

FY 2022 IMPACT REPORT



Friends *of the*
VERDE RIVER

Photo by Kegn Moorcroft

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I write this morning, I note the Verde River is really, well, the "Rojo" River today. It is August and monsoons, somewhere in the Verde drainage, are putting life giving water into the system. I like to think Sedona is running by my ranch at the southeast end of the Verde Valley.

Another Rojo, our dog, is the red heeler we rescued. He loves us; we love him. He is our constant companion as we walk/ride along the Verde River, swim in its waters, and raise our beef. I love to watch him as he pursues great blue herons or jack rabbits, among others he knows at Rancho Tres Brisas.

I love Rojo's determination; he thinks he can catch anything that flies, or runs like the wind. I wonder what it would be like to know every smell in the area, animal smells, the sweetness of blooming flowers, the cycling smell of leaf debris composted by nature.

Like Rojo, I am enraptured by the life our Verde River brings. As President of Friends of the Verde River, we work to keep the Verde flowing, with a healthy habitat, and a vibrant community, so that you and your best friend can join Rojo and me in enjoying our Verde. Your support ensures this. Thank you for helping to keep the Verde flowing!

Jeni O'Callaghan, *President*



FY22 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeni O'Callaghan, President

Tony Gioia, Vice-President

Brent Bitz, Treasurer

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Kim Knotter

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Nancy L.C. Steele, ex officio

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Friends of the Verde River exists because you can't imagine a world in which the Verde River isn't flowing, free and healthy!

Because you can't imagine a world without the sounds of birds singing and streams gurgling;

Because you can't imagine a world in which people of all ages can't float downriver in a boat or fly fish in Fossil Creek;

Because you can't imagine a world in which you can't take a hike along Oak Creek;

Because you can't imagine a world in which your children and their children and future generations don't experience the joy and wonder of rivers and creeks.

Friends of the Verde River is here for you. We want to make your dreams of a blue and green future come true. When you support Friends, you support rivers with flowing water. Thank you for keeping the Verde River flowing and healthy!

Nancy Steele, *Executive Director*

FY22 STAFF LIST

Nancy L.C. Steele, Executive Director

Isaac Dudley, Flows Projects Manager

Hudson Keffer, Restoration Specialist

Melanie Miles, Events & Outreach Manager

Kegn Moorcroft, Stewardship Director

Elaine Nichols, Restoration Projects Manager

Jake Phelps, Field Supervisor

Maya Rappaport, Communications Associate

Tracy Stephens, Program Director

Mark Troksa, Finance & Operations Director

Virginia Weis, Accounting Administrator

Maxwell Wilson, Sustaining Flows Manager





DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Johnny Williams

Johnny Williams' property on the Verde River near Camp Verde is his escape-from-the-world place. An outdoorsman, he spends his time trying to catch six different kinds of fish from his own riverbank and riding horses on riverside trails. He enjoys the beauty and wildlife from his house. He says he would trade city life for a day on the Verde, any day of the week.

"I became involved with Friends of the Verde River because I live on the river. I fish it. I hike it. I kayak it. I swim in it, and I make it a point to enjoy all that it has to offer. Where I live the river is wide and beautiful and I feel blessed to be able to enjoy Arizona's only perennial river as well as Arizona's only federally designated wild and scenic river, as much as I do. It's important to me to keep the river flowing and healthy. If a financial contribution can keep the Verde going, count me in!"

Dean & Tammy Pefanis

Dean and Tammy Pefanis live on Oak Creek, so when Eric Glomsky of Page Springs Cellars introduced them to Friends of the Verde River at Tilted Underground and asked for their support, it was a logical fit. Friends' stewardship team followed up with them and last year the Pefanises responded to a request for a year-end match to board giving. Before long, Tammy was invited to join the Development Committee -- but she tagged Dean instead.

"Financial support is necessary to keep the organization going and fund its projects and vital work. We are pleased to be in a position to help."





"Once there is an endowment, so many things become possible."

Tony & Kim Gioia

Tony and Kim Gioia have been working for the Verde River since the 1990's. Tony was part of an informal group of river enthusiasts cleaning up the river and teaching others to kayak. Tony has been on more than a dozen water-related committees, has taught many students about groundwater and surface water and was instrumental in getting the Wild and Scenic designation for Fossil Creek.

Kim gets on the water when she can. She enjoys kayaking, watching otters, and being at peace on the water. It restores her soul. The Verde truly gives so much to Tony and Kim.

Their most recent investment is a provision in their trust to leave funds for an endowment for Friends of the Verde River. By including Friends in their estate plans, Tony and Kim are members of the Friends' Sycamore Society. Their gift will sustain the organization and the River, long into the future.





RIVERFRIENDLY L I V I N G

Bring river conservation home with you! Decisions that you make in your community have big impacts on the health of our rivers. River Friendly Living offers solutions for protecting waterways in the areas of sustainable water supply, clean water, healthy habitat, and connected communities.

River Friendly Living also recognizes those who are protecting the Verde River. Since July 2021, we have worked with forty-six homeowners, business owners, farmers, rancher, and housing developers to become certified as River Friendly. You, too, can be River Friendly certified! Join us!



STATISTICS

11

HOMES

8

CERTIFIED
BUSINESSES

29

PARTICIPATING
BUSINESSES

2

FARMS

2

DEVELOPMENTS

300,000

GALLONS OF WATER RECHARGED
TO THE GROUNDWATER

\$20,000

RAISED BY BUSINESSES TO SUPPORT
RIVER FRIENDLY LIVING

47

PARTICIPANTS IN RFL

23

CERTIFICATIONS ISSUED

THE VERDE RIVER THANKS THESE BUSINESSES FOR SUPPORTING RIVER FRIENDLY LIVING

Businesses

Amazon Smile Foundation

Chateau Tumbleweed

Coldwell Banker Northland

Cottonwood Chamber
of Commerce

D.A. Ranch

Dudley Photo

Frys/Kroger

Lynn's Skin Care

The Mine Cafe

Merkin Vineyards

Multi-Etch LLC

Origins Bed and Breakfast*

Out of Africa

Page Springs Vineyards

Pillsbury Wine Company*

Pin Drop Travel Trailers

Pines Inn & Suites*

Pink Adventure Tours

Rainbow Acres

Red Rooster Cafe

Sinagua Malt*

Smart Window Creations

Smelter Town Brewery*

Prescott Audubon Society

Sedona Eye Boutique*

Square Roots Vineyard

Sycamore Vista Airbnb*

Tres Brisas Properties*

Verde Adventures

Farms

Rancho Tres Brisas*

Spec Farms*

Developments

TinyCamp Cottonwood Resort*

Rio Verde Plaza*

* River Friendly Living Certified



TinyCamp is Certified Silver!



All River Friendly Developments must meet criteria in four categories: Sustainable Water Supply, Clean Water, Healthy Habitat, and Connected Communities. The TinyCamp Cottonwood Resort was not required to include any conservation strategies as part of its site plan. Owner Darin Dinsmore took it upon himself to be an example of how conservation strategies can be used in an urban setting.

This site achieved the silver level of certification by including a greywater capture system and a rain harvesting system to dramatically reduce their water use. The site captures up to 20,000 gallons of water per year! In addition, the development offset the first five years of water use through the Verde River Exchange, enhanced native habitat, removed invasive plants, and today provides educational opportunities to residents about river health.



"The TinyCamp team has enjoyed working with Friends of the Verde River on this pilot project. We've been learning extensively about the importance of water conservation, as well as habitat restoration and preservation through this project. We hope that this project can be an educational opportunity for guests and visitors"

-Darin Dinsmore

River Friendly Living Grants

Each year, participating businesses help fund River Friendly Living Grants. These grants are awarded to homeowners, businesses, non-profit organizations, and municipalities to support sustainable water supply, clean water, healthy habitat, and connected communities.

In FY22, Friends awarded a total of \$10,000 to four organizations: Verde River Institute for implementation of the Verde River Rangers program, Verde Earth Technologies for the purchase of equipment to restore habitat, Verde Village Property Owners Association for removal of invasive plant species, and Verde Valley Cyclist Coalition for an expansion of the Blowout Wash Trail System in Cottonwood.



"The Verde River Rangers have so far engaged more than 2,000 people in instruction and conversations, patrolled 195 miles of river in 765 man-hours, collected 1,836 pieces of trash weighing 635 pounds, and assisted over 140 people in rapids and elsewhere."

Doug Von Gausig
Executive Director of the Verde River Institute

Ranger Doug Von Gausig and Scott Buckley of Clarkdale Kayak Company moving a flood-washed truck bed out of the river. The truck bed was washed into the river by the large monsoonal floods of August 2021 and was causing a hazardous obstruction.

"The grant provided by Friends of the Verde River really was the catalyst to growing our work. The funds not only purchased six chainsaws, it created full time work for six people and led to the restoration of over 300 acres of pine and aspen forests, chaparral, and deserts across the state in the past year."

Chris Young
Verde Earth Technologies



Chris Young with one of the chainsaws purchased with the River Friendly Living Grant at a restoration project site.

HABITAT RESTORATION

Every year, our treatment season starts in the fall as temperatures cool down. In 2021 we contracted with Arizona Conservation Corps (AZCC) and Verde Earth Technologies (VET) to restore eleven sites throughout the Verde Watershed. Crews removed tree of heaven, tamarisk, giant reed, and Russian olive along the Verde River and tributary streams. In total, the crews spent 7,585 hours treating invasive species during from November 2021 through February 2022.

In the fall of 2021, Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) and FVR inventoried Himalayan Blackberry at Fossil Springs after the Backbone Fire burned the area. Himalayan blackberry is an aggressive invasive species that will be removed over time.

In the spring of each year we map and monitor invasive plant growth and native plant recovery. Our three-person crew worked for two months in 2022. The team monitored a total of 1,424 acres throughout 27 river miles within the watershed. Sites of focus included part of the upper Verde, 89A - Bignotti, lower Oak Creek, and the river section through Camp Verde.



Above: The 2022 spring monitoring crew collecting data along West Clear Creek.

492 Acres Treated

1,423 Acres Monitored

14 New Private Landowners Signed Up



Above: Members of the AZCC crew treating giant reed at the Reeve's property during training



The VET and AZCC crews from the 2021-2022 treatment season at training on the Reeve's property in Camp Verde

Friends is Making a Difference

I just wanted to let you know what a great group of hard-working guys came to work today. Not only were they great workers but they all were very knowledgeable also. I learned a lot. Thank you!

Tom Carpenter, *Camp Verde Landowner*

I feel it's important to recognize the pressure we are all putting on the Verde River and make choices to help improve its health and longevity for future generations. I hope that my family's continued commitment to preservation and conservation will inspire others to do so.

Claudia Hauser, *Hauser & Hauser Farms*

Being a veteran, especially during times of conflict, is a challenging task to reintegrate into society. Many of the experiences you have had have no counterpart in day-to-day life. And for many of our veterans these experiences become debilitating. Our work with Friends of the Verde River gives our veterans peace - sometimes for the first time. I for one can truly say it saved my life.

Chris Young, Verde Earth Technologies (VET)

Protecting Wildlife Corridors

Friends and our VWRC partners have been focused on connecting two pronghorn herds that were not mixing due to an inability to cross the river. The group is working to remove unnecessary fencing and is using game cameras to better understand why the pronghorn are having difficulty crossing the river. With this information, managers will have a better understanding of how Verde Watershed pronghorn can be preserved.

10 volunteers

¼ mile fence removed

5 game cameras installed



Above: Volunteers removing unnecessary fencing to allow free movement for pronghorn.

Community Stewards Work for the River

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service 2022

Many people contributed their time towards completing restoration projects along the Verde River at sites throughout the Verde Valley. We also thank our partners from the Town of Camp Verde, Prescott National Forest, Dead Horse Ranch State Park, Oak Creek Watershed Council, and the Town of Clarkdale.

48 Volunteers

144 Hours Worked

200 lbs of Trash
Removed

140 Willow Poles
Planted

100 Trees of
Heaven Removed

1/2 mile trail
maintained



Volunteers plant native willow trees near Clear Creek River Access Point with the Prescott National Forest and Camp Verde.



Volunteers restore a portion of trail that was washed away during a major flood event. By restoring this trail, we can encourage hikers to stay on one path and have less impact on the surrounding environment.

This was my first volunteer event I've participated in at Camp Verde as the Economic Development Specialist. Having worked with the Friends of the Verde in the professional setting, so I thought it was high time that I got my hands dirty a little bit by doing some tree planting along the Verde River. We had a diverse mix of folks, some even came up from Phoenix to help plant Willow trees and I honestly had a great time. It was great to help the natural habitat here in Camp Verde and it was fun meeting new people who are passionate about the environment. I would recommend other people and organizations to work with the Friends of the Verde River on volunteer activities and events!

Sean Brooks, Economic Development Specialist, Town of Camp Verde

Community Scientists Learn About Nature

Verde Water Watchers

40 samples collected by volunteers in FY22

"For nearly a year now we have been going out, once a month, to area streams to collect water samples and monitor water quality for Friends of the Verde River. It is rewarding to know that our sampling will allow the state of Arizona to better categorize and track the cleanliness of our most precious resource. Equally rewarding has been the chance to make friends with our fellow volunteers and to return through the seasons to our sampling sites, often at remote locations along our area streams, taking pleasure in the continually fresh sights and sounds of our local riparian habitats." - Community scientists George and Brennan



Middle school students learning how to collect water quality samples on Oak Creek.

2022 Annual Verde Valley BioBlitz

A BioBlitz is a community effort to record and identify as many species as possible in a designated area over a designated period.



Top: Laurie Altringer, Science Vortex Director, showing a group of students how to identify plants and participate in the BioBlitz

Bottom: BioBlitz trip leaders led groups of fifth grade students on nature walks in Dead Horse Ranch State Park.

Thanks to support from the City of Cottonwood, we were able to bring over 200 Fifth Graders out to the river to learn about nature.

4,762 Observations

1,164 Species

419 Observers

418 Identifiers

201 Fifth Graders in 7 Classes Participated

"Getting all the fifth graders from Cottonwood Oak-Creek School District outside exploring was a sight to see! Kids used phones and iPads as learning tools to take photos of living species and to help identify their discoveries. It was super exciting to hear kids exclaim things like, 'There's another grackle!' and 'I think I found a mushroom, come here!' Their learning continued back at their school campuses where students analyzed their data, learned about taxonomy, and got to see their photos in the iNaturalist project. These hands-on experiences not only taught students about the value of community science projects and biology, but also connected them to nature. Place-based education is the best!"

-Laurie Altringer, M.Ed, Science Vortex Director





Fiesta de la Garza December 2021 Honorees

We celebrated our first decade in style!

Every year, Friends honors partners whose collaboration and support are beyond measure. In December 2021, these partners were given well-earned awards.



President's Award

Sandy Moriarty, Mayor, City of Sedona



Special Honorees

Peggy Chaikin, Marsha Foutz, Delbert "Chip" Norton, founding Board members



River Friendly Living Award

Ron Corbin, City
Manager, Cottonwood



River Steward Award

Dick Lynch, Verde



Business Partner of the Year

Jim Ariola, Old Town
Red Rooster Café



Nonprofit Partner of the Year

Laurie Altringer,
Science Vortex



Government Partner of the Year

Chad Yokum, Prescott
National Forest



Volunteer of the Year

Debbie LaFrance

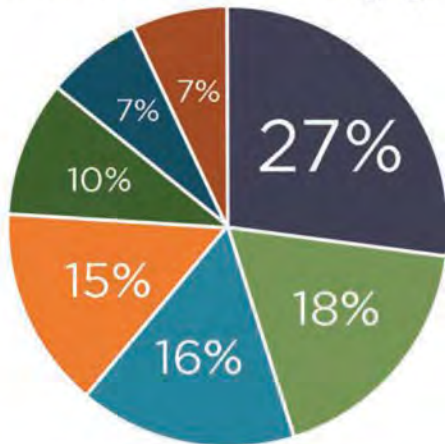


Special Mention to

Greg Kornrumpf, on
his retirement from
SRP

FINANCIALS

Revenue & Support



Donations

Grants- Foundations

Grants- Nonprofits

Grants- Federal

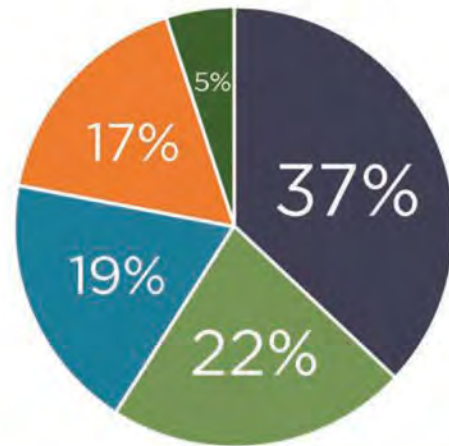
Grants- Arizona

Special Events

In-Kind & Other

Total: \$1,536,217

Expenses



Programs- Habitat

Programs- Flows

Programs- Community

Administration

Fundraising

Total: \$1,377,478

Thank You to Our Top Supporters of 2022

Arizona Department of Game and Fish
 Arizona Humanities Council
 Arizona State Forestry
 Arizona Water Protection Fund
 Bonneville Environmental Foundation
 Coconino National Forest
 Conservation Legacy
 Forever Our Rivers Foundation
 Horne Family Foundation
 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 National Forest Foundation
 Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
 Page Springs Vineyards, LLC
 Prescott National Forest
 The Nature Conservancy
 Walton Family Foundation

Thank you to our FY22 Event Sponsors!

Arizona Community Foundation
 Arizona Humanities
 Arizona Public Service
 Cambium Wealth & Legacy Strategies
 City of Cottonwood
 City of Sedona
 KT Kayak Rentals
 Pines Inn & Suites
 Rancho Tres Brisas
 Sedona Beer Company
 Sedona International Film Festival
 Salt Mine Wine
 Salt River Materials Group
 Salt River Project
 The Melting Point
 Town of Camp Verde
 Town of Clarkdale
 Trulieve, Inc.
 Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona

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 can make a big difference

\$1,200

is enough to hire a military veteran for a week of removing nuisance plants from the riverbanks. \$240 pays for one day of work.

\$500

is enough to buy a new chainsaw for our restoration crews.

\$200

is enough to keep 100,000 gallons of water flowing in the Verde through the Verde River Exchange.

\$75

is enough to train a volunteer to collect water samples to help reduce pollution.

\$50

is enough to help a young person learn about nature during our spring BioBlitz.

\$25

is enough to buy much-needed hand tools so that we can restore the land



Donate today at
verderiver.org/riverhero

