

Friends of the Sandia Mountains Annual Newsletter, September 2014



**Friends of the Sandia Mountains
P.O. Box 1832,
Tijeras, New Mexico 87059**

Remaining Meetings of 2014

**7:00 pm at Sandia Ranger Station
Tuesday, October 7**

Dave Weaver
Day of the Dead – Oaxaca, Mexico

Tuesday, November 4

Jim Kohler
Airplane Crashes in New Mexico

December: No Meeting

From the President

Preparing this column on an annual basis usually involves looking back over the prior year to see what circumstances or accomplishments somehow stand out from others and can form a foundation upon which to base the report. OK, let's see... Did we have an exceptionally wet or dry winter? Well, not really. We have had much wetter and much dryer years, but there was plenty of snow for our Annual Snowshoe Race. Was the mountain as parched and brown this spring as it was last year? Well, not really. It wasn't particularly lush, but the vegetation on most of the mountain got off to a pretty good start. Did we have another lengthy fire closure this year? Actually, no. A one week closure around the July 4th weekend helped get us through another fire season safely. Was there a single project that stood out from all the others due to its complexity or scope? Well, kind of hard to say, although rebuilding the pedestrian

bridge behind the Ranger Station was certainly different.

So, it seems to me that this past year was pretty average in most ways. I am good with that, because "average" means that our FOSM volunteers put in thousands of hours of plain old hard work to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for visitors to the Sandia Ranger District. I would be happy to compare that FOSM "average" with any other volunteer organization's "best".

Please take the time to read the activity reports that follow which document the varied projects and activities undertaken by our FOSM volunteers over the past year. My sincere thanks go to all our dedicated volunteers for their hard work and for all they do on behalf of our organization. Thanks also to the FOSM Officers and Board members for their guidance and direction and to the staff of the United States Forest Service Sandia Ranger District whose support and encouragement are vital to our

Mission.

See you on the mountain.

Bob Lowder, President
Friends of the Sandia Mountains

Talking Talons Collaborative Forest Restoration Program

The task of the Friends of the Sandia Mountains in the Talking Talons Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) over a period of three years is to clear the pinon-juniper forest to restore meadow conditions on 14 acres of a 30-acre parcel at the northwest corner of the Sandia Ranger District (SRD) south of I-40. During the first two years of the project, FOSM volunteers felled and limbed trees in the meadow areas. They bucked the trunks into stove/fireplace lengths and piled it so that it was available for collection by Scouts who distributed it to needy families.

During FY2014, the third year of the project, on September 25, 2013, volunteers bucked wood in the FY13A area for an Eagle Scout project on September 28. The primary activity this year was thinning Rocky Ridges 2 and 3 using a prescription obtained from SRD Forester Aaron Johnson. The volunteers removed all the trees except the “leave” trees that Aaron had marked with orange paint. The volunteers appreciated very much Aaron’s marking the trees so that they did not have to devote time to deciding which trees to leave according to the prescription.

On February 19, 2014, the volunteers bucked wood in the FY13B area for Scouts to collect on March 1. On four days in February and March, the chain sawyers and swampers thinned all of Rocky Ridge 2. On two days in April they thinned the smaller

Rocky Ridge 3 area. On July 23, the volunteers bucked wood in the FY13A area for collection on July 26.

From September 1, 2013, to August 31, 2014, the volunteers worked a total of 692 hours including travel time from and to home and including time for chain saw and chain maintenance. Laurie Werne, Talking Talons Director, stated recently that the project will probably be extended to the spring of 2015. (Sam Beard)

Pedestrian Bridge Reconstruction

One of the major projects during the summer was partial reconstruction of the 50-foot pedestrian bridge behind the Ranger Station. Many parts of the bridge constructed with pressure-treated landscape timbers many years ago were warped and cracked, and some were partially decayed. Project Leaders Jim Lunn and Sam Beard worked with the Cibola National Forest Engineering Staff to define plans to replace railings, posts, diagonal braces, and horizontal timbers with pressure-treated 2x4s or 4x4s. Volunteers worked three days on removing the old parts and replacing them with the new lumber. During each work day, the bridge remained open to pedestrians. The main part of the bridge was completed on July 23. On August 13, Jim and Dan Benton completed the project by digging out two old east end posts and setting two new 4x4 posts in concrete. They also replaced some railings that had become warped since they were attached to the old posts. (Jim Lunn and Sam Beard)



Chipping slash near vehicle gate
Photo by Sally Lowder

Recertification of Crosscut Sawyers

Every three years, FOSM's crosscut sawyers renew their certifications for their work on the Cibola National Forest, Sandia Ranger District. In June, 2014, Kerry Wood, C-advanced Crosscut Sawyer and Trails and Program Manager for Cibola National Forest, Sandia Ranger District, recertified Bob Lowder, Sam Beard, Paul Torno, Rav Nicholson, Sally Lowder, Linda McDowell, Jerry Pekarek and Dave Gabel. These Sawyers have current certifications through June 2017. Dan Benton, Bill Savage, Don Carnicom, Larry Littlefield, Diana Filliman, Pete Rhyins, Jim Lunn, Chris Fritzsche have their certifications end in mid-2015. Carl Smith and Bill White were unable to complete their recertifications this year.
(Sally Lowder)

CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens Training

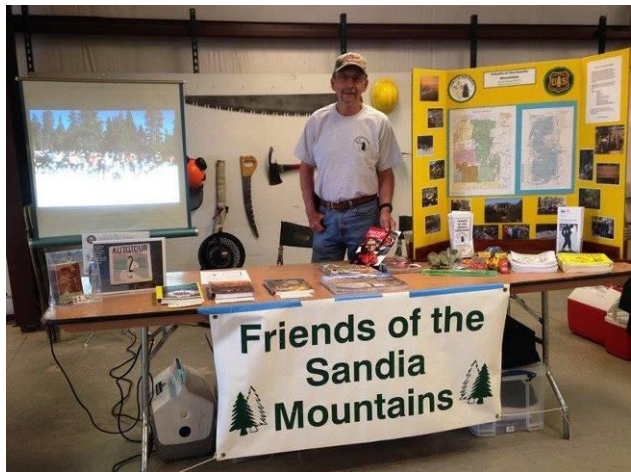
Nineteen certified crosscut and chain saw sawyers fulfilled their class room obligations for blood borne pathogens (BBP) and first aid trainings for 2014. Five

sawyers completed their CPR training for 2014. Every two years we must recertify for CPR and first aid. BBP is good for 1 year. Thanks to FOSM member and long time Red Cross instructor Kitsie Hilaire Smiset for her tireless devotion to keeping us certified. FOSM members participating were Bob Lowder, Sam Beard, Dan Benton, Bill Savage, Carl Smith, Paul Torno, Don Carnicom, Larry Littlefield, Diana Filliman, Rav Nicholson, Sally Lowder, Linda McDowell, Jerry Pekarek, Dave Gabel, Pete Rhyins, Bill White, Dennis Crowther, Jim Lunn and Chris Fritzsche. (Sally Lowder)

Junior Ranger Program

The Junior Ranger Program for the top of Sandia Mountain was put on hold for 2014 due to several factors. The Sandia Peak Tram was remodeling the building at the top and there was no place for volunteers to work. The Sandia Crest Visitor Center had been closed so much of 2013, and the visitor level had dropped. The FOSM Board decided, with the blessings of the Sandia Ranger District, to take a hiatus from the Junior Ranger Program at the Crest to see if the interest still might be there. So many of the children in the last few years wanting to do the program were told by their parents that it would "take too long" and "we don't have the time". Granted, it takes about an hour to walk the trail, read the signs, and answer the questions. Then the child brings his/her test back to the volunteer at the desk to have it graded. They were then given a patch and a certificate signed by the District Ranger. A total of about 90 minutes could be spent doing this program. Such a sad thing that the parents are not willing to spend 90 minutes with their child/children in the forest learning about the trees, flora, fauna, and other things. It is truly a sad thing to see. Generally, the number of visitors coming to the USFS desk at the

Crest this summer has been down. I have not heard if there was any interest in the Junior Ranger program. Bob and I saw none on Mondays. We will address this issue for FY2015. There was a Junior Ranger Program being offered at the Doc Long Picnic Area by volunteers on the weekends, and the Ranger Station also was providing a Junior Ranger Program for the children there. (Sally Lowder)



Bob Lowder at the NM EXPO
Photo by Sally Lowder

FOSM Publications

Recreation Guide to the Sandia and Manzanita Mountains - This year we continued to distribute this free visitors guide that includes information about picnic areas, camping, volunteer work, parking fees and passes, wilderness restrictions, temperatures and precipitation, maps, trail lengths and difficulty, and Leave No Trace. The guide is available at the Ranger Station, Crest Visitor Center, REI, Albuquerque Convention and Visitor Bureau, and Tinkertown. In addition, they are frequently distributed at FOSM outreach activities. (Don Carnicom)

Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains – UNM Press reports that 12,078 copies of this book have been sold. (Gerry Sussman)

FOSM Email Notification Groups

Communication to and between members is important for most organizations, and ours is no exception. Several years ago FOSM created three email groups using the Yahoo Groups system which is provided at no cost.

Friends of Sandias – This group of about 98 email addresses is made up only of current members of the Friends of the Sandia Mountains. It is used to provide information that pertains only to FOSM members, such as election matters, etc. Messages going out to this group must be approved by one of our assigned moderators.

NMFOF/Volunteers – This group of about 279 email addresses is made up of all FOSM members, other authorized USFS/SRD volunteers and others who have expressed an interest in receiving the information it provides. This system provides announcements of FOSM projects, monthly FOSM meetings, information from our partners at the USFS Sandia Ranger District, etc. Messages to this group also require approval by a moderator. (NMFOF stands for New Mexico Friends of the Forest, our original and corporate name.)

Cibola Trail Rangers – This group of 128 email addresses provides a forum for anyone to report trail conditions on our Sandia trails. Many of our projects have resulted from information provided on this system. Messages posted on this system do not require moderator approval. (Bob Lowder)

Sandia Ranger District Signage Program

Four years ago the FOSM Signage Committee undertook a project to inventory all signs on the Sandia Ranger District, evaluate which signs needed to be replaced,

then design, purchase and install the signs on a timely basis. These activities were completed with the majority of the replacement signs being installed in the Crest, Tram, and Kiwanis Meadow areas. Maintenance, such as graffiti removal and complete sign replacement was performed as required throughout the year. In particular two signs in the Cienega PA were replaced as were two around Kiwanis Meadow. The time is rapidly approaching when we will need to order some new signs as we are about out of replacements. The sign inventory for the District was updated as changes occurred and electronic files were supplied to the SRD staff. (Don Carnicom)

FOSM Records Retention

Throughout the year we continued to get our corporate records collected and filed. Now all electronic files and hard copy records are stored in a locked cabinet in the FOSM office at the Ranger Station. The electronic files are stored on a flash drive that is updated about twice a year. A duplicate set of files are kept on another flash drive and on a hard drive. Any director issuing a document they wish to have retained can copy it to the email address, fosmrecords@friendsofthesandias.org, and it will end up on the flash drive. All of the hard copy records will eventually be scanned and added to the other electronic records. (Don Carnicom)

FOSM Outreach

* **Celebrate Wildlife Event at Wildlife West** – On June 2 the Wildlife West Nature Park celebrated wildlife with their “Wildlife Festival.” Many wildlife-orientated organizations such as FOSM, US Forest service, NM Game and Fish, NM Herpetological Society, Sandia Mountain Bear Watch, NM Wilderness Alliance, The

Peregrine Foundation and a number of others participated. Approximately 200 people passed through the Bean Barn where each organization had a table displaying their handouts, literature, photos, and in some cases, live animals. Don Carnicom manned the FOSM table for about 7 hours. We sold one Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains and passed out a number of Recreation Guides, FOSM membership applications, SRD Trail Maps and other literature. This is a good event for FOSM as it reaches out to a variety of people and many more now know about FOSM. (Don Carnicom)

* **New Mexico Outdoor EXPO** -- It has been our practice for a number of years to have a table for FOSM at the annual New Mexico Outdoor Expo which is coordinated by the NM Department of Game and Fish and draws an average of 4000 visitors over the weekend. It is held at Albuquerque's Shooting Range Park located west of the Double Eagle Airport on the far west side. This year it took place on August 16 and 17. It has been a good venue for FOSM as everyone attending the Expo has some sort of interest in the outdoors and traffic at our table has always been good.

In the past, as staffing allowed, the Sandia Ranger District had an adjacent table, but lately, we have been distributing fire safety materials and the ever-popular Smokey Bear items supplied by SRD Fire Information Officer Karen Takai. Sally and I also provide information about FOSM and the Sandias and hand out tri-fold trail maps to hikers upon request. We have static displays of some of the tools we use on field projects and have a slide show of FOSM activities running in the background. For the past few years, Santa Fe National Forest has had a table next to us. This has worked out very well.

This year we also sold one copy each of the **Auto Tour Book, Field Guide to the Sandias, Sandia Hiking Guide** and the **Flowers Guide**. (Bob and Sally Lowder)

* **FOSM Outreach at REI** -- Bob Mosher, Manager of the Albuquerque REI Store, invited FOSM to participate in its annual Community Partners Day, March 29. It is a day when community organizations who advocate for the use and care of outdoor resources can display their interests and mission to help educate and invite membership. This year, in behalf of FOSM, I accepted Mosher's invitation and engaged 3 other volunteers, Don Carnicom, Anne Hickman and Linda McDowell, to staff a display table from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. The various organizations were distributed at locations throughout the store. We engaged over 50 adults and children. We had our standard FOSM display of banner, photo albums, maps, handout literature, and books. (Lou Romero)

* **Presentation at Wilderness 50th Anniversary Event** -- At the request of Dana Howlett, retired USFS employee, I made a short presentation about FOSM wilderness trail maintenance as part of a Wilderness 50th Anniversary event in the Tijeras Educational Center. I discussed the following topics: brief history of FOSM, removal of fallen trees, communication with Cibola Trail Rangers (CTR) and SVANMFOF egroups, informal and formal outings, crosscut saw certification, and other tools. A presentation was also made on wilderness ecology, and Matt Rau, SRD Fire Management Officer, made a very interesting presentation on fire in wilderness. (Sam Beard)

12th Annual Sandia Mountain Snowshoe Race

The 12th Annual Sandia Mountain Snowshoe Race, presented by Friends of the Sandia Mountains, our only fund raising event, was held January 18, 2014. The Race started at 10:00 am at the lower level parking lot at Sandia Crest and followed a 5-km course on beautiful trails in the Cibola National Forest. Registration started at the REI store or by mail on December 1, 2013. Registration forms were also available online at www.sandiasnowshoe.com. The race is limited to 150 participants, and racers of all levels are invited to participate. This year 134 racers participated. There were 6 categories each of female and male racers ranging from age 7 to 86.

The overall best female time was posted by Michelle Hummel at 0:30:02. Best male time and overall winner was Steve Clarke with a time of 0:28:19. The youngest female entrant was Elizabeth Eminger, age 8 and youngest male was Luke Eminger, age 7. Jonah Thompson, age 14, posted a time of 0:35:15. He was filmed and interviewed by Albuquerque television station Channel 4 during the race, and his story was featured during the 2014 Olympics broadcast as one of our local athletes demonstrating the "Olympic Spirit."

The 2014 Race was blessed with the support of 38 very diverse local sponsors contributing in-kind donations used for prizes, gift bags, food and drink.

The 2014 Organizing Committee Chairs were Bob and Sally Lowder, Anne Hickman, Jane Harrison, Mike Coltrin, Jim Lunn, Beth Corwin, Joy Bosquez and Linda McDowell. (Lou Romero, Race Director)



Young boy in snowshoe race

Adopt-A-Trail Program

During FY2014 through September 5, seven Adopt-A-Trail organizations/individuals have reported a total of 468 hours worked on their adopted trails. The groups/individuals reporting so far this fiscal year are the Friends of Piedra Lisa South, Friends of the Sandia Mountains, New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club, New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors, Rav and Ken Nicholson, Southwest Forest Service Amigos, and Linda McDowell. The Southwest Forest Service Amigos have reported the most outings to work on their trails at ten, and also reported the most hours worked at 176.5. There are still over three weeks to go in the fiscal year, so we anticipate that the participants in the AAT program will take advantage of the moderating temperatures to get out on their adopted trails and enjoy the fall colors while adding additional hours to repair any damage brought on by this year's monsoon storms. (Dan Benton)

Adopt-A-Trail Report for Tecolote and Cienega Nature Trail

Cienega Nature Trail and Tecolote Trail located at Dry Camp Trailhead are FOSM'S adopted trails. On May 2 Bob and Sally Lowder worked 6 hours doing work on both Tecolote Trail and Cienega Nature Trail. Tecolote Trail was in excellent condition at that time with little or no need for any trail work. Trash was picked up along the trail and in the parking lot. A fire ring was also broken up as it was set under some trees. We did remove a total of 5 trees on or across the trail. Cienega Nature Trail for the handicapped also received some spring cleanup. The concrete trail was raked of debris and then the Stihl Power Blower was used to finish the work. The parking lot was blown clear of winter debris. The group picnic table area was raked and also blown clear.

A second Tecolote project was done on August 13 for a total of 5.5 hours. This trail usually is in good shape in the spring and by the late summer it needs remediation due to the rains and growth of vegetation. The entire length of Tecolote was hiked and vegetation was trimmed back to the edges of the trail using loppers, shears and pruning saws. This work was done by Paul Torno, Jim Levesque and Sally Lowder. Lou Romero and Bob Lowder cleaned out all the water features, cleared some deadfall from the side of the trail (encroaching) and repaired the wooden edging along the trail that had been washed out by the summer rains. In a few places the trail was starting to develop a significant slope to the downhill side of the trail, and this was also repaired. We had never seen Tecolote Trail as full of wildflowers as it was this year. "Just add water"!! (Sally Lowder)



Bet Gendron cleaning Piedra Lisa water trough with Pat Benton and Sam Beard in background. Photo by Dan Benton

Wildflower Walks

Wildflower Walks in the Sandia Ranger District and surrounding public areas continued again for the summer of 2014 led by a team of six people trained by Pearl Burns. Walks, co-sponsored by the Sandia Ranger District and FOSM, were held Saturday mornings from the beginning of June to last Saturday in August, except for one Saturday during Forest Closure. Leaders were Mari Draper, Vicki Farrar, Dick Frederiksen, Chris Husted, Marj Patrick and Jean Payne. Larry Littlefield co-led once with Dick Frederiksen. (Jean Payne)

Paint Crew Report

The paint crew ended the 2013 fall season by returning to Oak Flats Group Picnic Area

with Kerry Wood, Trails and Wilderness Manager, and doing some re-stripping with yellow paint. This should allow more room for the bikers to enter and exit the trails. In October the last of the five new Smokey signs was finished.

The 2014 season started in February with the paint crew measuring and documenting all the forest signs in the Sandia Ranger District for Karen Takai, Public Affairs Officer. In March the crew obtained two new parking stripe painting machines that make striping faster and neater. In March and April the parking lots in Oak Flats, Juniper, Yucca, and Pinyon were all redone. In April and May the parking lots at Balsam Glade, Ellis, 10K South, Tree Springs, and 10K North were repainted.

In May the crew moved to the west side of the mountain and repainted the bathrooms at La Luz Trailhead that gets a lot of graffiti. Also in May, Doc Long parking lot was re-stripped. In July the crew touched up the Crest Area handrails with cream paint. The directional arrows in the upper lot were enlarged and painted with white paint. The usual graffiti was removed from the signs and bathrooms. In August, we repainted the large metal door from Las Huertas PA with a special greenish/black paint.

In August and September the crew returned to Pine Flats and painted a total of 54 picnic benches. On September 11 we ended the season by painting the six picnic tables and benches in the upper level at Nine Mile Picnic Area.

Volunteers for the year were Anne Hickman, Joy Bosquez, Jane Harrison, Angela Welford, Kerry Harmon, Sara Morlan, Rikki Barrett, Gordon Eatman and Jean Payne. (Jane Harrison, Crew Leader)



Steel hand railings painted by Paint Crew at Sandia Crest. Photo by Jane Harrison

Membership

We now have 109 memberships compared with 118 last year at this time. We added 13 new memberships this year. New members are John and Diana Wee, Don and Barbara Evans, Pamela Beachum, Patricia Beres, Steve Glass, Cameron Metzler, Rodney and Hildegard Adams, Robert and Stephanie Long, Diana Helgeson, Nancy Fisher, and Karen Leach. Welcome aboard everyone! (Timothy Brown)

Financial Report

We began FY2014 on October 1, 2013 with a checking account balance of \$22,014.21 and on September 7, 2014 the balance was \$25,109.59. We also have two CDs which total \$31,200.14. The largest expenses were \$2,628.85 for projects and \$4,234.18 for fundraising/publicity, which included \$4091.24 for Snowshoe Race expenses. The largest revenues were \$3,346.66 from donations, \$2,176.66, after expenses, from the Snowshoe Race, and \$1,655.00 from memberships. (Timothy Brown)

Audit

In October 2013, Art Arenholz completed an audit of the FOSM financial records. He reported the records to be accurate and in good shape. Also in October 2013 Tim Brown completed an audit of all of the FOSM physical assets. (Timothy Brown)

National Trails Day FOSM Project

On National Trails Day (NTD) on June 7, Sam Beard and Dan Benton led a FOSM crew in a project to prune around picnic tables and along trails in La Cueva Picnic Area. This project done at the request of Sandra Arazi-Coombs, Sandra District Archaeologist, because many of the historic structures built by the CCC prior to WWII were being lost in the overgrowth. The picnic area was divided into the following areas based on the adjacent parking:

* **Stone House Area** – Trails to the Stone House and four picnic tables were pruned with manual tools such as long-handle loppers and pruning saws. Volunteers also picked up trash near the house. We found two tables that Sam and Dan had not seen earlier. Most of the tables are located among large boulders and under gray oak trees.

* **East Parking Area** – The volunteers found 11 tables and pruned branches over seven tables with the power pole saw. Branches over one table were pruned with loppers.

* **West Parking Area** – The volunteers pruned trails to seven picnic tables. We found an octagonal table with a head-size granite rock set in the concrete top. Many tables were made for a specific site and have an arrow pointing to the north impressed in the concrete top. Some concrete table tops also contain an impression the USFS shield. Benches at some picnic tables are supported by local rocks.

At 12:30 pm, the NTD volunteers gathered at the Kiwanis Shelter at Elena Gallegos Picnic Area for a lunch of sandwiches, chips, and drinks. After lunch six of the eight FOSM volunteers won door prizes. (Dan Benton and Sam Beard)



Octagonal table with small granite rock in the center and concrete benches set on granite boulders. Photo by Dan Benton

418 Trees Removed from Trails

The volunteer trail maintenance program managed by FOSM is divided into three parts – maintenance by individual Cibola Trail Rangers (CTR) e-group members, maintenance by AAT (Adopt-A-Trail) groups or individuals, and maintenance by volunteers on scheduled FOSM outings.

Cibola Trail Rangers E-group – Volunteers in the CTR e-group frequently visit the forest and report trees across the trails to the e-group, and the information goes to all the e-group members. Usually within one or two weeks, CTR members will remove most of the trees under 12 inches in diameter year-round with hand tools on unscheduled outings. Sam Beard and Sally Lowder maintain a record of reported and removed trees in a Word table. If you would like to be in the CTR e-group, contact Sally Lowder, 505-821-9640.

Scheduled FOSM Trail Outings -- FOSM schedules trail work outings when more volunteers and equipment such as crosscut or chain saws are required to remove larger trees. Maintenance of trails was scheduled for about 28 days this year.

Some examples of the many outings to remove down trees from trails are given below. Only parts of some trails were hiked. All trees in the wilderness were cut with crosscut saws.

- * Pino Trail, 5 outings, removed 21 trees
 - * 10KN and Survey, 1-22-14, removed 7 trees in snow
 - * 130S and Faulty Loop, 12-28-13, removed 5 trees
 - * Osha Loop, 6-13-14, removed 4 trees
 - * 3-Gun, Oso Pass, and Upper Embudito, 6-18-14, removed 3 trees
 - * 10KN, Osha Loop, and Survey, 6-25-14, removed 24 trees
 - * 10KS, 130S, and Cienega, 7-16-14, removed 12 trees
 - * 130S, Faulty, and Bart's, 8-29-14, removed 19 trees.
- (Sam Beard)

Volunteers Fell 223 Danger Trees

Volunteers continued felling danger trees in picnic areas and at trailheads during FY2014. Kerry Wood, Sandia Ranger District, used the Southwestern Region Danger Tree Evaluation Form to designate trees with the following defects as danger trees: dead, dying, dead branches, exposed roots, cracks in trunk, lightning scar, leaning, insect damage, dead top, trunk wounds, forked trunks, cankers, bole (trunk) decay, cavities, and disease.

The number of danger trees felled in the picnic areas and at trailheads from September 2013 through August 2014 is given in the table below. The total number of felled trees was 223 in these outings. Most trees were less than 18 inches in diameter, and the maximum diameter was 30 inches. The slash (branches) of the felled trees was chipped with the large Sandia Ranger District chipper. (Sam Beard)

Site	Trees Felled
Cienega Can. PA	41
Doc Long PA	19
Wolf Spring Trail	12
Sulphur Can. PA	26
Balsam Glade PA	10
Capulin Spring PA	40
Nine Mile PA	23
10K South TH	13
Ellis Trailhead	8
Crest Area	3
Las Huertas PA	24
Ranger Station	4
Total	223

Programs at Monthly Meetings

This year we had the following presentations at our first-Tuesday monthly meetings:

- * Oct. – Cancelled due to government closure
- * Nov. – Sam and Edwina Beard -- Three Arctic Islands: Iceland, Greenland, and Spitzbergen
- * Mar. – John Taylor -- Civil War in New Mexico
- * Apr. – Linda McDowell -- Habitat for Humanity in Guangxi, China
- * May – Charlie and Traci Casey -- Backpacking 9 days on the Colorado Trail between Creede and Durango, CO.

- * June -- Pauline Ho and Richard Buss -- Remote islands of Indonesia: Komodo, Rinca and Flores
- * July -- Paul Mauermann and Chris Modelski – Forest health and research projects that are underway at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center.
- * Aug. -- Carl and Marilyn Smith--Trip to India and Nepal
- * Sept. -- Laurie Frantz -- History of the Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway with an emphasis on Madrid
- * Oct. -- Dave Weaver -- Oaxaca and The Day of the Dead celebration
- * Nov. -- Jim Kohler -- Airplane crashes in New Mexico



Dan Benton beside a tree exploded by lightning in Balsam Glade Picnic Area.
Photo by Carl Smith

Projects at Developed Sites

***Construction of Pine Flat Horse Trailer**

Parking Lot-- On Friday, January 31, volunteers worked with Ryan Reineke, SRD employee, to begin constructing a horse trailer parking lot in the southern part of Pine Flat Picnic Area and closing the road from the south restroom to the traffic circle at the end of the PA. The following tasks were completed or started as part of converting the south parking lot into a horse trailer parking lot: removal of kiosk with skid steer, cutting a new half-circle road, removal of old railroad track posts around old parking lot, and placing road base on new road. (Sam Beard)

***Cutting Brush near Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area** – Near the entrance to Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area, the volunteers cut willow brush with brush cutters and chain saws on October 23. At the intersection of Cienega Road and the Crest Highway, they also cut willow brush, three 6-inch oak trees, 4-inch elm tree, numerous small oaks, and one Rocky Mountain juniper. (Sam Beard)

***Installation of Site Boundary signs at Doc Long Picnic Area** – At the request of Bob Heiar, SRD Recreation Manager, volunteers installed recreation site boundary markers at locations around Doc Long PA where Bob had placed flags. A steel tool shaped like a Carsonite post is pounded into the ground to make a hole for the fiberglass Carsonite marker. The Carsonite post is then pounded in the hole. A site boundary sticker is attached to the post. The signs are installed every 100 feet to 200 feet around the boundary of the site. (Sam Beard)

*** Pruning at Oak Flat Group Picnic Area** – On February 12 volunteers worked with Kerry Wood, SRD Trails and Wilderness Manager, to do general brush cutting along roads and parking lots in the Oak Flat Group Picnic Area. They also pruned an extra wide unpaved strip along a parking lot edge at one

place that will be part of an official mountain bike race later in the year. (Sam Beard)

*** Las Huertas Picnic Area Clean-up** -- A crew of FOSM volunteers cleaned the picnic table/pathway areas in the Las Huertas Canyon Picnic Area. What a beautiful area built many years ago. It is beautifully laid out, and the flowing stream is most welcome in a dry area. It was lush and green and a most inviting place to have a picnic. When we first got there we were met with about 10 years of forest debris that had built up on the roads, pathways, and table areas. Some table areas are natural and laid out in dirt areas. These areas were raked somewhat to clear leaves/pine needles from around the tables to help cut down fire danger from people smoking. The roadways leading to other areas were scraped, shoveled, raked and cleared of debris using the FOSM gas powered blower. The walking paths between the different areas were cleaned in the same manner. Parking lots were also scraped of the build up of dirt and pine needles from around the edges and the parking bumpers. The Stihl Power Blower was used extensively in all these areas to clear out the residual debris. The bridge pathways leading to the asphalt handicapped picnic areas were also cleaned. One bridge area was totally covered in mud, leaves and much grass growing near the edges, and this was all cleared. The area with the two tables on the asphalt pad was cleared of excess mud, ants and other debris. What a gorgeous place to have a picnic down by the stream-----perfect place for our lunch!! The surprise of the day came when Jerry and Bob started to clear a mud and grass covered ramp and discovered a concrete stairway!! All the steps were shoveled and swept of debris. What a find! (Sally Lowder)

*** Large Cottonwood Tree Felled at Ranger Station** – At the request of Cid Morgan, District Ranger, volunteers felled

the large dying cottonwood tree in front of the Ranger Station on June 18. Dan Benton used the Stihl power pole saw to cut off a large branch on the north side of the tree to help ensure that the tree would fall to the southeast into the parking lot. The bucked wood was hauled to the donation pile near the hazmat building, and the slash was piled there for chipping later. (Sam Beard)

*** Nine Mile PA Tables Painted with Special Paint** – In June and early September, four wooden picnic tables were sanded and painted with two coats of Behr DeckOver paint designed for weathered decks in an attempt to preserve these old tables a few years longer. Other tables were painted with the regular BBQ brown latex paint in order to obtain a comparison of the performance of the two paints. (Sam Beard)



Jim Lunn on the pedestrian bridge rebuilt by FOSM volunteers. Photo by Dan Benton

Chipping Slash at Various Sites

Each year volunteers use the large SRD Vermeer chipper to chip slash resulting from brush cutting and tree felling at the Ranger Station and various picnic areas. For example, on November 20 volunteers removed eight dead pinyon trees from the hillside south of the vehicle gate at the Ranger Station. The resulting slash (branches and small trunks) was chipped, and the trunks were cut into stove/fireplace lengths. The bucked wood was stored at the hazmat building until it was donated to a needy family.

The busiest chipping day was July 30 when six volunteers worked to clear slash from the Ranger Station area and Cienega Picnic Area. Six piles of slash were removed from several locations at the Ranger Station where dead trees had been felled – two small pinyons and some Russian olives near the fire shed, three piles of the large cottonwood tree slash near the hazmat building, piles of slash near the public restrooms where three dead pinyons were felled, and a very large pile behind the vehicle gate that resulted from thinning on the hillside by the fire crews.

Then the crew moved to Cienega Picnic Area where we found much slash. FOSM had cut danger trees in June that had been marked by Kerry Wood for removal. These trees had been limbed and bucked for people with wood permits. The slash had been stacked in several locations. The fire fighters assigned to the SRD during the fire season had cut many trees in Cienega near the host site. The slash was moved by them to the side of the parking lot for ease in chipping. Once this area was cleaned up, the crew moved to the upper end of the Cienega Canyon PA. There were 3 large piles to chip and much scattered wood

debris. All slash and debris was chipped, and the parking lot and picnic area were blown clean with the Stihl Power Blower. This area now looks nice once again. (Sally and Bob Lowder)

Other Projects

Demolition of Oso Corredor Trail Bridge

– At the request of Kerry Wood, Trails and Wilderness Manager, on July 30 volunteers removed the partially collapsed bridge across a wet area on Oso Corredor Trail. Using wrenches and socket sets, the crew removed numerous lag screws that secured the deck boards and cross members about 12 inches above the ground. The next task was digging out six 6x6 posts using shovels, a Pulaski, and a digging bar. The posts were in good condition and were stored near the puncheon so that they could be used as cross members when the puncheon is rebuilt.

Buck and Pole Fence Removal – Kerry Wood also requested that the volunteers remove a mostly collapsed buck and pole fence running to the east from the Oso Corredor Trail bridge. It had been built many years ago to discourage hikers from going into prime bear habitat. The long spikes securing the poles were removed and collected. The untreated timbers were then dispersed in the woods away from the trail. (Sam Beard)

Trees Felled in Unauthorized Sledding Area – At the request of the SRD Staff, volunteers felled seven dead danger trees in an unauthorized sledding area adjacent to the Crest Highway about one-half mile below Tree Spring Trailhead in an attempt to discourage winter recreation in this area. The trees ranged in diameter from 4 inches to 19 inches. (Bob Lowder)

Blue Diamonds on Crest Area Trails --

Wayne Kirkby, a member of the N. M. Cross Country Ski Club, and Sam Beard nailed about 50 blue plastic replacement diamonds to trees along the Switchback, Buried Cable, Gravel Pit, and Rocky Point Trails to make them easier to follow. Although these trails were originally ski trails adopted by the Ski Club, they are now also very popular with hikers and snowshoers and are maintained by the Friends of the Sandia Mountains and the Ski Club year-round. (Sam Beard)

FOSM Project Participants

A total of 47 volunteers worked on at least one project in FY2014. About two dozen members frequently volunteer to work on the weekly Wednesday projects, and 10 to 20 members typically work each week. Ten members are on Jane Harrison's paint crew.

The FOSM officers, Board Members, and the Sandia Ranger District Staff appreciate very much the support of all the FOSM members. The volunteers who worked on FOSM projects in FY2014 were Bob and Sally Lowder, Dan and Pat Benton, Tim Brown, Don Carnicom, Dennis Crowther, Gordon Eatman, Diana Filliman, Chris Fritzsche, Bet Gendron, Steve Graham, Jane Harrison, Anne Hickman, Jim and Judy Levesque, Larry Littlefield, Jim Lunn, Vic Matricardi, David McCreery, Linda McDowell, Bob Moore, Rav Nicholson, Russ and Ellie Parker, Jerry Pekarek, Pete Rhyins, Lou Romero, Rodger Sack, Bill Savage, Carl Smith, Gerry Sussman, Paul Torno, Bill White, Doug Thiesen, John Wee, Diana Helgesen, Rikki Barrett, Sara Morlan, Jean Payne, Joy Bosquez, Angela Welford, Kerry Harmon, Sara Morlan, Rikki Barrett, Gordon Eatman, and Sam Beard. (Sam Beard)



National Trails Day FOSM crew at La Cueva Picnic Area.
L to R: Ellie Parker, Russell Parker, Sam Beard, Judy Levesque, Jim Levesque,
Tim Brown, Don Carnicom, Dennis Crowther, and Linda McDowell
Photo by Dan Benton



Lou Romero under-bucking fallen tree in snow near Sandia Crest. Photo by Bill White

Projects Related to Providing Water for Wildlife

In addition to periodic inspections and maintenance, this year FOSM volunteers made improvements at several wildlife water sites. The two types of improvements were (1) silt deflector construction to prevent the accumulation of silt in the drinker and (2) reduction of deer predation by removing trees near drinkers where mountain lions can hide.

1. Wildlife Water Sites in the KAFB/Military Withdrawal Area – FOSM volunteers in cooperation with Zachary Parsons, SRD, and Dustin Akins, KAFB Cultural/Natural Resources Office, inspected and performed maintenance on these sites located in the Military Withdrawal Area on the Sandia Ranger District on the west side of the Manzanita Mountains.

Site	Date	Condition and Maintenance Completed in FY2014	Notes
4-Hills North TT*	1-21-14	Operational	
4-Hills South TT	12-13-13 2-13-14	Operational Installed silt deflector Cut trees to reduce predation	
Shooting Range TT	1-21-14	Operational	SNL**
Sandia TT	1-21-14	Operational.	SNL**
Sol se Mete N TT	1-21-14	Not operational	
SsM Middle TT	1-21-14	Operational	
SsM South TT	1-21-14	Not operational	
SsM Trough	9-3-14	Operational Cut trees to reduce predation	
Burn Site TT	8-27-14	Operational Cut trees to reduce predation	Needs new float valve
Madera Canyon	11-14-13	Not operational	Collapsed structure
Bonito Canyon TT	11-14-13	Operational	
* Trick tank. Water is collected in large tank and dispensed in drinker with float valve. ** SNL. Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) maintains this site.			

2. Wildlife Water Sites South of I-40 – The David Canyon and Largo sites are located west of NM-337, and the Cedro site is located east of NM-337.

Site	Date	Condition and Maintenance Completed in FY2014	Notes
David Can. North	Spring '14	Operational	Lined pond
David Can. West	Spring '14	Not operational	Guzzler***
David Can. E TT*	Spring '14	Operational	
Cedro TT	1-1-14	Operational	
Largo TT**	4-7-14	Not operational	No drinker/valve
* Trick tank. Water collected in large tank and dispensed in drinker with float valve. ** Near east boundary of Isleta Pueblo. *** A guzzler does not have a float valve at the drinker.			

3. Wildlife Water Sites North of I-40 – In addition to the maintenance performed at the site, the approximate site location (N, E, S, W, NW) on Sandia Mountain is given.

Site	Date	Condition and Maintenance Completed in FY2014	Notes
3-Gun Sprg Trough	1-20-14	Not operational. South end	
Borrow Clam Shell	11-7-13	Operational. East side*	Guzzler**
Embudito Troughs	Spring '14	Operational; cleaned. West	2 concrete troughs
Jaral Spring	4/25/13	Not operational. West	No water in sprg
Jaral Ranger Sta.	7/27/14	Operational. West	Guzzler.
Tierra Monte	Spring '14	Operational. West	Concrete trough.
Piedra Lisa Trough	4-14-14	Operational; cleaned. NW	Concrete trough.
Piedra Lisa	4-14-14	Operational; cleaned. NW	Clam shell. Guzzler
* White fir trees were felled to maintain open browse area for wildlife.			
** No float valve at drinker.			

Publication of the FY2014 Newsletter

A huge thank you to the following people who contributed to the publication of the FY2014 Friends of the Sandia Mountains Annual Newsletter: authors who contributed articles, photographers who made informative and interesting pictures, reviewers who found errors in the early versions, and FOSM volunteers who completed the many projects for us to report. This is our year-end historical review that is available to all members, volunteers, and visitors to our meetings. (Sam Beard, Editor)

Officers

- * President – Bob Lowder
- * Vice-President – Gerry Sussman
- * Treasurer – Tim Brown
- * Secretary – Linda McDowell

Board Members

- * Sam Beard,
- * Dan Benton,
- * Don Carnicom,
- * Mike Coltrin,
- * Jane Harrison,
- * Anne Hickman,
- * Sally Lowder,
- * Jim Lunn,
- * Lou Romero,

Officers are also Board Members.

FRIENDS OF THE SANDIA MOUNTAINS

If you hike, bike, ride a horse or use the Sandia Mountains in any way, we know you enjoy what nature has given us. As you know, all this traffic takes a toll on our forest lands. Working in conjunction with the **United States Forest Service** as a volunteer organization, we provide many services in support of the Sandia Ranger District.

WHO WE ARE

Friends of the Sandia Mountains is a non-profit organization of local volunteers. We are dedicated to working in partnership with the USFS, other groups, and individuals to maintain, protect and restore the natural, cultural and scenic resources of New Mexico's forest lands for the enjoyment and use of present and future generations. Our focus is conservation and education within the Sandia Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest and adjacent lands.

WHAT IS THE NEED

This uniquely beautiful land can't wait another minute. It truly needs our help! As USFS funds are inadequate to handle the increasing demands on the forest land by the public, the Friends of the Sandia Mountains will work to help meet the forest needs. Learn more about how you can be a part of this vital effort.

WHAT WE DO

Conservation
Education
Restoration
Danger Tree Removal
Sponsor Annual Snowshoe Race
Trail Construction & Maintenance
Junior Ranger Program
Visitor Services
Published "Recreation Guide to Sandias"
Adopt-A-Trail
Co-publisher of **Field Guide to the Sandia Mtns.**

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN OR RENEW:

You can be part of this effort; work with friends, visitors and USFS personnel.

Tell us briefly how you would like to participate & we will get back to you.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone & Email _____

Dues:

- \$10 Student
- \$15 Individual
- \$20 Family
- \$30 Sustaining
- \$50 Sponsor
- \$100 Benefactor
- \$250 Life Sponsor
- \$500 Corporate Sponsor

Please make your check payable to:
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Mail To:

Friends of the Sandia Mountains
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Tijeras, NM 87059

www.friendsofthesandias.org

FOSM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Dues and donations are tax deductible.