

Currents & Flow

Fall 2018

As we reflect back over the year, our thoughts turn to gratitude for all of the many people that contributed their time, energy, skills, and finances in support of our shared mission to support a healthy Verde River system.

In this issue of the quarterly Friends newsletter, *Currents & Flow* we'd like to thank all of you and share a few stories that recognize those efforts.

A Note from Chip Norton, Board President

I'm grateful for the Verde Valley mayors that value healthy, flowing rivers and streams and sound water management. Thank you, Doug von Gausig. Thank you, Tim Elinski. Thank you, Charlie German. Thank you, Sandy Moriarty. I'm grateful for our County Supervisors that provide leadership in cooperative river recreation management. Thank you, Tom Thurman. Thank you, Randy Garrison. Finally, I am grateful for the Chairwoman of the Yavapai-Apache Nation for her commitment to preservation of the Verde River and all that it provides to our communities. Thank you, Jane Russell-Winecki.

I am grateful for the Hauser family. As owners and managers of Hauser & Hauser Farms and Speck Farms, they have greatly reduced their consumption of Verde River water, especially during the dry summer months. During the last five years, they have converted much of their farmland from flood irrigation to water-efficient drip systems and switched 25% of that land to crops that use less water. Overall, the Hausers have reduced their annual water use by 85 million gallons! Sincere thanks to all of the Hausers for the hard work that they do every day to keep the Verde River flowing.

In Gratitude, Chip Norton

"The 150 acres of barley that Hauser planted on his Verde Valley farm this year will conserve almost five acre-feet — about 1.5 million gallons — of water per day in June, Schonek calculated. That translates to a 2.4-cubic-foot-per-second increase in the Verde's flows, which is a big deal when the river is running at 20 or 25 cubic feet per second in the summer." Kim Schonek, The Nature Conservancy

Quoted from the AZ Daily Star. [Read more...](#)



Zach Hauser, Photo Credit: Mark Brodie.



Chip Norton, Board President

"The care of rivers is not a question of rivers but of the human heart."
— Shozo Tanaka



**Friends of the
VERDE RIVER**

Working Collaboratively for a Healthy Verde River



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VerdeRiver.org

A Message From the Executive Director

"Nature's beauty is a gift that cultivates appreciation and gratitude."
- Louie Schwartzberg



You may recognize these moments of appreciation and gratitude:
--the morning when the sunrise stops you in your tracks, the orange glow below the clouds stunning you into pausing in your morning rush to get ready for the day;
--the afternoon drive when the landscape and sky open up before you, surprising you yet again with the indescribably deep blue sky paired with the pure white of clouds and vivid greens and tans of the landscape below, drinking in the view even as you must pay attention to the drive;
--the feeling of easing your body into water, finding quiet joy in relaxation as your weight is liberated from gravity for a short while and water flows over your muscles.

In these moments, I am filled with appreciation and gratitude, yes for nature's beauty and yes for the sheer delight in being alive. This is the time for gratitude.

Likewise, I am filled with gratitude for the work we have done together here in the Verde Valley and how you have supported our work.

I am grateful for seeds ripened and harvested, giving thanks for all who pulled weeds under the hot sun, having faith that the harvest would come. And a special call-out to Marsha Foutz, who drove the harvest to New Mexico for processing, with the promise of the cleaned seed coming back to help in restoring native grasses.

I am grateful for the river bank, feathery with new growth of willows, cottonwoods, clovers, and other wildflowers, whose seeds were released from inhibitions to grow after the hard work put in by our crews – conservation corps youth and veterans – to clear the riverside of choking plants that inhibit the natives that are evolved to live here.

I am grateful too for those who give some of their treasure to nurture the work we do. One has to take care of a community, be a part of its formation and continuation. That's called stewardship. How wonderful that an action so simple as transferring some of your time and treasure to an organization that you believe in improves your community, improves your life, and, in the case of Friends, improves the Verde Valley.

After the demands of summer, this is a time when we look back, when we pause and reflect and give thanks for all of our blessings. I speak for all the staff and directors of Friends of the Verde River when I thank you for your support, especially as we have navigated our way through many changes, with staff new and old, programs reconfigured, and a Board of Directors dedicated to the cause. What you do matters, and I give thanks for all you do for the Verde Valley and to support the rivers that we all love.

Partners Support Kids & Conservation!

Thank you to Eric and Gayle Glomski of Page Springs Cellars for their generous donation to Friends. Teaming up with Festival producers, Page Springs Cellars and End of the Tunnel Ventures LLC, Prescott Creeks, Friends of the Verde River, and Big Brothers Big Sisters worked with artists, businesses, dining and entertainment establishments, and others throughout the region to put on the silent auction during the two-day celebration of music, wine, and community that took place at Page Springs Cellars in June. Eric and Gayle Glomski donated \$6,516.26 to Friends from the \$20,000 raised.



Volunteers Raise the Bar

I started as a volunteer at Friends pulling Tree of Heaven at Dead Horse Ranch State Park. For me, what started as a Saturday afternoon commitment has grown into a 6-year career, where I get to see the importance of volunteers every day.

Whether it is removing invasive plants, planting natives, organizing the Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival or safely guiding kayakers down the river, our volunteers make the preservation of the Verde River possible. During 2018, Friends volunteers have contributed more the 2,200 hours of time, effort, creativity, knowledge and sweat to make the Verde River the treasure that it is.

So thank you to our volunteers! Like the river we all value, we value you too!

Laura Jones,
Community Engagement Coordinator

Celebrating Arizona's Wild & Scenic Rivers



Friends of the Verde River partnered with Prescott Creeks and Citizens Water Advocacy Group to present the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in October, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act of 1968.

The film festival included 13 inspirational films curated from the South Yuba River Citizens League's collection of the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Nevada City, CA



We celebrate this important congressional act that was created by Congress on October 2, 1968 to preserve certain rivers with outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations. It encourages river management crossing political boundaries and promoting public participation to develop goals for river protection.

Sections of the Verde River and Fossil Creek are the only two Wild & Scenic designations in Arizona, representing less than 1/10th of 1% of the state's river miles. These rivers are important migratory paths for many birds, home to multiple species of endangered fish and wildlife and have outstanding historical significance.

"There are approximately 3.6 million miles of streams in the United States. Only 12,734 miles are protected by the **Wild & Scenic Rivers**. (Rivers.gov)

The festival was made possible through the support of our sponsors:



And Friends of the Verde River Board Members:

Chip Norton, Peggy Chaikin, Marsha Foutz, Siera Russell, & Brent Bitz.

Promoting Community



Amanda Webster

We'd like to thank Amanda Webster, our AmeriCorps Vista Volunteer Coordinator, who dedicated a year of her life to helping to promote the Verde River through community outreach and education efforts.

Amanda went above and beyond in her work with Friends. Her time with us had a great impact on her as well. She was inspired to continue in the conservation field and pursue a career in environmental law. In August Amanda moved east to attend Vermont Law School.

Local Businesses Supporting a Healthy Verde River

Our business partners support us and the work we do through direct giving as well as fundraising events, outreach and education.



We're pleased to add "Hattie Hour" at **Pillsbury Wine Company** to our partner events schedule. Wear a hat and join us on the last Friday of the month at Pillsbury Wine Company in Old Town Cottonwood, 5-8pm.

Thirsty Thursday continues at **The State Bar** in Old Town Cottonwood on the second Thursday of the month.



In Jerome, we're pleased to welcome **The Mine Cafe** as our newest conservation partner. The Mine Cafe has created the Verde Burrito and donates one dollar to Friends for every burrito sold.

Contact [Isaac Dudley](mailto:Isaac.Dudley@VerdeRiver.org) via email or call 928-821-2002 to learn more about our Business Conservation Partner opportunities.

Learn more at VerdeRiver.org/conservation-partners



Thank you to our Business Conservation Partners for their generous support.

\$1,000 and above:
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Bueno Marketplace
Olsen's

\$100 and above:
Western Resource Advocates

Donations received July 1 - September 30, 2018

Business Conservation Partners bring together the collective resources of local business to raise funds to implement conservation projects across the Verde River Watershed. These conservation projects go directly to enhancing the natural resources of the watershed which is essential to our community's way of life.

Sustaining Flows

A Letter of Thanks from Our Newest Staff Member by Max Wilson, Phd., Program Manager, Sustaining Flows

You don't know me, but I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you.

My name is Max Wilson and since the last newsletter I have started managing the Sustaining Flows program at Friends where I oversee our Verde River Exchange and Integrated Land and Water Planning programs. Before coming to Friends I was wrapping up my PhD at ASU, where I studied the water systems of the Tibetan Plateau, the sustainability of the world's largest water transfer, and the ecological impacts of a dam in southeastern China. I loved my work, but after years abroad it was time to come home.

Home for me has always been Central Arizona. Born and raised in Phoenix, I cut my teeth hiking, hunting, and fishing all over this state. My favorite trips, however, were always to the Verde Valley, whether fishing at Dead Horse, swimming at Fossil Creek, or hiking in Sycamore Canyon. I was lucky to grow up with parents who showed me the wild and then let me roam it. And so, most every weekend of my childhood was spent scraping my shins in the mountains and cooling my feet in the Verde.

It may come as a shock, but what your support has built here at Friends—a locally developed, professional, passionate team doing genuine science to save a precious resource—is an incredible and unique achievement. Many communities face serious environmental problems, but few band together to solve them and even fewer build organizations that can last. It is the hard work you did building Friends that laid the foundation for a scientist like me to have a home here. Living up to the standard you set frames how I do my job every single day.

Far be it for me, the new guy, to speak for everyone, so for now let's keep this between you and me: Thank you. Thank you for believing in this organization, for willing it to be. Thank you for growing with us and building a coalition with staying power. Because of you, and all the others like you, Friends has blossomed into a place I am proud to call home. It is an incredible gift to be able to do a job I enjoy while protecting a river I love. I couldn't do it without you.

And I am passing on my love of the Verde to my children. Here is a story about me and Jack.

This is a morning for Jack and me. Together we move slowly along the headwaters of a Verde River tributary toward our favorite fishing hole. For the first time I am following in his steps, rather than the other way around. They are the steps of a three year old, tottering and uneven. River rocks that are nuisances to me are boulders to him. Standing at the base of one particularly large rock Jack looks back to me, unsure how to proceed. I give encouragement, but don't give him a hand. Slowly he works his way up the tiny escarpment, while his dad-da-safety-net tries to nonchalantly remain within arm's reach. When he finally regains his footing at the top he lets out a gleefully ferocious I DID IT! I can't help but join him.

When we finally arrive at the fishing hole, I hand Jack my rod and let him cast away. Never mind that we are making too much noise to catch fish, and never mind that his casts aren't looking very cast-y, his eyes sparkle as he gets to mimic what he has spent his whole life watching me perfect. He still has a lot to learn, but then again, so do I. I'm sure we'll have some hiccups along the way, but for now, as he splashes his line onto the streams surface and tries to call in the "fish-ies" by screaming at the top of his lungs, I can't help but smile and be thankful for the stream that allowed us to share this perfect moment.



The Verde River Exchange is an innovative, community-driven program to help address unmanaged groundwater pumping that threatens to deplete flows in the Verde River. The Exchange is a key part of our work to preserve a perennially flowing Verde River while also promoting sustainable economic development in the Verde Valley.

Restoring Habitat

Partnerships by Matt Wilson, Habitat Restoration Manager

Here at Friends, we pride ourselves on our partnerships, working for a healthy Verde River.

This past year, Friends embarked on an ambitious program to grow native grasses for seed production. These seeds will eventually be planted in areas of the Verde watershed within the Tonto National Forest. As we have learned, growing native grasses is really hard work. I am unable to express how grateful I am for all that our volunteers contributed to keep our plants happy, and to collect the seed they produced. Among all the dedicated volunteers who made this program a success, I am particularly grateful to **Marsha Foutz**.



Marsha is a founding board member who is not afraid to get her hands dirty, and who joyfully volunteered to drive all the seed we collected to New Mexico for processing. Without her - and all of Friends' other friends in Camp Verde - I am certain we would not have had such success in our first



year. To all our volunteers, I thank you for your time, your stories, and your ever brimming joy and optimism while pulling weeds and picking seeds with us under the Arizona sun.



Marsha Foutz with a truck load of harvested seed headed to New Mexico for processing.

Partner Appreciation

by Ben Kowalewski, Habitat Restoration Coordinator

Friends would like to extend a very special thank you to **Amina Sena**. Amina has always been a motivated and engaged partner who did everything she could to help Friend's and the Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition succeed. As a hydrologist for the Forest Service, she worked to preserve and promote the health of the Verde River throughout the watershed. In 2018, Amina moved on to the next stage in her life and moved to New Mexico to be closer to family. She has been the best partner we could ask for and can't wait to work with her in the future, saving and restoring all watersheds of the West.



Amina Sena, hydrologist with the US Forest Service



Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition (VWRC) is a collaborative effort among a diverse group of public and private stakeholders to improve and restore riparian habitat in the Verde River Watershed.

Working with over twenty partners and more than 200 private landowners, VWRC focuses on three core methods to protect the Verde River from the harm caused by invasive plants: 1) outreach to local communities and private landowners; 2) treatment to remove invasive species; and 3) monitoring treated areas to ensure their continued health.

Supporting Friends

You can help Friends to restore habitat, sustain flows and promote community stewardship every time you shop at Fry's or Amazon. Click the links here to join the [Fry's Community Rewards Program](#) and [Amazon Smile](#). Select "**Friends of Verde River Greenway**" for your charity.

Please visit our [website](#) for information on charitable gifts and estate planning.



Thanks to our donors!

Donations received July - September, 2018

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Eric & Gayle Glomski
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Molly Goulden
Diana Bishop
Max Wilson
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Kimberly Schonek
Esther Henselmans

Become a Friend of Friends

Our membership program allows individuals, families, businesses, and organizations to support the vital work that Friends does on a continual basis in the Verde River Watershed. We hope you will recognize the importance of this work and help Friends attain its goal of sustaining flows, restoring habitat, and promoting community stewardship by joining us as a Friend of Friends. [Join Us!](#)

Wear Your Love of the Verde River

Your purchase of Friends' merchandise supports conservation in the Verde River watershed. Show your community support by Wearing your Love for the Verde River. T-Shirts, Long Sleeve Shirts, Hats, & Patches, available only at [Bueno Marketplace](#) in Old Town Cottonwood.



Friends of the Verde River

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[VerdeRiver.org](#)

You can make a difference!

Friends of the Verde River is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. Please visit our [website](#) to make a donation and for information on charitable gifts and estate planning.



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Sustaining Flows, Restoring Habitat, and Promoting Community Stewardship.



Members receive early bird registration. Become a Friend of Friends and join us.
VerdeRiver.org/Membership

MISSION

Friends of the Verde River works collaboratively to restore habitat, sustain flows and promote community stewardship to support a healthy Verde River system.

Save The Dates

March 16th:

Verde River Runoff

April 25th - 28th:

Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival

Find all of our events at
VerdeRiver.org/Events

