



FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

By Steve Dobbs

Happy New Year! On behalf of the TRACKS Board, we hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and we send our best wishes to all our members for a happy, healthy and active 2025.

TRACKS was quite busy in 2024. Our biggest achievement was building the LumberJack trail (formerly referred to as the *shortcut loop*) connecting two points on the original ‘Blue Ridge’ trail. This trail is 3.25 miles long and gives users different options when hiking the Blue Ridge trail. Our second project was building two short connector trails from the Mountain Meadows sports complex to the ‘Hitching Post’ trail in Woodland Park. These connectors are 0.15 and 0.25 miles in length. Pinetop-Lakeside hopes to have Mountain Bike events in the future and will use these connectors. By the time you read this, we will have installed rollover gates on these as they enter the forest. And of course, the trail crew worked diligently maintaining our trails.

For 2025, there are three projects in the queue; the expansion of the Buena Vista trail system, the Show Low Bike Course north of the city, and the reroute of a section of the Chipmunk trail from marker 8 to 18. These projects will proceed at a slower rate than we would like, but the Forest Service is dealing with a manpower shortage. They are the final decision-makers and will have to make sure there are no effects on wildlife, archeological concerns, etc. 🙏



Early Oct – Board members flagging new Mountain Meadow trail



Trail Crew working into November



“Testing out” the new trail



The Rollover Gate waiting to be installed



TRAIL CREW *By Jerry Good*

ATTENTION ALL TRACKS MEMBERS! The trail crew would like your assistance. We would like you to report possible problems on the trails as you enjoy them. Although we have Trail Stewards who also do so, they are not out all the time. With TRACKS MEMBERS help, we can be more efficient. What we would like is for MEMBERS to report erosion, overgrowth, trees down and bad signs, etc. What we are proposing is to use the Emergency Diamond Markers to report issues. For example: LB6-8 erosion problem; LB18-20 vegetation problem; LB32-33 tree down, closer to 32. Please take pictures – very helpful! With all of us helping, we can maintain trails more efficiently. Please contact President Steve Dobbs (tracks.steven@gmail.com), Trail Steward Coordinator, Ron Miller (tracks_ts@yahoo.com), or me, Trail Crew Boss, Jerry Good (jgood6@cox.net). We are hoping for a great 2025; it will be a busy one. We appreciate EVERYONE's help and assistance! 🙏

WANTED! – TRACKS NEWSLETTER EDITOR

TRACKS is still looking for a newsletter editor, so if you know of anyone who may be a good candidate, please contact Steve Dobbs at tracks.steven@gmail.com. Ideally, the individual should have basic knowledge of Microsoft Word and is willing to learn the MailChimp platform. Our next newsletter is scheduled to be published in April, so there is some time to learn. If no one comes forward, you may be reading our last newsletter. 😞

HIKING

With the mild, early Winter weather, Up The Hill Gang (UTH) has continued their Wednesday hikes. On a November hike, UTH was joined by member Pam Morrow, who led the group to several wall paintings in Fool Hollow Lake State Park. Pam has been involved with Northern Pioneer College's art class and is proud to show off the students work whenever she can. We hope to have her lead another hike in the Spring. 🙏



Fool Hollow Lake "Wall Art" – on the walls near the restrooms

Weather permitting, UTH gang continues to hike on Wednesdays. If you are interested in joining them, please contact Kay Alderton at 928-367-7003

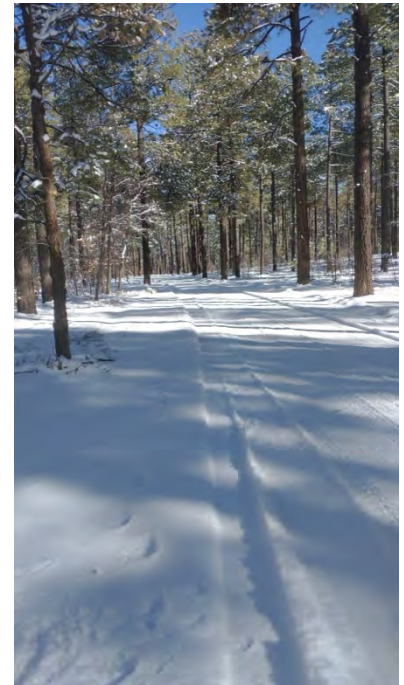


CROSS-COUNTRY SKI SEASON



That early November snow fall got all of us excited for ski season, but now we wait. Annette Fox has agreed to continue to maintain the cross-country ski notification email list, so if you are interested in receiving emails for cross-country activities, please send Annette an email at arfox2324@gmail.com. And let's all think **SNOW!**

And in the meantime, enjoy hiking on the trails!



TRACKS MEMBERS ARE TRASH TRACKERS !

We had least three separate groups of **TRACKS** members volunteer with the **Trash Trackers** last summer, a long-standing tradition for our members. Some of our members have gone multiple times during the program's 35 years. For those not familiar with **Trash Trackers**, it's a program sponsored by the National Parks Service, whereby volunteers pick up trash around Lake Powell's shoreline. My thanks to Carol Axford for these pictures, who along with Denise Curry and two of her friends spent 4 days under the hot summer sun picking up trash. It's so sad to see that their haul is typical - ninety bags, filling up 3 dumpsters. On her last day, Carol counted 85 plastic water bottles! Can you imagine how Lake Powell would look without this program and such dedicated volunteers?



Carol cleaning up Lake Powell shoreline



Where's Denise?



White Mountain Happenings

Jan 18 Night Skiing Sunrise Park Resort

Feb 8 Eagle Fest - WMNC

Feb 3 Groundhog Breakfast Snowflake

Feb 15 Night Skiing Sunrise Park Resort

Mar 30 Easter Egg Hunt Taylor/Snowflake.

Raptor shows at 3:00 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Tickets available online at www.wmnature.org

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:

White Mountain Nature Center: www.wmnature.org

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/>

2024 VOLUNTEER HOURS

By Cathy Purvis

Don't forget to send your volunteer hours to Cathy Purvis at cpurvis25@gmail.com or call her at 847-812-5558 by January 10, 2025. We are only tracking volunteer hours for TRACKS and other non-profits in the White Mountains and Rim regions. Include travel time and hours you volunteered at the Tour of the White Mountains, but not Monday Trail Crew (it's counted separately). No breakdown is necessary. Our volunteer hours are consolidated into our TRACKS annual report that is shared with our local government, forest service and community partners. Thank you for all you do!

SAVE THE DATE - EAGLE FEST



Feb 8, 2025 – Spend the day learning about and enjoying the American Bald Eagle! Presentations start at 9AM at the White Mountain Nature Center, followed by watching wild eagles on Rainbow Lake.

REPLACING TREES IN THE MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Ron Miller never sleeps! He discovered deer were chomping at the trees TRACKS had planted a few years ago in the Memorial Arboretum near the Nature Center. He, Jim Snitzer, Arlene Nelson and other volunteers spent a day planting new ones. Our deepest appreciation to Ron for keeping our Arboretum so BEAUTIFUL!



APACHE SITGREAVES NATIONAL FOREST *By Stephanie Rainey*

Bringing your dog to the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests



Trixie ready for a hike, carrying her own pack of supplies

I enjoy taking my dog, Trixie, hiking with me on trails on the A-S Forests. It helps Trixie learn how to socialize and behave when she sees other dogs and people. But problems can occur when dog owners let their dogs run loose. Every year, I receive calls from the public complaining about dogs running loose in the forest. This year in the Black Mesa Ranger district, a 10-year-old child walking on a trail was bitten by a dog and the owner grabbed the dog and ran off, leaving the injured child on the trail. Another instance, a poodle was killed (by an under-restrained dog who broke his thin leash) in a campground.

Please Remember:

- Dogs must always remain under the owner's control.
- Dogs must be leashed in developed recreation sites-meaning an area that has been improved or developed for recreation such as campgrounds, picnic areas, day use areas, trails, parking lots, etc.).
- You must clean up pet waste and DON'T leave the poop bag in the forest! Carry it out, because no one is going to pick up the bag for you and now you've created litter. It's best to carry a small trowel, dig a hole, and deposit the dog waste in the hole just like when properly disposing of human waste.

Federal Regulations regarding dogs

- Failure to have a dog on a leash can lead to a citation under 36 CFR 261.8(d).
- Within developed recreation sites, you can be cited under 36 CFR § 261.16j.
- Within the rest of the forest, you can be cited under 36 CFR 261.8(d).

The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests is dog-friendly, but there are rules and regulations regarding dogs in the forest. These rules are meant to keep visitors safe, whether you are camping, hiking, horseback riding, or biking.

Stephanie Rainey, Recreation Management Specialist
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TRACKS HOLIDAY PARTY

Our thanks and deep appreciation to Jim Snitzer for hosting our annual holiday party and potluck at his family's cabin along the beautiful shores of Rainbow Lake. The camaraderie of our members as we visited and ate was very special. It was a perfect day to celebrate the season, the end of one year and welcome a new one!



TRACKS WINTER CALENDAR

GROUP	DATE	EVENT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION / DETAILS
Trail Crew	Winter recharging period. Will get back working on the trails in April	Monday mornings from April- October, keeping our trails safe and beautify.	To volunteer, subscribe and tick the checkbox for Trail Crew https://trackswitemountains.org/about-contact/volunteer/
Biking	Paused for the winter	Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 9:00am	To receive biking information visit www.trackswitemountains.org/subscribe and tick the checkbox for Biking or email Suzanne Milligan at suzanne.milligan@yahoo.com
Up the Hill Gang (UTH) and Tuesday Trekkers	No official hikes in the winter, but if the weather is nice, Wednesday hikers will be on the trails!	Hikes of various distances and difficulty. Tuesday Trekkers will be back in the late Spring!	To receive hiking 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/
BOARD MEETING	Thursdays before the General Meeting at 1:00 PM January 9 February 6 March 6	TRACKS Board Meeting Members and visitors welcome	Pinetop-Lakeside Town Hall, 325 W. White Mountain Blvd
GENERAL MEETING	Second Saturday of the month at 8 AM January 11 February 8 March 8	TRACKS General Meeting (visitors welcome)	Sal and Teresa's on Woodland Road in Lakeside