

# The Otter

SPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF VERDE RIVER GREENWAY

## Accolades for Anna and VWRC!



VOLUME FOUR  
SUMMER ISSUE

### Local Partnership wins National Award for Invasive Plant Control and Prevention

The Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition (VWRC) and its coordinator Anna Schrenk brought home a national award from the Reduce Risks from Invasive Species Coalition and the Congressional Invasive Species Caucus during the 2016 Congressional Reception and Awards Program in Washington D.C. held June 15, 2016.

The award was presented to Schrenk and VWRC *In Recognition of Outstanding*



*Achievement by a Volunteer Organization in Protecting America's Environment and Economy.* Prescott National Forest, an

important VWRC partner, nominated Schrenk and the partnership for the award.

During the past four years the coalition has improved riparian habitat on over 7000 acres by removing stands of tamarisk, giant reed, Russian olive, and tree of heaven from the banks of the flowing streams in the watershed and allowing native trees to thrive.

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## PROGRAM MANAGER'S LOG

With Summer in full swing here in the Verde Valley, Friends staff and VWRC partners are making plans to complete implementation of the Verde River Cooperative Plant Management Plan. We set out six years ago with four common goals: improve riparian habitat by controlling the invasion of woody invasive plants; educate our community; support local Veterans and young adults; and develop management practices that give us the best results. We've excelled and surpassed those goals all while building a solid coalition that has expanded our goals to address other challenges and opportunities in our watershed including sustainable flows, erosion, volunteerism, youth engagement, and monitoring. As we move forward with this important work I invite you to become more involved, if you are not already, in helping to restore, preserve and protect the Verde River and her tributaries. The opportunities are endless!

Have a great Summer, enjoy the river and eat corn!

### News you otter know

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## 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Summer Monitoring Crew

*“The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps is a bold national effort to put thousands of America’s young people and veterans to work protecting, restoring, and enhancing America’s great outdoors.”*

**21ST CENTURY  
CONSERVATION  
SERVICE CORPS**



Throughout the course of 10 weeks, the summer monitoring crew searched for native plants, invasive regrowth, erosion issues and more from Granite Creek to Beasley Flat. The crew did a variety of monitoring including measuring the recruitment of woody native species; regrowth of the four target species on properties that were recently treated; and the presence of secondary species on both properties that are scheduled to be treated and properties that have already been treated. The crew also completed a trial treatment Tree of Heaven at Dead Horse Ranch State Park using the EZ-Ject Injector gun.



Sean Borruso, Lyle King and Abnel Pena-Arias of the Vetraplex and Kevin Murphy and Rueben Diaz, former AZCC corpsmembers made up the summer crew and honed their plant identification skills. They meticulously photographed these plants so they could be used for training future crews. The crew also worked on post-treatment rapid assessments on properties that have been treated in the past four years where they collected data that measures successes and any raises any red flags. Overall, the treatments are looking great; especially tamarisk. The crew also surveyed

properties that are slated to be treated during the 2016/2017 season and checked for the existence of secondary invasives and collected baseline native plant data in order to compare post-treatment.

Overall, the crew traveled over 2,000 miles, reading 82 repeatable native recruitment transects and 51 post and/or pre-treatment rapid assessments. They monitored over **1,300 acres** along **30 miles** of the Verde River, Granite Creek, Sycamore Creek, Oak Creek and West Clear Creek in 1,400 hours while gaining valuable job skills.

This work was made possible with funding from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conservation Service Corps funding through Prescott National Forest. FVRG/VWRC was awarded \$52,000 to use for the summer monitoring crew as well as treatment crews during the fall season. For more information click the link above.



## Anna Schrenk Receives Award

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During Schrenk's trip to our nation's capitol, she was invited to sit down with Arizona District 4 Congressman Paul Gossar and his Legislative Director Jeff Small to discuss VWRC and ideas for partnerships to reduce the impacts of crayfish on the Verde River.

The Reduce Risks from Invasive Species Coalition (RRISC) is a national organization working to educate Americans on the risks posed by invasive species to the economy, environment, and public health of the United States, and promotes cost-effective strategies to reduce those risks.

Pictured: Scott Cameron Executive Director, Reduce Risks from Invasive Species Coalition and Anna Schrenk, VWRC Coordinator



## FAREWELL AND GOOD LUCK

A special thank you is in order to Laura Moser and Chris Theil, two very important VWRC partners representing the U.S. Forest Service.

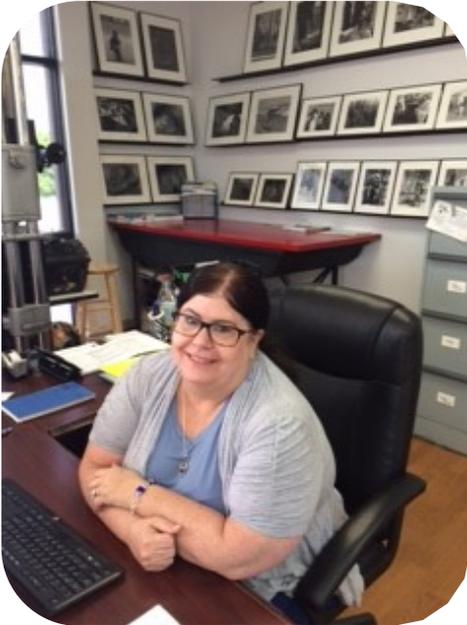
Laura, served as the Weed Coordinator for the Coconino National Forest and was a founding member of the partnership from day one, she served on both the VWRC Steering Committee and several subcommittees and provided essential support during the planning and implementation stages of this initiative including training field crews. Laura is now working at the Regional Office for the F.S. in Albuquerque, NM as the Assistant Director for State and Private Forestry.

Chris, served as the Range Manager and Weed Coordinator for the Prescott National Forest. Chris served on the VWRC Steering Committee and on the Sustainable Funding subcommittee, bringing valuable resource and experience to the table. Chris is now working for the Coronado N.F. in southern Arizona as the Natural Resource Staff Officer.

Many thanks to both Laura and Chris for their incredible service and dedication to VWRC!

## Friends of Verde River Greenway

### WELCOME BONNIE!



Bonnie has worked in Healthcare where she has been an administrator for over 30 years. She is a graduate of Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, MA and with a degree from Ashwood University in Management. Bonnie and her husband moved to Arizona from Massachusetts eight years ago. They have two adult children, her daughter lives in Benson, AZ and currently their son is in the US Army.

Since moving to Arizona Bonnie has worked with multiple companies to assist them in updating and streamlining their Healthcare related practices and ensure compliance with all State and Federal guide lines.

She is excited and looking forward to this new chapter in her life outside of the Healthcare industry, where she can use her cumulative knowledge to work to support Friends of Verde River Greenway and all of their partners. Much of her work at FVRG is similar and transferable from administration in Healthcare to administration at FVRG.

## One for the Verde

### WELCOME MELISSA!

Melissa Robinson is our new Program Coordinator for One for the Verde. She is an AZ native, who was raised in the Prescott area, and the White Mountains (Show Low) and has spent the past four years in Flagstaff.

Melissa and her family have been drawn to the Verde Valley area for several years and just moved here in April 2016! "We enjoy the awesome recreation the Verde Valley has to offer, water, and the climate that we can have a garden to grow our own fresh organic produce!" She is passionate about our environment and preserving the Verde River Watershed and also brings sales and marketing experience to this position. Melissa has spent the past 2 years as the Leasing Manager of Flagstaff Mall, "My focus was bringing the community back into the Shopping Center." She was very successful in building key relationships with Tenants and helping that market grow.

Melissa is an Ambassador of the local Chamber of Commerce and loves to be involved in the community she lives in. She is a personable addition to One for the Verde and will tirelessly continue to move the program forward.



### MORMON CROSSING VOLUNTEER EVENT



Sunday, June 5th

Volunteers gathered to remove Arundo from the popular day use area at Mormon Crossing on Willow Point Road in Cornville. Stalks were cut, bundled, loaded into a truck bed and staged for chipping. FVRG's summer crew did the chipping the following day. This kind of prep work make its much easier for the treatment crews to remove the arundo in the fall.

Overall, 9 people showed up to get sweaty and be rewarded with a swim in beautiful Oak Creek. A special thanks to everyone who came out to help with this project!

This project was part of a grant with the National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program. In addition to the removal of invasive plants by the treatment crews, community involvement is also required.



- Marsha Foutz
- Laura Moser
- Janie Agyagos
- Peggy Chaikin
- Anna Schrenk
- Sara Van Marel
- Martin Ball
- Jo Anne Forristal
- Larry Forristal



## HAPPENINGS AROUND THE WATERSHED, STATE, BASIN

### VWRC Goes To Boise

With the assistance of the Friends of the Verde River Greenway, and its partners, the Town of Camp Verde was privileged to develop a River Recreation Master Plan in 2015. The plan, vetted through the participation of nearly 200 residents, riverfront property owners and state and federal agency personnel, charts a path the Town will follow as it develops recreational opportunities along the 17 mile stretch of Verde River passing through its corporate boundaries.

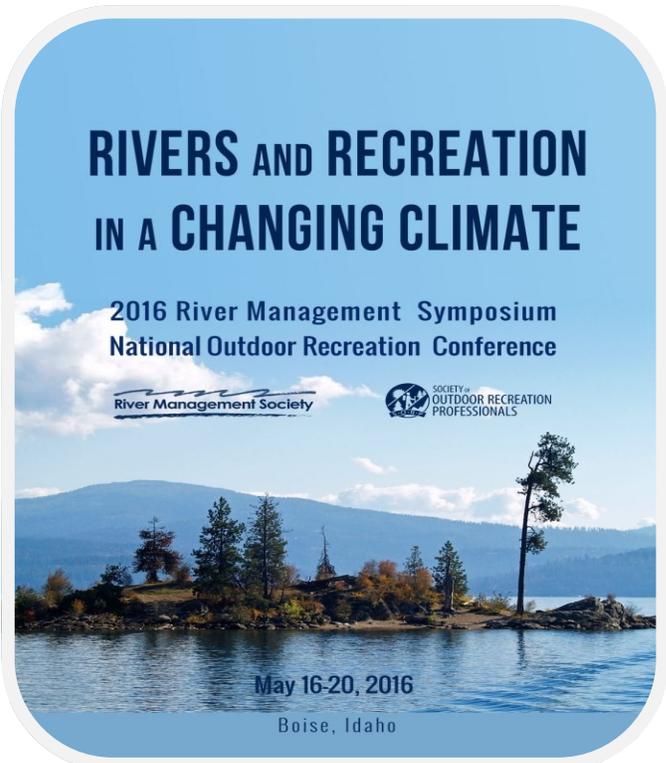
The plan is ambitious. It places resource protection as its number one goal. And it is sensitive to the impacts recreation, both managed and unmanaged, has on landowners who live along the banks. So when offered the opportunity to travel to Boise, Idaho, for the 2016 River Management Symposium and Outdoor Recreation Conference, I jumped at the opportunity.



Overlooking the Boise River. Photo taken by Laura Jones.

The conference was a great opportunity to see how other communities had approached river recreation, not just from the standpoint of developing recreation sites and opportunities, but to see how they dealt with impacts, how they marketed their programs and how they leveraged partnerships. It was also a great opportunity to spend some time with our Verde Valley contingent; Anna Schrenk, Chip Norton and Laura Jones with the Friends, Dusty Humphreys with Arizona State Parks, Carrie Eberly with Southwest Decision Resources and myself.

The biggest take-away I got out of the trip was the realization that no matter where you live, no matter what it is you want to accomplish or how you plan to



During a Learning and Research Tour of the Morrison-Knudsen Nature Center, operated by the Idaho Fish and Game Department, Steve, Chip and Anna had a bit of fun. Hey, we give a hoot about the Verde!



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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**VWRC CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**August**

**Outreach, Education & Engagement Sub-Committee**

Wednesday, May 18, 9-11 AM  
Where: Cottonwood Middle School

**Sustainable Funding Meeting**

Tuesday, August 23, 2016, 10 AM-Noon  
Where: Yavapai County Board of Supervisors Meeting Room

**Steering Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, August 23, 2016, 1-3 PM  
Where: Yavapai County Board of Supervisors Room

**SEPTEMBER**

**Outreach, Education & Engagement Sub-Committee**

Wednesday, August 17, 2016 9-11 AM  
Where: Cottonwood Middle School

**Sustainable Funding Meeting**

Tuesday, September 27, 2016 10AM– Noon  
Where: Yavapai County Board of Supervisors Meeting room

**Steering Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, September 27, 2016, 1-3 PM  
Where: Yavapai County Board of Supervisors Meeting Room

**VWRC Steering Committee Members**

- Friends of Verde River Greenway-**Chip Norton**
- The Nature Conservancy- **Kim Schonek**
- Coconino National Forest- **Laura Moser**
- Arizona State Parks– **George Christianson, Dusty Humphreys**
- Arizona Game and Fish Department-**Wade Albrecht**
- Salt River Project-**Heather English**
- National Park Service-**Tina Greenawalt**
- Natural Resource Conservation District-**Chris Jensen**
- USFWS (Partners for Fish & Wildlife)-**Kris Randall & Jennifer Kaplan**
- Tamarisk Coalition-**Jamie Nielson**
- Yavapai-Apache Nation-**Vivian Stevens & David Lewis**
- Prescott National Forest-**Chris Thiel & Michael Kellett**
- Verde Valley Land Preservation– **Steve Estes**
- Verde NRC Ed Center– **Erin Cody**

**Staff:** Anna Schrenk, Laurie Parker, Laura Jones, Sara Van Marel

**VWRC Sub-Committees**

**Outreach, Education and Engagement**

**Co-coordinators:** Steve Estes and Laura Jones  
**Members:** Anna Schrenk, Laurie Parker, Mary Ontiveros, Erin Cody

**Research and Monitoring**

**Co-coordinators:** Ruth Valencia and Michael Kellett  
**Members:** Laura Moser, Chip Norton, Anna Schrenk, Kris Randall

**Planning and Implementation**

**Co-coordinators:** Anna Schrenk and Laura Moser  
**Members:** Chris Jensen, Kim Schonek, Chip Norton, Ruth Valencia, Sara Van Marel, Chris Thiel

**Sustainable Funding**

**Co-coordinators:** Wade Albrecht and Chip Norton  
**Members:** Anna Schrenk, Laura Jones, Kristin Jespersen, Chris Thiel, Jenise Nyquist, Sara Van Marel

**Save the Date!**

**Farmers Markets!**

- Monday 4PM-Dark: Cornville**
- Thursday 5PM-Dark: Cottonwood**
- Saturday 8AM-12PM: Camp Verde**

**Verde River Day**  
**September 24**

**I ♡ the Verde River Gala**  
**November 12**



**Volunteer with VWRC!**

Please contact FVRG at [admin@verderivergreenway.org](mailto:admin@verderivergreenway.org)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS!



## NOW HIRING VERDE VALLEY CHAIN-SAW CREWS!

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW:** Arizona Conservation Corps invites you to join our AmeriCorps Conservation Field Crew national service program. Our Flagstaff office is seeking crew members to work on chainsaw crews based in the Verde Valley. This program is designed to provide members with conservation and job skills, leadership opportunities, challenging project work, personal and professional growth as well as financial support for college education.

### Project Work:

AZCC works with a variety of land management agencies in Arizona. Projects vary but will primarily entail invasive weed (tamarisk, Russian olive) treatments and removal through safe chainsaw operation. Other duties may include trail construction and maintenance, ecosystem restoration, habitat restoration, fire fuels reduction, fencing on public lands, invasive weed removal, tamarisk removal, herbicide applications, and many others.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** To qualify, you must be between the ages of 18 and 25, and a US citizen. All offers of employment are conditional upon completion of an acceptable check of the National Sex Offender Public Registry and federal criminal background check.

**Timeline:** September-March

### HOW TO APPLY:

Visit our website

[www.azcorps.org/join/positions](http://www.azcorps.org/join/positions) or

contact [michelle@conservationlegacy.org](mailto:michelle@conservationlegacy.org)

for details!

make it happen, if you are set on investing in quality recreational programs, you are going to have challenges. Multi-jurisdictional issues, capacity and more recently, climate change, will come into play. The good part, or so I know now, is that we are not alone. Someone has already faced these challenges and is willing to share.

Aside from all the information being exchanged that week, there were a couple other take-away. Boise has grown and grown in a good way since I was last there in the early 80's. They have a booming economy, a robust downtown and a river walk that is to be envied. Oh, and one more thing. Boise has some of the best breweries around. For those wanting to see how economic development can be done correctly, take a trip to Boise...and let me know how the Payette Brewing Company was. We missed that one.

By Steve Ayers

Economic Development Director  
Town of Camp Verde

**Who?** VWRC Stakeholders: Landowners, Agency Partners, NGOs, Individuals who care about the Verde

**What?** Crew Training

**When?** September 19-30

**Where?** Cottonwood and Camp Verde

**Why?** Every year we have crews on the ground working hard to remove invasives from the Watershed. Many of them are introduced to the river for the first time by chainsawing in cold mornings with wet boots. It would be great for them to meet the huge community of people who are working so hard, sometimes behind the scenes, to continue this project. It's a huge inspiration for them to know all of these people that appreciate the work they are doing.

To get involved in training please contact Sara at [515-460-8788](tel:515-460-8788) or [sara@verdewrc.org](mailto:sara@verdewrc.org)

## ALTERNATIVE PLANT OF THE QUARTER

### Ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*)

If saguaros are the soldiers of the desert the ocotillos are the ladies. They are frequently found in the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts. These beautiful green leafed, orange flowered, spiny stalked plants sway gracefully in the desert breezes. They prefer south facing moderate rocky slopes with well-drained soils. Ocotillos shed their leaves when it gets too hot or too dry. This is done to reduce water loss. They can appear dead to the uninformed eye, then sprout leaves and flowers when the climate favors them again. Live, leafless stalks will be pliable and have a greenish color. Ocotillos can tolerate temperatures as low as 10 degree F. These beautiful plants can be found on gentle south facing hills in the Verde Valley. Studies have indicated they can live between 60 to 100 years and can grow up to 20 feet tall. Ocotillo stalks have been used as fencing because the spines on them stop people and animals from passing through. Because Ocotillos are a protected native species, they require a permit from the Arizona Dept. of Agriculture to take or transport them from the growing site. Nurseries are a legal source of Ocotillos.

*The Verde Valley is home to an array of unique and fascinating native plants. By working to control the spread of non-native, invasive plants in the Verde Valley, VWRC is giving a helping hand to native plants - a valuable part of our Arizona natural heritage.*



Submitted by: **Chris Jensen, NRCD**

#### FVRG Board of Directors

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 Tony Gioia — Vice President  
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 Peggy Chaikin — Secretary

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Marsha Foutz, Steven "Max" Castillo,  
 Kim Schonek, Denise Lurette, Jeni O'Callaghan

#### FVRG and VWRC

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