



Friends *of the*
VERDE RIVER

Working Collaboratively for a Healthy Verde River

FY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



**THE VERDE RIVER, ONE OF THE LAST
PERENNIAL SOUTHWESTERN RIVERS,
IS IN DANGER OF RUNNING DRY.
YOU CAN HELP SAVE IT.**

SUSTAINING FLOWS

RESTORING HABITAT

PROMOTING COMMUNITY

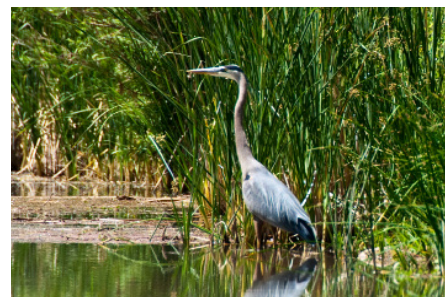


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Nancy L.C. Steele, Executive Director
 Maxwell Wilson, Manager, Sustaining Flows
 Tracy Stephens, Manager, Habitat Restoration
 Matthew Wilson, Manager, Habitat Restoration
 Karon Leigh, Manager, Marketing & Communications
 Matthew Gilbert, Financial Services Administrator
 Virginia Weis, Administrative Assistant
 Elaine Nichols, Habitat Restoration Field Supervisor
 Laura Jones, Community Engagement Coordinator
 Isaac Dudley, Business Development Coordinator
 Tod Young, Communications Coordinator
 Benjamin Kowalewski, Habitat Restoration Coordinator
 Emily Garding, GIS Specialist
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If you love the Verde River and its tributaries, such as Granite Creek, Sycamore Creek, Oak Creek, and Fossil Creek, please **ACT NOW TO HELP** Friends work collaboratively to restore habitat, sustain flows, and promote community stewardship.

DONATE, VOLUNTEER, & LEARN at VERDERIVER.ORG

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Chip Norton, Board President

"Nothing occurs without a successful team-building effort that includes agencies, tribes, counties, academic institutions, municipalities, agricultural producers, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners."

Friends Staff, con't:

Erin Burk, Field Assistant, Seasonal
Aidan Cyra, Field Assistant, Seasonal
Cohen Klinger, Sustaining Flows
Intern

Maya Rappaport, Sustaining Flows
Intern

"Working collaboratively for a healthy Verde River."
This has been the modus operandi of Friends since our inception in 2007.

Partnerships + Collaborations

I've learned that in order to achieve our vision of a healthy Verde River flowing through healthy communities, we need to build even more partnerships going forward.

The more things change, the more they remain the same. In 2007, the founders of Friends relied upon a small group of volunteers to donate their passion and their time to complete river projects in the Verde River Greenway Natural Area. The geographic and social scale of our current work bears little resemblance to those early days. The vision, however, remains the same, as does the critical role that volunteerism and financial resources plays in conservation work.

Thanks to your support, in FY19:

The Habitat Restoration team treated 800 acres of invasive plants, monitored over **3,000 acres**, and **created 28 seasonal jobs**.

The Sustaining Flows team sold water offset credits to **six** buyers through the Verde River Exchange thus keeping 3.8 million gallons of water in the watershed and partnered with The Nature Conservancy to create the Verde River Watershed Report Card.

The Promoting Community Stewardship team hosted and participated in dozens of successful community events, recognized volunteers and donors, launched the new organization brand, increased Verde Conservation Partners.

All these accomplishments lead us closer to forever-flowing rivers and streams that provide benefits for people and nature. Nothing occurs without a successful team-building effort that included agencies, tribes, counties, academic institutions, municipalities, agricultural producers, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners.

Last but not least, businesses, volunteers, foundations, and individuals provide the fuel that powers everything: time and money.

Sincere thanks from all of us at Friends for making our work possible.
You are the champions of the Verde Watershed!!

Kind Regards, Chip Norton
President, Friends of the Verde River

RESTORING HABITAT



The Friends' Habitat Restoration team met with collaborative partners David Lewis and Vivian Stevens of the Yavapai-Apache Nation's (YAN) Environmental Protection Department (EDP).

Vivian told us, "water is life. People came to this area for the river. It is not just the water, it is the life that the water brings. It is ceremonial, sustaining life, and medicinal, giving shelter."

There has always been a strong connection between people and the river. The EPD is passionate about what they do to make tribal lands better for people, plants and animals. "We've gotten too high above the animals, thinking we are better than them and don't understand plants and animals. The land, water, plants and animals all have value."

David Lewis with the EPD says, "we want a healthier river, we want native plants for the livelihood of our people. We are pleased with our growing collaborative relationship with Friends."

It is an ongoing fight against invasives with 10 miles of river and only a two man crew. Friends and YAN are allies helping to fight the invasives through the Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition (VWRC)."

"It is not just the water, it is the life that the water brings. The river is ceremonial, sustaining life, and medicinal, giving shelter."

- Vivian Stevens

VWRC Partners:

Arizona Conservation Corps
Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
Arizona Game and Fish Department
Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management
Arizona State Parks
Arizona Wildlife Federation
City of Cottonwood
Coconino National Forest
Friends of Verde River
Kaibab National Forest
National Forest Foundation
National Park Service
Natural Resources Conservation District
Natural Resource Conservation Services
Northern Arizona University
Oak Creek Watershed Council
Prescott National Forest
RiversEdge West
Salt River Project
The Nature Conservancy
The Vetraplex
Tonto National Forest
Town of Camp Verde
Town of Clarkdale
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Verde River Institute
Yavapai-Apache Nation
Yavapai College



SUSTAINING FLOWS

By Kim Schonek, Verde River Projects Manager for the Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy has worked collaboratively with Friends of the Verde River for more than a decade on projects ranging from invasive plant management to water resources planning.

Friends is a valuable local partner that addresses key community concerns and builds collaboration among diverse stakeholders.

Having a strong partnership between Friends and the Conservancy has allowed us to accomplish more than if the groups were working separately by ensuring we are developing capacity in both organizations and diverse relationships.

One key strategy that Friends and the Conservancy have worked on is developing informed stakeholders around a variety of critical issues.

In an effort to increase awareness and engagement around water issues we have formed the Sustaining Flows Council. This group is made up of community leaders elected officials and other large water users.

Max Wilson, Friends Sustaining Flows Program Manager, has been a representative from Friends on this group and critical to bringing a informed science perspective and diverse background to the group. Being new to the nonprofit sector allows Max to bring a unique, fresh perspective.

Working with Max is a delight. He is always positive, solutions oriented and equipped with a fishing tale.



"Friends is a valuable local partner that addresses key community concerns and building collaboration among diverse stakeholders."

Verde River Exchange Partners:

Merkin Vineyards and Osteria
Page Springs Cellars
The Fish's Garden
Rainbow Acres
The State Bar
Sinagua Malt



PROMOTING COMMUNITY: EVENTS

Volunteer profile: Whit Manter

"By volunteering, you're doing something good, but with Friends you get such positive energy and feedback, it's also so much fun!"

Whit Manter and his wife Diana moved to the Village of Oak Creek from Massachusetts five years ago. After getting settled they started looking for way to connect with the community.

To help fulfil his birding passion, Whit attended a volunteer planning meeting for the Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival (VVBNF) in the fall 2017.

Whit volunteered to shadow Dena Greenwood, a legend in Arizona birding and a co-founders of the VVBNF. Whit intended to shadow Dena, but sadly days later, Dena was diagnosed with a life-ending illness.

"The festival is such a huge team effort. For me, I have a very deep commitment to continue Dena's legacy."

"The festival's not fancy, it's sincere, and personal and tied to the river. Birding here is connected to water and wetlands."

"Without the water from the rivers, creeks and streams, there would be fewer birds; the water is such an important factor."

Thank You Event Sponsors!!

Arizona Public Service (APS)
Arizona Humanities
Chaparral Mountain Honey Co.
City of Cottonwood
City of Sedona
Cottonwood Chamber of Commerce

Jay's Bird Barn
National Park Service
Northern Arizona Audubon Society
Salt River Project (SRP)
The Nature Conservancy

Brent Bitz
Chip Norton
Peggy Chaikin
Marsha Foutz
Siera Russell



Volunteer profile: Chris Jensen

"I'd volunteer 60 hours a week for Friends; just don't ask me to keep track of them."

Chris Jensen spent most of his professional life educating youth. Since his retirement, he has spent his time volunteering for the Verde River. "My connection is the Verde River. I find anything that is tied to the river engaging."

Chris volunteers with Friends in any capacity he can. He volunteers to help remove invasive plants with our Habitat Restoration program, he is a safety boater for the Verde River Runoff and wears many hats for the Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival.

"It's a lot of work, putting up the tents, driving the trips, and then it's over. It's a relief, but it's also sad that it's over. It's all connected. Without the River the birds wouldn't be there. I work for issues that impact the river, but also get to work with some very committed people."

Verde Conservation Partners:

\$1,000 or Higher

Blazin' M Ranch
Chateau Tumbleweed
Coldwell Banker Mabery
Merkin Vineyards Tasting Room & Osteria
Page Springs Cellars
Pillsbury Wine Company
The Mine Cafe
The State Bar
The Vineyards at Cottonwood

\$500-999

AZ Pines Motel
Cottonwood Old Town Association
That Brewery
Vino Di Sedona

\$250-499

Cellar 433
Sedona AZ Timeshare Rentals
Karon Leigh Art Studio
Olsen's Grain

\$120-249

10-12 Lounge
3 Kings Kasbar
Ageless Touches Massage
All Things Creative
Century 21 Sexton Realty
Clarkdale Kayak Company
Four Eight Wineworks
Multi-Etch LLC
Ocotillo House AIRBNB
Red Rooster Cafe
Salt Mine Wine
Su Casa
Taylor & Huntley Financial Group
The Flatiron Cafe
Vortex ATV
Winery 1912

PROMOTING COMMUNITY: VERDE CONSERVATION PARTNERS



In 2019, Pillsbury Wine Company raised over \$1,000 with their "Hatty Hour," a night of fun held on the last Friday of each month.

At Pillsbury's tasting room in Old Town Cottonwood, visitors wear their favorite and often silliest hat for a chance to win a bottle of wine, while supporting the Verde River with each purchase.

Sam Pillsbury, owner of the Pillsbury Wine Company, is committed to making his mark at every turn and his great team has done just that through their support of a healthy Verde River.

The Verde Conservation Partners are businesses that are committed to a healthy Verde River. This network of businesses has been responsible for funding over 18 different community projects in the Verde Valley over the last five years, all of which are focused on conservation, education, and enhancement of our waterways.

Thanks to these donations, funding raised in FY19 will be used for two projects. The City of Cottonwood will construct a segment of the Blowout Wash Trail, and the Town of Clarkdale will construct a bathroom at the popular Tuzigoot river access point.

"We are so proud to be conservation partners with Friends of the Verde River. We do a "Hatty Hour" every last Friday of the month at Pillsbury Wine Company. It's a ton of fun and you can feel really good that 15% of your purchase from 5-9pm will help conserve the Verde River."

- Valerie Fisch, Pillsbury



Top: Pillsbury Wine Company Team.

Right: Cottonwood visitors pose for a picture during "Hatty Hour"



Cottonwood \$5,000-\$9,999

Brent Bitz

Desert Willow \$1,000 - \$2,500

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Marsha Foutz
Jeni & Mike O'Callaghan
Chip Norton
Jennifer Diffley
Susan Culp
The Diffley Family
Abigail Disney
Mary Huntley
Nancy & Bruce Steele
Linda Trubitz
Kimberly Weed

Black Hawk \$500 - \$999

Peggy Chaikin
Kimberly & Nick Schonek
Gary Wagner
Harry Sweet
Siera Russell
Bob & Kristen Rothrock
Eric Moore
Max Wilson
Kathy Davis
Christopher Frost
Leann & Kevin Norton
Jimmy & Robin Whatley
Yavapai-Apache Nation

Beaver \$100 - \$499

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Jeri Higgins
Tony Gioia
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Alexandra & Chris Boothe
BJ Davis
Patricia George
Brigit Loewenstein
Lyn Major
Tracey McConnell
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Dragonfly Up to \$99

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THE CRUCIAL WORK FRIENDS ACCOMPLISHES CAN ONLY BE DONE
WITH YOUR SUPPORT. THANK YOU DONORS!!

THANK YOU FRIENDS' VOLUNTEERS FOR DEDICATING 2,200 HOURS OF YOUR TIME, ENERGY, AND EXPERTISE

9

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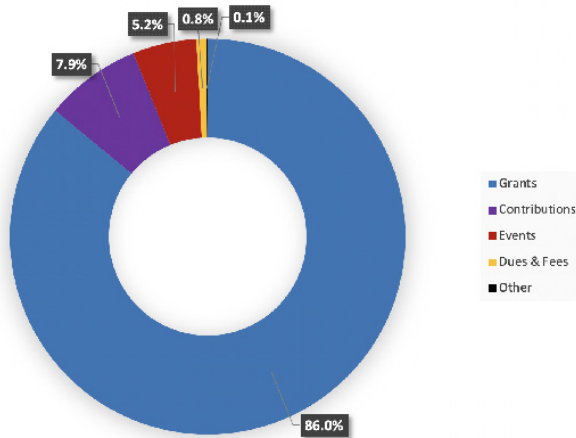
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Donors & volunteers listed are recognized for FY19 contributions, designated from July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

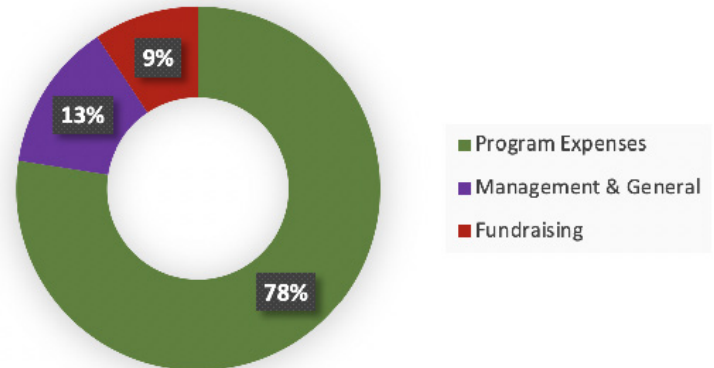


FY 2019 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenue by Funding Source FY19



Functional Expenses FY19



FY 19 was an amazing year, a transitional year, as we grew into the visionary strategic plan adopted in 2017 by the Board of Directors.

Their vision established our three-part mission: restore habitat, sustain flows, and promote community stewardship. We worked and played hard together, all in service of the mission.

You've asked us to grow and do more for the rivers; so we have.

You, faithful supporter, are why and how we do this work. You are there when we call for volunteers, members, supporters, donors, and those who pledge on Arizona Gives Day.

You express your love for the rivers in so many ways.

We need you more than ever to fulfil the vision of a healthy, flowing Verde River that supports our ecosystems and communities into the future.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to the following major grant contributors and supporters:

Arizona Public Service
Arizona Department of Game and Fish
Arizona Humanities Council
Arizona State Forestry
Arizona Water Protection Fund
Bureau of Land Management
Coconino National Forest
Freeport McMoRan, Inc.
Institute For Applied Ecology

National Forest Foundation
National Forest Foundation
RAIN: Rural Activation and Innovation Network
RiversEdge West
Salt River Project
The Nature Conservancy
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Walton Family Foundation
Yavapai Apache Nation

THANK YOU FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Nancy Steele, Executive Director

**"If you value a
flowing river,
we need you!"**

**If you value
healthy
wildlife, we
need you!"**

**If you value
communities
that love their
riverside
habitat, we
need you!"**

Dear River-Lover,

Looking back on the past year, one thing truly stands out for me: a deep and abiding sense of gratitude for the work we've done together and how you have supported Friends of the Verde River.

Maybe you are a business owner who contributed a part of your earnings to us or held an event on our behalf, thank you!

Maybe you are retired or still working, but you've become a monthly or annual giver, thank you!

Maybe you've volunteered of your precious time at a river clean up or the birding festival or the conference, thank you!

If you have given of your time and treasure in any way that benefits our work, thank you!

We are grateful to the foundations and corporations, nonprofits and for profits, individuals and government agencies that pay their funds to work for the river.

We are grateful to our many partners, including standing shoulder-to-shoulder with The Nature Conservancy Arizona on river conservation.

We are grateful to the coalitions of cities, agencies, businesses, Yavapai County, the Yavapai-Apache Nation, and organizations who come together out of a belief in our ability to solve our issues in collaboration.

I thank you for your commitment to our vision of a healthy, flowing Verde River system.

Sincerely,

Nancy Steele, Executive Director

JOIN CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

If you have supported Friends of the Verde River with an annual gift in the past, thank you! We invite you to renew your support, as well as consider upgrading your contribution.

DONATION LEVELS:

\$50 - Supporter Circle

\$100 - Conservationist Circle

\$250 - Preservationist Circle

\$500 - Protector Circle

\$1,000 - Leader Circle

\$2,500 - Silver Circle

\$5,000 - Gold Circle

\$10,000 - Platinum Circle



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VERDERIVER.ORG**