

Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument



2018 Annual Report



Still waters of the Agua Fria River following a winter snow storm.

FAFNM

<http://www.AguaFriaFriends.org>

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December 31, 2018

Dear Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument,

As 2018 comes to an end we look back at the year's achievements and challenges for the future. First, here are some highlights.

Like the Monument's seasonal rhythm, our Friends' activities are shaped by the forces of nature. The landscape is gradually recovering from the July 2017 lightning-caused Brooklyn Complex fire, which burned more than 33,000 acres on the AFNM and Tonto National Forest. The Cultural and Natural Resources Committees continue to monitor the burned areas for impacts. The regional, prolonged drought stretched into the first half of 2018, then finally relented, somewhat, with this year's summer monsoon storms and rains in the early fall. The flows in the Agua Fria River have intermittently spiked and dipped, sunflowers were uncharacteristically scarce, and the summer's cuckoo counts decreased this year.

In October the Board of Directors was pleased to welcome three new members elected to the Board: Adam Stein, Luke Edens, and Reed Kraemer. It's been a while since all our Board positions have been filled. They are bringing fresh ideas to continue and expand our impact on the Monument and the public. In the summer FAFNM contracted with Lindsey Collins who provided much appreciated administrative help with Wet-Dry Mapping activities and our annual meeting.

Friends' activities also are affected by the administrative climate. In summer of 2018 the FAFNM secured a cooperative agreement and small amount of funds from the BLM to conduct public outreach, and continue cultural resources activities at the La Plata ruin. It is our intent that these funds will increase our membership of local residents and provide a benefit to the visitors of the Monument. It is appropriate that we acknowledge the strong support of Monument staff, including Ron Tipton, manager; AJ Whiteman, park ranger; and Tim Watkins, archeologist. Recent staff changes in the biology staff include Paul Sitzmann and Cody Carter both of whom have moved to different positions. We look forward to continuing our productive relationship with the BLM in 2019.

Financial Status: Jim Riggs, Treasurer

See the online update to be posted in January 2019.

Awards and Recognition: Kathleen Rickard, Vice-president

At the Friends Annual Meeting in September the Distinguished Member Award was presented to **Larry Kraft**, a long-time member of the Friends. Larry assists in the management of the Friends, was a Board member for several years, and participates in numerous events of the Cultural Resource Committee and other committees. We are grateful for his service.

If you know of Friends members with outstanding service to the Friends or protection of the Monument, please nominate them for the 2019 Distinguished Member Award. Nominations can be sent to Kathleen Richard (Kathleen@aguafriafriends.org) by July 1st.

As most of our service to the BLM is conducted by volunteers we were pleased to recognize several members for reaching a designated level within the Service Hours Recognition Program (SHRP). Members recognized for reaching the 100 Hours SHRP level were Jim Riggs and Tom Weimer. Members recognized for reaching the 250 Hours level was Marie Davis. Larry Kraft and Tom Leinfelder were recognized for reaching 500 Hours, and Mike Hoogendike for the 1,000 Hour level. We all thank you.

If you are providing volunteer hours as a member of the Friends make sure you are updating your hours on the www.TrackItForward.com (TiF) website, so that you can be recognized for your efforts. These hours are important to track as they help document the public's support for the Monument and show the BLM administrators our in-kind match. You also can find the TiF [link](#) from the FAFNM website www.AguaFriaFriends.org |Members|Report Your Volunteer Hours. If you have questions about keeping track of hours, contact the Friends at fafnmadmin@aguafriafriends.org.

Cultural Resource Committee Update: Connie Stone, Co-chair

The Cultural Resources Committee and its members assisted BLM staff in monitoring and protecting sensitive archaeological sites. These efforts were especially useful in identifying and assessing the long term effects of the extensive Brooklyn Complex wildfire on Perry Mesa.



Vegetation recovery below Perry Mesa, along Silver Creek, August 2018.

Site protection and research:

- Continued to monitor the condition of archaeological sites.
- Continued to inspect areas affected by the wildfire on Perry Mesa in 2017 and report observations to the BLM.
- Assisted Dr. David Abbott of ASU and Scott Wood of the Friends of the Tonto National Forest in surveys to study pottery types and prehistoric sites associated with human use of the area before A.D. 1200.
- Maintained signs at interpreted sites, including the 1891 School House.

Public outreach events:

- Arizona History Bookfest at Black Canyon Heritage Park

- Winterfest at Black Canyon Heritage Park
- Arizona Outdoor Expo sponsored by Arizona Game & Fish Dept.
- Tours of the Badger Springs petroglyph site for Arizona Archaeology Awareness Month and the Pecos Archaeology Conference
- Led a "Kid's Day in the Park" hike for youth at Badger Springs

Other activities:

- Coordinated with the BLM on implementing parts of the interpretive plan for Pueblo la Plata
- Participated in a Navajo weaving workshop conducted by one of our members

Lively committee meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month from 12:00 to 2:00 pm at the BLM Phoenix District Office at 21605 N. 7th Avenue in Phoenix. Members and guests are welcome to attend. Check the FAFNM calendar to confirm the schedule.

Natural Resources Committee Update: Tim Flood, Water Team Lead

Most activities under the Natural Resources Committee this year were conducted by members of the Water Team.

We conducted our annual Wet-Dry (WD) mapping of the Agua Fria River in June for the 11th straight year. BLM staff provided safety training targeted for summer outdoor work to volunteers on June 2. With BLM staff providing major logistical support, thirty-two volunteers arose early on June 23 to map the surface water along the Agua Fria River, Badger Springs Wash, Big Bug Creek, and Silver Creek. Lindsey Collins performed the data entry and was assisted by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Arizona, and the National Audubon Society in processing and posting the WD findings [online](#).



Committee members continued to attend meetings of the Upper Agua Fria Watershed Partnership (held the first Tuesday of each month at Arcosanti, just north of Cordes Junction). This Partnership discusses significant issues in the watershed including commercial developments, the ongoing drought, groundwater withdrawals, and ADOT’s intent to reconfigure the I-17 freeway. Current plans are aimed at reducing erosion by stabilizing the soils of the watershed. Riparian photo point monitoring continued at the Riverbend of the Agua Fria (see <https://sway.com/xG0NkCBGCGd0Ka5s>) and other segments.

The Natural Resources Committee also continued its participation in bird surveys on the monument. From June-August, the Agua Fria River provides nesting habitat for the western yellow billed cuckoo, designated as a Threatened species in 2015. This was the 7th year of monitoring for this neo-tropical migrant bird. Members of the committee participated in the biannual general survey of birds in the riparian area led by Bob McCormick of the Sonoran Chapter of the Audubon Society. In celebration of the National Audubon Society's *Year of the Bird* Tim has been conducting monthly surveys of Badger Springs Wash to document a year's census of birds. The committee also had a presence at various outreach events.



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In the coming year these opportunities and more will continue for members of the Friends. To express interest in this committee's activities please contact the new Committee chairperson, Board member Adam Stein.

Outreach and Recreation Committee Update: Kathleen Rickard, Vice President

In addition to the outreach activities of the aforementioned committees and despite the lack of a chairperson to lead the committee the Friends participated in a variety of other activities.

- Hiking tours of Badger Springs Wash
- Reinstatement of our ADOT Adopt-a-Highway program with a clean-up of the Bloody Basin Road exit in October
- Hike with a Veteran – an outing held at Badger Springs Wash on Veteran's Day
- Participation at a Rendezvous of friends groups sponsored by the national Conservation Lands Foundation (CLF)
 - Attendance at conference calls of their Friends Grassroots Network.
- New and recently improved presence on social media sites. Check out our sites on [www.Facebook.com/FriendsAFNM](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsAFNM) and Instagram.

We plan to hold another *Agua Fria Day* in 2019 with an emphasis on making residents of surrounding communities aware of the Monument and River.

Looking Forward

It is appropriate to especially acknowledge the continuing support we receive from the Conservation Lands Foundation. They provide technical assistance and guidance to Friends groups around the country at a time when the federal executive branch has subjected two national monuments to unprecedented major reductions in size. And the Foundation's direct financial assistance to FAFNM in 2017 allowed us conduct committee projects described above in 2017 and 2018. We are most grateful for their support.

The membership of Friends can play a complementary role by letting our federal elected officials know how much we support the Monument. If you know them or their staff personally, it makes an impression to invite them out for a visit or tour. This might have a beneficial effect on the disruptive shutdown of federal agencies including the Department of the Interior over the budget impasse.

In the coming months, you can help us increase activities concerning outings and education. In 2019 FAFNM will partner with the Black Canyon Heritage Park in promoting the Smithsonian Institution's travelling exhibit called *Water/Ways*. Details of the various events will be posted on our Wild Apricot website that can be reached via www.AguaFriaFriends.org. Be sure to check out the various resource tabs for: ***Calendar, Science and Research, Donate, Members, contact info for committee chairs***, and more. Your postings of trip reports, pictures, and comments on our social media sites will keep the content fresh.

Please check that your membership remains current by logging into the website and clicking on your name. Your financial contributions are most appreciated. Then, come join us out on the Monument!

Sincerely,

Tim Flood, President,
Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument