President’s Report

By Robert Weissler

The highlight of the fall was celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act of 1988 that created the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. The celebration was held at San Pedro House on Saturday, November 17. The Friends of the San Pedro River and the Bureau of Land Management planned this event with speakers celebrating 3 decades of recovery of the riparian area and protection of the natural, cultural and other significant resources along the San Pedro River.

The first speaker was Dean Bibles, the former Arizona state director for BLM from 1982 to 1989. Under Bibles’ leadership, BLM concluded the land exchange that acquired the property from Tenneco for inclusion in SPRNCA. Thereafter, BLM started to monitor recovery of SPRNCA, removed fences that interfered with wildlife movement, provided visitor services, carefully managed vehicular access, accommodated research needs, and provided dedicated law enforcement on these public lands. You can read Bible’s article about the event on page 2.

After Dean Bibles, the next speaker was Tim Fisher, BLM’s national program lead for the National Monuments and National Conservation Areas program. Tim spoke about the values of our National Conservation Lands and programs to manage and share them with the public. Next up was Ken Mahoney, BLM Arizona program manager for National Conservation Lands. He described efforts to manage our conservation lands in Arizona, including SPRNCA. Ken was followed by BLM Tucson field office manager Jayme Lopez, who spoke about management of SPRNCA and lasting cooperation with the Friends. To mark the occasion, Jayme presented the Friends with a plaque of appreciation for 3 decades of support in sharing the resource with the public. The final guest speaker was Jane Chambers, an FSPR founding board member. Jane spoke about the beginnings of the organization, including the grassroots effort to set aside the land to protect the river.

In other news, the partial federal government shutdown resulted in most employees in the BLM Tucson Field Office being furloughed. The most immediate impact is that restrooms throughout SPRNCA are not being cleaned by BLM or its contractors, so Laura Mackin and our volunteers have stepped up. At Fairbank, site hosts Kate and Pat Jacobson have been cleaning and supplying the bathroom and emptying trash cans during the shutdown, in addition to maintaining the grounds and trails. On behalf of all visitors to SPRNCA, I offer our deepest appreciation for your efforts to keep the doors open. Despite the shutdown, both San Pedro House and Fairbank Schoolhouse remain open for business. Nevertheless, development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BLM and FSPR has stopped cold. We do not have an estimate when a new MOU will be drafted, much less concluded and signed. Meanwhile,

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progress on the SPRNCA Resource Management Plan (RMP) has stopped and delays in publishing the Final RMP are inevitable. Thanks to all of our supporters who wrote and submitted substantive comments during the public comment period last summer on the Draft SPRNCA Resource Management Plan. Those comments have been heard by BLM. We hope the result will be modifications to the preferred alternative that would reduce areas in SPRNCA available for livestock grazing and hunting.

Dutch Nagle, long-time FSPR member, volunteer, and former Board president, has been wearing several hats for our organization for many years. In addition to volunteering every week at San Pedro House, Dutch has been responsible for compiling volunteer hours on a monthly basis and reporting them quarterly to BLM, as well as managing brick donations for the Dedication Walkway. For health reasons, Dutch is stepping down from those tasks. Fortunately, Mary Ann Ambrose has offered to take them over. Dutch will help Mary Ann during the transition period, so the process continues to work smoothly. Dutch, you have our heartfelt thanks for the many hours you’ve dedicated to the Friends. You are an invaluable asset!

Down at San Pedro House, BLM engaged a site host who started last fall. As a result, the maintenance of the site, the security of FSPR assets there, and the safety of bookstore volunteers have been improved.

As winter winds down and spring approaches, we look forward to interpretive walks and other events scheduled for the remainder of 2019. We hope to see you at these events down at the river soon!

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San Pedro 30-Year Celebration

By Dean Bibles

On the bright and warm afternoon of November 17, Friends of the San Pedro and BLM held a celebration for the 30th anniversary of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA). The legislation establishing SPRNCA was signed by President Reagan on November 18, 1988. The anniversary event was held at San Pedro House, where the event to celebrate creation of the conservation area was originally held on May 6, 1989.

I was honored to be invited to speak about the acquisition and establishment of SPRNCA and gave a brief explanation about how and why this area was established to have very specific uses. This was the first Riparian National Conservation Area to be managed by BLM. BLM has shown its varied abilities, again, by successfully protecting this one-of-a-kind area for the past 3 decades.

A number of attendees came prepared to hike or had already hiked along the San Pedro River and were very strong supporters of protection for the area. SPRNCA is heavily used for birdwatching, hiking, and scientific research specific to the Desert Southwest, attracting international visitors to the area with the rare and migratory birds using the riparian corridor.

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John Kelly, a representative for former Congressman Jim Kolbe, who wrote and coordinated passage of the legislation, was in attendance as well as former Phoenix BLM district manager Marlyn Jones. Marlyn managed the exchange that acquired the property from Tenneco Oil Company. A number of former and current BLM employees also attended, including Henri Bisson, former Phoenix district manager; Alaska state director, and deputy director of BLM. I was also very happy that my son Brent, professor of wildlife ecology, was able to join this celebration, as he did his original PhD work on Gray Hawks in the San Pedro River area.

It was impressive that several people attended who originally started, and have continued serving in, the Friends of San Pedro group. The Friends have contributed thousands of hours of service to SPRNCA. Jane Chambers, a founding member and 30-year volunteer, spoke and told entertaining stories about some of the “emergency” calls they had responded to from visitors. Robert Weissler, FSPR president, served as master of ceremonies and spoke about the Friends’ organization and its support for BLM and SPRNCA. BLM was represented by Tim Fisher, BLM national program lead; Ken Mahoney, BLM Arizona program lead; and Jayme Lopez, BLM Tucson field office manager.

BLM recently held a public comment period to receive comments about a new management plan for SPRNCA, with a preferred alternative that would introduce grazing, hunting, and other non-compatible uses. Numerous individuals and organizations oppose the proposal, as this particular area was acquired and legislated to specifically protect the very special resources it contains and was recognized by Congress for special management and protection. As I pointed out in my remarks, if future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave this desert riparian area as it is meant to exist: as a critically important artery of life in the desert.

The event was a great time to renew old acquaintances and meet so many strong supporters of protecting this rare jewel in the desert.

FSPR Annual Meeting

By Robert Weissler

More than 30 volunteers and members attended the Friends’ 2018 annual meeting and volunteer recognition on October 20 at San Pedro House. Results of the recent election were announced: Charles Corrado, Pamela Corrado, Ronald Stewart, and Stephen Ogle were re-elected to the Board. Volunteer statistics for FY2018 were shared. FSPR volunteers provided 8,390 total hours. Of the 87 volunteers, 22 had more than 100 hours of service and received bookstore certificates. Some of these volunteers also received passes that provide free access to US national parks and monuments for 1 year.

A recap of activities and events included volunteer clean-ups at San Pedro House, submitting comments on the draft Resource Management Plan for SPRNCA, and more than 200 interpretive walks and hikes offered throughout the year. All volunteers were thanked for their service. The Friends provided sandwiches and beverages, while attendees brought plenty of side dishes, salads, and desserts to share. All in all, it was a terrific day to enjoy the great outdoors.
Mowing Equipment Donation Thanks
By Laura Mackin

The Friends of the San Pedro River would like to thank Helen Patterson for her generous donation of new mowing equipment at the San Pedro House.

Helen, an 18-year resident of Sierra Vista and avid bird watcher, was out birding on the San Pedro River when she encountered volunteer John Broz mowing the trails on a hot summer day. As she watched John struggling with the tall weeds, she knew that she wanted to do something about it. She offered to purchase a more adequate mower for the Friends so volunteers could continue to keep the trails clear and safe.

After some research, John and Helen met at the C-A-L Ranch Store, where John picked out a professional DR Power mower/trimmer and Helen purchased it for the Friends. We are very grateful for the generosity and thoughtfulness of Helen’s donation. She saw a need and was determined to fill it. “I’m just happy that the Friends are here, doing all of this,” stated Helen. In appreciation of her generous donation, the Friends have installed a brick in her honor in the dedicated walkway adjacent to San Pedro House.

Last year, a second volunteer stepped up to help John with mowing the trails. Paul Edwardson, a new resident of Sierra Vista and birdwatcher, already has mowed several miles of trail and is also very grateful for the new mowing equipment.

FSPR at SE Arizona Birding Festival
By Robert Weissler

From August 9 to 12, 2018, the Tucson Audubon Society held its Southeastern Arizona Birding Festival and Nature Expo at the DoubleTree Hotel across from Reid Park in Tucson. FSPR staffed a table at the event to promote conservation of the San Pedro River and good stewardship of SPRNCA by BLM. Visitors who felt strongly about SPRNCA were encouraged to submit substantive letters to BLM regarding the draft Resource Management Plan. Tucson Audubon volunteers welcomed 2000 visitors who attended the expo, many of whom also joined field trips and attended workshops, in addition to strolling through the exhibit area full of partner organizations.

Three New Docents at FSPR
By Renell Stewart

Docents are the heart of the Friends of the San Pedro River. These intrepid volunteers lead walks to the natural and historical sites in SPRNCA, sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for the river and its treasures. Docents also work with school kids on educational programs about the river. Our goal is to increase public awareness of the area and to build support for the preservation of the San Pedro. We are always in need of docents. If you are interested in participating in our activities, please send us a note at www.sanpedroriver.org.

We recently added three new docents. We sincerely thank them for sharing their unique knowledge and skills with our visitors. Here is a bit about each, in their own words:

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**Sandy Heusman**

My business career included about 30 years as a public purchasing administrator. I retired from the Boulder Valley School District in Colorado. While making frequent trips to visit southern Arizona, I fell in love with the desert. My husband and I moved from Nederland, Colorado, to Bisbee about 7 years ago, joined FSPR, and became involved as a way to help preserve and protect this important resource. Currently I am volunteering at the Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum and the Fairbank Schoolhouse. My interests include hiking and exploring the trails in the surrounding mountains, camping, rafting, visiting ancient cliff dwelling and petroglyph sites, and the Old West history of SE Arizona. I enjoy leading some of the Clanton Ranch history walks and meeting so many people with similar interests from all over the world.

**Rob Woodward**

Birds have been a big part of my life since early childhood, although I didn't become an active “birder” until later in life. Prior to retiring from state government and moving to Sierra Vista 2 years ago, I was a volunteer field trip leader for New Hampshire Audubon for over 20 years. As soon as I got to Sierra Vista, I joined the Wednesday morning bird walk at San Pedro House every week. After a few months, they sized me up and then signed me up, and I have been leading bird walks ever since. The San Pedro River is a natural wonder that I enjoy showing to our visiting birders who travel from all over the country and beyond to see our birds and landscape.

This year I am running a North American Big Year with the goal of seeing 500 species of birds. The year will take me to the best birding spots in the United States in Texas, Florida, New England, Colorado, and southern California. Over the past 20 years, I have birded 21 countries on 5 continents, but Arizona remains one of my favorite birding destinations.

**Pete Siminski**

I was born during the late Holocene in the middle part of this continent. My mother said she found me under a cabbage leaf, but I know she found me in a field of corn. To the surprise of many, I completed both a Bachelor’s degree in Zoology and then a Master’s degree in Biology. After inventing the internet, I worked in three zoos, two botanical gardens, two natural history museums, one ecological consulting firm, one bird observatory, plus a stint in the Peace Corps. I have been very fortunate. My contributions to the world have been the establishment of a conservation education program for the threatened desert tortoise in the Mojave Desert, the conservation and reestablishment of an endangered Peninsular pronghorn population in Baja California, and I am probably best known for my 35 years of work in Mexican wolf conservation. However, my favorite job was during my college years as an inspector of all the little wet spots in a 50-square-mile area of northwestern Ohio searching for mosquitoes as an agent for county mosquito control. I retired to Sierra Vista in 2017 to be in the most beautiful part of the world and have found some of the most beautiful people here also.

I volunteer for FSPR to help people enjoy and, hopefully, appreciate nature as much as I do. I lead birding walks at San Pedro House and at the Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park.
Hike into History

By Ronald Stewart

Come out for our Friends of the San Pedro River history walks during March, Arizona Archaeology and Heritage Awareness Month. Join our docents for a visit to one of the historic sites along the San Pedro. Interested in Tombstone? We will visit the Clanton Ranch. How about silver mining? We will go to two silver mills. Ghost towns your thing? Come along for a tour of historic Fairbank. Interested in early colonial history? Come for a walk to a Spanish presidio. Finally, if you are interested in archaeology, we will visit a camp site of the ancient Clovis culture.

On March 2, we walked the Millville and Rock Art Discovery Trail. Our docents talk about the silver ore processing that occurred here at the mill built by Richard Gird, founder and organizer of the Tombstone mining district, and partner of Ed Schieffelin. American Indian petroglyphs offer another opportunity to view the history of our area.

On March 3 (rescheduled from February 23 due to bad weather), we walked to Clanton Ranch. Old Man Clanton and his sons converted cattle stolen in Mexico into good American cows that were sold in Tombstone or to feed the troops at Fort Huachuca. This is always a popular tour, given its connection to the infamous gunfight at the OK Corral.

March 9 was a tour of the ghost town of Fairbank, including a short hike to the town cemetery. Fairbank was a railroad town and the tour includes a discussion of Cochise County's railroads and the train robbery that occurred at Fairbank in 1900. Learn about the true law enforcement hero of our area, Jeff Milton.

On March 16, FSPR will host a hike to the site of the Presidio of Santa Cruz de Terrenate. This Spanish bastion, which dates to the 1760s, failed in its mission to pacify and colonize the San Pedro River Valley. The foundations and remaining walls have been carefully preserved.

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On March 23, a hosted hike will go from Fairbank to the site of the Grand Central Silver Mill. This was another mill that processed silver ore from the Grand Central Mine in Tombstone. This was the largest of the silver mills and its stone foundations are an impressive monument to our mining past.

Finally, on March 30, we will visit Murray Springs, the site of a Clovis Paleo-Indian mammoth-kill and camp site. An excavation by Vance Haynes studied this site in the 1970s. It is without doubt the most famous Clovis archaeological site in Arizona.

The history of the San Pedro River Valley stretches back 13,000 years. Our free, family-friendly events all entail walking on uneven, primitive surfaces. Be sure to dress for the weather, with a hat, good walking shoes, and water. We hope to see you at the River!

FSPR holds history walks every Saturday during the temperate months. We also host free bird-watching and nature walks. Detailed information can be found on our Facebook page, web site (http://sanpedroriver.org/wpfspr/), or in our monthly calendar of events, available at our Fairbank and San Pedro House visitor centers. There are Arizona Archaeology and Heritage Awareness Month activities all over Arizona. You can learn more at https://azstateparks.com/archy. The major event was the Archaeology Expo on March 10 at the Arizona Museum of Natural History in Mesa.

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Is the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area Ready for Cattle Grazing?

By Robert Luce

A lot of gunfights in the Old West were fought over cattle grazing. We don’t see any shootouts these days, but battles still exist. Whether or not to return grazing to the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) is one of them.

Roughly 12,000 years ago, before they became extinct, large grazers like mammoths were a dominant part of the San Pedro landscape. Livestock grazing in southern Arizona began with the early Spanish land grants of the 1500s. So, in other words, during over 99.9% of the last 12,000 years, the lands of the Chihuahuan Desert were grazed by nothing larger than jackrabbits and prairie dogs. This land did not evolve with the ability to sustain intensive cattle grazing without altering the habitat.

The Gadsden Purchase in 1854 made the Arizona Territory part of the United States and began the livestock equivalent of the Oklahoma land rush. From 1873-91, millions of cattle were herded from Texas to Arizona.

Texas cattlemen brought with them range management techniques used in the southern Great Plains, but those methods were not strictly applicable in the arid climate of southern Arizona. The range was overstocked and soon overgrazed. What overgrazing did to the San Pedro River and surrounding lands is well documented in numerous publications. In our arid climate, full recovery of the land is a long process. Ranchers and ecologists are eager to learn better ways to manage the land. Maintaining SPRNCA without livestock grazing is integral to that process.

Public Law 100-696-Nov. 18, 1988 (Arizona-Idaho Conservation Act) created SPRNCA: “to protect the riparian area and the aquatic, wildlife, archeological, paleontological, scientific, cultural, educational, and recreational resources of the public lands surrounding the San Pedro River.”

BLM conducted one of the most significant grazing research projects in the American West on SPRNCA from 1986 to 1990, comparing wildlife and vegetation response from when grazing was still ongoing (1986) until after grazing was stopped (1990). When cattle were removed from SPRNCA in late 1987, vegetation in both riparian areas and mesquite-grassland communities increased very quickly and bird populations increased. Follow-up research continues today on SPRNCA and in other parts of Arizona and the West. Overall, results indicate rest from livestock is good for wildlife.

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BLM is proposing to bring back grazing on only 100 acres of riparian habitat, not the 1560 acres of riparian zone right along the San Pedro River. So, 26,350 is upland. But, when it comes to river ecosystems, the kneebone is connected to the thighbone, etc. The San Pedro watershed includes uplands and associated dry washes all the way from the Huachuca, Whetstone, and Mule Mountains down to the river. What happens on the uplands affects the river, so the two habitat types cannot be arbitrarily separated when it comes to management. The scientific literature supports that conclusion, and 22 scientists with experience and knowledge of the San Pedro River ecosystem have written to BLM asking that grazing not be allowed on any part of SPRNCA.

BLM has 11.5 million acres of rangeland available for livestock grazing in Arizona. It should manage the 57,000-acre SPRNCA--which is only .005% of the public rangeland in the state--to protect SPRNCA and continue the important wildlife, riparian, and grassland conservation research being conducted here.

A Walk by the San Pedro River

By Pamela Corrado

March is a glorious month; warm, lots of sunshine, and cloudless blue skies. A perfect time that Arizonans and visitors alike have come to expect and enjoy in the Southwest. It was on a wonderful spring day last March that my husband and I ventured down to the vital San Pedro River, as we often do.

Overhead, we spotted a soaring hawk, heard the tapping of a Gila Woodpecker on a nearby tree, and watched a small black-throated sparrow gathering nesting materials. This is one of the best times to visit the San Pedro: the cottonwoods are starting to bloom, spring bird migration has begun, some early flow- ers are blooming, and the riparian area comes to life. The weather is not too warm and the vegetation hasn't obstructed the view or hindered walking ability.

Whenever we head down to the San Pedro River using any of the trailhead access points, we go prepared. We pack a lunch, take our camera, binoculars, plenty of water, walking sticks, gloves, and most importantly, a trash bag. You see, when visiting one of the most studied and visited free-flowing rivers in the country, a rare desert riparian area, we have a sense of responsibility in keeping that treasured river in the same or better condition than we found it. We carry out what we bring in, and if we see trash left by others, we pick it up too. You can play an important role by acting as good stewards of the river by picking up unwanted trash, thus making this enchanting destination delightful for others to enjoy. It only takes a few minutes of your time.

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Trash is an unacceptable byproduct that humans create, either accidentally or intentionally. It's something that we all should address. Plastic bottles are one of the worst offenders. They take up to 1000 years to decompose. Plastic of any kind, tin cans and old tires, anything not biodegradable are not only unsightly in such serene surroundings, but also will remain there almost indefinitely, contaminating the water and soil, if not physically removed and disposed of properly. Wildlife cannot sweep away unwanted trash threatening their habitat; it's up to us.

Charlie and I are members of the Friends of the San Pedro River, a nonprofit environmental group created to help protect our treasured public lands, along with our partners, the Bureau of Land Management. Therefore, we have a civic duty to lead the way and set an example for all those that have come to depend on the San Pedro River as a source of enjoyment in the arid southwest.

Bring your family, friends, and pets down to the San Pedro River to see, smell, and hear the gurgling and splashing of the river, but don't forget your trash bags! Or join us for one of our bird, history, or cultural walks, to the river. Contact San Pedro House for details or visit our website.

Woodcutting, Part I: Wood for Construction

By Gerald R Noonan PhD © February 2019

[Excerpt from book manuscript about the human and environmental history of the San Pedro River Valley and adjacent areas from the Gadsden Purchase to statehood]

The discovery of valuable ores in the Tombstone and Bisbee areas and elsewhere sparked a mining boom that attracted people to such places and to the San Pedro River Valley. Wood was urgently needed for the development of mines, mills, businesses, and homes. The Tombstone mines and mills were most active during the Tombstone Bonanza years from June 1879 through December 1886 (Bahre and Hutchinson, 1985, p. 181). The Copper Queen Company and other mines in the Bisbee area continue to need large amounts of construction timber after the Tombstone mines declined.

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The largest stands of construction-grade lumber near Tombstone and Bisbee were coniferous forests of approximately 20,000 acres in the Huachuca Mountains and 50,000 acres in the Chiricahua Mountains (Kellogg, 1902; TDE, 1889). These forests occurred at elevations of 7000 feet or above because only such higher reaches had enough precipitation for the trees. The *Pinus ponderosa* species complex was the predominant type of tree at these higher elevations and furnished almost all the lumber first used for construction in the Tombstone area. While this type of tree was the principal source of local lumber, its quality was poor, knotty, and often with rotten streaks and many blind knots. In the early days of the Tombstone Bonanza, this lumber was in great demand because it was cheaper than wood brought from outside of Arizona by wagon trains.

The Army apparently was the first organization to harvest construction timber from the Huachuca Mountains (Spring and Gustafson, 1966, p. 58, 111). The short-lived Camp Wallen on the Babocomari River sent soldiers in 1866 to the vicinity of present-day Fort Huachuca to cut timber for rafters and lintels for buildings being constructed at the camp. In 1867, eight soldiers were still harvesting timber at a temporary camp in the mountains.

In the spring of 1879, Captain Whitside, first commander of Fort Huachuca, had soldiers begin running a sawmill near the mouth of Huachuca Canyon to obtain lumber for constructing buildings on the post (Lage, 1949; Smith, 1981, p. 26). Soldiers had to climb considerably higher into the Huachuca Mountains to cut down pine trees and then skin the trunks and snake the large logs down the mountainside. They used their own muscle power and that of mules to get the timber to the sawmill. Men who committed misdemeanors were condemned to hard labor at the sawmill camp. Those who volunteered or were detailed to this work received extra pay of $0.20 per day for enlisted soldiers and $0.35 for sergeants, corporals, and enlisted men whose expertise or training qualified them to work as masons, carpenters, or blacksmiths.

In 1867, a Tucson Catholic Church that needed lumber for a schoolhouse roof cut it from the Huachuca Mountains because it was easier to reach the pine woods there than those in the Santa Rita Mountains (Farish, 1916b, p. 298-299, 314-315 abs.). The Huachuca Mountains were conveniently close to Tombstone and its mills and people knew about their timber (O'Leary, 1877).

Four commercial sawmills in the Huachuca Mountains initially supplied construction-grade lumber (AC, 1879c,h; ADS, 1880c,d; AQI, 1880, p 4; Bahre, 1991 p. 168-169; Bailey, 2004, p. 66; Bailey and Chaput, 2000a, p. 54; Garner vs. Gird, 1885, p. 59, 150-152, 160; Matheny, 1975, p. 5-8; MSP, 1881; Spencer, 1966; Underhill, 1979, p. 64). Richard Gird and his associates arranged for 24,000 pounds of sawmill machinery to be transported by ship around Cape San Lucas, up the Gulf of California, and then via the Colorado River to Yuma, where it arrived on November 16, 1878 (AS, 1878; Fulton, 1966; LAH, 1878). The mining partners chartered a wagon train outfit from Meyers & Bowley at extra rates to speedily deliver the machinery to the Huachuca Mountains. The exact location of the Gird Mill is unknown. The Gird sawmill was described in July 1880 as located on the western side of the Huachuca Mountains “high up on the northern side of McCloskey cañon.” The name McCloskey was a misspelling of McCluskey and referred to one of the partners who owned the mill and did not become an accepted designation of a place in the mountains. Bailey and Chaput (2000a, p. 54) regarded the mill as in Sawmill Canyon within the Huachuca Mountains, Matheny, (1975, p. 35) placed it in Ramsey Canyon, and Wilson (1995, p. 208) believed it was in Carr Canyon. People who went into Carr Canyon to see part of the Huachuca Water Company's pipeline in 1882 could see the Gird Mill in the distance (TWE, 1882). The June 10, 1880 issue of the Weekly Nugget, as quoted by Bahre (1991, p. 168), said that the mill originally began operations at Saw Mill Canyon and after harvesting the timber in that area was moved to the top of the mountains at 8000 feet. The region of the canyon is on the western side of the mountains west of Ramsey Peak (1958 and 2018 Miller Peak topographic maps).

Gird had persuaded his brother William to run the sawmill. William partnered with John McCluskey to run it. The two partners owned the mill and initially had an arrangement with the Tombstone Mill and Mining Company to supply its lumber needs. Lumber not needed by the mining company was shipped to the mining company, which then distributed it to other parties. The arrangement with the mining company specified that the partners would furnish lumber at $50 per thousand feet and that the partners could sell excess wood at whatever price they could obtain. The money from the sale of all lumber went
to the mining company until it was paid for the cost of the mill. The mining company received a bargain because the price to other parties in May 1879 was $100 per 1000 feet (AC, 1879k).

William Gird and McCluskey laid the foundations and then erected the mill, which began shipping lumber to Millville and Tombstone on January 14, 1879. In March 1879, the partners agreed to Thomas Bidwell’s proposal that he and W.H. Harwood sell lumber not needed by the mining company for a commission of 5% of the proceeds. Bidwell stopped selling timber in June 1879 when he went East. Harwood continued selling it until January 1880.

The sawmill’s need for logs resulted in an August 1879 advertisement seeking lumbermen and teamsters for logging in the Huachuca Mountains and hauling logs to the sawmill (AC, 1879j). The Tombstone Mill and Mining Company sought a total of 1 million feet of logs and would receive bids until August 20, 1879.

Ownership of the mill changed in 1880. McCluskey transferred his interest to William Gird in February and James Carr bought the mill in April. Carr specialized in lumber for mining purposes and provided it not only for the Tombstone Mill and Mining Company and a yard in Tombstone but also filled contracts for the Boston and Arizona Mill and The Tombstone and Charleston Ice Company (Matheny, 1975, p. 36; Rose, 2012, p. 30).

By April 1880, the sawmill had produced approximately 3 million feet of lumber, which was sold primarily in the Tombstone District. Six men worked the mill, 25 more men cut timber and served as teamsters, and 12 yoke of oxen and 35 span of mules pulled wagons and sleds with timber. The lumber primarily was used for mine timbers and for constructing mining and milling facilities and boarding houses. The remaining accessible supply of uncut timber was estimated at 3,500,000 feet. Demand for lumber was so high that a night shift began running the mill in the spring of 1882 to increase its output.
Early in 1879, John Campbell and other Mormons set up a sawmill in the Huachuca Mountains in Miller's Canyon, sometimes called Mormon Canyon because of the Mormon sawmill (ADS, 1880c; Bailey, 2004, p. 66; McClintock, 1921, p. 236, 301 abs.). By October 1879, the sawmill was producing 3000 to 5000 feet of lumber a day (ADS, 1879c). Most lumber went to the Contention Mill, with the rest going to Turner's lumber yard in Tucson. In November 1879, the Mormons had a disagreement among themselves and decided to sell the mill. John N. Turner acquired the mill in late 1879 or early 1880 and moved the mill, which was designed to be portable, to Ramsey Canyon (AC, 1879g; AQI, 1880, p. 4; AS, 1879b; Bahre, 1991, p. 168-169; Bailey, 2004, p. 25-31). In March 1880, Turner built a good wagon road up Ramsey Canyon along an old burro trail (AC, 1880). In April of that year, he refurbished the former Mormon sawmill and soon had it running at full capacity (ADS, 1880d; AQI, 1880, p. 4; Bailey, 2004, p. 66; Bailey and Chaput, 2000b, p. 161).

Turner had a lumber yard in Tombstone that sold wood from the Huachuca Mountains. The estimated uncut timber in the canyon as of July 1880 was 4 million feet, 400,000 of which would be processed before the mill was moved a mile or two higher up the canyon. Turner found an eager market in Tombstone for his lumber at an average rate of $55 per thousand feet. In June 1880, Turner sold his lumber yard to Philip Morse, who had W.H. Harwood, former mayor of Tombstone, run it for him (Bailey and Chaput, 2000b, p. 161).

The nearest settlement to the first mill site in Ramsey Canyon was 2 miles below the sawmill and was named Turnersville in April 1880 after John Turner. The small town served as a local social hub (ADS, 1880d). For example, a dance at the home of Richards and Hill on June 15, 1880 attracted 20 ladies and approximately 50 men. Several participants came from Tombstone. The hosts provided the music for the dance. Brown’s hotel supplied excellent accommodations for travelers and visitors. Enough funds had been pledged to build a schoolhouse and a teacher had been hired. Residents in the area were looking forward to a pleasant time in the town on July 4 and expected 200 people to take part. Turner was scheduled to give a talk, after which there would be dancing.

Francis Tanner and William L. Hayes established a sawmill on the eastern side of the Huachuca Mountains in the fall of 1879, with its output supplying the Patagonia District (AC, 1880; ADS, 1879a; AQI, 1880, p. 4; Bahre, 1991, p. 168; Bailey, 2004, p. 66; Bailey and Chaput, 2000b, p. 149). By the latter part of September 1879, the mill was furnishing excellent quality lumber at a cost of $65 per thousand feet, with the output being bought the moment it was delivered in Harshaw for use in buildings that were being constructed. The mill continued in 1880 to find a ready market for its output and employed more than 30 men, but a boiler explosion destroyed it. A new mill soon was producing 7000 to 8000 feet of lumber a day and by July 1880, had cut more than 400,000 feet of lumber.

A religious commune in Sunnyside Canyon on the southwestern side of the Huachuca Mountains set up a sawmill late in 1894 to augment revenues from a mine it ran (LAT, 1896; Peterson, 1999; Wilson, 1995, p. 208). The mill’s principal market was Washington Camp, a mine in the Patagonia Mountains. The mill ran for approximately 25 years until it lost that market.

The army was the first organization that logged within the Chiricahua Mountains (Bennett, 1865; Meketa & Meketa, 1980, p. 19-20; SFWG, 1864; Wilson, 1995, p. 209). On July 10, 1864, Captain T.T. Tidball left Fort Bowie on a scout for Indians with 16 California and New Mexico volunteers. His report mentioned the abundance of pine timber in the upper part of Pine Canyon and that much of it could be reached by wagon “without difficulty.” Tidball noted the plentiful timber at other locations and suggested that all the lumber needed for building Fort Bowie could be obtained from the Chiricahua Mountains. Lieutenant Colonel Bennett, commander of Fort Bowie, in early 1865 sent 17 New Mexico Volunteers to the Chiricahua Mountains to establish a lumber camp with sawpits and to harvest timber. In July 1865, 20 soldiers and a sergeant from the New Mexico Volunteers went to Ajo del Carrizo to obtain lumber for construction. Another detail of soldiers left the fort on August 31, 1865 to relieve the first group. During October 1865, a group of California Volunteers went to protect the loggers from Apaches thought to be near the lumber camp.

Citizens also knew about the abundant timber in the Chiricahua Mountains. The Arizona Citizen on October 26, 1878 published an article about wood in southern Arizona that mentioned the abundant
timber in the Chiricahua Mountains (AC, 1878). The first commercial sawmill in the Chiricahua Mountains began operations in 1879. Philip E. Morse convinced Jacob Grundike, a prominent banker and cattleman in California, to accompany him to southeastern Arizona and invest in a sawmill. The two men arrived in Tucson from San Diego in early April 1879 and searched for a suitable place for erecting a large sawmill that would produce lumber at prices below that for lumber imported from California (AC, 1879a,b,d,f,i; ADS, 1879c,d; ADS, 1880a,b; Bahre, 1991, p. 170; Matheny, 1975 p. 37-38; Patt, 2013; USDA, 2003, p. 16; WAC, 1880a,b). They found such a site on the western slopes of the Chiricahua Mountains in Turkey Creek Canyon 22 miles south of Fort Bowie. (The canyon was sometimes termed Morse Canyon or Morse Creek [Barnes, 1988, p. 290, 458-459].)

Morse began superintending the cutting of logs and their transportation to the future mill site. Grundike departed Tucson on April 17 for San Francisco to buy a sawmill. He ordered from H.R. Rice of San Francisco a large sawmill with a 12x12 engine powered by a boiler capable of producing 30-40 hp. The 20,000 pounds of machinery for the mill was shipped by railroad on May 20, 1879 to the end of the Southern Pacific Railroad, where it was loaded onto a Barnett & Block wagon train that subsequently trundled through Tucson on June 14, 1879 on the way to the Chiricahuas.

The sawmill began running on July 18, 1879. A shingle-making machine was shipped from A.D. Otis & Company on July 24, 1879. By July 1879, Morse & Co. was advertising that through a lumber yard in Tucson it provided "All Kinds of Lumber," along with "Matched Flooring" and shingles. The Morse sawmill in 1880 produced the first tongue-and-grooved surfaced flooring and ceiling materials made in Pima County. The demand for lumber was greater than the capacity of the mill. During the first 9 months of operation, the mill shipped more than 1 million feet of lumber, mostly to Tombstone and adjacent mills. In May 1880, it was cutting 50,000 feet of lumber per week. By July 10, 1880, the company was advertising that its agent in Tombstone had on hand 200,000 feet of lumber suitable for mining, building materials, seasoned flooring, rustic shingles, etc. The sawmill shut down in early November 1882 (AWC, 1882). Morse returned to San Diego and by September 1887, was worth $250,000 in lumber and real estate (TE, 1887).

William Downing erected a substantial sawmill in December 1879 in Pinery Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains 20 miles south of Fort Bowie (ADS, 1880a,e; AS, 1879a,b; Bailey and Chaput, 2000a, p. 100-101; Patt, 2013). The mill began working in January 1880, with many orders already on hand. It supplied lumber to Tombstone for buildings and mines and shipped considerable wood to Tucson (ADS, 1891; Matheny, 1975 p. 37-38). The Cochise County delinquent tax rolls for the year ending 1887 showed that Downing had delinquent taxes of $37.41 on property valued at $1125 (TWE, 1888). The property included a ranch in Pinery Canyon, improvements to the ranch, a sawmill, a house in Dos Cabezas, and miscellaneous items such as harnesses and tools.

In the spring of 1888, Downing moved the sawmill higher up within the Chiricahua Mountains to an area where he believed there was enough timber to run his mill for several years (ADS, 1888). The sawmill temporarily closed in the summer of 1889 when the Copper Queen Company briefly reduced its operations and was using very little lumber (ASB, 1889). A fire of unknown origin destroyed the sawmill and 30,000 feet of lumber in mid-July 1891 (ADS, 1891; TWE, 1891a). Downing immediately rebuilt the mill.

Around 1895, Downing sold his mill to the Riggs Bros. & Co. (Bailey and Chaput, 2000b, 82-83; Patt, 2013; Potter, 1902; Wilson, 1995, p. 211). The many members of the Riggs family were developing a large cattle operation along the eastern flanks of the Chiricahua Mountains and collectively in time owned approximately 100,000 acres of patented land, controlled about 25,000 acres under forest reserve permits, and held about 50,000 acres by leases. The family operated the former Downing mill in Pine Canyon and later moved it higher within the canyon and then to Barfoot Park, approximately 7.5 miles west of Portal (1994 Chiricahua Peak topographic map 31109-E1-TM-100). The mill eventually logged most of the Barfoot region (Russell, 1982, p. 69-94), Brannick Riggs, Jr. estimated in 1902 that the forest near the mill would supply 4 million board feet of lumber. In 1903, he contracted to supply the Detroit Copper Company at Morenci with 600,000 feet of lumber that would be hauled 15 miles to the Rodella station of the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad and then shipped to the company by rail (BDR, 1903; CS, 1903).
Edward F. Sweeney of the Duluth & Chiricahua Development Company bought the Riggs mill in May 1904 for $8000, along with related items such as adjacent track, cars, horses, a logging truck and wagon, and the right to harvest and sell timber from the Chiricahua Forest Reserve under a contract with the federal government (Patt, 2013). The new sawmill company was alternatively called the Sweeney Lumber Company and the Chiricahua Lumber Mills Company. The sawmill supplied lumber to the nearby developing mining town of Paradise and to the Paradise Mining District in the Chiricahua Mountains (BDR, 1904; BDR, 19005; BDR, 1906a,b; GNIS, 2018; TWE, 1906).

In June 1906, the company sold out to Boyer and Sanders, with the sale including the mill machinery and all buildings on the ground, all the cut and cured lumber, all wood left over from earlier timber logging, and the right to all standing timber near the mill and in Rustlers' Park. The new firm announced plans to fill a contract with a mine at Pearce for 2 million feet of mining timber produced at the rate of 50,000 to 60,000 feet per month and to supply mining timber and other lumber to anyone who wished to buy it. In the spring of 1907, the sawmill was removed from Barfoot Park (Pilsbry and Ferriss, 1910).

The sawmill of Daniel Ross harvested thousands of feet of lumber from the Chiricahua Mountains during the 1880s and early 1890s (ASB, 1889; Bailey and Chaput, 2000a, p. 92; AWE, 1890; Douglas, 1906, p. 27; Patt, 2013; DT, 1886d; TDE, 1886a,b; TDP, 1890; TWE, 1891c). In 1883, Daniel D. Ross and Jacob Scheerer partnered to buy a sawmill in either John Long or Mormon Canyon. Scheerer sold his share of the facility to Ross in 1886 and the latter subsequently moved the mill into Rock Canyon. After the mill gained the Copper Queen Company as its major customer, it sent most of its output to Bisbee for the company. Most of the timbers wanted by the Copper Queen were 12x12 and 10x10 in thickness. The mill in April 1890 was cutting 15,000 feet of timber per day and hauling it to Bisbee. The Copper Queen Company was taking all the native lumber it could obtain and importing a significant amount from Oregon. However, the company then preferred local timber because managers believed it was tougher and would stand more severe strains.

In April and May of 1886 and in July 1890, the mill advertised for heavy teams for hauling lumber from it to Bisbee. In the summer of 1889, the sawmill temporarily closed because the Copper Queen Company had momentarily reduced its operations and was using little lumber. The Ross Mill in November 1891 was running full time and producing about 20,000 feet of lumber per day, all of which went to Bisbee. The mill shut down in March 1894 because Ross concluded that it was impossible to make a profit because of the expenses of defending against a federal lawsuit.

During at least the latter part of 1886 Holmes & Thompson sold lumber from their mill at the head of Morse's Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains (DT, 1886a,b,e).

The Copper Queen Company and other Bisbee mines first harvested timber from the Mule Mountains (AWC, 1893; Douglas, 1906, p. 27; Douglas, 1910, p. 429, 496 abs.; Schwantes, 2000, p. 90; TWE, 1891b; USDA, 2003, p. 16). However, these mountains were relatively low in elevation compared to the other mountains in southeastern Arizona and supplied only limited amounts of what Douglas termed “stunted wood.”

By the end of the 1880s, the Mule Mountains' supply of lumber suitable for construction was mostly exhausted and could no longer meet the needs of the Bisbee mines. The Copper Queen switched in the middle 1880s to obtaining construction timbers from the Ross mill. Because of the legal expenses incurred...
in defending itself against a federal civil suit resulting from the purchase of Ross lumber, the Copper Queen Company in 1892 began looking elsewhere for suitable lumber. It found that it could obtain Oregon pine delivered to Benson or Fairbank for $19-$20 per thousand feet versus $32 per thousand feet for lumber from the Chiricahua Mountains delivered in Bisbee. The Southern Pacific imported the timber through San Pedro, California and transported it to Benson.

For several years, the inadequate supply of cut lumber was a limiting factor on the erection of buildings and the development of mines in southeastern Arizona. There was a great scarcity of lumber in Tucson in the latter part of 1879 (PH, 1879). Thirty-four buildings, mostly business houses, were under contract in Tombstone, but builders were waiting for the arrival of lumber so that they could construct the buildings. The Arizona Citizen noted on November 8, 1879 (AC, 1879e) that a dispute among the workers at a sawmill resulted in a shortage of lumber that hampered operations of the Contention Mill. The demand for lumber during 1880 was so great that sawmills could not meet the demands of Tombstone-based mining companies (WAC, 1880c).

The prominent merchant Lewis Blinn noted the demand for lumber and in May 1880, established a 185x210-foot lumberyard in Tombstone and by 1885 also had yards elsewhere (AQI, 1881; Bailey and Chaput, 2000a, p. 31; DT, 1886c). He initially sold lumber from the Chiricahua and Huachuca mountains at $60 to $65 per thousand feet. However, he found such lumber unsatisfactory for building purposes because it warped and twisted and therefore switched to selling only seasoned lumber from California.

Blinn was a major provider of lumber by the summer of 1885 and felt secure enough to threaten a rival who offered lower prices. On July 11, 1885, he wrote from Tombstone to Messrs. O.S. Merrill & Co. at Saw Mill, Carr Canyon to express outrage that the latter firm had offered to supply Mr. Warrington with lumber for a livery stable at the price of $35 per thousand feet. Blinn wrote, “I can be very disagreeable, and make things very disagreeable, and make things very uncomfortable.” He further threatened that “[I]f you supply one single foot of lumber into Tombstone market at any such rates as those proposed, or in any way enter into direct competition with me here, I will see that you cannot make enough out of your lumber to pay the freight.”

The arrival of railroads in the San Pedro River Valley facilitated importation of construction wood from outside Arizona. Even before the Southern Pacific reached Tucson, the A.D. Otis & Company in Tucson in addition to supplying timber from the Chiricahua Mountains was importing in October 1879 large cargoes by rail from California via the Casa Grande railroad terminus and then by wagon to Tucson (ADS, 1879b). The Arizona Daily Star noted on June 10, 1894 that lumber brought by railroad to Fairbank cost $25 per thousand feet, $5 more than lumber transported from the Ross Mill to Bisbee (ADS, 1894). The paper opined that the latter lumber was better suited for mine timber but was not yielding a profit for the Ross Mill because of the legal cost the company was incurring defending itself against the U.S. government.

[A future article will discuss the federal lawsuit, government attempts to protect forests, and the harvesting of fuelwood.]
References Cited


Volunteer at the Fairbank Schoolhouse

By Sally Rosén

If you are a lover of history and enjoy sharing that with others, Fairbank Schoolhouse is the place for you. Having the expanded Friends of the San Pedro library on site is a real plus and our volunteers use it to learn more about the history of our area.

Once you learn a little, you will want to know more. Since most of our visitors come here for the history, they are really appreciative of the information you can impart.

It is true that there are fewer visitors and fewer sales than at San Pedro House. That gives you time to do some reading: your personal reading or the many materials available about the history of the area. We also have a new WiFi setup to keep you in touch with the 21 century, if you so desire.

I have found volunteering at the Fairbank Schoolhouse to be fascinating, peaceful, and a great learning experience. I have met people from all over the world there and they all love to talk. It is fun to watch the kids come in and decide to play school. They are so excited! And the adults are extremely impressed with the museum displays that Ron Stewart has designed.

Isolated? Not really. Fairbank is as close to civilization as is San Pedro House, and there are usually site hosts there if you need anything. Yes, it is a bit further to drive, but I find that worth it for the enjoyable hours spent there.

We are finding ourselves a bit shorthanded lately, so please consider volunteering a shift or two at the Fairbank Schoolhouse. We are looking especially for members of the Friends who share our love of the San Pedro River and the people who have lived along it. Contact us at schoolhouse@sanpedroriver.org.

New & Renewing Members, mid-August 2018 through February 2019

Jerry & Mary Ann Ambrose; Deidre & Dawn Asbjorn*; Richard Bansberg; John Barthelme; Richard Bauer; Ginny Bealer; Judy Behnke; Donna Boe & Steve Fletcher; Kevin Cox & Heleen Bloethe*; Joelle Buffa; June Campbell; Shirley Campbell; Richard Carlsten; Margaret & Bill Case; Alice Cave & Rick Fletcher; Madeleine Charron; Marty Conant & David Levin; Steve, Marjorie & Keitelyn Conroy; Clay & Sue Cook; Patch Curtis; David Crowley; Philip Davis; Tom Deecken; Pat & Bruce Dillingham; Diana Doyle*; Paul Edwardson; Mel & Elaine Emeigh; Elisa Foladare; Barbara Foley; Sully & Carole Frumenti; Roger Funk & Douglas Noffsinger; Sheila Gershen & Sy Baldwin; Bette Goble; Ken Gray & Barbara Grabowski; Elvira Hartrim; Vance Haynes; Mary Haynes; Jon Hazen; Ken & Sandy Heusman; Francie Hills; Susan Husband*; Steve Johnson*; Mary Ann Jones; Robert King; Gabrielle LaFargue; Kenneth Lawson; Jonathan Lee-Melk; Rodney Leist; DeForest & Ceci Lewis; Ann Lorris*; Maura & Dale Mack; Susan Mathews; Marion McDonald*; Cecile McKee & Jesse Zoernig; Reuben Merideth & Deb Scherrer; Gretchen & Gary Michaels; Steve & Kathy Miedziak*; Skip & Sonya Miller; Anne Morris & David Steed; Miriam Moss; Ted & Melanie Mouras; Charles Mullany; Jay Nenninger; Fritz Neuhauser; Gary Noonan; Steve Ogile; Richard & Cheryl Osburn; Joe & Susan Payne*; Marie Pinto; Al & Dee Puff; Mary Raje; Matt Reed*; Norman Richey; Doug & Arlene Ripley; John Rose; Deanna Sanner; Carolyn Santucci; Heidi Schubert; Kathleen Scott; Peter Siminski; Jeanne & Rachel Simonella*; Kirk Stitt; Rick Tello*; Doris Turner; George & Ruth Van Otten; Martha Vogt & Jim Greene; Lloyd Walters; Russell & Julitta Watson; Richard Webster; Erika Wilson; Connie Wolcott. * = New member
Events, March-June 2019

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
  » 9 am—March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
  » 8 am—April 6, 13, 20, 27
  » 8 am—May 4, 11, 18, 25
  » 8 am—June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

FSPR Bird Walks
Every Wednesday & 4th Saturday at SPH
  » 8 am—March 6, 13, 20, 23, 27
  » 7 am—April 3, 10, 17, 24, 27
  » 7 am—May 1, 8, 15, 22, 25, 29
  » 7 am—June 5, 12, 19, 22, 26

FSPR/SABO Bird Walks
Every Sunday at Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park (EOP)
  » 7 am—March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
  » 7 am—April 7, 14, 21, 28
  » 7 am—May 5, 12, 19, 26
  » 7 am—June 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

History Hikes
  » March 2—Millville Ruins & Petroglyphs, 10 am
  » March 3—Clanton Ranch, 10 am
  » March 10—Fairbank Historic Townsite, 1 pm
  » March 16—Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate, 9 am
  » March 23—Grand Central Mill, 9 am
  » March 30—Murray Springs Clovis Site, 9 am
  » April 6—Clanton Ranch, 9 am
  » April 13—Millville Ruins & Petroglyphs, 9 am
  » April 20—Fairbank Historic Townsite, 1 pm

  » April 27—Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate, 9 am
  » May 4—Grand Central Mill, 9 am

SABO Hummingbird Banding
Saturdays, unless otherwise noted; observe from 4-6 pm at SPH
  » March 30
  » April 6, 13, 20, 27
  » May 4, 11, 18, 25
  » June 1, 29

Contact List
  • President—Robert Weissler
  • Vice-President—Ron Stewart
  • 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.
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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
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