



Friends of the Sandia Mountains  
friendsofthesandias.org

# Friends of the Sandia Mountains (FOSM)

Presentation for 3rd Annual Volunteer Program Meeting

Mike Madden, President  
Sam Beard, Projects Director  
Lou Romero, Youth Outreach Coordinator

January 30, 2025





## Presentation Outline

- Our History
- Who we are
- What we do
- Our partnership and culture with Cibola National Forest (CNF) and Sandia Ranger District (SRD)



## History

- 1996 - Sandia District Ranger requested that volunteers organize a 501(c)(3) friends group
- 1997 - New Mexico Friends of the Forest created
- 2004 - Name changed to Friends of the Sandia Mountains to better reflect scope of activities

Our founders: Still active  
well into their 80s!



Sam Beard



Don Carnicom

January 30, 2025



## Who we are

- **Membership**

- 160 members (mostly retirees)
- 60 Life members
- 60 active workers
- All volunteers

- **Board of Directors**

- Four officers
- 8 at-large



## Who we are

- Monthly meetings
  - April-October
  - Held at Sandia Ranger Station
  - Guest speakers include SRD leadership
- Recruitment and Retention
  - Comprehensive, frequently updated Website
  - Annual newsletter
  - Business cards
  - Weekly project reports



## What We Do (Driven by Our Strategic Plan)

- Mondays - Trail maintenance
  - Down tree removal
  - Trail tread repairs
- Tuesdays - Painting and graffiti removal
  - Picnic area restrooms, shelters, kiosks, wooden signs, trash cans, parking area striping, etc.
  - Removing graffiti from structures and natural features.
- Wednesdays - General projects
  - Hazard tree removal, tree thinning, brush removal, fence and structure repairs, donation firewood, signage
- Thursdays - Trail construction
  - New trails
  - Trail reroutes



## What We Do (Driven by Our Strategic Plan)

- Special projects
  - Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains (14,000 copies sold!)
  - Roof installation and repairs (shelters, restrooms)
  - Repairs of CCC and other historic structures
  - Fencing and gate installation and repairs
  - Wildlife drinker maintenance (Adopt-a-drop)
- Youth outreach
  - Forest educational outings (schools, Scouts, ...)
  - Talking Talons Youth Leadership (3 weeks per year)
  - Rocky Mountain Youth Corps



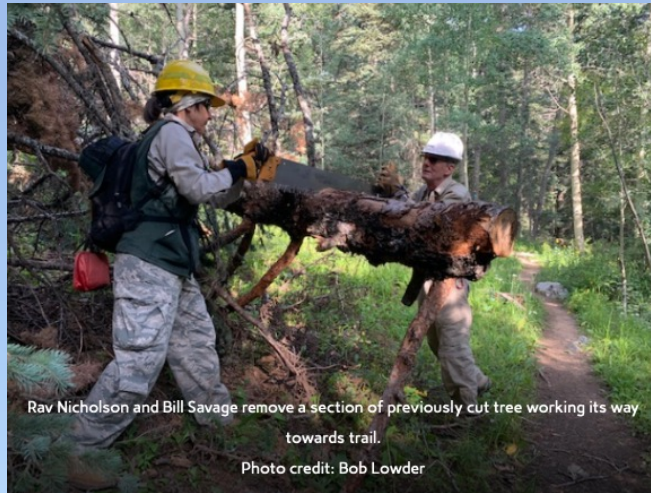
## What We Do (Driven by Our Strategic Plan)

- NMDOT Adopt-a-highway
  - Mile 4-5 of Crest Highway (NM 536)
  - Two cleanup projects each year
  - Blue highway signs give us visibility
- January Snowshoe Classic
  - 5-km course at top of Sandia Peak (10,000-ft. elevation)
  - 175 participants
  - 75 support volunteers





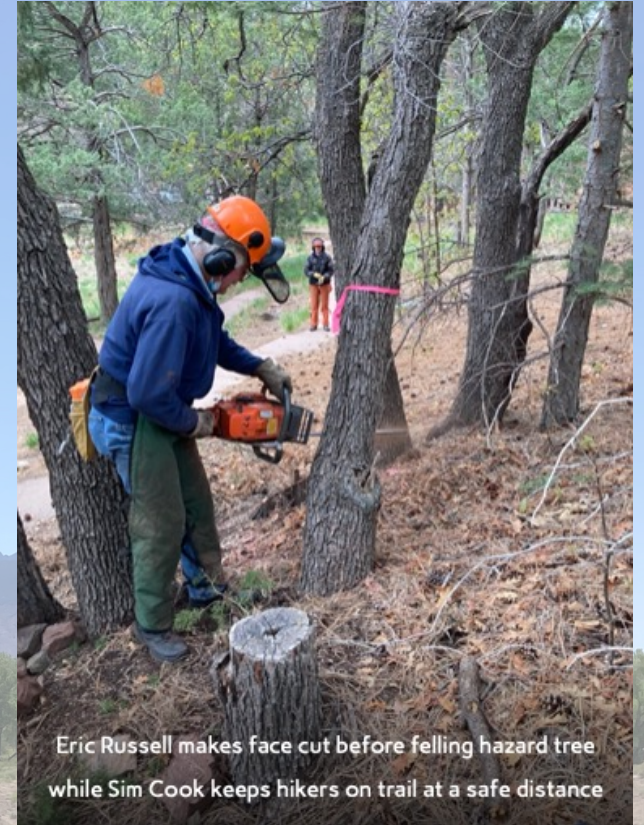
Claudia Bergsohn and Eric Russell working on Un Poquito Canyon Trail



Rav Nicholson and Bill Savage remove a section of previously cut tree working its way towards trail.  
Photo credit: Bob Lowder



Russell Parker, Ellie Parker, Jane Harrison, and Anne Hickman paint gable end of restroom at Yucca site in Oak Flat PA.  
Photo credit: Sam Beard



Eric Russell makes face cut before felling hazard tree while Sim Cook keeps hikers on trail at a safe distance

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# Friends of the Sandia Mountains

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Digital Arts and Technology Academy (DATA) Students  
at Doc Long PA



2020 snowshoe race start



Fran Lusso and Dave Weaver at visitor center in Crest House



Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup Project

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## Our Partnership and Culture with Forest Service

- Volunteer service agreement with Cibola National Forest
- Frequent and comprehensive communications
  - Two e-mail groups (include SRD personnel)
    - Cibola Trail Rangers – reporting trail and tree conditions
    - FOSM membership – information of general interest
  - Annual project planning meeting with SRD ➔ coordination of work
  - Project reports filled with photographs illustrating work ➔ feedback from FS experts
  - Trail tree removal report ➔ FOSM-user communications with CTR emails
  - Daily updated website ➔ public exposure and member awareness
- USFS certification of volunteer sawyers (chainsaw and crosscut saw) ➔ excellent safety record



# Our Partnership and Culture with Forest Service

- Track our volunteer hours monthly and report them annually
  - Indicates level of trust by FS
  - Almost 9,200 hours (~5 FTEs) contributed in FY2024!
- Recognition
  - SRD annual volunteer appreciation event
  - SRD provides annual parking passes to those who qualify
  - 2018 National Award for Enduring Service
- General support
  - Storage shed (“Guard Station”) on FS property
  - Office in ranger station
  - “Keys to the kingdom” - Access to Forest Service facilities (ranger station, workshop, pipe gates, etc.)
- Effective local TV and newspaper relationships



## Recognized by Cibola National Forest in May 2018

- **National Award for Enduring Service**
- Nominated by Steve Hattenbach, Forest Supervisor:
  - “For more than 22 years, they have helped maintain and paint facilities, fell hazard trees, build and maintain trails, serve at the Sandia Crest Information Center, and restore historical buildings.”
  - “So many volunteers contribute endless hours of time and energy to the success of our mission and we appreciate each and every one of them.”

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**Local volunteer groups recognized in Forest Service award ceremony**

**Albuquerque, NM, May 31, 2018** – Please join the Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands in congratulating two outstanding volunteer organizations - Friends of the Sandia Mountains and the Pecos Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen. Both are recipients of the USDA Forest Service National and Regional Volunteer and Service Awards.

Each year, the agency recognizes individuals, organizations, and partners for their efforts in four categories - Enduring Service, Restoration, Leadership, and Citizen Stewardship and Partnerships.

This year, Friends of the Sandia Mountains won the National award in the Enduring Service category. For more than 22 years, they have helped maintain and paint facilities, fell hazard trees, build and maintain trails, serve at the Sandia Crest Information Center, and restore historical buildings. The Enduring Service Regional award went to the Pecos Chapter of the Back Country Horsemen. For more than 20 years, this group has maintained miles of trails in the Manzano Mountains on the Mountainair Ranger District.

“So many volunteers contribute endless hours of time and energy to the success of our mission and we appreciate each and every one of them,” said Steve Hattenbach, Forest Supervisor. “Congratulations to Friends of the Sandia Mountains and the Back Country Horsemen, and thanks to all of our volunteers for the support that you provide.”

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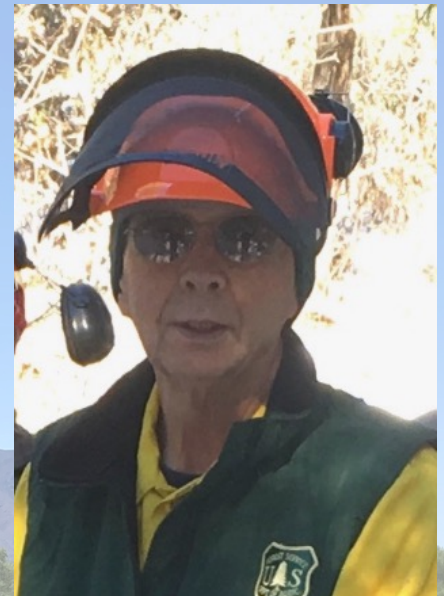


## FOSM Volunteers Also Recognized by City of Albuquerque



- September 2019 - Co-founder Sam Beard recognized as Volunteer of the Month

- March 2021 - Former President Bob Lowder recognized as Volunteer of the Month





Questions?

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