



March 2019 Newsletter

February Meeting: Fifteen members attended the mid-winter meeting on February 9 at Darbi's. **Jim Snitzer** called the meeting to order at 8 am. He discussed the need for selection of a new TRACKS Board Member due to the recent resignation of Beck Ney. The Board is considering a number of possible candidates. If you have an interest in becoming a TRACKS Board Member contact Jim Snitzer (jim@snitzer.org or 928-368-3283).

Next Jim discussed the following things Pinetop-Lakeside is working on,

- improving lighting and irrigation on Mountain Meadow **soccer field** and bringing it up to full regulation size – it will soon be a much nicer place to play soccer than most places in the valley most of the year!
- building a **walking trail** around Mountain Meadow Park, and
- starting a **voluntary trash recycling program**, hopefully in the next 3-6 months.

Lynn Krigbaum discussed

- the **2019 Northeast Arizona Science Fair** to be held at Snowflake NPC Arts Center March 2. Volunteers are needed to serve as judges. Special expertise in science is not necessary. Those volunteering to serve as judges will be given instructions on the morning of the fair. To discuss volunteering contact Lynn (gemma.krighbaum@yahoo.com or 928-242-8814).
- **The annual White Mountains Walk for The Woods (W4W)** will be on June 1, National Trails Day. This is a major fund-raising event for Save Our Park and the White Mountain Nature Center. W4W needs sponsors and Lynn asks members to participate in the search. The cost of sponsorship is a \$300 tax-deductible donation. Sponsors get a number of benefits including having their logo printed on event entry forms, posters, and T-shirts and getting an acknowledgement of sponsorship in the WM Independent.
- TRACKS has always been a sponsor for W4W. Lynn asked for donations from members because TRACKS money is limited to trail related expenses; \$152 was donated. Contact Lynn to donate for this year's TRACKS sponsorship or send a check to Save Our Park, Inc., P.O. Box 2375, Lakeside, AZ 85929 or WM Nature Center, P.O. Box 581, Pinetop, AZ 85935 with W4W/TRACKS in the memo line.

Liz Jernigan talked about 2019 Audubon programs and field trips, as described in the handouts she provided; for more info call 928-367-2462.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

March Meeting: The next TRACKS General Meeting will be held at Darbi's in Pinetop on Saturday March 9 at 8 am. Come early if you'd like to order breakfast.

White Mountain Audubon Society:

The **Christmas Bird Count** numbers are in! Four teams of birdwatchers counted 1898 birds of 50 species! We could all recognize ducks, geese, and doves, like the beautiful one to the right, but I'm afraid the kestrels, buffleheads, and gadwalls would fly by unrecognized by most of us 😞



The **next Audubon meeting** will be held at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, March 6 at the Council Chambers in the new Pinetop-Lakeside Town Hall, 325 W.

White Mountain Blvd. **Dave Cagle from Arizona Game & Fish** will talk about how the Arizona Game and Fish Department and other agencies **manage wetlands** with fire and other methods. Photos of local wildlife will include ducks, geese, and other birds. Everyone's welcome at WMAS General Meetings and Field Trips.

White Mountain Nature Center Events

- Saturday, March 2, 10am to 2pm. Celebrate **Dr. Seuss's Birthday**. Books, games and treats -- the first 100 kids get a book written by the Great Doctor! For more info, call 928-358-3069. This program is sponsored by Books for Kids -AZ
- Saturday, March 16, 5 to 9pm. **Camp Shamrock** welcomes children of all ages. There will be games, books, coloring, FOOD, and STEM activities (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, and **M**ath). Sign up by calling 928-207-5346 by Wednesday 3/13. A donation of \$20 is requested per child.

TRACKS has purchased six new McLeods. Right? So, what's a McLeod? Well, it's one of the favorite tools of trail-crew workers. It's a heavy-duty tool with a two-sided blade on a long wooden handle. One side is a rake with sturdy coarse tines, the other side is a big flat sharpened hoe. Join the trail crew and you can get a chance to put one to use!



The Up-the-Hill-Gang continues Wednesday morning Hikes in March.

Unfortunately, the March 6 hike to Petrified Forest National Park is “sold out” 😞 The Park has begun limiting the number of hikers to 12 in a group, and 12 of the regular winter hikers have already signed up. Other hikes have no such restrictions. **Kay Alderton** will continue to scout out the best places to hike (considering wind, weather, and mud) and **Heather Steiner** will be emailing everyone on the Up-The-Hill-Gang mailing list descriptions of the hike and when and where to meet. If you’re interested in getting on the list, contact Heather Steiner (steinerhm@aol.com or 480-620-1676).

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

Cycling -- Last October’s Tour of the White Mountains: Epic Rides shares the following information from their Summary Report on the 23rd Annual Tour of the White Mountains. There were over 650 bikers and over 2300 visitors to the area related to the event. Over 70% of out-of-town riders plan to return to the area for biking and other recreation activities. Epic Rides estimates the direct economic benefit to the community to be over \$500,000. All this is good for the local economy.

The Winterfest Chili Cookout on February 9 was a big success -- standing room only. The Nature Center was full of skillful chefs and lots of hungry spectators awaiting the judging, which had to come before the eating 😞 \$100 prizes went to The Country Way BBQ for Traditional Chili, to Bilbies Interiors cooks for Homestyle, and to “Some-Like-It-Hot” for vegetarian chili. I liked “The Hot Cookin’ Mamas” best. There was lots of good music by The Lakesiders and Fat Chance and there was even a bit of dancing between the tables! Hopefully we’ll be able to use the bigger newly purchased Nature Center buildings next year. We might even have room for a dance floor!

The Biomass Powerplant Field Trip planned for February was **postponed** due to weather. Pam Morrow will work to reschedule, probably for April.

This Spring, **Ron Miller** will be giving a presentation about his 37-day 500 mile walk along the Way of St. James in southern France and Northern Spain. More details coming next month.



New TRACKS member **Nina Garcia** enjoying cross-country skiing by Edler Lake in Lakeside on 2/20.

Environmental News – Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI)

We live in the largest stand of Ponderosa Pine Trees in the world. Unfortunately, they are adapted to fire. For over 100 years fire has been suppressed. Remember Smokie the cute bear? So now we have way too many trees in our forests. The local Forest Service office began to address this problem in the '90s in the Blue Ridge Demonstration Project. TRACKS members were involved a few years ago in collecting data for the Forest Service. When thinning was done, there were study areas and we took photos to document what had occurred in the various areas which were thinned in 3 different "prescriptions." There were also areas which were not thinned which were "controls." The Forest Service used the information to decide how best to treat our overgrown forests.

Then came the Rodeo-Chediski fire. As a result of this catastrophic fire, the **White Mountain Stewardship Project** was started. This was the first time there was a plan to thin a large area over a ten-year period, 2004 to 2014. Over 50,000 acres were "treated." When the Wallow Fire happened, it demonstrated that the thinning worked. Areas where thinning had been done acted differently and fire fighters could actually fight fire better in thinned areas. Ponderosa Pines have thick bark and as long as the fire was not in the canopies or not catastrophic, the trees survived.

The next step in the process to protect us in our beautiful forest was a much larger plan called the **Four Forest Restoration Initiative. 4FRI** began at least 5 years ago and calls for TWO MILLION acres to be thinned over 20 years. The plan was divided into two parts. The area closer to Flagstaff was chosen to be treated first. Unfortunately, there were no businesses there to support the thinning. During **White Mountain Stewardship**, businesses were started to deal with the small diameter trees which are the main problem in our overgrown forest. The Forest Energy pellet plant in Show Low and NovoBioPower in Snowflake were instituted to use the small trees and slash. These companies pay for the stuff and actually make money which is what businesses need to do. So, the thinning continues in our area even though we are supposed to be the second part of 4FRI.

Fortunately, a lot of thinning has been done and much more is planned. In this way, we hope to prevent the catastrophic fires which would destroy our towns, like the recent Camp Fire in California. We are fortunate to have the Forest Service doing the big work, but we need to do our part, too. **Firewise** is the National Program which tells us what we as home owners need to do. There will be several programs this spring to help us prepare for the fires which we hope won't come, but which probably are inevitable. In June there will be the 4th annual presentation about Firewise at the Nature Center. In the meantime, Google "Firewise" and see what you can do to make your home defensible in case of a forest fire. We will also have a presentation on emergency evacuation and how to be "ready!" TRACKS members have been involved in planning these programs and I hope you will take full advantage of them. If you have questions, contact Lynn (gemma.krigbaum@yahoo.com, 928-242-8814) or the Forest Service.

Exercise for the brain! TRACKS members enjoy exercising the body, and that's good. But it's also important to exercise the brain. Reading, puzzles, cards, chess, Mah Jongg, and Scrabble all give your brain a little exercise as well as a bit of diversion from the routine activities of daily living. The Pinetop-Lakeside Library sets aside space for Mah Jongg players at 3pm on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month and for chess players at 3pm on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month. Also, if you'd be interested in getting together for occasional scrabble battles, contact Tim Strand at 928-367-7495.

Finally, a reminder to record your **VOLUNTEER HOURS** for TRACKS and other volunteering you do, including travel time. Twice a year, Nick will request these hours from you, which helps with the TRACKS annual report. To report your hours monthly send Nick an email, lundaz@cableone.net or call 928-241-2444.

TRACKS EVENT CALENDAR

March 2019

March 2, Saturday	Northeast Arizona Science Fair Volunteer judges needed. There will be training for volunteer judges.	NPC Performing Arts Center in Snowflake. For more information, call Lynn Krigbaum at (928)242-8814.
March 6, Wednesday	Audubon Monthly Meeting: Dave Cagle from Arizona Game & Fish on Wetlands Management	6:30 PM at the Council Chambers in the new Pinetop-Lakeside Town Hall, 325 W. White Mountain Blvd. NOTE LOCATION CHANGE
March 7, Thursday	TRACKS Board Meeting	1:00 PM at the Nature Center, 425 S Woodland Rd. Lakeside. Members welcome
March 9, Saturday	TRACKS General Meeting	8:00 AM Darbi's Restaurant Arrive early to order breakfast
Mondays	No Trailwork for now ☹️ Any bright-eyed bushy-tailed volunteer out there for Trail-Crew Boss ??? Welcome !!!	
Wednesdays	Up the Hill Gang Hikes continue through the winter, weather permitting (the weather has not been permitting much except cross-country skiing). For more info contact Heather Steiner at steinerhm@aol.com or call her cell phone 480-620-1676.	A more specific schedule will be back in effect starting May 1. Warm weather hikes are being planned & coordinated by Kay, Heather, Arlene, and Jim Meeker. They'll get the schedule to you in time for Mayday.



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