



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Steve Dobbs

Rest assured the TRACKS board is working diligently behind the scenes this winter.

The Blue Ridge Shortcut loop looks likely to be completed this year. There is a little more paperwork before final approval and then get on our contractor's schedule. The Buena Vista Trail system will hopefully get final approval in late summer and construction would start soon after. There are several meetings happening in the winter such as the Eastern Arizona Trails Collaborative and the Arizona Trail Association. 2024 looks to be a productive year for trail building.

Happy New Year to all of you!! See you on the trails.... 🌲

TRACKS HOLIDAY PARTY



A good time was had for all during our annual Holiday Party at Jim Snitzer's family home on Rainbow Lake! We had 30 members enjoying all the yummy food, conversation, warm fireplace, chilly, but clear weather and the awe-aspiring view of the beautiful lake. Thank you, Jim, for use of the awesome house and location! 🌲

TRACKS TRAIL CREW (TC)

By Jerry Good

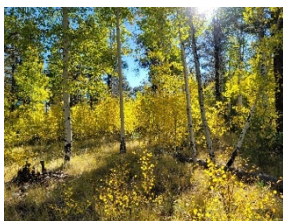
After the veteran and experienced trail crew accomplished so much in 2023, we will once again be at work in April. We hope to have a tool sharpening event again at Jim Snitzer's house in late March and hit the trails the first week in April. The trail crew invites you to take a short hike on Turkey Track Trail to see their great work. We expect to get much accomplished this year and invite you to join the crew. 🌲

TRACKS BIKING

By Nick Lund

Although some TRACKS mountain bikers brave the cold, most of us will resume group rides in the Spring. I hope everyone has a good winter. 🌲

FALL HIKES



TRACKS Hikes officially ended in October, but not before the groups saw the Aspens in full color on Pole Knoll. After our October meeting, a few of us went to Woodland Lake to add a



couple of our rocks to Sadie the Snake. It was also the partial solar eclipse! In November, Kay Alderton led a group to our area's largest Alligator Junipers. On the top of the mountain was a summit marker. A jar was "buried" under a lava rock pile, inside was a note pad. First entry 2009. Last entry: 11 TRACKS members, led by Kay A 11/15/23. (Photos left to right: Hikers at Pine Knoll, Pine Knoll view, our

rocks at Woodland Lake during partial solar eclipse, a November hike to our area's largest alligator juniper.) 🌲



LEAVE NO TRACE

From www.LNT.org

Last June, TRACKS was honored to be the Spotlight Event by the Leave No Trace/Subaru Traveling Team. The organization accomplishes its mission by providing innovative education, skills, research, and science to help people care for the outdoors. Since then, we have been reviewing the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace in the newsletters to keep the information front and center.

The *7 Principles of Leave No Trace* provide an easily understood framework of minimum impact practices for anyone visiting the outdoors. The principles can be applied anywhere — from remote wilderness areas to local parks and even in your backyard. Each principle covers a specific topic and provides detailed information to empower you to minimize your impact. To refresh our members' memories, the principles we have reviewed in past newsletters are: 1) Plan Ahead & Prepare; 2) Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces; and 3) Dispose of Waste. 🗡️

Principle 4: LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

The items we find in nature have a role to play, either in the ecosystem or the story of the landscape. Leaving what we find in place helps to preserve both. Allow others a sense of discovery by leaving rocks, plants, archaeological artifacts, and other objects of interest as you find them.

When you are in the wilderness, whether you are in a field of wildflowers or at a sandy beach, it's important to leave the area *untouched* — as if you were never there. Remember the basics: Preserve the past — observe cultural or historic structures and artifacts, but do not touch them; leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them; avoid damaging live trees and plants; avoid introducing or transporting non-native species; and minimize site alterations (do not build structures or dig trenches) 🗡️

2023 VOLUNTEER HOURS

By Cathy Purvis

If you haven't done so yet please submit your volunteer hours to me by January 8th, at cpurvis25@gmail.com or 847-812-5558. This information is consolidated into our TRACKS annual report that is shared with our local government, forest service and community partners. The Board has decided that beginning in 2024, we will track volunteer hours for only the White Mountains and Rim regions. 🗡️

A TRAIL CREW WORTH CELEBRATING

In October, the Trail Crew celebrated the end of Season and gave many thanks to those who go that extra mile. Jerry Good, our trail crew boss, not only spends his Monday mornings leading the crew and working on the trails, he (and others) also spends additional days keeping our trails cleared and safe. We also thanked Deb McGinty for bringing the cooler full of thirst-quencher drinks. And each Monday, a different crew member brings snacks, some multiple times throughout the season. Come join us in the Spring for some hard work, and yummy snacks! 🗡️



White Mountain Happenings

Jan 13 – 14 Sunrise Resort Night Skiing. (Open daily 9 to 4)
& Feb 17 – 18

Jan 22 Pinetop Library: Lunch Bunch Book Club

Feb 4 Groundhog Breakfast Snowflake

For more information on the above events and other events that are happening in the White Mountains, please visit the respective website and/or Visitor Center for more information:

Pinetop/Lakeside: <https://www.visitpinetoplakeside.com>

Show Low Chamber of Commerce: www.showlowchamber.com/

Snowflake/Taylor Chamber of Commerce:
<https://snowflaketaylorchamber.org/calendar/>

White Mountain Audubon Society:
<http://www.whitemountainaudubon.org/>

White Mountain Apache Tribe: <http://whitemountainapache.org/>

Sunrise Ski Resort: <https://www.sunriseskipark.com/>



JUDGES WANTED!

In the past, TRACKS members have been judges for the annual Northern Arizona Regional Science and Engineering Fair in Snowflake. This year's event on February 24th is no exception. Volunteers starts around 9am, with a training session. Judging is done in pairs and is usually completed by 2pm. Snacks and lunch are provided. It's a fun day and you learn a lot (especially how smart our youth are). If you are interested in volunteering or would like additional information, contact Lynn Krigbaum at 928-242-8814 or Gemma.Krigbaum@yahoo.com. 📧

THE MEMORIAL ARBORETUM By Cathy Purvis



It's with heavy hearts that we added three more plaques to the Memorial Arboretum Kiosk: Kathy Dahnk, Holly Hanson, and Walter Bethoon. If you haven't seen the Memorial Arboretum, please stop by. It's located behind the Nature Center. The arboretum garden and kiosk were finalized in 2021 to honor TRACKS and Nature Center members who contributed their time, passion, and energy to our mission. Ten trees have now been planted near the kiosk, along with the Zia Symbol, with plans to add identifiers at each tree. We thank Ron Miller for originally presenting the idea to the Board and for overseeing the project. 📧

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH By Aaron Hartzell

As another year comes to an end, we look forward to what winter may bring our way. We also prepare for the cold and wet season to come. Wildlife does the same as they anticipate the upcoming weather. Depending on the species, they typically put on fat stores, cache food to access later, or enter hibernation or torpor. Much of the animal kingdom, continues their daily activities as they work to survive whatever the elements can throw at them. In a severe winter, the work they do ahead of time to prepare may not be enough and winter could bring disaster. As we consider this, it is always good to do what we can to not disturb wildlife during the winter months. Disturbance can cause wildlife to use up precious resources that they rely on to survive into the next year. The Arizona Game and Fish Department encourages people to get out and enjoy the wildlife around you, just do so at a distance. 📧

ATTENTION, ATTENTION, PLEASE! TRACKS has joined the 21st century!

We have relaunched the Facebook page Nick Lund started a few years back; plus, we are now connected on Instagram! Follow us @trackswitemountainstrails (FB and IG) for schedule updates and everything else related to our trails system in the White Mountains. We need members help with keeping it active and current. Just completed a hike or ride? Tag us in your social media accounts (@trackswitemountainstrails) or send those photos via email trackswitemountainstrails@gmail.com or text 928-316-6036. We also now have a Zelle account to accept donations directly from our members vs donating through PayPal. Check out the QR code on our website, and please click away! <https://trackswitemountains.org/>. 📧

SKIING SEASON IS UPON US By Lynn Krigbaum

As I am writing this, there is no snow. There's not even snow predicted in the forecast for the next ten days! But I hope, we will get snow at some point this winter. For several years I have been keeping the TRACKS Cross Country Ski List, which has now grown to 110 people. Sometimes I would send an email with scheduled time we expected to ski and only a few people would show up or at least reply that they were or were not coming. I plan to continue this year (if and when we get snow!). If you would like to be on my list, please email me at Gemma.krigbaum@yahoo.com. Also, if there is anyone out there who could take on this job, I'd love to hear from you!! In the meantime, please THINK SNOW!! 📧



APACHE SITGREAVES NATIONAL FOREST

From Website

It's true! Arizona does get snow! The high country on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests receives ample snow each year for various types of snow play. The only question is when that snow arrives. During most winters, skiing and snowmobiling can first occur around Christmas but sometimes the snow simply doesn't show up until January.

Popular winter activities include snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowshoeing, tubing, and ice fishing. Although there are few designated snowmobile trails, roads that are inaccessible to other vehicles at this time of year offer many miles of ready-made trails. One recommended snowmobile route, however, is from the Williams Valley area west of Alpine on FR 249 to Big Lake.

There are four recommended areas for cross-country skiing although there are endless other routes that could be selected: Hannagan Meadow south of Alpine, Williams Valley west of Alpine, Pole Knoll and Greer west of Springerville, and Forest Lakes west of Heber. Winter camping is available in the backcountry and some campgrounds that are open year-round.

Snowshoeing opportunities exist throughout the forests but can be particularly fun when combined with ice fishing at Woods Canyon, Willow Springs, or Luna lakes. It will take snowmobiles to access the other good ice fishing lakes such as Big Lake, Crescent Lake, Chevelon Canyon Lake, and Bear Canyon Lake.

Ice fishing is most convenient at Nelson Reservoir since it's accessible by automobile. There is an area in Williams Valley west of Alpine that is very popular for tubing. This site offers opportunities to sled, toboggan, or tube down the slope. Additionally, forest users often venture out to their own favorite locations.

Road and driving conditions can be hazardous in the winter so please be prepared. We recommend that all vehicles, even 4-wheel drives, have a set of tire chains. Bring extra food, water, warm clothes, and tell somebody where you are going so that searchers can more easily find you should you become stranded. ❗

TRACKS WINTER SCHEDULE			
GROUP	DATE	EVENT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION / DETAILS
Trail Crew		Beautify the Trails. Winter recharging period. Will get back working on the trails in April	To volunteer, subscribe and tick the checkbox for Trail Crew https://trackswitemountains.org/about-contact/volunteer/
Biking	Paused until spring		To receive biking information visit www.trackswitemountains.org/subscribe and tick the checkbox for Biking or email Nick Lund at nplundaz@gmail.com
UP THE HILL GANG & TUESDAY TREKKERS	Paused until spring	Up the Hill Gang (UTHG) and Tuesday Trekkers.	To receive UTHG WEDNESDAY or TUESDAY TREKKERS information by email, tick the checkbox for hiking on the Become a Member form For maps, newsletters, and additional information, please visit the TRACKS website: https://trackswitemountains.org/
Cross-Country Skiing	Various days, depending on snow levels and weather conditions.		To receiving cross-country skiing information, visit www.trackswitemountains.org/subscribe , and tick the checkbox for Cross Country Skiing
BOARD MEETING	Thursdays before the General Meeting at 1:00 PM Jan 11, Feb 8, Mar 7	TRACKS Board Meeting Members and visitors welcome	New Location: Pinetop-Lakeside Town Hall, 325 W. White Mountain Blvd
GENERAL MEETING	Second Saturday of the month at 8 AM on Jan 13, Feb 10, Mar 9	TRACKS General Meeting (visitors welcome)	New Location: The January 2024 meeting will be held at Sal & Teresa's on Woodland Road in Lakeside.