



TRACKS TRAIL CREW (TC) – Trail Work Is Finished Until Spring

By Jerry Good

Hope you and yours are staying safe and healthy and enjoying the Holiday Season.

As for our trail crew. We have shut down for winter. Hopefully we will resume the 1st Monday in April 2021 weather permitting. We hope to continue the wonderful work of last summer. The Trail crew took on tasks and problems with the trails that were not thought possible to overcome; however, they did so. They made Tracks proud!

There always is much work to do and the winter season will show us how our work stood-up. It will also show us more work to do.

Want to wish all Tracks Members a healthy and safe Holiday season and hope everyone is able to return for Summer of 2021. 🎉

WHITE MOUNTAIN NATURE CENTER

The WMNC's centers winter hours are Monday-Wednesday-Friday; from 10 am to 2 pm. Donations are gratefully accepted. For more information, or to get our latest news, call (928) 358-3069, or visit our website at: <https://whitemountainnaturecenter.org/>.

While there are no current events scheduled for Winter (January/February/March) 2021, please visit the Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/WhiteMountainNatureCenter/> for possible new events.

For those that are not yet aware, the WMNC was given three orphaned kestrels for rehabilitation that were found in Springville early in the summer of 2020. In September, the two healthy males were released back into the wild. The female kestrel, named Bella, had sustained a head injury so gets to stay and great visitors at the WMNC. Please stop by and visit the center when you are in the area and say hello to Bella – she loves company! 🎉

SPOTLIGHT – Pinetop-Lakeside Rim Trail Improvement and Maintenance

By Nick Lund

TRACKS was contacted by the Lions Foundation about being in partnership with them and the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside to maintain the Rim Trail that is part of the town of Pinetop-Lakeside. The Lions Foundation would like the Rim Trail to be one of the premier attractions in our region.

One of the first actions will be to repair the kiosk by installing two new support posts. TRACKS will be working with the Town to develop plans for the Rim Trail as needed for improvement and maintenance tasks. The Lions Foundation plans to make an annual donation to TRACKS for their maintenance work.

We are looking at something very different and exciting for the Rim Trail. Instead of a single trail or loop trail, we want to take advantage of the many "social trails" already there. If we add lots of signage and leave most of the trails in place, it will be closer to a "Family Fun Area" with a maze of short trails connecting with each other.

As the next step, we need a volunteer to GPS all of the social trails and work with the Town and Forest Service to develop an "as-is" map. Then we can decide if any of the social trails need to be eliminated or re-routed, and work out the signage needs for the Rim Trail area. 🎉

JOIN TRACKS Today!

If you would like more information on joining TRACKS, would like to Subscribe, or Donate, please visit our website at: www.trackswhitemountain.org.

TRACKS CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

By Lynn Krigbaum

For several years I have maintained a list of people who are interested in cross country skiing. I have over 90 people on the list and in the past when we had snow, I would send an email to those people saying where we were planning to ski, where to meet and what time to meet.

Since we haven't had any real snow yet I haven't been sending emails. If you want to be added to the cross-country ski list, please send an email to gemma.krigbaum@yahoo.com.

In the meantime, please THINK SNOW!!! ❄️

DONATE to TRACKS!

It's a worthwhile cause – promoting healthy outdoor activity in the forest. Your financial help enables TRACKS to purchase tools, signs, etc. for White Mountains Trail System maintenance and helps pay for other expenses of the organization.

TRACKS does not have a membership fee and counts on donations. We are a non-profit, 501c3 volunteer organization so donations are tax deductible. There are several ways to contribute!

- Mail a check payable to: **TRACKS**,
- 958 S Woodland Road, Lakeside AZ 85929.
- Use PayPal on the TRACKS website at <https://www.trackswitemountains.org/>
- Make TRACKS a beneficiary of an estate, please contact TRACKS Treasurer, David McCullough, at: <mailto:drmccull67@gmail.com>.
- Donate through AMAZON Smile by adding TRACKS as a charity in their AMAZON account.

If you would like more information on joining TRACKS, would like to Subscribe, or Donate, please visit our website at: www.trackswitemountain.org. ❄️

UP THE HILL GANG (UTHG)

By Jim Meeker

Trails we sometimes avoid in the summer make for great winter hiking, including snowshoeing when there is plenty of snow. An example of that is the Railroad Grade Trail # 601. Many hikers consider this trail good for winter hiking because the northern part covers open land with few trees to get in the way of the warming sun.

The Railroad Grade Trail goes 21 miles, ending at Big Lake. The portion of the trail that starts along Hwy 260 is good for winter hiking because it is easy to follow the raised railroad bed even when there is snow covering the landmarks.

Remember to dress appropriately for winter weather, bring a hat, layer clothing with appropriate coat as needed, sunscreen, water and snacks if planning to be out for any length of time. ❄️

White Mountain Happenings

Due to current changing COVID-19 circumstances, events may be cancelled and/or delayed. Please call or contact the respective organization or town websites to confirm that events are still being held.

JANUARY

No events to note at this time

FEBRUARY

White Mountain Chili Cookoff – Lakeside

White Mountain Winterfest – Sunrise Ski Resort

MARCH

No events to note at this time

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 Chamber of Commerce:

<https://www.pinetoplakesidechamber.com/calendar/>

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/>

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Lakeside Ranger District News – Show Low Lake Access Restriction to Protect Bald Eagle Nesting

By Lorna McNeil-Cox

Our White Mountain communities are home to many native and migratory birds. To protect a bald eagle nesting site in an area of high recreation use, where noise is likely to adversely affect the success of nesting and fledging bald eagles, the forestry service has enacted order number 03-01-21-05 for Show Low Lake prohibiting the general public from access to the lake effective January 1st, 2021, at 5:00AM., and shall remain in effect until July 31st, 2021, or until rescinded, whichever occurs first. For more information and a map of the restricted area, please visit the forestry websites “Alerts and Notices page at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/asnf/alerts-notices/?cid=stelprd3793918>.

Many other lakes and areas are still open for outdoor recreation and use. Please check area websites for updates and remember cold Mountain storms can mean fun in the snow! To stay safe and healthy, good fun means good planning:

- Travel with a companion if possible.
- Let someone know where you’ll be and when you’ll return.
- Dress for success! Warm and waterproof with lots of layers.
- Wear sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses.
- Carry and drink plenty of water and bring food.
- Rest often and don’t over-exert.
- Bring a first aid kit and emergency supplies.
- Be weather-wise.
- Be aware of road conditions and whether 4-wheel drive or chains are required.

Wishing everyone safe and happy holidays and a great welcome back to Nick Lund as returning President for TRACKS!

For more information and current updates, please visit the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest website at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/asnf>.

NOTE: Most forest roads are primitive roads that are not plowed or maintained in the winter. Please avoid rutting and damaging wet roads and respect road closures. ❗

Arizona Game and Fish (AZGF) NEWS

By Jackie Follmuth

Arizona’s bald eagles are back, and they will soon be preparing for the next generation of eagles at breeding sites statewide.

To assist with the state’s continued bald eagle population growth, the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) encourages outdoor recreationists, aircraft pilots, drone operators and motorized paragliders to do their part by not disturbing the state’s 92 eagle breeding areas. To protect breeding attempts, some portions of public land and water areas will be temporarily closed to help these majestic animals and ensure even more young eagles take to the skies this spring.

“Arizona’s bald eagles are hard at work preparing their nest for what we hope will be a productive breeding season,” said Kenneth “Tuk” Jacobson, bald eagle management coordinator. “The birds nest, forage and roost at rivers and lakes that are also popular recreation spots. That’s why we must be vigilant to help protect the birds and ensure their populations statewide continue to flourish. That success wouldn’t be possible without the cooperation of outdoor recreationists who respect the closures during the breeding season.”

During the 2020 breeding season, 71 young hatched, and 55 reached the important milestone of their first flight, known as fledging.

Please check the Arizona Game and Fish Pinetop Region facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/azgfd/> or for more information or call (928) 367-4281 or visit the AZGF website at: <https://www.azgfd.com/>. ❗

WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE NEWS

WMAT camping and fishing is open to non-tribal members as winter weather conditions permit. Phase One reopening plans and other pertinent information can be found at the WMAT website at: <http://whitemountainapache.org/>.

Current fire prevention, prescribed burns and other relevant information for the White Mountain Apache tribe can be found by visiting the WMA Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/BIAFAAFireMgt/> or by contacting Candy Lupe at (928) 338-5425.

TRACKS MONTHLY SCHEDULE – January through March

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION / DETAILS
Mondays – finished until spring	Trail Crew (TC): Beautify the Trails	To volunteer please check box on website for “Trail Crew” on “Join” form and or email Nick Lund at: lundaz@cableone.net. See page one of newsletter for more information about trail crew news.
Monday through Friday (weather permitting) <i>Days and times will vary due to leader availability and weather conditions.</i>	Cross Country Skiing (winter only):	Cross Country Skiing will be notified via email by Sunday of each week of the days and details for planned skiing. Please visit the website and check “Skiing” on the “Join” form and or contact Lynn Krigbaum at gemma.krigbaum@yahoo.com to get on the notification list.
Wednesdays - no official hiking is being scheduled for Winter (Jan/Feb/Mar) 2021	Up the Hill Gang (UTHG) Hiking:	To get UTHG information please check box on the website for “Hiking” on “Join” form. See page two for specific hiking schedule information.
Thursdays -- 1:00pm	TRACKS Board Meeting (members and visitors welcome)	White Mountain Nature Center, 425 Woodland Lake Rd, Lakeside
Saturdays – on hold until Spring	TRACKS General Meeting (members and visitors welcome)	To Be Announced When Commence in Spring

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