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version online!



Friends *of the* **VERDE RIVER** *2021*

FY2021 IMPACT REPORT

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I assumed the position of President of Friends of the Verde River in July of 2020. Then-President Chip Norton asked me if I would be interested in taking on the President position, while he stayed on as Vice President for one final year.

I so admire Chip's tenure with Friends of the Verde River. His love and knowledge about both the Verde River and the workings of Friends of the Verde River brought us to the place we are today. His gentle humor softens any conversation.

Over ten years ago, he and a team that included founding board members Peggy Chaikin and Marsha Foutz started collaborating with landowners for the river. As I read through the documents of our history, I note Chip's words about teamwork and collaboration. That theme is his president's message in every annual report during his tenure. Friends initially began as an organization to remove invasive species, clear river access points and maintain trails on and along the Verde River. Friends of Verde River Greenway, as it was called back then, worked in partnership to do the above. Through the efforts of our original incorporating board - Chip, Peggy, and Marsha along with Bob Rothrock, Max Castillo, Jane Moore and Diane Jones - this team grew Friends of the Verde River into what it is today. I will add that the board, and our then-employees Anna Schrenk and Laura Jones, educated the public about the Verde River as we continue to do so.

July 2021 marked the end of Chip, Marsha, and Peggy's tenure on Friends of the Verde River's Board of Directors. They continue to love our river, educate about it, and advocate for it. Each of them taught me something, and more importantly, they brought new life to our river. Their efforts, alongside many collaborators, have restored over 10,000 acres of riverside habitat. That's over 6,800 soccer fields! What a gift they have given us through the founding of Friends of the Verde River.

Which brings me to the present. During this past year Friends continued on doing what we do best: restore, collaborate and educate.

There is much more that I could say, but space restricts me. I encourage you to enjoy the photos and words in our annual report.

Get outside, paddle the river, walk along its banks, talk about its flows, support our programs, and enjoy the gift of this magnificent Verde River.

Jeni O'Callaghan

President



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeni O'Callaghan, President

Chip Norton, Vice-President

Tony Gioia, Secretary

Brent Bitz, Treasurer

Thomasene Cardona

Peggy Chaikin

Jennifer Diffley

Marsha Foutz

Linda Stitzer

Harry Sweet

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Dr. Maxwell Wilson, Sustaining Flows Manager

Kegn Moorcroft, Stewardship & Development Manager

Tracy Stephens, Habitat Restoration Manager

Mark Troksa, Business Manager

Matthew Gilbert, Business Manager

Virginia Weis, Administrative Assistant

Isaac Dudley, Development Coordinator

Melanie Miles, Events and Outreach Coordinator

Maya Rappaport, Communications Coordinator

Elaine Nichols, Habitat Restoration Program Coordinator

Jacob Phelps, Habitat Restoration Field Supervisor

Cynthia Butler, Mapping and Monitoring Intern

Chad Kwiatkowski, GIS Intern

Nadene Hubbard, Flows Intern

Abbe Ahler, Flows Intern

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

About ten years ago, a small group of dedicated lovers of the Verde River got a wild idea. They decided to turn their small group into an organization; to incorporate and become "official." Why did they take this step? There were many reasons, none the least of which was the realization that it would take many people to keep the Verde River flowing. Being an official organization that could take tax deductible donations would help.

The Verde River needed you to care for it, too. As a nonprofit organization, the River could invite you in as a supporter. Then you had a stake, too.

Today, thanks to people like you, Friends of the Verde River is celebrating its 10th year of success. The river is still flowing and we have many people working for the Verde. You make this possible every time you advocate, volunteer, and donate.

Today, you have a fourth way to show your love for the Verde River and all creeks and rivers in the watershed: you can become certified in River Friendly Living!

I am excited that you will have the opportunity to show your neighbors what you stand for - you stand for the Verde! And for Granite Creek, Sycamore Creek, West Fork, Oak Creek, Fossil Creek, West Clear Creek, the East Verde, and more. Every rivulet of running water is a success.

Thank you for keeping the rivers flowing!

Dr. Nancy L.C. Steele
Executive Director



SUSTAINING FLOWS

Urban Renewal at Rio Verde Plaza

Friends partnered with local builder, Tierra Verde Builders, and property owner, YTA Properties, Inc., to construct the first ever “River Friendly Building” in downtown Camp Verde. Rio Verde Plaza has been designed from the ground up to infiltrate rainwater to support river flows in dry periods, protect the river from urban pollution, provide habitat for native plants and animals, and engage the community in protecting the river.

New rainwater infiltration basins.



KEY STAT

More than **300,000** gallons of rainwater infiltrated into the ground each year.

Verde River Exchange

Featured Partners:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| DA Ranch | Merkin Vineyards Tasting Room and Osteria |
| Page Springs Cellars | Sinagua Malt |
| Pines Inn and Suites | Southwest Wine Center |
| Rainbow Acres | |

Pilot certifications are under way! To learn more or certify your home or business, visit RiverFriendlyLiving.org.



Maxwell Wilson
Sustaining Flows Manager
maxwellw@verderiver.org

PROGRAM STATS

Offset impacts of **4.6 million** gallons of groundwater pumping.

Developed certification programs for river friendly homes, businesses, agriculture, and residential developments with input from:

- **Eight** community or environmental organizations
- **Five** local governments
- **Five** local business
- **Four** agricultural producers
- **Three** real estate developers
- **Three** universities/colleges
- **One** private utility

Who can
be
Certified?



Homes



Businesses



*Agricultural
Producers*



Developments



Communities



RIVERFRIENDLY
L I V I N G

River Friendly Certification

River Friendly Living empowers residents, businesses, and communities to do their part to keep the river healthy and flowing through certification

Anywhere you see the River Friendly logo you can know that it has met stringent standards in four core areas:



Sustainable Water Supply

River Friendly entities reduce water use where possible and offset the impacts of their groundwater use on the river



Clean Water

River Friendly entities use chemicals responsibly, prevent erosion, and manage waste.



Healthy Habitat

River Friendly entities provide places for animals to grow and thrive using native plants.



Connected and Supportive Community

River Friendly entities support river conservation in our communities.

*Learn more and get certified at
www.riverfriendlyliving.org*

RESTORING HABITAT

Healing Eroding Landscapes

Friends worked with our Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition partners to analyze, develop, and implement plans to restore gullies in the Wickiup Mesa, Flowing Springs, and Munds Draw areas. Why are we doing this work? When it rains on gullies, the rainwater moves quickly across the landscape and cuts down cliff edges. As it cuts these cliffs, it takes the dirt, also known as sediment, with it down the gully towards the river. By slowing the movement of water down with rock structures (before photo), we can prevent the cutting of the cliffs (also known as headcutting) and stop sediment from flowing into the Verde and encourage vegetation growth (after photo). Slowing down the water also allows it to be absorbed into the local area and replenish the underground water storage that is so important for our desert plants.



Before, top, and after, bottom.

Featured Partners: Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition

Funders

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Walton Family Foundation | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Arizona Water Protection Fund | Bureau of Land Management |
| National Forest Foundation | National Fish and Wildlife Foundation |
| Catena Foundation | Arizona Game and Fish Department |
| Coconino National Forest | U.S. Forest Service |
| City of Cottonwood | |
| The Nature Conservancy | |

Partners

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

KEY STAT

200 juniper thinned from
120 acres at Munds Draw

PROGRAM STATS

1,858 acres monitored
360 acres treated
18 crew members employed
57% of sites with evidence of natural recruitment of native species
4 acres of native seeding
19 native cottonwood tree plantings
One Fossil Blackberry pilot treatment project

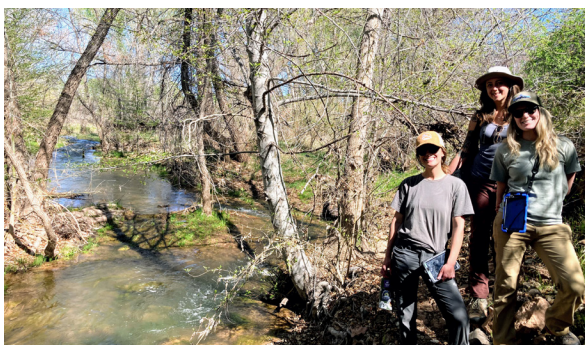


Tracy Stephens
Habitat Restoration Manager
tracys@verderiver.org

COMMUNITY SCIENCE

Engaging Youth for the Verde River

In 2021 we started a fun, new way for kids of all ages to explore and learn about our natural environment. Funded by the City of Cottonwood, the BioBlitz took place in April. Kids and adults were invited to stalk plants and animals with their cameras. By taking a photo and uploading it to iNaturalist, they could learn the name of the plant, animal, or fungus. And as a bonus, the scientific community has a record of the living things here in the Verde watershed. The Cottonwood BioBlitz will return in 2022, thanks to the City of Cottonwood.



Summer monitoring crew.

KEY STAT

78 participants removed **92** pounds of trash

PROGRAM STATS

Verde Valley BioBlitz

122 students from **five** classrooms

47 individual participants

1,028 observations

391 species

285 hours

Program Overview

Friends is hosting three new community science opportunities focused on key areas.

Locating and measuring gullies



We have started volunteer recruitment by hosting virtual open houses and sending out surveys to interested volunteers.



To see a full list of donors and volunteers, scan the QR code for a digital version of the FY2021 Impact Report.

Monitoring water quality



Verde Valley BioBlitz



Learn more about volunteer opportunities by visiting VerdeRiver.org/volunteer.



Elaine Nichols
Habitat Restoration Coordinator
elainen@verderiver.org

VERDE CONSERVATION PARTNERS

Wine, Beer & Burritos!

Each year, businesses across Northern Arizona work together to support on-the-ground conservation projects. This year we saw new wine partnerships, our first beer collaboration, and even menu items at local restaurants such as the Big 'ol Breakfast Burrito at The Red Rooster Cafe, our Business Partner of the Year (right). We thank all of the businesses that have contributed through donations, events, and product sales.



Participating Partners

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 3 Kings Kasbar | Fry's/Kroger | Pink Adventure Tours | The Vineyards at Cottonwood |
| Alcantara Vineyard | KT Kayak Rentals | Rainbow Acres | Tres Brisas Beef |
| Amazon Smile Foundation | Merkin Vineyards & Osteria | Red Rooster Cafe | Verde Adventures |
| Chateau Tumbleweed | Multi-Etch LLC | Snap 24 hour Fitness | Viking Media |
| Chef Wayne's Creations | Ocotillo House Airbnb | Salt Mine Wine | Southwest Wine Center |
| Coldwell Banker Mabery Real Estate | Olsen's Grain | Smart Window Creations | DA Ranch |
| Dudley Photo | Page Springs Vineyards, LLC | Smelter Town Brewery | Russ Lyons Southerby Real Estate |
| The Mine Cafe | Pillsbury Wine Company | Prescott Audubon Society | |
| | Pines Inn & Suites | Square Roots Vineyard | |

KEY STAT

\$12,500 was granted out in 2020

PROGRAM STATS

\$5,000 was awarded to the Verde River Rangers in Clarkdale. **\$5,000** was awarded to the Verde Village Property Association in Cottonwood for improvements to the Verde River Nature Preserve. **\$2,500** was awarded to the Mountain View Preparatory School in Cottonwood for construction of a Bike Skills Park.

The Verde Conservation Partners program is changing! Starting in July 2021, the businesses will be River Friendly Business Partners.



Isaac Dudley
Development Coordinator
isaacd@verderiver.org

EVENTS ●

2021 Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival

Friends of the Verde River's first-ever hybrid event!

The Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival is a treasured annual event in Arizona. Friends worked hard to keep the beloved tradition alive through the many difficulties and restrictions posed by COVID-19.

Friends coordinated in-person birding tours, with limited groups and safety restrictions, all throughout the state, including Flagstaff, Sedona, the Verde Valley, Prescott, and all the way down to Phoenix. Friends filled in-person field trips to 92% capacity!

Virtually, Friends held 15 online webinars about animals, birds, plants, and of course the Verde River. All attendees had access to the virtual presentations for 2 weeks, granting opportunities for participants to learn from panels and professional speakers. VVBNF had viewers from 18 different states and 3 different countries!

This event raised over \$10,000 for Friends of the Verde River, allowing us to continue to hold events that educate, inspire and engage our communities.



Participants enjoyed in-person birding tours and multiple virtual experiences, such as Armchair Birding (top). Friends' own Maya Rappaport joined viewers from her living room to identify birds that came to visit (bottom).

HERE'S WHAT ATTENDEES SAID

"The amount of work and results that you can produce and create is absolutely astounding. I treasure this experience and cannot thank you enough. I appreciate everything you do for our community."

"An amazing event for birders from all over the place to connect!"

"I loved watching the virtual presentations from the comfort of my own home!"

"I really enjoyed the small group live sessions because people were able to listen to the leader and not get all crowded up. It was an excellent experience for us as we added about 40 life birds."

FY2021 Event Sponsors

Salt River Project
Arizona Public Service
Tierra Verde Builders
The City of Cottonwood
Sedona Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau
Tres Brisas Beef
Cambium Wealth & Legacy Strategies
Audubon Arizona
Pink Adventure Tours
The Melting Point
Verde Valley Images
KT Kayak Rentals
Reliance Printing Solutions INC



Melanie Miles

Events & Outreach
Coordinator
melaniem@verderiver.org

STORIES FROM OUR SUPPORTERS

Mary Taylor Huntley

My family is peaceful and content, floating along, listening to the river sounds. We don't dare consider the possibility that we could lose such a precious resource. So, we will continue to give to Friends of the Verde River, as long as they continue to support such a dreamy place on Earth.



Linda Stitzer

As a long-time Arizonan and resident of the southwest my entire life, I recognize the gift of water, including ribbons of green supporting rich and diverse plant and animal species. Knowing how climate change and humans are impacting these beautiful and critically important systems motivates me to support a healthy flowing river.

Brent Bitz

I want the Verde River to be around for my children and grand-children and donating to Friends can make that a reality. Everyone has something to give to support the Verde. Whether it's volunteering, giving money, or including Friends of the Verde River in your will – it all matters.



Fiesta de la Garza Awardees 2020

Every year, Friends honors various partners whose collaboration and support is beyond measure. In December 2020, these partners were given well-earned awards.

Tierra Verde Builders
River Friendly Living Partner of the Year

Ryan Hudson
Volunteer of the Year

Coldwell Banker Mabery Real Estate
Business Partner of the Year

Bill & Bobbie Sparrow
Private Land Owner Partner

Tom Runyon
Agency Partner

Laura Jones
Boots on the Bank

Charlie German
President's Award

To ensure the future health of the Verde River system, please consider becoming a member of Friends' new legacy program, the Sycamore Society. Visit VerdeRiver.org/donate.



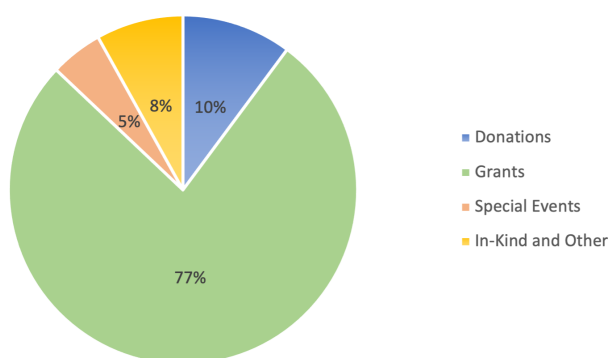
Kegn Moorcroft
Stewardship &
Development Manager
kegnm@verderiver.org

FINANCIALS

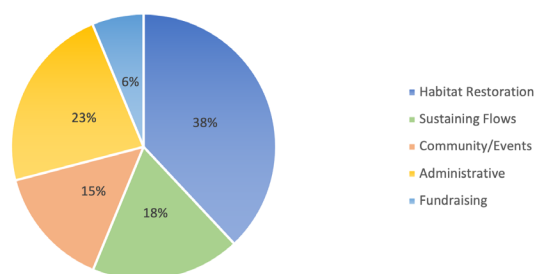
Thanks to strong support from our community and a paycheck protection loan (forgiven), we were able to overcome the financial challenges of the pandemic and end the year with a surplus. Your generous contributions support all of our programs. Despite holding most events remotely or in hybrid format, our events generated positive net revenue this year. Grants primarily support our habitat restoration and sustaining flows programs. Despite the Backbone Fire, we were able to complete most of our goals for the Fossil Creek area. One of the challenges with COVID and fires is that if we can't work, we don't earn the revenue from awarded grants. Your donations, therefore, support all of our programs.

FY2021 Financials

Revenue and Support 2021



Expenses FY2021



Our Top Supporters

Many thanks to our top supporters!

| | |
|--|---|
| Arizona Game and Fish Department | Nina Mason Pullium Charitable Trust |
| Arizona Water Protection Fund | National Fish and Wildlife Foundation |
| Bonneville Environmental Foundation | National Forest Foundation |
| Bureau of Land Management | Page Springs Vineyards, LLC |
| Catena Foundation | RAIN: Rural Activation and Innovation Network |
| Coconino National Forest Conservation Legacy | The Nature Conservancy |
| Forever Our Rivers | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Freeport-McMoRan Foundation | Walton Family Foundation |



To see a full list of donors and volunteers, scan the QR code for a digital version of the FY2021 Impact Report.

Start giving today! Make your gift monthly, quarterly, or annually. Donate today at VerdeRiver.org/Donate.



Mark Troksa
Business Manager
markt@verderiver.org

DONORS

Your gift supports sustaining a healthy Verde River, with flowing water, natural wild places for plants and animals, and vibrant communities. Friends thanks you for your generosity!

OTTER **\$10,000-30,000**

Brent Bitz
Eric and Gayle Glomski
Sheri and Paul Young

COTTONWOOD **\$5,000-9,999**

Marsha Foutz
Dean and Tammy Pefanis

DESERT WILLOW **\$1,000-2,500**

Jeni and Michael O'Callaghan
Jennifer Burns
Chip Norton and Kathy Davis
Lisa and David Diffley
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Darcy Hitchcock and Dale Graham
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Julie and Cris Frost
Mary Taylor Huntley and Chris Huntley
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Claudia Hauser
Cynthia and Peter Belowski
Kevin and Leann Norton
Billie Nicholson
Dimas and Roxanna Bejarano
AnnaMay Cory
Marguerite Peggy and Hank Chaikin
Isaac Dudley

BLACK HAWK **\$100-499**

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Harry Sweet
Roxanne Wessel
Jeri and Paul Higgins
Eamonn O'Callaghan
Carly Cooper

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Kelly Zahoudanis
Sheryl Leigh-Davault
Nicole Martin
Robin Aitken Hardy
Amanda Snyder
Jodi Rooney
Kelly Davis
Chelsea Leika
Pauline Gregory
Rachel Byland
Autumn Herring
Derek Field
Sukanda Sutti-ard
Phillip Loersch
Dane Schwartz
Olive Deponte
Lisa Dennis



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are critical to the work we do. Friends celebrates the **999** volunteer hours in FY2021!

| | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Ryan Hudson | Juie Traxler | Broch Echols | Kristine Follet | Doug Von Gausig |
| Ramon Milian Jr. | James Koel | Aria Christianson | Rich Armstrong | Peg Downs |
| Keith Lemcke | Kelsey Jensen | Bronson Harvey | Carolyn Heath | Thomasene Cardona |
| Nguyen Nguyen | Doug McGlothlin | Vincent Hood | David Curtis | Kathleen M |
| Mollie Petersen | Patricia Greer | Colette Condon | Gina Miller | Salamanek |
| Halleigh Milian | Val Maxey | John Hart | Patti Greeneltch | Nathan Porter |
| Addilynn Milian | Lyle Maxey | Linda and Steve | Vivian Stevens | Francine Porter |
| Pam Lindsley | Gail Wais | Lombardo | Diana Pryer | Kathleen Green |
| Kevin Semmons | Claire Contreras | Julie Hardman | Arlene Connolly | Bob Rothrock |
| Christine Coates | Brandon Echols | Martin Ball | Rachel Wilkin | Kristen Rothrock |
| Dennis Coates | Greg Miranda | Josh Nance | A.B. Berman | Harry Lampros |
| Sarah Colombo | Debbie McGlothlin | Austin Littenberg | Kelly Zahoudanis | Mynzah Osiris |
| Matt Gilbert | Jack Zahoudanis | Alex Albright | Bob Bush | Mike Gray |
| Andrew Paffrath | Peter Zahoudanis | Mark Lee | Ikuko Baldwin | Jeanmarie Haney |
| Max Benoit | James Major | Jancine Serene | Tracy Schultze | Cindy Emmett |
| Corrinne Goldenstein | Kaitlin Haase | Elaine Nichols | Ron Condon | Amber Hatfield |
| Aly Gangemi | Tatia Bauer | Gillian Burns | Marsha Foutz | Charles Combs |
| Christie Captain | Hanna Ryder | Harry Sweet | Abigail Schneider | Elisa Rios |
| Samantha Mason | Kim Carney | Gregory Yori | Leah Donell | Ann Owen |
| Katie Wood | Wally Warnke | Natalie Mastalski | Steve Leininger | Ethan Baruch |
| Samantha Sanner | Anna French | Barbie Hart | Fern Greathouse | Pete Fule |
| Shiloh Rhodes | Lynn Sine | Wade Gibson | Sherry Singer | Kathy Davis |
| Gaile Gerrish | Carol LaPorte | Janice Konderik | Debra LaFrance | Laurie Parker |
| Opal Boyer | Melissa Fernandez | Ryan Veltri | Debbie Mantyla | Felicia French |
| Milissa Koel | Dea Collie | Bob Wais | Chris Jensen | James Quinn |
| Lisa Foss | Steve Doyle | Dannie Keil | Roxanne Wessel | Jake Cecil |
| Tania Boeskin | Caio Vissicaro | Felicia Coates | Phyllis Webb | Laura Jones |
| Eric Serene | Martha Sample | Charlie Schudson | Steve Ayers | Marguerite Peggy |
| Apphia Shirley | Hannah Simpson | Karen Schudson | Ashlee Wolf | Chaikin |
| Malorie Burris | Jack Collie | Cynthia Butler | Dan Traxler | Tony Gioia |
| Rodolfo Morales | Bella Johnson | Kimberly Lipsky | Becki Jensen | Michael Levick |
| Martinez | Hannah Haines | Kimerly Poucher | Whit Manter | Jamie Guyn |
| Robert Mills | Ky Simpson | Jennifer Diffley | Dennis Tomko | Madeleine Ascott |
| Chipeta Difani | Leah Manak | Jolynn Greenfield | Maegen Hughes | Emma Harries |
| Dale Czarnecki | Nate Collie | Brent Bitz | Michael Hilton | Elise Guzman |
| John Bryan | Kelsey Christianson | Jim Graham | Dale Graham | Jeni O'Callaghan |



Birds grow in trees, but we know your money doesn't.

That's why Friends of the Verde River stretches every dollar as far as we possibly can. With Friends, even small donations make a big difference.

\$500

is enough to hire a military veteran for removal of nuisance plants from the riverbanks.

\$250

is enough to buy much-needed tools for volunteers and work crews.

\$150

is enough to keep 100,000 gallons of water flowing in the Verde. That's like pouring one million glasses of water back into the river.

\$75

is enough to plant and nurture a willow tree that will provide important habitat for birds.

\$50

is enough to train a volunteer how to work safely in the field.

\$25

is enough to track one acre of land and decide if it needs to be restored.

Start giving today! Make your gift monthly, quarterly, or annually.

Donate today at **VerdeRiver.org/Donate**.

