

The Otter

SPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF VERDE RIVER GREENWAY



VOLUME TWO
SPRING ISSUE

2013/2014 TREATMENT SEASON WRAP!

We've done it again. Another successful treatment season under our belts.

Through VWRC partnership, Friends of Verde River Greenway (FVRG) was able to fund three full-time treatment crews plus a part-time Biomass Reduction Crew for our 22 week season, lasting from the beginning of September through the end of February.

Two eight-person crews, were contracted through the Coconino Rural Environment Corps (CREC), who recruited young adults from near and far to serve as AmeriCorps Members. During the season they worked throughout the Verde Watershed while learning about the rich natural and cultural resources the watershed harbors.

CREC crews started their season in the upper Verde on the Prescott National Forest near Hells Canyon, treating a five mile stretch downstream near Bear Siding. They also tackled sites downstream including Dead Horse Ranch State Park, adjacent private properties, and TNC's Shields Ranch in Camp Verde. They finished up the season working on Tonto, Coconino and Prescott NF lands on the lower stretch of the river between Beasley Flats and Fossil Creek.

Sara VanMarel, CREC Crew Leader described her crew's experience by saying "We worked hard, got a lot done, had tons of fun and fell in love with the Verde Valley."

See **2013/2014 Treatment Season Page 3**

PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S LOG

Hi Friends,

As you read this spring issue of *The Otter*, Friends of Verde River Greenway staff and Board Members are preparing for Arizona Gives Day, a statewide day of giving to non-profits. We'll be staked out at our Cottonwood and Sedona headquarters to promote our organization, listen to good music and give out some swag. See page 6 for more info!

April 9th is a day to support Friends with a donation to further our efforts in restoring habitat along our streams while at the same time providing job opportunities for local Veterans and young adults who serve our community. Your donation may also go to help support Friends efforts to promote recreation on our river. As an Arizonan, this is your day to show your support.

I hope you will join me during this day of giving in supporting Friends. Donations of all sizes keep us working to promote, protect and restore our streams. Thanks for your support!

News you otter know about VWRC

- ♦ **Meanderland Private Landowner Partners Stepping Up Page 2**
- ♦ **2014 Tamarisk Coalitions Annual Conference Page 4**
- ♦ **Yavapai County Adult Probation Team Pitches In Page 5**
- ♦ **Happenings Around the State Page 6**
- ♦ **Summer Interns Hit the Ground Running Page 7**

MEANDER LAND: PRIVATE LANDOWNER PARTNERSHIPS STEPPING UP!

One of the most unique aspects of the Verde Watershed is how many places private and public lands intersect. In many large watersheds in the Southwest, public and private lands often intersect, but private land tends to be large parcels owned by a few private landowners.

For many years, large ranches and farms dominated the Verde Watershed. There has been a decreased trend in agriculture and the subdivision of larger parcels along the riparian areas of the Verde, Oak Creek, Sycamore Creek, Wet Beaver Creek and West Clear Creek. Today there are an estimated 1,700 individual parcels owned by approximately 850 private landowners.

For FVRG and VWRC to effectively implement projects on a watershed scale, we must partner with as many entities as possible including private landowners.

Many of these private parcels

are adjacent to public lands managed by a variety of VWRC partners including the US Forest Service, AZ State Park, Arizona Game & Fish, two National Monuments and a fair amount of land managed by Yavapai County and other local municipalities.

These parcels come in all shapes and sizes; the smallest being .2 acres; the largest being over 1,739 acres.

The good news is that here in the Verde Watershed, private landowners have joined in our partnership.

In the three years that FVRG and it's partners formalized habitat improvement agreements with private landowners, almost 190 of them have signed these agreements, see table below. Agreements include more than 2,000 riparian acres in the Verde Watershed, almost one half of the riparian acres on private land. This is a major accomplishment!

These partnerships with private landowners are essential to ensuring that adjacent public and private lands are both participating, making our overall treatment efforts that more effective.

We look forward to continued improvements to the health of the Verde Watershed through the expansion of our public and private partnerships.

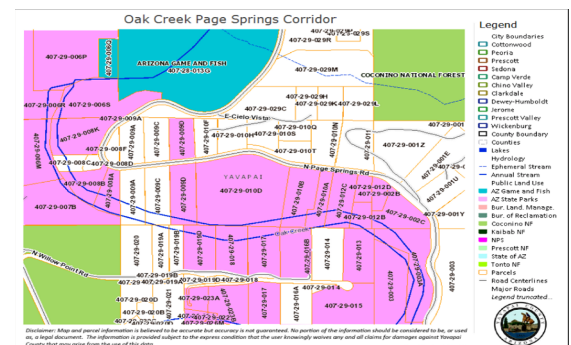
Laura Jones Community Outreach Coordinator, FVRG

Below a small section of Oak Creek through Cornville. Blue parcels indicate land managed by AZ Game and Fish Department, green indicates land managed by Coconino National Forest, and purple indicates private land with habitat improvement agreements with FVRG/VWRC.

Private Landowner Participation*

Project Year	Individual Landowners	Total Parcels	Total Acres	Total Riparian Acres	Total River Miles
2011/2012	18	33	1228	285	8
2012/2013	100	202	1059	357	10
2013/2014	71	245	3292	1382	17
Total	189	480	5579	2024	35

*As of March 5, 2014



2013/2014 TREATMENT SEASON WRAP UP



CREC Crew treating Tamarisk on an eight-day spike in the Upper Verde

Continued from page 1

Our third crew was our seven-man Vets Crew hired by The Vetraplex.

This crew engaged local Verde Valley Veterans, some were returning crew members from the previous season and some were previously unemployed Veterans.

They continued their march down Oak Creek, starting up on private properties in Oak Creek Canyon and finishing up the season around Sheep's Head Crossing above the Cornville Bridge.



Veterans Crew removing a large Arundo Donax (Giant Reed) patch on a hill side looking over Oak Creek

James Privett, The Vetraplex Crew Leader and returning crew member, reflects on this seasons experience: "It was great to come back to our work on Oak Creek. We could see all that we had accomplished last year and built on that. I'm look-

ing forward to next season."

FVRG funded a part-time Biomass Reduction Crew who put over 200 hours onto our chipper this season to transform huge piles of invasive plant debris into smaller manageable piles. They followed behind the crews making sites tidy!

This season, our crews treated and removed close to 125,000 stems of invasive plants on 1,125 acres of riparian habitat along the Verde River, West Clear Creek, Beaver Creek, Oak Creek and Fossil Creek.

As we continue our work, it is exciting to see how the commitment of our partners, both public and private, have supported us to make huge strides towards achieving the goals of the Cooperative Invasive Plant Management Plan (CIPMP)!



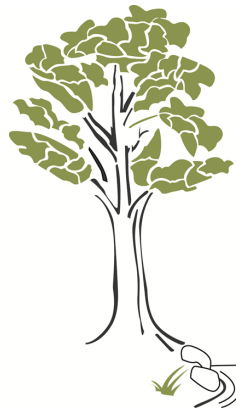
Biomass Reduction Crew chipping Arundo stalks into small pieces

VWRC PRESENTS AT TAMARISK COALITION'S ANNUAL RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

This February nine VWRC representatives attended the 2014 Tamarisk Coalition's Research and Management Conference focusing on riparian restoration in the western US.

VWRC was represented by Friends of Verde River Greenway, Coconino National Forest, AZ Game & Fish Department, Southwest Decision Resources and The Nature Conservancy. The three-day conference took place in Grand Junction, CO, hosted by the Tamarisk Coalition and the Water Center at Colorado Mesa University.

The Tamarisk Coalition's mission is *Advancing the restoration of riparian lands through collaboration, education and technical assistance*. Their geographic focus is areas that have potential habitat that is suitable



Tamarisk Coalition

Restore. Connect. Innovate.

important research, techniques, methods and solutions through diverse presentations, interactive sessions and networking opportunities.

Presentations included many pertinent and useful topics for VWRC partners such as water rights, wildlife and endangered species protection, public involvement, and new technology.

Additionally, there were two half-day "think-tank" group discussions (including a mini Cross-Watershed Network Symposium, for those who attended) that revolved around how to facilitate sharing of resource management and research ideas to a larger audience.

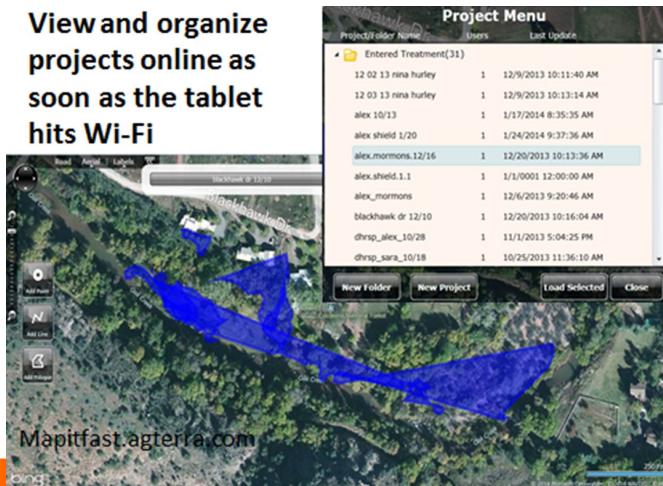
FVRG staff members Laura Jones, Anna Schrenk, and Hannah Farrell gave presentations. Laura Jones' presentation "*Land Owner Engagement in the Verde Valley*" was about the efforts and tools VWRC utilizes to involve the community with our restoration efforts as well as the successes and challenges we have had with recruiting land owners to join our management efforts.

Anna Schrenk and Hannah Farrell co-presented "*The Use of Tablet Computers for Field Data Collection in the Verde River Watershed*" which addressed how VWRC has spearheaded the use of Android tablets and specialized software this season for the collecting of mapping, monitoring and treatment data. Both presentations were greeted with enthusiasm and inquiries on specific details.

Everyone from VWRC attending the conference came away with useful contacts and connections, ideas for improvements for our programs, and contagious excitement for river restoration!

Hannah Farrell Field Data Coordinator/AmeriCorps Intern, FVRG

View and organize projects online as soon as the tablet hits Wi-Fi



Mapping Tablet demonstration by Hanna Farrell Field

for tamarisk establishment, which includes most of the western US. This Grand Junction-based organization acts as a information clearinghouse. This year's conference had about 175 scientists, land and water managers, researchers, students, and consultants in attendance from throughout the southwest.

The primary purpose of this conference was to share

YAVAPAI COUNTY ADULT PROBATION SUPPORTS LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE



It was a sleepy Monday morning and I had been playing phone tag with a guy that had left me several enthusiastic voice mail messages. We finally connected and his voice boomed through the phone, I knew that this guy was going to be fun to work with.

Van Parson, Community Restitution Coordinator, with Yavapai County's Adult Probation Program brings his booming voice and enthusiasm to a job, that I imagine, some could find difficult. Van and his team work with adult probationers and public partners throughout Yavapai County to assist public entities with landscaping and brush clearing and indoor painting projects, while providing probationers with a meaningful community service experiences.

For FVRG/VWRC this program has been a successful partnership where community members help us with needed long-term maintenance while learning that a healthy riparian area has value.

The partnership began by addressing an immediate need in Dead Horse Ranch State Park. During the treatment season, our CREC crews felled thousands of Tamarisk trees. The park staff was prepared to chip and

distribute the material, but they needed some helping hands. Van's crew came in and swamped the trees to a better location to be chipped.

On the other side of the river, below the 10th Street Bridge, the County crews helped swamp piles of cut Tree of Heaven that the CREC crews cut down to a central area for chipping. The partnership was moving along smoothly.

Last fall when new Ailanthus trees began to spring up in the same area below the bridge, we called on Van for his assistance. This time, the crew worked side by side with FVRG volunteers and staff to dig and pull the small seedlings and saplings. By working side by side with staff, the crew leaders, Jeff Hall and Clint Dougherty, learned the techniques used to help remove the trees.

When similar regrowth happened at Page Springs Hatchery, they were able to help take those saplings

down as well. With all of this success our partnership has now expanded to include invasive removal and trail building with FVRG and the Town of Clarkdale.



Adult Probation crew members working on a trail clearing project with FVRG and the Town of Clarkdale.

As we all know, the four species of invasive trees that we are working to reduce in the Verde Watershed

are tenacious. It takes dedication from across our community to help with the initial clearing and long term



An area where the view of the Verde River was completely block by Giant Reed (*Arundo Donax*), now has a clear view thanks to the Adult Probation Crews hard work.

maintenance.

Yavapai County's Community Restitution Program also essential to grants that require a in-kind cost share. In 2013 contributed 1,916 hours to FVRG . These hours add up; the total value of this service is \$23,493.60, a very large in-kind contribution.

Our partnership with the Yavapai County Adult Probation program will help FVRG/VWRC carry on long-term maintenance making sure that this aggressive tree regrowth is kept to a minimum on public lands while continuing to add value to our public spaces.

**Laura Jones Community
Outreach Coordinator, FVRG**

HAPPENINGS AROUND THE STATE



Donate Now!!!

<http://www.razoo.com/story/Friends-Of-Verde-River-Greenway>

FVRG is honored with Partnership and Collaboration Award from AZ State Parks

At AZ State Parks Annual Agency Recognition event, Friends of Verde River Greenway was awarded the Partnership and Collaboration Award in recognition of the close working relationship Dead Horse Ranch State Park and the Verde River Greenway and Friends of the Verde River Greenway.



Arizona Gives Day is a powerful 24 hour online giving experience that unites Arizonans around causes they believe in. Hosted by the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits and the Arizona Grantmakers Forum, Arizona Gives Day is a great way for nonprofits to connect to the larger community. Please join us in our Arizona Gives Day campaign by donating to the vital work we do in our community!

Riparian Restoration Workshop in Yuma!

This March, representatives from VWRC participated in the 2014 Binational Riparian Restoration Workshop in Yuma hosted by the Walton Family Foundation, City of Yuma, Fred Phillips Consulting and the Quechan Tribe. The workshop focused on hands-on riparian restoration techniques as well as the successes and challenges of large scale restoration along the lower Colorado River. Participants got their feet wet while harvesting plant materials and learning techniques for planting and erosion control. VWRC representatives discussed how these methods can be used on Verde projects.



SUMMER ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS (AZCC) INTERNS HIT THE GROUND RUNNING!

We are proud and excited to welcome four Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC), formally the Coconino Rural Environment Corps (CREC), interns to the VWRC team! Interns will work with FVRG and VWRC partners for two and a half months focusing on mapping and inventory of invasive plant species throughout the watershed.

They started their internship by mapping Freeport McMoRan property in Clarkdale. They have also been treating Giant Reed, conducting monitoring of last year's treatments, as well as doing some public outreach and recruitment to local youth for next year's crew positions.

All four interns served on our treatment crews this fall and winter. They are led by Sara Van Merel, a crew leader with two and a half years of experience leading conservation corps crews. Sara said she decided to stick around to lead this mapping crew because "while working in the Verde Watershed I've seen the progress that has been made and hope to be part of the successful control of the invasive species here."

Kody Crawford, John Robertson, and Brandon Swapp round out the foursome as AmeriCorps Members. Kody, originally from Bullhead City, says "I want to continue working for VWRC because I have really enjoyed living in and becoming familiar with the Verde Valley." Both Brandon and John grew up here in the Verde Valley. John looks forward to

gaining new adventures and experiences while on the mapping crew. Brandon, who has lived here his whole life, wants to continue to work for us because he has enjoyed learning about what is going on with his local environment and being able to give back to the area by helping to restore it.

After finishing their time in the Verde Watershed, these four interns will join two more interns above the Mogollon Rim. The group will be working with the Coconino National Forest where they will be conducting weed and rare plant surveys.

FVRG is dedicated to providing young adults with career pathway opportunities in the field of conservation, resource management and restoration. This work experience will provide the interns with new job skills while learning about career opportunities with our VWRC partners.



AmeriCorps Volunteers provide essential services to non-profits like FVRG and throughout the Verde Valley, Arizona and the US

Spring Interns from right to left, Sara , Kody, John and Brandon .

Special thanks to the private landowners and organizations that joined FVRG and VWRC Partners in improving habitat in the Verde Watershed this quarter.

- ♦ **Idell Le Gendre**
- ♦ **Jennifer Dutton**
- ♦ **Don Goettle**
- ♦ **Chris Cotter**
- ♦ **Margaret Edge**
- ♦ **Marcia Johns**
- ♦ **Steven Borrouso**
- ♦ **Eastham Family Trust**
- ♦ **Norton Development**
- ♦ **Davis—Norton Family Trust**
- ♦ **Larry Watkins**

- ♦ **Linda Miller**
- ♦ **Esther “Babe” Daley**
- ♦ **Conroy Camp Verde Ranch Farms**
- ♦ **Nils & Janet Anderson**
- ♦ **Dale & Bonnie Harvey**
- ♦ **Richard Martin**
- ♦ **Hauser Farms**

Thanks for
improving wild-
life habitat in the
Verde!!



**Join us by giving towards
Friends of Verde River Greenways**

GIVE NOW

**Thanks for your Support! Come out to
one of our AZ Gives Day Headquarters!**

The Field Coffee House in Sedona

And

RIOT in Old Town to celebrate

AZ Gives Day With us!

Special Thanks to VWRC & FVRG Volunteers!!!

Marsha Foutz

George Reeve

Chip Norton

Chris Jensen

Mal Otterman

Duane Edwards

Martin Ball

Hank Dingemann

Jim Quinn

Joan Otterson

Jesse Miller

Earl Poucher

Becky Brassfield

Kimberly Poucher

Kipian Horcos

Jim Kreunen

Jodi Allen

Theresa Hughes

Bruce Maurer

Shannon Shaw

Sarah Sonrenbery

Mick Emerson

Lo Modric

Devin James

Prescott College Ecology Class

Krystina Karczewski

Martin Yassi

Hugh Taylor

Jeremy Mc Murtry

VWRC Steering Committee Members

Friends of Verde River Greenway-**Chip Norton**

The Nature Conservancy- **Kim Schonek**

Coconino National Forest- **Laura Moser**

Arizona State Parks-**Steven "Max" Castillo**

Arizona Game and Fish Department-**Wade Albrecht**

Salt River Project-**Ruth Valencia**

National Park Service-**Tina Greenwalt**

Natural Resource Conservation District-**Chris Jensen**

USFWS (Partners for Fish & Wildlife)-**Kris Randall**

Tamarisk Coalition-**Jamie Nielson**

Yavapai-Apache Nation-**Fred Sanchez**

Prescott National Forest-**Albert Sillas and Nancy Walls**

Staff: Anna Schrenk, Laurie Parker, Laura Jones, Phil Hall and AmeriCorps Member Hannah Farrell

VWRC Sub-Committees

Outreach, Education and Engagement

Co-coordinators: Steve Estes and Laura Jones

Members: Max Castillo, Chip Norton, Anna Schrenk, Jaime Nielsen, Tahnee Robertson, Lynda Zanolli, Laurie Parker, Chris Bertrand

Research and Monitoring

Co-coordinators: Kim Schonek and Ruth Valencia

Members: Laura Moser, Chip Norton, Jaime Nielsen, Max Castillo, Anna Schrenk, Kris Randall, Hannah Farrell, Chris Bertrand

Planning and Implementation

Co-coordinators: Anna Schrenk and Laura Moser

Members: Chris Jensen, Kim Schonek, Chip Norton, Ruth Valencia, Laura Jones, Chris Bertrand and Hannah Farrell

Sustainable Funding

Co-coordinators: Jamie Nielson and Chip Norton

Members: Anna Schrenk, Wade Albrecht, Laura Jones, Kristin Jespersen, Nancy Walls, Jenise Nyquist

Volunteer with VWRC!

Please contact Laurie Parker from FVRG at admin@verderivergreenway.org

VWRC Map & Monitor property for invasive plants.

No experience necessary!

ALTERNATIVE PLANT OF THE QUARTER

Native Plants of the Verde Valley

Get to Know: Desert Willow Tree (*Chilopsis Lineraris*)

Desert willow trees come in many varieties. Native the to southwest U.S. and northern Mexico, this small, deciduous tree has narrow, bright green leaves and colorful, trumpet shaped flowers.

During the cold season, desert willow will shed its leaves for up to six months. In summer, few trees can rival the beauty of flowering desert willow. Flower colors range from white to purple, although a pale pink or a lavender flower color is common. This drought-tolerant, hardy tree performs well in southern Arizona, but it is not actually a true willow tree. It belongs to a family of blooming plants that includes pink and red trumpet vine. Desert willow trees come in a variety of cultivars with remarkable differences in flower color, leaf form and branching characteristics.



For information on native plant alternative for landscaping visit our web site at www.verdewrc.org

VWRC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

April 16-17, 2014 SRP/VWRC Bioengineering Workshop

Tuesday, April 22 10 AM-12 PM

Sustainable Fundraising Sub-Committee Mtg.

Tuesday, April 22 1-3 PM

VWRC Steering Committee Mtg.

Wednesday, April 23, 2014 9-11 AM

Outreach, Education & Engagement Sub-Committee Mtg.

Where: Cottonwood Middle School

MAY

Tuesday, May 27, 2014 10 AM-12 PM

Sustainable Funding Subcommittee Meeting

Where: County Supervisors Room, Yavapai County Building

VWRC Steering Committee Mtg. 1:00 –3 PM

Where: County Supervisors Room, Yavapai County Building

Wednesday, December 22, 2013 9-11 AM

Outreach, Education & Engagement Sub-Committee Mtg.

Where: Cottonwood Middle School

JUNE

Tuesday, June 24, 2014 10 AM-12 PM

Sustainable Funding Subcommittee Meeting

Where: County Supervisors Room, Yavapai County Building

FVRG Governing Council

Chip Norton — President

Tony Gioia — Vice President

Position Vacant— Treasurer

Marsha Foutz — Co-Secretary

Peggy Chaikin— Co-Secretary

Councilors

Jane Moore, Bob Rothrock, Steven “Max” Castillo-
Kim Schonek, Denise Lerett

FVRG and VWRC

P.O. Box 2535

Cottonwood, AZ 86326

Visit our office in “Old Town” at:
903 N. Main Street. Suite B
Cottonwood, AZ 86326
(upstairs above the Red Rooster Mercado)

Call us: 928-301-4934