



Friends of the San Pedro River Roundup

Summer 2018

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President's Report

By Robert Weissler

As you will read later in this newsletter (see p. 4), the Bureau of Land Management has published its draft Resource Management Plan for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA). The preferred alternative in the draft plan would open more areas of SPRNCA to livestock grazing and to hunting.

The Friends of the San Pedro River has formulated a position, including its opposition to such dramatic changes in SPRNCA management. At www.sanpedroriver.org, FSPR has shared its position and a sounded a call to action for concerned citizens to attend local public meetings held by BLM and to submit substantive comments before the end of the public comment period on September 27, 2018.

In related news, BLM and FSPR met in early August to discuss a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) between FSPR and the BLM's Tucson Field Office. Field Office Manager Jayme Lopez hosted the meeting in Tucson. A new MOU will continue the partnership between FSPR and BLM under which FSPR operates the bookstores, docent-led walks and other interpretive events, and volunteer activities. It will specify the terms and conditions under which FSPR and BLM cooperate and communicate to achieve the mission of protecting the San Pedro River and interpreting its natural and cultural resources. The MOU also will clarify requirements for our docents and other volunteers to lead outdoor events, including the provision of first aid/CPR training.

BLM recently completed an upgrade of the solar photovoltaic installation at San Pedro House. The upgrade, including a new backup generator, now provides ample power for both a new site host and for FSPR operations in San Pedro House. BLM has lined up a site host to start in the fall at San Pedro House, so site maintenance, security of FSPR assets, and safety of bookstore volunteers will be much improved. Elsewhere in SPRNCA, BLM has completed accessibility improvements at Fairbank. The parking lot was reconfigured for improved safety, while the road into the townsite was widened to separate vehicle and foot traffic. There are also improvements around the schoolhouse and the entrance gate to the townsite was moved and aligned with a walkway to the building.

Owing to budget constraints, BLM has implemented space reductions in the Hereford building where it leases space from the Forest Service. As a result, FSPR vacated its office cubicle there before July and moved records and office equipment to San Pedro House. FSPR administrative operations now take place in a virtual office using cloud computing services to share records and coordinate workflow. Meanwhile, FSPR completed two projects in recent months, namely, design of a new FSPR logo and replacement of aging signs at San Pedro House (see p. 5). The \$4000 grant from Arizona Community

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Foundation of Cochise supported the sign replacement, with new ones designed by local nature artist Linda Feltner. FSPR vice-president Charlie Corrado, his wife, Board member Pam Corrado, and our bookstore manager Laura Mackin took the lead with Ms Feltner to complete this effort on time and under budget.

Laura and office manager Carolyn Santucci went above and beyond the call of duty in their efforts to support the wet-dry mapping training event and the landscape maintenance project on consecutive days in June (see p. 6). Both events were hosted at San Pedro House, including a catered dinner and lunch for volunteers. The project to repair and improve paths at San Pedro House was funded with a grant from the Fort Huachuca Community Spouses Club.

As summer winds down, we are starting to make plans for autumn. We look forward to celebrating the 30th anniversary of SPRNCA at San Pedro House on Saturday, November 17. Save the date and stay tuned for more information!



Participants at the August 18 work day at San Pedro House. Photo by Laura Mackin.

Work Day at San Pedro House

By Laura Mackin

Thirty Army volunteers from Bravo Company and Charlie Company, 309th MI Battalion, Ft. Huachuca joined a dozen FSPR volunteers for a work day at San Pedro House on August 18. They braved the heat and humidity for several hours, pulling weeds in the Xeriscape Gardens and along the paths around the building. They accomplished a lot of work in a short amount of time. The Xeriscape Gardens are maintained year-round by a small group of dedicated volunteers, but during the monsoons, we need to call in the troops for extra help with the weeds!

FSPR Board Election & Annual Meeting

It will soon be time to elect Board members for the Friends of the San Pedro River for the coming year. Four positions are open. Current Board members Charles Corrado, Pamela Corrado, Ronald Stewart, and Stephen Ogle are interested in continuing as Board members.

The FSPR annual meeting and potluck will be held on Saturday, October 20, starting at 11 am at San Pedro House.

This year, we are using an electronic form for both Board elections and RSVPs for the annual meeting and potluck. We'll be sending this information out around the middle of September, so look for it in your email inbox.

Bird the San Pedro with Tucson Audubon

Tucson Audubon is hosting a free, family-friendly day of birding along the San Pedro on Saturday, September 22, from 7 am to 1 pm at Holy Trinity Monastery in St David. Activities will include guided morning bird walks on the grounds, along the river, Guindani Canyon (Whetstones), Benson area, and St David Cienega. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the San Pedro's critical riparian lifeline. For more information, visit Tucson Audubon's [website](#).

And, if you'd like to help prepare the trails around the monastery and San Pedro River for the September 22 event, Tucson Audubon is seeking volunteers on Saturday, September 8 to help weed and clear the trail of tall grass that could hide chiggers. To join the clean-up team, email Nicole Gillett at ngillett@tucsonaudubon.org.

Save the Date! 30th Anniversary Celebration of SPRNCA

It's been 30 years since the US Congress established the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. To recognize that momentous act, the Friends of the San Pedro River and the Bureau of Land Management are planning a special event on Saturday, November 17, with speakers celebrating three decades of restoration on the San Pedro River. Watch for more information once details are finalized.



A few of the many volunteers at the June work day. Photo by Robert Weissler.

Many Hands Made Light Work at San Pedro House

By Carolyn Santucci

Twenty volunteers with the Friends of the San Pedro River arrived at San Pedro House early in the morning of June 23. Armed with shovels, rakes, gloves, and wheelbarrows, they made short work of moving five tons of fine gravel and spreading it on the walkways and garden areas. The added gravel filled in low spots, improved accessibility for visitors in wheelchairs, and enhanced the appearance of the walkways. Volunteers also removed two old signs, in anticipation of the new ones (see article, p. X), and assembled a bench to be placed in a convenient location for taking in the sights and sounds of nature.

FSPR would like to thank the Fort Huachuca Community Spouses' Club for providing a grant to cover the cost of the supplies and materials for this project. Thanks also to Peter Piper Pizza, who donated food for a well-deserved lunch for our hard-working volunteers.



Section of San Pedro River showing damage from vehicular traffic and cattle grazing (1986). Courtesy FSPR Archives.

BLM Draft Resource Management Plan Strays from Purpose of SPRNCA

By Robert Weissler

We will soon celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act of 1988 (aka, the Enabling Act) that created the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA). Now is a good time to reflect on the success of that designation, as we contemplate the merits of a new draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently published for comment. In the 30 years that SPRNCA has existed, we have witnessed the restoration of riparian and other wildlife habitat, dramatic improvements in breeding success for many species of birds and other wildlife, the return of beaver to the river, and the return of many reaches of the San Pedro to proper functioning condition.

However, FSPR believes that BLM's Preferred Alternative C strays from the original intent and central purpose of the Enabling Act: namely, to conserve, protect, and enhance the river and its riparian and other natural resources, not to mention cultural heritage resources. Many of the strategies and management decisions that have served SPRNCA so well have been cast aside or significantly altered. In particular, Alternative C would increase areas open to livestock grazing and hunting. In addition, Alternative C would allow the widespread use of bulldozers and other heavy equipment to modify the natural landscape and increase roads open to motorized vehicular traffic. It is unclear how BLM could still achieve natural resource objectives if these strategies are implemented. Furthermore, Alternative C would allow the cruel practice of trapping wildlife; it is hard to understand how that practice furthers the objective to conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife. Similarly, allowing the use of toxic chemicals like herbicides and pesticides to treat landscapes just pollutes the environment. FSPR does NOT support these misguided strategies in Alternative C.

Instead, FSPR supports most aspects of the RMP's Alternative D, as it is the alternative most consistent with the purpose of the Enabling Act. In particular, preserving the characteristics of the natural landscape identified in the inventories of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics and Wild and Scenic Rivers furthers the purpose of the Enabling Act. Meanwhile, fire management strategies that limit the risk of catastrophic fires are desirable, but they need to be measured and limited to preserve native habitats like mesquite bosques and cottonwood/willow gallery forest. In general, treading lightly on the landscape is a recipe that has worked well for the past 30 years and should continue.

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If the BLM's preferred alternative opens most of SPRNCA to grazing; only a narrow strip immediately adjacent to the San Pedro River is excluded. We believe grazing is directly contrary to the Enabling Act because of already documented adverse impacts to lands in SPRNCA prior to 1988. Whatever economic gain may be realized by allowing grazing will be more than offset by the loss of revenue from the burgeoning Cochise County ecotourism industry. Conversion of now undisturbed areas to grazing will open them to vehicular traffic; degrade wildlife habitat; and foster a return to the beaten-down, resource-depleted landscape that existed when the area was set aside. Finally, managing these new grazing areas to avoid adverse effects to riparian areas will require ongoing scrutiny and management by BLM employees. We question whether politics and future funding cuts will prevent this needed oversight, degrading habitat in these areas as well as the riparian corridor along the river.

In the final analysis, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

If you care about the river, its gallery forest, and wildlife, not to mention its other notable resources, MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD! Attend the public meeting in Sierra Vista on August 22. Then, submit your comments on the draft RMP to BLM during the public comment period that is already underway and ends on September 27, 2018. You can make comments through the BLM ePlanning website by going to this page: <https://go.usa.gov/xUYjE> and clicking on the "Comment on Document" link. If you cannot make comments online, you can mail BLM your comments at Attn: Amy Markstein, Bureau of Land Management, 3201 E Universal Way, Tucson, AZ 85756 or you can fax them to 520-258-7238.

Out with the Old, In with the New

By Pam Corrado

The old exterior signs at San Pedro House, which welcomed visitors from around the country and the world, have served us for many decades. Replacing them had been on our wish list for some time. So, when a grant opportunity from the Arizona Community Foundation arose, I and bookstore manager Laura Mackin successfully shepherded FSPR's grant application to cover the cost of sign replacement.

Photos of the previous, weathered signs show that the Friends needed to present a more updated and fresh look. We needed to better direct handicapped visitors to the SPH wheelchair ramp. The new signs are made from top-quality material and should last for decades. The project was completed within budget and on time.

The Friends wish to thank wildlife artist Linda Feltner for her incredible vision and expertise in executing this project without a hitch. Also, thanks go to FSPR volunteer Norm Richey for all his hard work and FSPR vice-president Charles Corrado for his steady hand with the level.

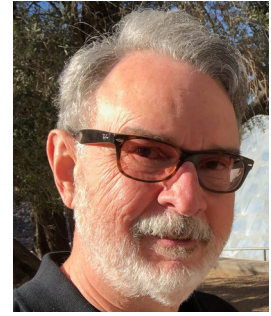
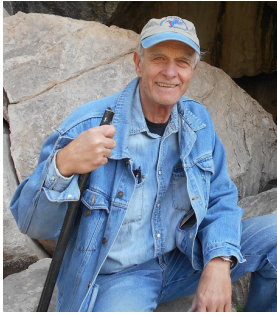
The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) will be celebrating its 30-year anniversary this November and the San Pedro House will be ready with inviting and beautiful new signs.



Old San Pedro House sign.



New San Pedro House sign.



(From left) Charlie Corrado, Pam Corrado, Carolyn Santucci, Ron Stewart. Not shown: Laura Mackin.

Volunteer & Staff Kudos

By Robert Weissler

FSPR achieves its mission only through the dedication of our volunteers and staff. In this edition of River Roundup, we recognize conspicuous efforts and accomplishments to complete several projects, manage operations and activities, and host noteworthy events.

Board members Charlie and Pam Corrado took the initiative to procure a grant to fund the design and installation of new signs at San Pedro House (see p. 5). They completed this project ahead of schedule, despite the challenges of coordinating efforts with BLM to satisfy federal agency sign requirements and to receive the required approvals.

Meanwhile, our bookstore manager Laura Mackin and office manager Carolyn Santucci hosted volunteer events at San Pedro House on consecutive days in June to provide delicious meals to participants. We know we can depend on them to demonstrate their dedication to the FSPR mission as they did to support the Wet-Dry Mapping training event and the landscape maintenance project. They will be central to planning and conducting future events such as the 30th anniversary celebration of the SPRNCA at San Pedro House in November (see p. 3).

In August Ron Stewart is stepping down from chairing the FSPR Operations Committee. He wrote the charter for this and other committees more than five years ago, prepared meeting agendas, and ran the meetings efficiently and effectively since then. This committee offloaded most of the day-to-day operations and event planning from the Board, a great service to the Friends. We will miss his leadership and organization of this committee. Finding someone with the varied skills to fill this void will be difficult, if not problematic.

In our last newsletter, we recognized the efforts of John Broz, who has since been featured in the BLM's Gila District Newsletter for his efforts to ensure the safety and enjoyment of wildlife enthusiasts and other visitors to the San Pedro River.

Service Ethic

By Dutch Nagle

The Friends of the San Pedro River (FSPR) is run by volunteers. We offer many opportunities for people with various skills and interests. We are a nonprofit, nonpolitical organization whose sole purpose is to support the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in conserving and interpreting the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) through our programs and projects.

In the modern world, it is often difficult to believe that we are making any contribution to future generations. Many jobs, although they give us income and we perform meaningful work, do not give us a feeling of accomplishment. Volunteering, on the other hand, gives us the chance to make a contribution

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to our world. Volunteers that I've known have always been eager to talk about what they do (or did) as a volunteer, but most don't talk much about their old jobs. Let me mention that I'm speaking mostly about volunteers who enjoy working on projects that benefit the environment, but I think all volunteers share the same feelings.

In my 20 years of volunteering, I've worked with doctors, nurses, school teachers, bio-scientists, geologists, retired military personnel, college professors, housewives, househusbands, computer analysts, editors, archaeologists, gardeners, historians, carpenters, plumbers, lawyers, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, college students, and on and on. The point being that anyone can be a volunteer.

Most nonprofit organizations, as well as governmental agencies, do not have sufficient funds to carry out all of the projects they need to tackle. FSPR exists because of volunteers. The following is a list of opportunities we offer:

- » We need clerical assistance in our unique bookstores/gift shops in Sierra Vista and Fairbank. Volunteers there are responsible for direct sales to customers and restocking merchandise. You would also be the "information" person for many of our drop-in visitors.
- » If you would like to help but don't want to leave your house; we can use people to maintain computer spreadsheets, write articles for the *Sierra Vista Herald* newspaper, work on our newsletter, and perform clerical duties.
- » Our Education Program is great for those who enjoy teaching K-8 school groups at their schools and at our locations.
- » If you're an outdoors person, we always appreciate help with leading groups to some of our historical and natural locations, as well as trail maintenance, landscape work and trash pick-up.
- » For those with an interest in our feathered friends, we lead bird-walks at San Pedro House and the Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park.
- » There are many other special projects that offer opportunities for you to help.

So, why volunteer? In talking to people I volunteer with, here are some of the benefits they listed for me: learning about our riparian environment, balancing the needs of people with the resources available, teaching others about the value of nature, contributing to citizen science, getting physical activity and fresh air, helping to conserve our history, boosting feelings of self-worth, giving back to the community, keeping our natural treasure looking nice, and last but definitely not least, making new friends. I personally find myself a busier and happier retiree than I ever thought I would be.

Would you like to enjoy all these benefits and work for **FREE**? If so, please check out our volunteer opportunities. I think you will be happy you took that first step, I know I am. Remember, bored people become boring people, so volunteering makes you more pleasant to be around.

New & Renewing Members, mid-March through mid-August

Angie Allred*; Anders Aman; Kirk Bell & Paul Woodward*; Cheryl Braun; Lisa Breit; Kathy & John DeKeizer; Diane Derouen & Glenn Chambliss; Don Driscoll*; Catharina Eden; Linda Feltner; George & Sandi Fizell; Craig & Stacy Fletcher; Inman Gallogly & Gloria Linder; Carol Garnett; Charles & Uda Gordon; Bob Groendyke; Gary Hahn; Ann Hartfiel; Jim Havlena; Dave Heck; Robyn Heffelfinger; Peter Herstein; Kurt Hilsen*; George & Lisa Howison; Marty & Jack Jackson; Laurie Kagann; Merle Kilpatrick; Rosemary King; Menary Kitchen; Sarah Lane; Tom & Sue Leskiw; Ralph Lewis & Judith Cooper; John Maier; Frederick Marsi; Alice Moffitt; Jennifer Monks; Conrad & Elaine Moore; Deborah Moyer*; Pam Negri; HGM Oomen; William Panther*; Judy Phillips; Doug & Susan Polenz; Karen Ratte/Southern Arizona Guide; Judy Reis; Jerry & Bette Reitmann*; Mary Renfro, Norman Qing & Lucille Wu; Alexander & Marjorie Russell; Jeffrey Saunders; Mindy Saunders*; Catherine Schneider*; Tom & Judy Shepherd; Kathleen & Wayne Shilson; David Singleton; Douglas Snow; Robin Steinberg; Scott & Sarah Sticha; Wayne & Donna Viitanen; Judith Visty & Peter Allen; Robert White; Stephen White; Gail & Rich Wilder*; Carol Wood; Robert Woodward. * = New member

Events, September-December 2018

San Pedro House Open as Visitor Center (Daily),
9:30 am-4:30 pm

Fairbank School House Open as a Visitor Center
(Friday-Sunday), 9:30 am-4:30 pm

Understanding the River Interpretive Walks

Every Saturday at SPH

- » 8 am—September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
- » 9 am—October 6, 13, 20, 27
- » 9 am—November 3, 10, 17, 24
- » 9 am—December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

FSPR Bird Walks

Every Wednesday & 4th Saturday at SPH

- » 7 am—September 12, 19, 22, 26 (no walk on September 5)
- » 8 am—October 3, 10, 17, 24, 27, 31
- » 8 am—November 7, 14, 21, 24, 28
- » 9 am—December 5, 12, 19, 22, 26

FSPR/SABO Bird Walks

Every Sunday at Sierra Vista Environmental
Operations Park (EOP)

- » 7 am—September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
- » 7 am—October 7, 14, 21, 28
- » 8 am—November 4, 11, 18, 25
- » 8 am—December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

History Hikes

- » September 29—Fairbank Historic Townsite, 9 am
- » October 6—Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate, 9 am
- » October 13—Murray Springs Clovis Site, 9 am
- » October 20—Millville Ruins & Petroglyphs, 9 am
- » October 27—Clanton Ranch, 9 am
- » November 3—Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate, 9 am
- » November 10—Grand Central Mill, 9 am
- » November 17—Millville Ruins & Petroglyphs, 9 am
- » November 24—Murray Springs Clovis Site, 10 am

- » December 1—Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate, 10 am
- » December 8—Clanton Ranch, 10 am
- » December 15—Grand Central Mill, 1 pm
- » December 22—Fairbank Historic Townsite, 1 pm

SABO Hummingbird Banding

Saturdays, unless otherwise noted; observe from 4-6 pm at SPH

- » September 1, 8, 16 (Sunday), 22, 29
- » October 6

Special Events

- » September 22—Bird the San Pedro with Tucson Audubon, St David's Monastery, 7 am-1 pm
- » October 20—FSPR Annual Meeting & Potluck Lunch, 11 am start
- » November 17—30th Anniversary of SPRNCA Celebration, 2-4 pm

Contact List

- President—Robert Weissler
- Vice-President—Charles Corrado
- Treasurer—Renell Stewart
- Secretary—Sally Rosén
- Directors—Charles Corrado, Pam Corrado, Tricia Gerrodette, Robert Luce, Steve Ogle, Sally Rosén, Renell Stewart, Ron Stewart, Robert Weissler
- Docent Activities—Ron Stewart
- Education—John Rose
- Membership—Carolyn Santucci
- Newsletter Editor—Sue Leskiw
- Office Manager—Carolyn Santucci
- Bookstore Manager—Laura Mackin

To contact any of the above individuals, please call the office at 520-459-2555 or send us e-mail at fspr@sanpedroriver.org or sanpedrohouse@sanpedroriver.org.
Mailing address: 9800 East Highway 90, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635; Website: www.sanpedroriver.org

Friends of the San Pedro River (FSPR) is a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to the conservation of the River and the health of its ecosystems through advocacy, educational programs, and interpretive events.

Friends of the San Pedro River

9800 East Highway 90

Sierra Vista AZ 85635