



Also in this Newsletter:
 ASU Resilience Prize
 Learn about bald eagles
 We have new staff

CURRENTS & FLOWS *Spring 2023*



I am excited about a huge goal ahead of us: we need a new work truck! And we can't do this without you!

We call our current truck Bessie. Our friend Bessie is on her last wheels. With nearly 200,000 miles on her ticker, she's no longer very reliable. She has carried work crews, endured muddy fields, crept down eroded gullies, dodged a few errant cows, and even forded the river a few times. Invasive species fear Bessie.

You love Bessie because she makes habitat restoration happen. But it's time to replace Bessie with a new truck; we'll call her Birdie.

You can read more about our campaign and your part in it in the enclosed letter. But I want you to know that Bessie/ Birdie is only part of the habitat team; our crews and you are the rest of the team.

We are going to focus our efforts – starting now – on raising money to keep Verde River habitats healthy and help us to buy Birdie, from now right through Arizona Gives Day, April 4th. Mark that day on your calendar. You will be hearing more as the time approaches.

I'd love it if you would go online or mail us your donation for \$41. BTW, if you send more than \$41 it is okay with me. We'll get to our goal that much faster.

We can't buy Birdie without you!

Jeni O'Callaghan

Chair, Board of Directors



VERDE VALLEY BIRDING + NATURE FESTIVAL

Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival is almost here and we still have room for you!

The VVBNF is April 27 – 30. Each year, we invite an illustrious birder as our special guest. This year we have Arizonan Rick Taylor! Rick is a lifelong resident of Arizona. For 40 years he was director of Borderland Tours, a birding ecotourism company.

Rick is an accomplished author. In 2022, he published *Birds of Arizona*, a field guide for anyone who wants to focus on birds in the 48th state. Rick is also the author of *Trogons of the Arizona Borderlands* (1994), *A Birder's Guide to Southeastern Arizona* (2005), and *Birds of Southeastern Arizona* (2010). Rick will be joining us on several field trips and will be the keynote speaker at our banquet on Friday night. Learn more at verderiver.org/birding-festival.



Donate today at
verderiver.org/riverhero



2022 Resilience Prize

Friends of the Verde River

Each year Arizona State University's Knowledge Exchange for Resilience honors nonprofits and organizations that demonstrate positive impact in their communities through use -inspired research that builds community resilience.

We are pleased to announce that Friends of the Verde River was awarded ASU's Resilience Prize in late 2022.

The prize was given for our “collaborative, data-driven work to ensure the long-term health of one of Arizona’s last free-flowing rivers,” the Verde River. Our work builds community resilience by keeping the rivers flowing! This work is important not only in Northern Arizona, but downstream as well. Approximately 40-50 percent of the drinking water for the Phoenix metropolitan area is provided by Verde and the Salt Rivers. As Arizona receives less and less of its water from the Colorado River, our work will be more important than ever.

Please help us honor the great work we do by sharing

This YouTube video

<https://youtu.be/swDQGyyexCE>

or

This article by our Executive Director, Nancy Steele

<https://verderiver.org/friends/resilience-vs-sustainability/>





THE BALD EAGLE

*"Did you see it?" "There it is!" "It caught a fish!"
"They were both here!" "How beautiful!" "Spectacular!"*

The oohs and ahhs abound when the bald eagles are around. Cameras whirr and click as photographers track an eagle soaring above the pond or aim for the best photo of the eagle roosting in a tree.

Few people can identify a cactus wren or Gila woodpecker, but everyone knows that the huge bird with a white head is our national symbol, an American bald eagle.

But in 1963, because of hunting, habitat loss, and the pesticide DDT, there were only 417 nesting pairs of bald eagles left. Congress adopted laws in the 1940s to protect bald eagles (and golden eagles, which look a lot alike) and DDT was banned in 1972. In 1978, bald eagles were listed as an endangered species. The Fish & Wildlife Service began recovery programs such as captive breeding, reintroduction of healthy birds, and nest protection.

By 2007, bald eagles were no longer considered endangered or threatened, except in Arizona. The latest survey of breeding bald eagles in 2018-2019 pegged their numbers at 316,700, including over 71,000 breeding pairs, outside of Arizona. What an amazing recovery!

417

nesting pairs
in 1963

71,000

nesting pairs
in 2019



What about bald eagles in Arizona? There are two types of bald eagles found in Arizona. One is a winter visitor, arriving in October and leaving mid-March to breed in parts north. The other is a subpopulation of bald eagles that live here year-round. Arizona is home to these desert bald eagles, which nest along the Salt and Verde Rivers.

The desert nesting eagles are still listed as endangered, with only 47 nests. Over one-third of these nests are found along the Verde River. Their breeding season starts mid-November. As bald eagle nesting begins, access to those nests is closed off to foot and vehicle entry. Pilots are not even allowed to fly nearby. The young eagles fledge by June and take off on their own.

In the Verde Valley, you may see bald eagles any month of the year, although I usually see them fishing during winter and spring at Dead Horse Ranch SP. When you see a bald eagle, give thanks to the many unsung heroes of our wildlife agencies, and to Rachel Carson, author of the 1962 book *Silent Spring* that alerted the world to the dangers of DDT. They are responsible for bringing the American bald eagle back from the brink of extinction.

And give thanks to organizations like Friends of the Verde River, which work to keep the rivers healthy and flowing. Without rivers, bald eagles would not survive here.

Learn more at verderiver.org/birding-festival

FRIENDS TEAM CHANGES



Susan Van Norman

Director of Stewardship

Susan offers over ten years of comprehensive experience in marketing and communications management. An innovative visionary, Susan is recognized for successfully leading multiple fundraising projects from start to finish while effectively steering and coaching team members. She specializes in portrait painting, and is working on a Masters degree in Illustration and has a BFA in Graphic Design. Susan enjoys spending time with family, hiking, reading, and walking her Aussie dog in the beautiful Verde River Valley.



Mark Hufford

River Friendly Living Project Coordinator

Prior to moving to Camp Verde in 2022, Mark worked for the last 32 years for a variety of conservation, wildlife, and animal nonprofits in North Carolina, Washington DC, Washington state, and most recently for nine years in Baja California Sur, Mexico. He's served on boards and committees of fifteen small or regional environmental and animal-oriented nonprofits. Mark holds a degree in English from the University of Virginia, with a concentration in Environmental Science.



Katherine Sirimarco

Fundraising and Communications Coordinator

Katherine is a data marketer with fifteen years of experience working with schools, nonprofits, and start-up companies. Her passion is helping her community through education. She has taught classes for the U.S. Small Business Administration and Yavapai County. A former high school science teacher with a background in engineering and mathematics, she enjoys combining numbers with creativity, giving life to her projects. In her free time Katherine enjoys exploring nature with her little dog Archie. She teaches Tai Chi, hydroponic gardening classes, and flow art dancing.



Cynthia Butler

Water Quality Monitoring Technician

Cynthia works with the Water Quality Monitoring community science volunteers and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to assess biological and chemical changes that contribute to water pollution from the Verde River and its tributaries. Cynthia earned a BS in Environmental Science and Sustainability Studies from Northern Arizona University as well as a BA in Painting and Drawing from California Colleges of the Arts. Cynthia remains focused on watershed restoration and botany with a particular interest in native plants of Arizona and the Southwest.



Shannon Murphy

Watershed Report Card Project Scientist

Shannon is an Army veteran with diverse career experiences in numerous industries and professions including Geographic Information Systems (GIS). She has been an adjunct professor for Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and earned her Masters in GIS from Arizona State University and her BA in Geography with an emphasis in GIS from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. Shannon lives in Prescott Valley and loves hiking, gardening, and dancing.



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