

Currents & Flow

March 2018

Moving Forward

We're excited to jump into 2018 with re-energized enthusiasts and a clear direction for our work in Sustaining Flows, Restoring Habitat, and Promoting Community.

Welcome to the new Friends newsletter, **Currents & Flow**.

A New Year Begins

The third Monday in January, is **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**. It is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service— a “day on, not a day off.” In recognition of Dr. King’s incredible legacy, **Friends of the Verde River** organized volunteer events at four different sites in Camp Verde.

This first volunteer event of 2018 was a great success, bringing together 35 community members, 10 Friends staff and board members, 29 Arizona Conservation Corps members, and 7 Vetrplex Verde River crew members. Over three hours in the afternoon, volunteers removed more than 45 bags of trash from along the river and weeded 5.5 acres of pollinator and native grass gardens.

We have many opportunities for you to get involved. You can learn more about volunteering with Friends at VerdeRiver.org/upcoming-events



MISSION

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

*“The face of the river . . . was not a book to be read once and thrown aside, for it had a new story to tell every day.”
– Mark Twain*



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VERDE RIVER**

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Friends of the Verde River
PO Box 2535,
Cottonwood, AZ 86326
928.641.6013

VerdeRiver.org

A Message From the Executive Director



Over 30 years ago, right after I'd gotten married, packed up all my possessions, and moved to Los Angeles, my mother sent me a flyer for a property in Camp Verde with a note that "you should buy this place." I surely thought she'd lost her mind. While the property looked appealing, I couldn't imagine living in the country. The city life was for me! For the next 34 years, I raised my family and lived a pretty good life in Altadena, a town that is 25 to 60 minutes from downtown Los Angeles, depending on the time of day. My career took me from environmental protection with the State of California to watershed protection with a nonprofit focused on the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers. In my spare time, I earned another degree, founded a land conservancy and, with my husband, kept up with our family beekeeping business. I never stopped coming to Arizona, hiking its many beautiful places, rafting the Grand Canyon, and visiting my family (currently three brothers; my son, his wife, and two grandkids; my brother's sister and her husband; and a couple of aunts and many cousins all call Arizona home).

I ran across that Camp Verde for sale flyer again in 2015 when I was cleaning out the family house after my mother had died. I laughed through my tears about my mother trying to get me back to Arizona, the state she adopted after moving there with her parents in 1947. I tossed it, little imagining the turn my life would take just a year or so later. Perhaps that memory primed me to take a second look at the job opening for Executive Director of Friends of (the) Verde River (Greenway). As I learned more about the organization, the thought of returning to my native state became more appealing. I learned that the Verde River is one of the last healthy, perennial rivers in Arizona, providing habitat for fish and wildlife, attracting recreational boaters and fishers, supporting the economy of the Verde Valley communities, and supplying irrigation and drinking water to people from the Verde Valley all the way to Phoenix. I found common cause with the strong regional collaborations, such as Verde Front and Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition. And I believed that I could be the right person to help the organization achieve its mission and vision at this critical time in its history. So, I applied for the job and here I am. I think my mother and father (who passed away in 2005) would have been proud to see what I'm doing now.

As I write this, just over two months into the job, I know that I have a lot to learn. If I haven't met you yet, I hope to soon. In addition to the community, I look forward to getting to know the land, the waters, and wildlife, too. Friends of the Verde River has changed its name and added several new staff in the past year, but we are much the same as before. We know that we are stronger together, working for the River, its fish and wildlife, ensuring our quality of life, which is so tied to the land.

Arizona's Wild & Scenic Rivers



We are excited to celebrate this 50 year anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

In 1968, sustainability and environmental protection helped to introduce over 800,000 acres of wilderness protection, the National Trails System Act, and on October 2nd, the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act.

“There are approximately 3.6 million miles of streams in the United States; 1.1 million are at least five miles in length. Only 12,734 miles are protected by the **Wild & Scenic Rivers.**”
(Rivers.gov)

Making a Splash

The **Verde River Runoff**, a 10-mile race and 5-mile float on the Verde River in Camp Verde made a splash with our increased rain and flow in the week before the event. 132 boaters participated this year and we presented awards afterwards at the [Spring Heritage Pecan & Wine Festival](#).



We connected with families during the **SciTech Festival**, connecting modern technologies and old fashioned techniques in *The Science of Habitat Restoration*.



Celebrating 10 Years

In January, Friends celebrated our 10 year anniversary with an open house at the new office. The open house welcomed 160 visitors throughout the afternoon and evening. We introduced our new Executive Director, Nancy Steele, along with new and old staff. Interactive stations allowed for visitors to view our new website and learn more about our work in Verde River conservation efforts.



Ribbon Cutting at the new Friends office by Chip Norton & Nancy Steele.

The Wild & Scenic Verde River



It's your river. Make your splash!

The Verde River is a unique and important resource in Arizona. In a southwestern state where perennial flowing water is rare, the riparian oasis of the Verde River stands in stark contrast to the arid uplands through which it meanders. Indeed, Verde is the Spanish term for the color “green.” Major river access points are at White Bridge where State Highway 260 crosses the river east of Camp Verde, at Beasley Flats via Forest Roads 574 and 529, and near Childs Power Plant via Forest Roads 708 and 502. The Verde River provides diverse recreational opportunities including boating, hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, picnicking and photography. (Rivers.gov)

Promoting Community

One For The Verde

In December, 2017 **One For The Verde** had the great privilege of co-sponsoring the [Local First](#) Holiday Shopping Passport Celebration hosted by Boathouse Bar & Grill in Clarkdaler.



This celebration was a huge success! The shopping passport encouraged local shopping for the holiday season. Shoppers had their passport stamped at participating businesses. Completed passports were then entered into a drawing.

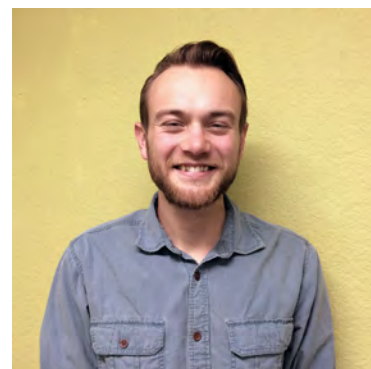
One For The Verde donated the Grand Prize to the Winner! We would like to send out a HUGE THANK YOU to: Clarkdale Kayak Company, Chateau Tumbleweed, Four Eight Wineworks, Stronghold Vineyards, The State Bar and Dead Horse State Park for contributing to the Grand Prize package!

One For The Verde



We'd like to thank **Melissa Robinson** for her dedication, enthusiasm and hard work over the last year and a half in building the One For the Verde program. Melissa is focusing on her real estate business but continues to participate with Friends as a volunteer, advisor and OFTV Conservation Partner. We wish her much success.

Friends is pleased to welcome **Isaac Dudley** to the team as the new Business Development Coordinator. Isaac will be managing the One For the Verde program, taking over for Melissa. A Verde Valley local, with degrees in Spanish and Journalism from Northern Arizona University, Isaac is an avid lover of the outdoors. Passionate about conservation and the sustainable growth of the Verde Valley, Isaac hopes to use his voice as a storyteller to help his community grow as every healthy community should. [Contact Isaac via email](#) to learn more about our Business Conservation Partner opportunities.



Thank you to our One For The Verde Conservation Partners for their generous support.

\$250 and above:

Chateau Tumbleweed
Blazin' M Ranch
Clarkdale Kayak
Coldwell Banker Maybery
Real Estate
Seed Boutique

\$100 and above:

Century 21 Sexton Real Estate
Thanks A Latte
10-12 Lounge
Aspey, Watkins & Deise
Page Springs Cellars
Keller Williams Legacy One Realty

Donations received September 1 - December 31, 2017

One for the Verde brings together the collective resources of business conservation partners 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

Verde River Exchange

Please join Friends in thanking our Verde River Exchange participants for their leadership and stewardship.

In 2017, four local businesses helped lead the way on river protection in the Verde Watershed through the purchase of Water Offset Credits through the Verde River Exchange.

Page Springs Cellars & Vineyards, an inaugural and second-year participant in the Verde River Exchange, is a family-owned vineyard and winery that crafts fine Arizona wines. In 2017, Page Springs offset the water used to grow about four and a half acres of grapes on the banks of Oak Creek.

Caduceus Cellars & Merkin Vineyards, the other second-year participant in the Exchange, is a boutique winery with tasting rooms in Jerome and Cottonwood. They have reduced their water footprint this year through offsetting the water used at the Merkin Vineyards Tasting Room & Osteria in downtown Cottonwood.

Out of Africa Wildlife Park in Camp Verde, a park that offers the community a chance to see wild animals from all over the world, joined the Exchange in 2017. Out of Africa offset water used in its Tiger Splash exhibit as well as new habitat for “Totter the Otter.”

The Fish’s Garden, a family owned aquaponics business, is the other new 2017 participant in the Exchange. The Fish’s Garden offset all of the water used in their cutting edge Camp Verde business.

Launched in 2016 as a solution to address pressure on the Verde River due to increased groundwater pumping in the Verde Valley, the Verde River Exchange program allows Verde Valley residents and businesses to reduce their water footprint through the purchase of Water Offset Credits. As a result of these four businesses’ participation in the Exchange, roughly 3 million gallons (9.2 acre-feet) of water were returned to the Verde River and its tributaries in 2017.

Want to join the Exchange? Learn more about how to participate by visitin our website, <https://verderiver.org/verde-river-exchange/>



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

In February, our restoration team participated in the annual Riparian Restoration Conference in Grand Junction, CO, hosted by [RiversEdge West](#).

Friends Staff and Partners Travel to Colorado to share VWRC stories, make connections and more.

The first week in February, a group of Friends' staff and two VWRC partners traveled to Grand Junction, CO to attend the Colorado Plateau Native Plant Partnership (CPNPP) annual meeting and the Tamarisk Coalition's 16th annual conference.

The week kicked off with Anna Schrenk, Matt Wilson, and Kate Watters representing Friends and the Verde Native Seed COOP at the CPNPP meeting. This meeting was very well attended, with over 125



Matt Wilson, Nancy Steele & Amanda Webster.

vegetation managers, seed collectors and growers, agency representatives and vendors gathering to discuss native plants on the Colorado Plateau.

On Monday, one of the highlights was hearing about the implementation of commercial grow-outs of crypto biotic crust along the Colorado River in Moab, UT. Kate Watters, a Friends consultant and coordinator of the Verde Seed COOP, shared on the success of our efforts to provide locally collected and grown native seed and plant materials



for our regional restoration needs. On Monday afternoon the rest of our contingent arrived. Nancy Steele, Emily Garding, Amanda Webster, and Levi Jameson arrived in time for a taste of Grand Junction cuisine and to meet some of our regional partners.

On Tuesday, we attended the Riparian Restoration



Melissa McMaster, RiversEdge West (left) with Emily Garding, Friends of the Verde River (right).

Conference, hosted by RiversEdge West, for three days of all things riparian, including a presentation by Emily Garding, Friends' GIS Specialist, and Anna Schrenk called A Dynamic Model for Data Collection, which included newly improved data collection methods. There were four interactive panels, three field trips, ample time to connect with partners and funders and most importantly introduce Friends' new staff. Our poster attracted the attention of many.

Our Verde contingent returned to Arizona with ideas to make our organization and partnerships stronger, knowledge of recent restoration related research, and new connections. Anna Schrenk was presented the First President's Award by her Colorado River Basin peers for her efforts in the Verde Watershed and beyond.

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.



**FRIENDS OF THE
VERDE RIVER**

Ways to Give

You can help Friends with our work 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.



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VerdeRiver.org

Thanks to our donors! Donations received September 1 - December 31, 2017

\$1,000 +

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Susan Culp - NextWest Consulting
Abigail Disney
Robert Johnson
City of Cottonwood
Town of Clarkdale
City of Sedona
Town of Camp Verde
National Park Service
Yavapai County

\$500 - \$999

Kay Hawklee - Northern Arizona
Audubon Society
Jeni and Mike O'Callaghan
- NBJ Ranch LTC (Ranch Tres
Brisais)
Jane Russell-Winiecki
- Yavapai-Apache Nation
Eric Moore - Jay's Bird Barn
Elizabeth Bieber
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Wild West Hair Cutters
- and Hair Stylists

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.



Friends of the Verde River

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Please join us! Learn more, volunteer, donate. VerdeRiver.org

**Save the Date!
Upcoming Events**

**April 2018
Verde Valley Birding
& Nature Festival**



April 2018

April 3 - Arizona Gives Day
April 26 - 29 - Verde Valley
Birding & Nature Festival
April 28 - Family Nature Fair

Congratulations, Anna Schrenk!



Anna Schrenk receives the Past President's Award
at the Riparian Restoration Conference.

Bon Voyage!

Anna not only won the First President's Award at the Riparian Restoration Conference, she was also given the President's Award at the VWRC Stakeholder's meeting in December 2017. Her 15 month contract with Friends turned into a six-year commitment to restoration work in the Verde Valley and beyond. Anna will continue to work with Friends part-time from her sailboat, currently located on the Sea of Cortez, Mexico.

Sustaining Flows, Restoring Habitat, and Promoting Community Stewardship.