

Friends of the Tonto National Forest
Minutes for Board Meeting on 23 August 2021

Attending meeting via Zoom were: Patti Fenner, Scott Wood, Don Pike, Brian Stultz, Susan Sridharan,
Trent Shue, Pete Allard, Eric Yamane, Dayan Anderson, and Urb Weidner,

6:02pm Call to order – Brian

President's Report – Brian

- Progress of Strategic Plan and Bylaws Review ad hoc committee met. Agreed to first address the Strategic Plan. Committee members volunteered to review/update specific sections.
- Intend to reconvene on 8/31. Brian will send an invitation.
- Question of advocacy – Should we write letters of support or non-support? If so, who will write the letter and does the writer have the necessary knowledge to address the issue? Or do we join a position of another organization, and, if so, who leads the effort and what level of knowledge is required? Another alternative is to put a link on the website as to where/when to comment for people to comment on their own. It was suggested we refrain from taking positions until we have more depth in our organization and perhaps legal support. We can provide information to individuals in order to allow them to be more informed and provide them a means to take a position on issues. Issue advocacy as an organization may not be beneficial at this point.
- Another question existed as to what is meant by “charitable” in the Organizational Description section of the Strategic Plan. Discussion ensued as to whether support provided to other groups fall under the definition of charitable.

Executive Director's Report – Patti

- Invitation from Payson District Ranger to participate in the 18,000 acres East Verde Headwaters Watershed Restoration Project – This is the 3rd watershed analysis being done on the Tonto. We are being asked if and how we might want to be involved. We are already doing Photopoint monitoring and are recognized as a partner for that. We may be able to assist with invasive species as part of this program. Could potentially participate in mapping activities such as mapping of rare and endangered plant species. Susan, Patti, & Wendy are getting field training, which would support this. Question of whether we have someone in the Payson area to take the lead on work activities. The net is we are already involved in Photopoint and Water Source Inventory and could potentially expand these points covered. Question raised as to whether we have the people to do additional work. Patti will write a letter stating our interest and in which activities we could be involved.
- Safety Protocols /Regular Scheduled Orientations – Patti suggested we work on our own safety protocols. Don says we already have this with the exclusion of motorized travel. Trent pointed out the differences between Volunteer projects having support of the Forest Service vs our Partner projects. We have been told by our Forest liaison that all current projects, which are on our Annual Plan of Work list, are Partner projects. We provide our own insurance for people working on these projects.

- Question was raised as to why we have multiple waiver forms. Suggestion made for project leaders (Trent, Scott, Patti, and Don) get together to create a single waiver form, a FOTNF version of a general JHA for all projects, and a template for signing up project volunteers for partner projects.
- Is it too early to think about in-person meetings? – Not yet

Financial Report – Susan (Detailed financial records were sent to Board in advance of meeting)

- Highlights:
 - Don Pike gave a \$5,000 donation to the invasive plants program
 - Board agreed to pay \$199 to have Susan attend a QuickBooks for Nonprofits course.

Cultural Committee Report – Scott

- Working on long term relationships with Forest Archaeologist.
- Assisted FS with evidence processing on pot hunting case

Natural Resources Committee Reports

- Superstition Mountains - Noxious Weed-Free Area projects/grant proposals - Don
 - Will put Oct removal event on the website. Will be two times/month events (2nd & 4th Sat). If receive Dept of Forestry and Fire Mgmt (DFFM) grant, will greatly expand the area covered. Stinknet & Sahara Mustard removal have been added to the project for the DFFM grant as they are “B” species, and buffelgrass and fountain grass are “C” species (more widespread).
 - Putting waiver form on website
 - Gearing up Early Detection/Rapid Response (EDRR) post-fire Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) funded SPA.
 - Need event leaders for invasives removal
 - Two mapping training sessions planned
 - Need to get our events on social media to get maximum exposure
- Water Source Inventory Project – Trent
 - First group outing done south of Payson
 - Another outing planned for Sept 11th
- Milkweed for Monarchs: 2020 – Patti/Susan
 - Seeds distributed; plants being grown for next planting
 - Planting scheduled for Sat., Nov 20th at Rattlesnake Cove near Bartlett Lake and Nov 13th at Phon D.

- Rare Plant Project – Tonto NF/Desert Botanical Garden - Patti
 - Will do field training
 - Have list of rare plants, some of which are in the East Verde River headwaters area; some grow in an area near Horseshoe Lake
 - Intent is to monitor plant populations

Membership Committee Report – Pete

- Have 37 individuals, 22 families and 2 organizational memberships
- Working with Helene on creating single all-inclusive mailing list

Recreation/Trails – Cave Creek Trail Loop System Project - Susan

- Provided update on Cave Creek Trail project. Patti & Susan met with Mickey Rogers, who is chief of grants and trails for AZ State Parks & Trails
- Cost estimated to be around \$30,000 of which we currently have \$10,000 from a donation from the Desert Mountain Desperados.
- Rogers felt it is a good project and suggested applying for two separate grants for project
- Patti contacted the East Valley Backcountry Horsemen to help with packing in tools and signage to the trails – RTP and Heritage
- Eric Norman, Cave Creek Ranger station, should have updated IS & A (archaeological clearance form) for signage project by Nov 10th

Central AZ Conservation Alliance (CAZCA) Liaison report - Dayan

- Sonoran Seed Summit scheduled for April 5, 2022, at the Desert Botanical Garden. The sessions will bring all CAZCA partners, land managers, non-profits, and subject matter experts interested/concerned about growing need for a reliable and appropriate supply of native plant materials.
- Information regarding the Seed Summit was sent by Dayan via email. Included were the five objectives of the meetings.

New Business

- Susan said Sonoran News had a big article with photos on Sears-Kay
- Will continue Strategic Plan committee work on Sept 14th

Adjourn – 7:31pm