youth crew to rebuild part of the “back trail” and do other erosion control/restoration work.

Natural Resources Committee Report – Don

- Trent held a meeting with Kelly, Forest Hydrologist, regarding a field day to go over how to use the field app for inventorying water sources.
- Volunteers for this project will be using a water source inventory phone app.
- Will get info to Dayan to add to her presentation.
- Patti covered Photopoint – Her Riparian Photopoint Team met with all 6 districts, who gave her their priorities. The FOTNF team will train volunteers in March. Field season begins in April and continues through the end of June.
- Milkweed status was covered by Susan – Lost one plant in Cave Creek; otherwise, plants are looking good. We’ve now heard from Leslie Crabtree that all plants at Phon D are doing well. She needs more volunteers to help with watering at Phon D.

- Don covered invasive species activity – Work is being done in the established weed-free zone on the west side of the Superstition Mountains. Ryan Nicholas, Tonto Invasive Plant Specialist, will be giving \$8000 to FOTNF to use for a youth crew to do invasive removal. We are also to do surveys along trails/washes for invasives. He has written a SPA (Supplemental Project Agreement) to be appended to our new Master Challenge Cost Share Agreement. The SPA has not been sent to the Regional Office for approval yet, though. Funds must be spent and work done by August 2021.

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Membership Committee Report – Pete & Georgy (Detail summary received from Georgy prior to meeting.)

- 2 renewals & 1 new. Total of 79
- Notice was sent to 29 for renewal.
- Pete has been in communication with Boyce Thompson Arboretum’s Education Coordinator, Abbie Smith. She sent an email to FOTNF, inviting us to collaborate. She sent this general outline on what BTA plans to do, with suggestions on how we could participate.
- Please send me comments and suggestions on what we can do, which I can combine in a draft for your review by our March meeting. I plan to discuss options with BTA by phone, email, or in a visit to BTA.
- Here is her email:

“Thanks for sharing your annual report. Your organization is doing a lot! That's fantastic. We'd love to put a spotlight on what you are doing. Since I last spoke with you we have developed a general outline and plan for the month of April leading up and following Earth Day. We are focusing on education/awareness and also on invitations to participate. Here's the general outline-

1st week- Invasive Species

2nd week- Benefits of Natives

3rd week- Stories of Restoration

4th week- Wrapping up and inviting people to get involved (volunteer) to help restore our Earth

We'd love to highlight what you are doing during any of these weeks- especially stories of Restoration. We could highlight what you are doing with Buffel Grass/Fountain Grass in the Supes or your Milkweed project- people love a good butterfly story. We are working with Wild Arizona and focusing on their work in Arnett Creek. So picking a different project would add variety to our stories and locations people can help out with.

We'd love to maybe do an interview with someone from the organization about the project(s) we highlight- what it is, why it's important etc. And then we'd love to invite our visitors/followers to come volunteer with your organization as well.

Let me know what you feel is possible for FOTNF- or if there is a different story you'd like to highlight.”

Central AZ Conservation Alliance (CAZCA) Liaison report – Dayan

- Dayan reviewed her updated presentation and received input from Board members.
- Everyone felt Dayan has done a great job putting this together.

- She asked for board members to attend this online meeting, as there are 4 concurrent sessions and she won't be able to attend them all!

New Business

- Brian said he is putting together a story map regarding the history of Arnett Creek. (for AZ Wild)
- Will have a table at Earth Day on 4/22/21

Adjourned at 7:48pm