

**THE PRESIDENT'S DESK** **Steven Dobbs, President**

TRACKS received a \$5,000 donation from the White Mountain REALTOR® Foundation to be used towards building trails. Our next trail build will be the Chipmunk Springs re-route of 2.1 miles. This trail will be mechanically built and cost in excess of \$30,000. Many thanks to our local real estate agents; we will put this money to good use!

We also received an update on the Buena Vista trail system which is on track for May approval from Jason Moore.

Although the work is going on behind the scenes right now, solid steps have been made recently to obtain final approval for the new Buena Vista trail system. The final version of the archeological study has been sent to the United States Forest Service (USFS). The study is scheduled to be sent to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the tribes for their review by the end of this week.

Work has begun on the signs that will need to be posted in the new Buena Vista area. About 1/2 of the 58 needed wooden trail signs have been cut, routed, painted and are ready to post. Those signs display the difficulty level of the trail. Black diamonds are used for technically difficult trails and/or trails that have significant grades. Blue squares for intermediate trails that have moderate grades and only a small amount of technically difficult terrain. Green circles are for trails that are mostly smooth trails without significant elevation gain or loss. Some "Horses Not Recommended" signs will be posted on steep unidirectional trails intended only for downhill mountain bike traffic and considered unsafe for horses, as well as a few narrow trails that include rocky narrow passes that don't easily accommodate equestrians.



*Wooden Trail Signs Ready for Posting!*

Eighteen "You Are Here" signs have been ordered from Allegra printing in Show Low and should also be ready by the middle of April. Further, the WMTS trail location diamonds are in progress so they can be posted upon approval of the new trail system.

The work on signage alone is huge for this project because the new Buena Vista Trail System is a stacked loop system within the larger WMTS which will need a lot of signage to keep

visitors on track. Fortunately, the project has received huge support from the city of Show Low, Navajo County and private donors which makes the necessary investment possible.



*The "Petrified" Trail on the eastern portion of the Buena Vista System*

With luck, TRACKS will be able to start posting the signs and making new trail before the end of May. Save the Buena Vista Foundation (STBVF) and TRACKS are excited to start moving dirt soon!

## TRAIL CREW

**Garth Orkney & Denny Humphrey, Coordinators**

The Trail Crew is the heart and soul of TRACKS, solidifying the mission to create, maintain, and improve the White Mountains Trail System we all cherish. We have great camaraderie and sense of accomplishment taking care of the trails. All members are invited to give it a try.

The 2025 Trail Crew season led by Jerry Good was outstanding with great member participation. The work quality improved with each regular Monday trail work session. That's what training and experience continues to do with the crew.

Our 2026 season is set to start April 6th and should be a momentous one. We're expecting to coronate the soon to be official (hopefully) Buena Vista trails just south of Show Low. There's lots of work to be done, including new signage, but those familiar with these currently "social" trails know just how special an addition they will be to the WM system. We also hope to build the reroute of part of the Chipmunk Connector where the trail is on a rough logging road. Both projects will be major accomplishments that have involved countless manhours of planning and permitting.

If you want to get involved sign up on the TRACKS website to receive notices of when and where we are meeting up ([www.trackswhitemountains.org](http://www.trackswhitemountains.org)). If you are already a TRACKS member and are interested in joining this amazing team, please update your profile at [contact@trackswhitemountains.org](mailto:contact@trackswhitemountains.org) to be included in the email announcements.

Trail Crew is every Monday morning and tools, snacks and drinks are always provided. Come on out! It is a great activity and we can always use your help!

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**Cathy Purvis, Coordinator**



The Strategic Planning Committee started off 2026 with a bang! The Trail Maintenance Guide has been completed and will be distributed to Trail Crew Members. This document establishes trail crew policies and guidelines to improve consistency on how we maintain our trails. Like last year, a training session will be scheduled in May after more of our crew is on the mountain.

Our thanks to Denny, Kat Westberg and her daughter Kristen, for their work on the document.

**TRAIL STEWARDS**

**Ron Miller, Coordinator**



We are so glad for the work you are doing to improve the trails for everyone to enjoy. Let's help make 2026 even better by checking all our respective trails again to make sure that trail conditions are good and clean-up any trash or downed limbs. Since erosion often occurs over the winter, try to improve or create new drainage ditches. A little prevention goes a long way! So that hikers don't become disoriented or lost, please also make sure that junctions are well-signed and that trail marker

diamonds are easily visible (in both directions). By staying on top of trail issues we can keep trails safe and available for the hiking public.

Most of our Trail Steward positions are currently filled, but we are always looking for more enthusiastic folks when there are openings. Please let me know if you are interested in helping improve one of our trails by being a volunteer. Just send an email to Ron Miller at [tracks\\_ts@yahoo.com](mailto:tracks_ts@yahoo.com) (don't forget the "underscore" between "tracks" and "ts" – or the email won't go through!)

**MEMBER UPDATES**



It is with deep sadness we share the news that Tim Strand passed away under a full moon in early February. Tim had been a TRACKS member for over a decade, served on our Board, helped build our Memorial Arboretum and was our "John Muir" a number of years ago in the Fall Festival Parade. He was an avid hiker who loved the freedom to roam and explore (aka, bushwhacking) the White Mountains!

***Happy Trails, Tim!***

**IN THE COMMUNITY**

Cathy Purvis, Contributor

In early March, TRACKS helped the Nature Center with its new Tree Grove. Recently, they received a grant to build a grove of Native Trees on the Northside of the property. It was a community effort !



- **Escudilla Hot Shot Crew** dug the irrigation ditches.
- **Nature Center** and **TRACKS** installed the irrigation lines.
- **Pinetop-Lakeside Public Works** dug the tree holes.
- **Christophers Gardens** (in addition to Nature Center volunteers) planted the native trees.
- **Nature Center** and **TRACKS** filled in the trenches, smoothed out the dirt and installed wire fences around each tree (to protect them from those hungry Elk).

Our long-time TRACKS member Tom Jernigan has been building a beautiful path around the grove, and benches will be placed throughout the walkway. Our original Memorial Arboretum Kiosk has been moved to the beginning of the path, and a wooden fence has been erected to keep humans away from the raptors. Stop by the Nature Center soon and check out all the hard work!

**MOUNTAIN BIKING**

Kelly Milligan, Coordinator



Mountain Bike rides will begin on Saturday, May 2nd at the designated Saturday start location at 9:00 am. Subsequent rides will follow at the Tuesday and Thursday starting locations (see below).

Tuesday: [Fire Escape Road \(opposite East Lane\) in Pinetop](#)

Thursday: [Junction of Forest Roads 185 & 271](#)

Saturday: [Junction of Forest Roads 182 & 7](#)

A helmet is required. Make sure your bike is in good, rideable condition. Don't forget ample hydration. Anyone with questions can contact me by email at [milligan-kelly@yahoo.com](mailto:milligan-kelly@yahoo.com). Looking forward to another great season and meeting any potential new riders.

**HIKING WITH TRACKS**

With the onset of summer hiking season, it may be helpful for us review the guidelines TRACKS uses for its hikes. Take some time to review the guidelines below so we are all informed as we begin our wonderful White Mountains summer!

### TRACKS HIKING GUIDELINES

- 1) The leader should be familiar with the hiking trail. It is a good idea, but not mandatory to pre-hike the trail prior to their scheduled group hike to ensure trail is safe and walkable (i.e., trees down blocking the trail)
- 2) The leader will have all hikers sign the TRACKS Liability Release Form prior to starting the hike. The leader shall keep the completed form with them during the hike, just in case a hiker's cell phone number is needed in case of emergency. Completed forms shall be given to a TRACKS Board Member for filing.
- 3) The leader shall reinforce that all hikers are responsible for their own self. Use of walking sticks/trekking poles are recommended.
- 4) All hikers shall carry ample water, electrolytes (if needed), snacks, wear sunscreen, and a hat.
- 5) The leader will advise hikers the approximate distance and difficulty of the trail. If a hiker has any doubts, then the leader can recommend a hiker not to go on a hike.
- 6) A hiker shall be selected to be a "sweep"; one who stays at the back of the group to insure everyone is hiking the same pace and reports any issues to the leader. Hikers must tell the leader or the sweep if they go off into the woods to "pee". The sweep will slow down/stop until the hiker rejoins the group.
- 7) Count off number of hikers prior to the start, mid-point and at the end. The leader shall stop at trail junctions, to ensure the entire group follows the correct path.
- 8) Stop for water breaks, as needed based upon the terrain and weather conditions.
- 9) If anyone on the hike becomes ill or is unable to complete the hike for any reason, try to assign someone to stay with that individual. Never leave anyone who appears to be sick or disoriented or is injured on the trail by themselves. Use your own judgment, since every case is unique, but always remember that safety comes first.
- 10) If a hiker insists on leaving the hike early, for whatever reasons, make sure they understand they are no longer part of the group and are essentially on their own at that point. However, call them to ensure they made it back to the trail head safely.
- 11) The leader and the sweep shall carry their cell phones in an event of an emergency.
- 12) The leader shall carry a first aid kit or ensure someone in the group has one.
- 13) It is advised, but not mandatory that all hikers have a medical card, to include emergency contact, in their pack or on their person.
- 14) If dogs are permitted on the hike, they must be leashed and stay at the back of the group.

#### **HIKE: TUESDAY TREKKERS**

**Heather Steiner, Coordinator**



It's almost time to get together at the beginning of May for a fantastic summer of low impact hiking! We'll be starting, as in the past, on Tuesdays at 8 AM. Sincere kudos to our esteemed Ed Gorny, our hike leader. Ed will need help on some hikes. If you are interested do contact him at [ejgorny@gmail.com](mailto:ejgorny@gmail.com) or 480-789-9332. More news will be coming in later in April.

Do sign up free for TRACKS info at [www.trackswitemountains.org](http://www.trackswitemountains.org). The TRACKS website has useful information including maps!

**HIKE: UP THE HILL GANG (Wednesdays)** **Kay Alderton, Coordinator**

Our May hiking schedule is set! See below for the details. We look forward to seeing you! Any questions, please contact Kay Alderton at 928-367-7003.

Date	Hike Description	Hike Length (miles)	Hike Rating	Hike Leader	Meeting Point	Meeting Time	RideShare Donation
<b>MAY</b>							
6-May	Springs Trail	3.5	Easy	Kay Alderton	Southside, McDonald's Parking Lot, Pinetop	6:45 AM	\$2.00
13-May	Country Club #632	3.5	Moderate	Lynn Krigbaum	Southside, McDonald's Parking Lot, Pinetop	6:45 AM	\$2.00
20-May	Ghost of the Coyote (West side)	4.5	Easy	Charmi Wecker	Show Low Park, parking lot off 260, between baseball & soccer fields	6:45 AM	\$2.00
27-May	Buena Vista	5.0	Moderate	Kat Westberg	Show Low Park, parking lot off 260, between baseball & soccer fields	6:45 AM	\$2.00

## MONTHLY CALENDAR

<b>TRAIL CREW</b>	8:00 am Monday <b>*Beginning April 6, 2026*</b>	Hard hat & tools provided.	*Please wear good boots, gloves, sunscreen and bring ample water.
<b>MOUNTAIN BIKE</b>	9:00 am Tues / Thurs / Sat <b>**Beginning May 2, 2026**</b>	Rides range from 15 - 25 miles.	*HELMETS REQUIRED* *Bring plenty of fluids
<b>HIKE</b>	Tues: Tuesday Trekkers Wed: Up the Hill Gang <b>**Both groups begin May 2026**</b>	Tues: 8:00 am – 3 miles or less Wed: 3-6 mile hikes	*Please wear appropriate footwear and bring sunscreen and ample water. <b>*Dogs must be on a leash.</b>
<b>BOARD MEETING</b>	Apr 9th	1:00 pm Thursday	Town of Pinetop-Lakeside Town Hall 325 W White Mountain Blvd Lakeside
<b>GENERAL MEETING</b>	Apr 11th	8:00 am Saturday *2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month*	Sal and Teresa's, 455 Woodland Rd Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ