



## Friends of the Sandia Mountains

# Annual Newsletter 2023



*The restored 10,400-foot sign on the Crest Highway just above Ellis Trailhead  
(from left to right: Sam Beard, Eric Russell, Dan Benton, Jerry Carroll, Sim Cook, and Don Carnicom)*

*September 2023*

### From the President

*by Mike Madden*

This year 3 of 12 members are stepping down from the FOSM Board: Don Carnicom, a founding father and 26 years of service, says that's long enough! Joelle Hertel, 2 years. David McCreery, 1 year. All three are continuing to volunteer with FOSM. Thank you for your dedication.

A special thanks goes to our vice-president, Cliff Giles, who arranges guest speakers for each of our 7 general meetings AND proactively manages our website.

FOSM continued to partner with Sandia Nordic Ski Club on improving our cross-country ski trails above 10K Trailhead.

We held our first Spring Adopt-A-Highway Clean-Up along mile 4-5 on the Crest Road. We'll have another Clean-Up this Fall.

Long term drought conditions persist, and wildlife could surely use a drink. Our Adopt-A-Drop wildlife drinker program is doing fine. Joelle Hertel and sister Jean Payne are managing 6 of them. Stephanie and Richard Long are managing another three, and Sam Beard and Dan Benton are managing one.



Our 19th Sandia Snowshoe Classic was sold out at 175! We had two dozen FOSM volunteers work the day of the event. This was the first year that we had Cibola Search and Rescue on the course. In addition, a Bernalillo County Fire Department EMT Unit and sheriff’s department were there. NMDOT did their best to keep the highway plowed that cold stormy morning.

All the great work that was done by our volunteers over the past year is described by the respective leaders in the pages that follow. Please take the time to read it. Kudos to Sam Beard, who assembles this Annual Newsletter and Silke Bletzer who formats it.

As always, my sincere thanks go to all our volunteers for their hard work, serving in so many capacities on the Sandia Ranger District. Thanks also to the FOSM Officers and Board who make my job easier by taking on so many administrative tasks, to the Crew Leaders who go out weekly, and to the Sandia Ranger District staff whose partnership and appreciation are vital to us fulfilling our mission.

This concludes my third year as President, and it continues to be my pleasure to serve you!

Respectfully,  
Mike Madden, President  
Friends of the Sandia Mountains

### Programs at the Monthly FOSM Membership Meetings

*by Cliff Giles*

We returned to in-person meetings in the Sandia Ranger District conference room for the first time since October 2019. Topics and speakers for our 2023 meetings were as follows:

- April 4, 2023 – Sandia Ranger District update and priorities, Sandia District Ranger Crystal Powell and Recreation Staff Officer Julie Padilla
- May 2, 2023 – Albuquerque Mountain Bike Association (AMBA), Hannah Russert
- June 6, 2023 – International Mountain Medicine Center, Trevor Mayachak
- July 11, 2023 – Bernalillo County Open Space, Adam Splitek (note: week delay due to holiday)
- August 1, 2023 – Cibola Search and Rescue, Shannon Braune
- September 5, 2023 – Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, Paul Mauermann
- October 3, 2023 – FOSM year-end update and election results, Mike Madden.

Attendance at the meetings ranged from the mid-20s to a high of 50 or so. We experimented with a hybrid meeting format with three to 8 additional people participating by Zoom.

For recordings of the meetings refer to the [Membership Meetings](#) page on the FOSM website.

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## TRAIL CREW UPDATES

### FOSM Trail Construction and Rerouting Projects

*by Jenny Blackmore*

For the FOSM trail construction crew, FY2023 began and ended on the 10K North reroute; however, the majority of the workdays were spent working on (and completing!) the Challenge Trail extension between Tree Spring Trail and Bill Spring Trail. They also worked in Placitas, on the Pino Trail, on the South Crest Trail, and on the Kiwanis Meadow Trail. Along the way, they enjoyed the addition of several new regular participants.

**October-December 2022** – On October 13, the crew hiked in over 2 miles on 10K North to continue building a realignment which the SRD trail crew had started in previous years. Then they returned to the Challenge Trail extension, working weekly to build new trail just west of the north end of the old Crest Road. On November 17, they were joined by Kerry Wood, Russell Berman and a film crew from KOB TV. On December 1, they connected with the old Crest Road, a long-aimed-for goal. On December 8 and 15 they worked on a special project along the Chalk Dust Trail in the Placitas Area Trail System - dismantling a bridge across a deep arroyo, building a new crossing, and relocating trails into and out of the arroyo.



*Jenny Blackmore and Kerry Wood using pick mattocks to build a segment of the Challenge Trail extension*



*Mark Werkmeister, David Bernstein, and Dan Benton using rock bars to move a boulder to create a raised streambed crossing while Eric Russell works nearby*

**January-April 2023** – On January 12, under supervision of SRD Trails Foreman Joseph Jaffa-Martinez, the crew built a realignment around a steep, trenched-out section of the Pino Trail. On February 2, they built a single-track realignment along the Sunrise Trail in Placitas. They returned to Placitas on March 9 to close off several social trails. On March 30 and April 6, they performed trail maintenance on the lower portions of the South Crest and Faulty Trails, building check-steps and other drainage features. On April 20 conditions were conducive to return to the Challenge Trail extension, now building the final segment, starting on the old Crest Road roadbed below the “red gate” (roughly two highway miles up from Doc Long Picnic Area).

**May-August 2023** – Completing the Challenge Trail extension was the crew’s main focus for the remainder of the fiscal year. They worked weekly from May 4 - August 10, making steady construction progress through difficult, often steep, always rocky terrain as they built southeastwards towards the planned junction with the Bill Spring Trail. For two Thursdays on June 1 and 8 they were joined by seven members of the Talking Talons Youth Leadership/Youth Conservation Corps (TTYL/YCC). On June 8, the combined crews worked to extend the 10K North reroute, nearly reaching its connection with the Ellis Trail. Over



the summer the Thursday crew encountered several “challenges on the Challenge” including hot temps, boulder fields, closing long segments of the old roadbed (to create sustainable single-track), one broken arm, and no trails staff on the SRD. Russell Berman on the Cibola NF and Kerry Wood from the USFS Region 3 office provided support as they could. On July 13, Kerry assisted with the construction of two raised streambed crossings. On August 3, the crew connected with Bill Spring Trail, then built the upper connection at Tree Spring Trail as well, thus officially completing the extension to open the entire Challenge Trail from Ellis Trailhead to Bill Spring! On August 10, Russell Berman led half the crew in some final changes near Tree Spring Trail, while the remaining crew built a retaining wall below the “red gate.” On August 17, the crew celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, planned by Russell Berman and others from the Cibola National Forest and Sandia Ranger District, and attended by a KOB TV film crew. The ribbon-cutting was held at the junction of Tree Spring and Challenge Trails.

*For more information see the FOSM web page about the [Challenge Trail Extension](#).*

**September 2023** – Between a post-Challenge hiatus and an end-of-September hiatus, the crew had two workdays. On September 7, they started building realignments along the Kiwanis Meadow Trail, not far from the Ellis trailhead. On September 14 they split into two groups to spruce up the 10K North reroute built by the SRD and FOSM and to build the final connections at the north and south ends, thus officially completing this long-awaited realignment!

## Clearing the Corridor for the Challenge Extension Trail Between the Base of the Sandia Peak Ski Area and Bill Spring Trail

*by Sam Beard*

The general project on some days last fall was clearing the corridor for the Challenge Extension Trail so that Jenny Blackmore’s Trails Construction Crew could build the trail tread.

**November 23** – Volunteers used the FOSM electric chain saw to remove eight down trees from the next segment of the Challenge Extension Trail that will follow parts of the Old Crest Road. When we were cutting the trees on the Challenge Extension Trail, we were walking in about 1 inch of snow in the shade.

**November 30** – Six FOSM volunteers worked on a project to clear a 6-foot-wide corridor for the construction of the next segment of the Challenge Trail Extension. This area is located approximately 1.5 miles up the Crest Highway from Doc Long Picnic Area. The most difficult part of the project was clearing the corridor in an extremely dense grove of small white fir trees growing on a large berm of soil and rock. In this area, it was initially very difficult to find the edge of the old road in order to clear the corridor in the desired location.

**December 2** – Volunteers primarily removed a few down trees and pruned trees on the segment between the steep slope and the upper most berm. One sawyer also cut several oak trees to a height of 4 feet adjacent to the very large culvert so that the trail tread could be routed above a 6-inch Rocky Mountain juniper to reduce the trail grade approaching the channel below the culvert.

**December 7** – Eight FOSM volunteers completed clearing the corridor for Challenge Trail Extension in Tejano Canyon between the large culvert under the Crest Highway and Bill Spring Trailhead.



## Hazard Tree Removal

*by Sam Beard*

Each year, the USFS is required to evaluate trees in picnic areas and campgrounds and at trailheads and other sites where visitors are usually stationary for some time and assets such as restrooms may be at risk of being harmed or damaged by falling trees. Approximately a dozen defects are considered when evaluating a tree to determine if it is a hazard tree that will be removed. Most hazard trees are dead or have one or more of the defects listed on the Risk Assessment Form. The Tree Risk Assessment form lists about a dozen defects that can cause a tree to be selected as a hazard tree. Dead trees at these sites are always considered to be hazard trees.

During the spring and summer of 2023, FOSM felled, limbed, and bucked a total of 54 hazard trees in the nine sites listed below. At each site, the number of trees felled and the maximum diameter of the trees at that site are given – Picnic Areas: Doc Long, 13, 13 inches; Sulphur Canyon, 5, 21 inches; Cienega Canyon, 10, 28 inches; Balsam Glade, 1, 14 inches; Capulin, 1, 17 inches; Nine Mile, 14, 24 inches; and Pine Flat, 3, 13 inches. Other sites: Cedro Campground, 6, 12 inches and Capulin Snow Play Area, 1, 11 inches. The contractor rebuilding Nine Mile Picnic Area felled approximately 50 trees during the initial stages of the reconstruction.

## Trail Trees Down and Removed

*by Sally Lowder*

What an interesting period FY2023 has been forest-wise. Due to a winter that came late with more snow than the Sandia Mountains have seen in many years, along with horrendous winds that did not move out until very late spring, then followed by no moisture, trail tree work was a tough go this year. There were periods of time when the depth of snow precluded going out on trails even on snowshoes. The goal was to keep the most popular trails open and safe even if only half the trail was hiked.

I was receiving reports from our hikers/volunteers of a “few trees down”, some with difficult go-arounds. When our crews were able to get out and start the work, those “few” trees became up to 3 dozen trees removed!!! The size of the trees was difficult to report, as well as, just finding the trail to make the cuts. It has always been the practice of the Monday Trails and Maintenance Crew to cut back the trees as far as possible (especially in snow), so as to not have to do recuts. This was almost impossible in a few areas on the north end of the mountain. This eventually made for double work.

FOSM had a hold-over of 24 trees reported last fiscal year that were not removed from the trails. Those trees became incorporated into the trail trees removed for fiscal 2023. Although our volunteers and hikers reported only 223 trees for this fiscal year, the actual total was 577 trees or parts thereof being removed. These trees were part of the “few” that were counted. Ha!

There were days when it was “all hands- on deck” with as many volunteers as we could get to go out on Mondays and Wednesdays to get the work done with both crosscut and chain saws. Thanks to all the volunteers that showed up to work. There were many LONG days out on the trails. Once again, thanks to many new volunteers that joined FOSM and are now certified for



chainsaw or crosscut saw work. Also, thanks again to David Galbraith who had some special training with Kerry Wood, Trails, Dispersed Recreation and Travel Management Program Manager with the Southwestern Region. Kerry stepped up for some excellent training for David who is all over the mountain and has become a 1-man logging operation! He goeth where no person wants to go without a Starbucks! Way to go!

Keep up the great work in FY2024 which will begin for tree reporting on Tuesday, September 19, 2023.

## Trails Maintenance Crew Report

*by Bob Lowder*

The FOSM Trails Crew is a group of volunteers who patrol Sandia Ranger District hiking trails removing fallen trees or those otherwise posing a hazard to users. The team will also cut back vegetation that protrudes into the trails and will perform tread work when necessary. The most used implements are crosscut saws and other hand tools including loppers, pruning saws, Pulaskis, and cant hooks. Where appropriate in areas outside wilderness boundaries, chain saws can be used. In addition to a core group, the crew can be made up of other individuals wishing to help. The team size can vary with the scope of work to be done. Projects are scheduled based upon reports submitted to the Cibola Trail Rangers (CTR) email group or information otherwise received and compiled onto the Trail Tree Report by Sally Lowder. As the trees are removed from the trails, they are deleted from that report.

The crew usually conducts its work on Mondays but will go out other times as needed. During the current one-year reporting period, the crew removed a total of 255 trees or parts thereof, ranging in size from two to twenty-two inches in diameter. These trees were removed from 30 different trails or trail sections, some of which were visited on multiple occasions. In addition to tree removal, this year the crew had a very different job to do. It was necessary to remove a large rockfall which had been blocking Crest Spur Trail 84. Another additional assignment featured the complete eradication of a long rogue bicycle trail that had been illegally built linking Tecolote Trail and the North Mystery Trail. When large trees fall, their root systems often create large root ball holes which can block or damage trails. The crew worked on five of those this past season, either repairing or re-routing the affected trails.



*Crest Spur Trail rock fall looking South*



*Trail has been cleared, from left to right: Jamey Browning, Rene Archer, John Cooper, Byron Garner, Michael Arndt, Silke Bletzer, Patrick Goschke, and Dan Benton*



## Removal of Down Trees on Trails between Sandia Crest and Upper Tram Terminal Following High Wind Event in October

by Sam Beard and Jerry Carroll

**October 26** – Seven volunteers removed fallen trees from the following trails near Sandia Crest: Kiwanis Meadow Road, upper part of South Crest Trail, Crest Nature Trail, and Switchback Trail above the lower intersection with Buried Cable Trail. A high wind event felled many trees in the Sandia Crest and Kiwanis Meadow areas. The trunks and green branches were buried in the snow and removing them was difficult.

Approximately three dozen down trees were removed from the four trails. The largest bucked tree was 20 inches in diameter. Jerry Carroll drove his pickup down Kiwanis Meadow Road to haul fuel and equipment. We walked in about 2 inches of snow all day. The volunteers were Byron Garner, Jerry Carroll, Steve Roholt, Dennis Crowther, Dan Benton, Cliff Giles, and Sam Beard. (Sam Beard)



*Jerry Carroll and Dan Benton using chain saws to remove fallen trees from Kiwanis Cabin Road in a few inches of snow*

**October 31** – Andre Biane and Jerry Carroll cleared down trees on Rocky Point, Four Seasons, and Gravel Pit Trails. We removed three walkovers on Rocky Point (12-inch maximum) and multiple walkovers, head and knee-knockers, and hang-ups on Four Seasons and Gravel Pit (up to 18 inches). Rocky Point and Four Seasons to the intersection of Gravel Pit were then clear of obstructions. At Gravel Pit we met Trails Boss Joseph and his crew doing the same job, so we began to leap-frog along the trail. As we departed first, we left several walkovers for Joseph, while removing any obstructions other than stepovers, leaving the trail passable. (Jerry Carroll)

**November 2** – The FOSM crew of Dan Benton, Byron Garner, Sim Cook, Cliff Giles, Jerry Carroll, and Sam Beard continued removing down trees on Gravel Pit Trail. The obstructions on this trail appeared to be the tops of live fir and spruce trees that had been brought down by the high wind event. The diameters of the tree trunks were small, and the tops were covered with green needles. Snow fell on the branches and froze, and it was difficult to pull them from under the snow and ice. Jerry and Joseph's crews had cleared the lower one-third and upper one-third of this trail on Monday. On Wednesday, the FOSM crew cleared the middle third of the trail so that this trail was then completely clear from Kiwanis Meadow to the Four Seasons Nature Trail. It was estimated that three to four dozen down trees had been removed from this trail. (Sam Beard)



## Removal of Down Trees from Bunny Hill in Sandia Nordic Ski Club Groomed Trail System

*by Scott Dietrich*

On Nov. 11, FOSM members Sam Beard, Dan Benton, Cliff Giles, Steve Roholt and Scott Dietrich headed up to the Sandia Nordic Trail System to clear a tangle of trees which a recent windstorm had taken down. The trees, which were located on the "Bunny Hill" approximately 1/2 mile from the Ellis Trailhead parking area, ranged in diameter from 6 to 14 inches. The crew also removed a few other downed trees to the east and west of the major work area which ranged in diameter from 10 to 14 inches. The entire Sandia Nordic Trail System was then clear of downed trees and ready for grooming which will commence as soon as there are 10-12 inches of snow on the ground. The weather was sunny but cool, with temperatures ranging from the mid 20's at the outset to the low 30's when the work was completed. Shaded areas of the trail system were covered with approximately 4-5 inches of snow from the recent storm.

## Maintenance of Crest Area Multiuse Trails

*by Steve Roholt*

Over the past year FOSM volunteers Jerry Carroll, Sam Beard, Jamey Browning, Dan Benton, Sim Cook, Michael Arndt and Steve Roholt did trail maintenance on Switchback Trail, Buried Cable Trail, and Trail 130 South. Two main things were done:

- Cutbacks of large logs which interfere with line of sight and create "pinch points". These trails are 2-way multiuser and consideration is given to cross country skiers, equestrians, hikers, snowshoers and mountain bikers when deciding what to do. The trails are used for the Sandia Snowshoe Classic in January.
- The second task was to redistribute previously placed logs that were parallel to the downhill aspects of the trails. The idea was to hold winter snow, but over time a berm tends to form and the trail doesn't drain properly.

## Clearing the Corridor for the Rerouted Segment of Kiwanis Meadow Trail

*by Sam Beard*

On October 15 and 21, FOSM volunteers cleared the corridor for the rerouted segment of Kiwanis Meadow Trail. This reroute begins near the mid-point of the original trail. The lower end of this reroute terminates at the upper end of the rerouted segment of Switchback Trail. This reroute of Kiwanis Meadow Trail eliminates the steep "chute" that leads to the Service Road. The lower half of the original Kiwanis Meadow Trail will be obliterated beginning at the Service Road.

Initial clearing of the upper half of this 500-foot long-reroute required removing a few small trees and logs and pruning branches. Clearing the lower half of this reroute required removing about a half-dozen logs in a complex arrangement of a very long 2-foot to 3-foot diameter log supported by several 12-inch logs resting on the ground.





## Clean Up around FOSM Guard Station

*by Sam Beard and Joelle Hertel*

On November 23, volunteers completed the following tasks around the FOSM Guard Station: moved pieces of steel roofing to the Boneyard, moved the high work bench from the east end of the FOSM Guard Station to the east end of the hazmat building, stored the shelves and supports from the hazmat building on the concrete behind this building, and applied grease to the bearings of the chipper drum axial. Volunteers later installed two of the heavy steel tables from Nine Mile Picnic Area at the east end of the Guard Station.

## Pruning La Cueva Trail and Tramway Trail

*by Sam Beard and Dan Benton*

At the request of Kerry Wood, Cibola National Forest Trails and Wilderness Manager, FOSM volunteers pruned La Cueva Trail and Tramway Trail on the following two outings:

**January 11, 2023** – Three volunteers pruned brush and cacti on the La Cueva Trail and the Tramway Trail from the junction with La Cueva Trail south to where the trail had been pruned by SRD crew member Jeff Cervantes working north from the Tramway trailhead. Following the prescription by Kerry Wood, the crew removed oak, juniper, piñon, mountain mahogany, sumac, cholla, and prickly pear. On the return the crew visited the nearby former Jaral Ranger Station and found the fountain there still had a flow of water from the pipe into the drinking basin. (Dan Benton)

Three volunteers pruned Tramway Trail north of the intersection with La Cueva Trail. They also pruned oak, juniper, piñon, mountain mahogany, sumac, cholla, and prickly pear. This crew went about a quarter mile north and turned around near the southeast corner of the Tierra Monte development. (Sam Beard)

**May 17, 2023** – A FOSM crew completed pruning Tramway Trail between the junction with La Cueva Trail and La Luz Trail. From La Cueva Picnic Area, the crew hiked the La Cueva Trail to the east to Tramway Trail that goes from the base of the Sandia Peak Tramway past Tierra Monte subdivision to La Luz Trail. They used long handle loppers and pruning saws to cut three-leaf sumac, pinon, gray oak, Gambel oak, foothills live oak, Apache plume, prickly pear and cholla cacti, and mountain mahogany. (Sam Beard)



## Brushing in Capulin Snow Play Area Traffic Island and on Sledding Slopes

by Sam Beard



*Sim Cook using a FOSM power brush cutter to cut brush at the Capulin Snow Play Area parking lot*

In FY2023, brush was cut in the snow play area and on the sledding slopes on the following dates:

- On October 12, 2022 four FOSM volunteers cut brush in the traffic island at the Capulin Snow Play Area so that there would be a place to push snow when the parking lot is plowed. The brush was cut with small chain saws and two power brush cutters. Primarily, just tall brush such as one-year old locust plants were cut. By cutting the brush here annually, the plants are not too large, and we can continue to cut them with brush cutters.
- On August 30, 2023 eight FOSM volunteers completed cutting brush in the Capulin Snow Play Area parking lot traffic island and on the three sledding slopes. SRD personnel later mowed these slopes last fall.

## Adopt-A-Trail Program Report

by Dan Benton

FOSM involvement in the Adopt-A-Trail (AAT) program dates back to 1997, when the District Ranger at that time saw the program as a way to cope with the lack of year-round paid staff for trail work. Previously, the District had even used convict labor crews for trail work. Groups recruited into the program were a diverse cross section of society: civic organizations, church groups, school groups, military organizations, homeowners' associations, environmental groups, outdoor recreation groups, meetup groups, and people simply living in the same apartment complex.

As recently as 2010 there were thirty such groups in the program, typically committed to three outings per year on their adopted trail. However, that year things began to change, as the District finally hired its first full time Trails Foreman and added the Trails and Wilderness Program Manager Position, and the focus began to shift to trails that most needed work. The addition of the Cibola Trail Rangers network also brought real time rather than infrequent attention to the needs of all trails. The result was that as AAT groups aged or lost interest and dropped out of the program they generally were not replaced with new groups. Today we have five active AAT groups; following are their statistics for this fiscal year.

Groups reporting hours this year were the New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club (several cross-country ski trails in the Sandia Crest area), Southwest Forest Service Amigos (Oso Corredor trail), Friends of the Sandia Mountains (Tecolote and Cienega Nature Trails), Friends of 10K South (i.e., Rav and Ken Nicholson, 10K South through the ski area), and the Sandia Nordic Ski Club (Nordic Ski trails).



Since October 1, 2022, five Adopt-A-Trail groups have performed 1329.5 hours of trail work as of September 17, 2023, over the course of 86 group outings. This represents an increase of 258.5 hours over the prior fiscal year. However, where statistics are concerned, there is the Sandia Nordic Ski Club, the newest AAT group, and then there is everybody else. Sandia Nordic alone accounted for 994 of the volunteer hours and 68 of the outings. Perhaps they are a portend of better days ahead for the program.

But in spite of its reduced number of participants, the AAT program continues to provide the District with measurable and valuable benefits.

## Paint Crew Projects

*by Anne Hickman and Sam Beard*

The paint crew completed the following projects:

- May 30 – Painted restroom exterior, sign board, trash containers, and table benches in Pine Flat Picnic Area
- June 27 – Painted stripes in parking lots at 10KN and 10KS Trailheads and at Ellis TH
- July 6 – Touched up red color on the south side of the Scenic Byway sign at the Triangle
- July 25 --Painted stripes in Balsam Glade upper parking lot
- August 15 -- Painted information boards, kiosks, and trash containers in Horse Trailer Parking Lot, Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area, and Cienega Canyon Picnic Area
- August 22 – Touch up painting of shelters A and B in Doc Long Picnic Area
- August 29 – Touch up painting of CCC shelter in Doc Long Picnic Area and Balsam Glade picnic shelter
- September 3 – Painted top board white in upper Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area





## Special Projects

### Graffiti Removal Projects

*by Sam Beard*

Graffiti tags on stone are removed with a chemical produced by the World's Best Graffiti Removal System. This chemical is applied three times to an area with a wait time of three minutes between coats. Frequently, it is necessary to scrub the treated area with plastic scrub brushes before water is used to rinse the mixture of chemical and paint from an area. Usually almost all of the tag is removed, but occasionally only about half of the tag is removed. Graffiti tags were removed from the following locations:

- Juan Tabo Picnic Area stone shelter and boulders – April 25, Aug. 4, and Sept. 2
- La Luz Trailhead boulders – Sept. 2
- Tree Spring Trailhead – August 9
- Ellis Trailhead – June 24
- Near 10K N Trailhead and on Old Road Clearing – July 1
- Kiwanis Cabin interior stone walls – July 1
- Crest Nature Trail interpretative sign post – July 1
- Otero Trailhead boulder – April 25



*Before: Graffiti on a large boulder in Juan Tabo Picnic Area*



*After the graffiti has been removed*



*Blue graffiti on a boulder on the Old Road Clearing near 10K North Trailhead*



*The boulder after volunteers used chemicals to remove the tag*



## Installation of Steel Roof on La Cueva Picnic Area Restroom

by Joelle Hertel and Sam Beard

On November 16, thirteen FOSM volunteers replaced the severely deteriorated shingle roof on the La Cueva Picnic Area restroom with a steel panel roof. Manny Chavez, Sandia Ranger District (SRD) Maintenance Supervisor, had removed the shingles from both sides of the roof. Joelle Hertel and Sam Beard laid out the steel roofing components in the Boneyard and organized the tools in the FOSM Guard Station on the day before the project day.

On the project day, Manny arrived at the shop at 7 am to load the following roofing materials and equipment on the large SRD trailer: 12 R-panels, 4 drip edges, 4 gable trims and 2 ridge



Installing a steel roof on the La Cueva Picnic Area restroom

caps, generator, fuel, three ladders, plywood, and 2 rolls of felt. FOSM volunteers loaded tools on the trailer, and Manny hauled the load to La Cueva Picnic Area. Katara Dale, SRD employee, also worked on the project and helped pick up nails and screws with a magnet and drilled holes in some components before they were handed to the volunteers on the roof. We arrived at the work site early and began to work on the project before 9 am. We completed installing the panels on both sides of the roof by 3 pm, whereas in the past restroom roof installations required two days.

## Project at La Madera Gate to Install a Limiter and Steel Pipe Fences

by Joelle Hertel, Sam Beard, and Dan Benton

On June 12 through 14, FOSM volunteers, Sandia Ranger District personnel, and TTYL/YCC (Talking Talons Youth Leadership/Youth Conservation Corps) crew members completed a project to remove half of a vehicle gate, install a steel pipe limiter with a width of 3 feet, and install a 100-foot welded steel pipe fence on both sides of the gate/limiter. The purpose of the project was to support the District's Travel Management Plan that prohibits motorized vehicles on this part of the district. Vehicles were able to bypass the old gate to get onto the pipeline road, and this project was intended to remedy that. The FOSM Project Leader was Joelle



The TTYL/YCC crew at the La Madera Gate limiter. Crew members (L to R): Robbie Larrison, Mari Salley, Kineo Memmer, Ella Cook, Olivia Lopez, Jared Moyers, and Levi Gloetzner



Hertel. Installation of the fence required drilling holes 10 feet on center with a power auger, placing and leveling vertical posts, and filling the holes with concrete. Twenty-foot-long horizontal rails set 4 feet above the ground were welded to the vertical posts. The gate is located about 2 miles north of the village of La Madera at the north end of the district.



*Activity along the west La Madera Gate pipe fence: filling gallon jug with water, mixing concrete, grinding rust off a steel pipe, spraying water on plants to reduce possibility of fire from welding*

The USFS personnel working on the project were Manny Chavez, Russell Berman, and Jeff Cervantes. The TTYL/YCC crew members were Jared Moyers, Crew Leader, Kineo Memmer, Assistant Crew Leader, Olivia Lopez, Ella Cook, Levi Gloetzner, Mari Salley, and Robbie Larrison. The FOSM members working on this project were Dan Benton, Joelle Hertel, Mike Madden, Glenn Beard, and Sam Beard.

## Removal of Three Solar Collector Poles in Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area

*by Sam Beard*

At the request of the Sandia Ranger District, Joelle Hertel, Dan Benton, and Sam Beard removed three solar collector poles in Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area on Thursday, April 13. These poles and solar collectors had not been used to provide electric power for the picnic area host site for numerous years. Large white plastic battery boxes had been removed last year.

After initially starting to remove the rusty nuts from the four large bolts set in the concrete base of the first pole, the volunteers decided to cut the steel bolts with battery-powered reciprocating saws. To be certain that the pole would not fall on the volunteer cutting the last bolt securing the steel base plate welded to the steel pole, straps and a come-a-long were used to pull the pole in the desired direction. The first small pole fell in the direction that it was being pulled, the second pole fell to the side 90 degrees from the pull direction, and the third pole fell in the pull direction. Kerry Wood, former SRD Trails and Wilderness Manager, had told us that it was not necessary to attempt to save the collectors, because they were old and out of date. Due to the water in Sulphur Creek from melting snow higher on the mountain, the volunteers were sometimes working in a few inches of water. SRD personnel later cut the steel poles into manageable lengths and recycled them.



## Project to Process Firewood Donated to Mountain Christian Church Wood Ministry

by Sam Beard

Each year, the Sandia Ranger District donates several cords of firewood to the Mountain Christian Church Wood Ministry. The Wood Ministry has one or more woodlots on church members' land, and during the winter the Wood Ministry donates wood to families who need it. FOSM volunteers process (buck and split) hazard trees that have been felled in picnic areas or other sites where visitors congregate and expect to be safe. FOSM volunteers process the wood that is eventually hauled to one of the church woodlots. Lou Romero's power splitter is used to split this donated wood. USFS



*FOSM crew members loading wood to be taken to the church wood lots, from left to right: Eric Russell, Don Carnicom, Jerry Carroll, Dan Benton, Lou Romero, Sam Beard, two church members, Michael Oliver, Jamey Browning*

trucks may not be used to haul firewood to private property. Joe Meade's pickup and large dump trailer are frequently used to haul wood to one of the woodlots. FOSM volunteers' pickups are also used to haul wood to the woodlots.

Through the efforts of a Hot Shot crew and FOSM volunteers, all the felled trees at Nine Mile PA were bucked and then split with Lou Romero's power splitter. All this wood was piled along the old highway adjacent to the picnic area. Numerous loads of split wood were hauled to the Mountain Christian Church Wood Ministry woodlot on Sandia Haven Road west of NM-14 and south of the Triangle. The last of the wood was hauled to a new woodlot located on Rider Road south of Frost Road. The many piles of wood were hauled in Joe Meade's truck and dump trailer, in FOSM members' pickups, and in Mike Oliver's truck and trailer.

The table below presents the dates that donation wood was processed and possibly hauled to one of the church woodlots.

Summary of Project to Process Firewood Donated by Sandia Ranger District and to Haul Wood to Mountain Christian Church Woodlots		
Date	Site	Wood Processing
Nov. 9	Tree Spring TH	Bucked big fallen pine, split* and hauled wood to woodlot in Joe Meade's dump trailer** and felled one hazard tree at each of these sites: Balsam Glade PA, Capulin PA, and the Snow Play Area.
May 24	Cienega & Sulphur PAs	Limbed logs



June 7	Cienega PA	Split & hauled wood in dump trailer. Worked with TTYL Crew
June 10	Nine Mile PA	Hot Shot crew bucked and piled about 60 of trees
June 14	Nine Mile PA	Hauled 9 trailer & 8 pickup loads to Old Highway at 9-Mile PA
June 15	Old Highway	Split wood with TTYL crew.
June 21	Old Highway	Split wood. Old Highway site is adjacent to Nine-Mile PA.
July 1	Capulin PA	Limbed white fir log
July 12	Old Highway	Split wood & hauled 3 dump trailer loads to woodlot
July 15	Capulin PA & SPA^	Scout Troop loaded and hauled trailer load to woodlot
July 19	Old Highway	Hauled 1 dump trailer loads to Sandia Haven site and one to Rider Road site
Aug. 9	Cienega PA	Bucked 4 logs to 6-ft length & moved them to Acequia Trail
Aug. 9	Old Highway	Hauled 2 pickup loads to woodlot
Aug. 16	Old Highway	Completed hauling wood to woodlot S of Frost Rd: 2 trailer & 4 pickup loads
<p>*All wood was split on Lou Romero's power splitter.  ** Most of the wood was hauled in Joe Meade's dump trailer.  ^ SPA – Capulin Snow Play Area with two sledding slopes</p>		



*Piles of donation wood and another trailer load of wood at the Mountain Christian Church wood lot on Sandia Haven Road west of NM-14 and south of the Triangle after the Scout Troop 9 public service work day*





## Watering Dry Camp Area Seedling Trees

by Sim Cook

The trees at Dry Camp Trailhead spread over 5 to 6 acres have done as well as can be expected with all the heat and drought this summer. The ponderosa pines have fared the best, as they seem to do better at the lower elevation and with the drier conditions when compared to the Douglas firs, which have struggled at the lower elevation and in the drier environment. Dry Camp's new trees were planted three years ago and have done fairly well assisted by my watering. I estimate that 30% to 35% of the trees adjacent to Dry Camp Trailhead have survived. Across the Crest Highway from Dry Camp, only ponderosa pines were planted on that north-facing hillside about a year later, and only about 15% have survived without any assisted watering. As Dan Benton and I both discovered, by some miracle a few ponderosas have survived, and I am now watering those remaining seedlings, also. They have really sprung "to life" with this new watering. Where's the monsoon weather and the moisture to get us over the "hump" and into winter?

## FOSM Members in Adopt-A-Drop Program

by Joelle Hertel and Dan Benton



Joelle Hertel having lunch at the David Canyon East wildlife drinker. The float valve is in the steel box on the left, wildlife drink water from the open right side of the drinker.

The Adopt-A-Drop Program (AAD) is modeled after the Adopt-A-Trail Program. In the AAD program individuals or organizations adopt a wildlife drinker site that usually includes a rain collector, storage tank, and drinker where water is available to animals. Most drinkers include a float valve system that allows additional water to flow into a basin as the water level in the basin drops. AAD volunteers monitor the site equipment and perform simple maintenance and send reports to the USFS.

The following FOSM members have adopted drinkers:

- Joelle Hertel and Jean Payne: Tree Spring, Old Barro, New Barro, Cedro, Oak Flat, and Pine Flat;
- Robert Long: David Canyon North and East; and
- Dan Benton and Sam Beard: Tablazon.

Joelle, Jean, Robert, and Dan Benton recently made the following improvements at the David Canyon East site: installed a shut-off valve near the drinker, installed a valve box, and patched holes in the ground-level rain collector rubber lining with Flex and Gorilla



Joelle patching the David Canyon East rain collector fabric with black tape. Rain falls on the fabric and flows down to one corner where the water enters a pipe and goes to a storage tank.



tape. FOSM volunteers annually cut brush around the Barro drinkers so that prey animals can see predators at a distance of up to 50 feet.

### Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup Project

*by Steve Roholt*

Eleven FOSM volunteers participated in our inaugural Adopt-A-Highway cleanup on June 24. We adopted Mile 4-5 of NM-536, also known as the Crest Highway. We parked at a large pullout about 0.3 mile up from Mile Marker 4. We convened, did a brief Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), and headed out to work. Volunteers Pauline Ho, Rick Buss, and David McCreery worked down from our parking space to MM-4 then crossed the highway and worked their way back up to the parking area. Don Carnicom, Dan Benton, Scott Dietrich, Cliff Giles, and Ken Nicholson worked up the highway to MM-5 then turned around, crossed the highway, and worked their way back. Mike and Pat Madden started at MM-5 on the east side of the highway and worked their way downhill removing overhanging limbs and small trees. The goal was to clear the shoulder and improve line-of-sight. All work was done facing oncoming traffic. We encountered bicyclists and motorized vehicles of all shapes and sizes. Steve plans to schedule our second Adopt-a-Highway cleanup sometime this fall.

### 19th Sandia Snowshoe Classic 2023

*by Mike Madden*

It was a cold stormy morning on the mountain. Even though we were sold out at 175 registrations, as we neared the 10 AM start time, we had less than 100 claim a bib. So, we delayed the start to 10:30. Racers were having a hard time driving up the slippery Crest Road. It turned out to be a good move, because our starting field rose to 135.

This was the first time we had the road down to the helipad plowed for convenient access to the start/finish and worker parking. This freed up the large lot above for participants.

This was the first year that we had Cibola Search & Rescue (three dozen) on the course. They also had a station at the start/finish and at Ellis TH. In addition, a Bernalillo County Fire Department EMT Unit and sheriff's department were there. NMDOT did their best to keep the highway plowed.

We had assistance from Cottonwood Classic High School for sign-in, timing, and finishing. Cash awards went to the top 3 male and top 3 female winners. Sports Systems provided tables, chairs, and other hardware. REI donated merchandise for winners in each age category.

*For pictures and videos of past events see the FOSM website's [Sandia Snowshoe Classic](#) section.*





## FOSM Working with Youth Groups in FY2023

### Overview

*By Lou Romero*

Our 2022 Newsletter article about FOSM's Youth engagement activities in the Sandias spoke to the increasing number of inquiries from individual youths and youth groups such as Boy and Girl Scouts; Schools, Clubs, etc. Based on those trends and Forest Service interest in getting more "youths in the woods", we decided to create a Leader Guide to help future FOSM Leaders plan and lead Youth Educational Outings.

The work to create the first edition of a Leader Guide started with a meeting of Michael Madden, Cliff Giles, Julie Padilla and myself. That meeting resulted in shaping the overall framework for the Guide. Cliff Giles and I developed the content, and the FOSM Leader Guide is now embedded and easily accessible in the FOSM website. Any individual or group can easily learn the basic requirements to start the process for planning an educational or project work event. In 2023 we have received several inquiries from individuals and groups wanting to explore how to participate in educational and project work outings in the Sandia Ranger District. We plan to continue to fine-tune the Guide as we gain more experience.



*FOSM volunteers and TTYL/YCC crew members splitting donation wood and loading it in Joe Meade's dump trailer in Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area*

### A Day in the Sandias for 21 DATA 8th Grade Students

*By Cliff Giles*

FOSM members Rene Archer, Sam Beard, Dan Benton, and Cliff Giles hosted twenty-one 8th-grade students and 6 teachers and parents from the Digital Arts and Technology Academy (DATA) on October 31, 2022 – a Halloween adventure in the Sandias. Teacher Sue Cote and FOSM member Lou Romero worked months planning this activity.

The day included a trip to Sandia Crest and a 2-mile round-trip hike at Capulin Spring Picnic Area. Educational topics included during the day: The Forest Service, Sandia Mountains, Wilderness Area, geology, water conservation, hiking safety, tree species, and wildlife.

According to Sue: *"The kids had SO much fun, they were buzzing on the school bus and when they got back to school Monday afternoon."*



## Moving Slash at Tree Spring Trailhead and Cleaning Wildlife Drinker at Tree Spring

*By Lou Romero and Sam Beard*

On June 6, seven Talking Talons Youth Leadership/Youth Conservation Corps (TTYL/YCC) crew members, Lou Romero, and Sam Beard completed a project at Tree Spring Trailhead to move a large number of branches (slash) from a live, 30-inch diameter, Ponderosa pine that had broken off 15 feet high, during a sudden local wind event several months earlier. The slash was dragged to the sidewalk at Tree Spring Trailhead to be chipped later.

After completing that project, the crew visited the historic ski site just NW of the Tree Spring Trailhead. We conducted an “Imagineering” exercise to illustrate how an individual or small group came up with an idea to find a suitable place in the Sandias to practice skiing in 1937 when no other ski areas existed in NM. The idea grew into the La Madera ski run and lodge. Eventually, after WWII, the idea expanded to become Sandia Peak ski area as it is known today. The idea ultimately also grew to create the Sandia Tram.

The TTYL crew hiked the perimeter of the slope to discover remnants of concrete foundations and “imagine” what was taking place at that location between 1937 and 1940. They arrived at a consensus about what they “imagined” and presented their conclusions to Sam and Lou, who then offered their version based on the references they have studied. The purpose of the Imagineering exercise was to stimulate creativity and enthusiasm for each individual crew member to reflect and articulate personal goals they will work on during their 9-week 2023 season with TTYL.

After completing the Tree Spring Trailhead project and the visit to the oldest ski area in NM, everyone moved down the Crest Highway about one-quarter mile and hiked a short distance to the actual Tree Spring in a small draw above the highway. Here the crew members cleaned out a wildlife drinker and visited where the water seeps out of the ground just below the CCC stone wall above the spring. The Old Crest Road bed lies several feet above the stone wall.

The TTYL/YCC crew members were Jared Moyers, Crew Leader, Kineo Memmer, Assistant Crew Leader, Olivia Lopez, Ella Cook, Levi Gloetzner, Mari Salley, and Robbie Larrison.

## Processing Wood with TTYL/YCC Crew

*By Lou Romero and Sam Beard*

On June 7, thirteen FOSM members worked with TTYL/YCC (Talking Talons Youth Leadership/Youth Conservation Corps) members processing donation wood at two sites in Cienega Picnic Area. Near the intersection of Acequia Trail and Cienega Picnic Road, the TTYL/YCC crew and FOSM volunteers continued limbing, bucking, splitting, and loading the wood on Joe Meade’s truck and trailer. After processing the two large logs at the first site, the crew and volunteers moved up the picnic area road and processed a large white fir that Steve Roholt had felled several weeks ago. After the truck and trailer were filled, the group held a brief “pow-wow” about the benefits of “cross-generations” working together, learning and sharing with each other. We ate lunch together at the picnic tables nearby. The wood was then delivered to the Mountain Christian Church Wood Ministry woodlot on Sandia Haven Road where the TTYL/YCC crew stacked the split wood.



## TTYL Work Project of Splitting Wood on June 15

By Lou Romero

On this work project, the TTYL crew split wood on the Old Highway that had been removed from the Nine Mile Picnic Area reconstruction site. This project concluded the first 3 weeks of TTYL's 9-week work season. Sam and I are gratified by the planning that Shelby and her team dedicated to the entire undertaking. We are pleased with our involvement and contributions. Every FOSM member that worked with the outstanding youths on a variety of projects was impressed by their willingness to learn and enthusiasm to perform assigned tasks. In the end we all learned something from each other in this cross-generational youth development endeavor.

Upon arrival at 9 Mile, we encountered 8 beautiful Deer wandering through the reconstruction "footprint". They seemed just as curious about what we were up to as we were about how they might be experiencing all the human activity in their environment.

Four principal topics emphasized during our work together were **Safety, Teamwork, Work Ethics and Leadership**.

Other topics featured during the 3 weeks with FOSM include at least a brief introduction to:

- Importance of Watersheds
- Tree Species
- Ecological zones
- Fire Fuel Ladder
- Fire-line Construction
- Crosscut Saw use
- History of the Pulaski tool
- Introduction to careers with the US Forest Service
- Dynamics of Positive Role Modeling and Mentoring
- Meaning and Fulfillment from Volunteering and Community Service

## Scout Troop 9 Service Project with FOSM Volunteers on July 15

By Lou Romero

Sam Beard and Michael Arndt had earlier bucked three dead/down white fir trees in the Capulin Snow Play Area and a large white fir in Capulin Picnic Area. Loading and hauling the large rounds from those trees provided a meaningful morning project. The four Scouts and three parents loaded one trailer and delivered it to the Mountain Christian Church Wood Ministry woodlot. They also made orderly stacks of piles that had been randomly unloaded earlier.



William handing Matt a round in Snow Play Area during the Scout Troop 9 public service workday in Capulin Spring Picnic Area



Next winter, the Wood Ministry volunteers will donate this wood to East Mountain families who need wood to heat their homes.

Participants were:

Scoutmaster - Jason Buelow

Scouts - Caleb Groff, William Weil, Alexandria Sider, and Luke Buelow

Adults - Chris Weil and Matt Groff

FOSM Volunteers - Cliff Giles, (Photographer), Michael Arndt (sawyer), Sam Beard, and Lou Romero

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## Signage and Mapping Projects

### Restoration of 10,400-foot and 8000-foot Vegetation Type Signs on Crest Highway

*by Sam Beard*

In July, the 10,400-foot vegetation type sign was retrieved from the SRD storage yard where it was stored after it had fallen over earlier, and it was restored by applying brown Cabot stain on the redwood panels and white and turquoise paint in the routed letters. On August 2, FOSM volunteers installed this restored Spruce-Fir Vegetation Type sign on the Crest Highway approximately one-quarter mile above Ellis Trailhead. *(See picture on page 1)*

On August 8, volunteers painted the 8000-foot Vegetative Type sign on the Crest Highway about one-quarter mile below Tree Spring Trailhead. The plywood backing of the redwood sign was painted with USFS brown paint. Cabot Jarrah Brown stain was applied to the redwood. The routed letters were painted with turquoise and white paint.

### Replaced Kiosk Sign Board in Doc Long Picnic Area

*by Don Carnicom*

In July, the information board at the first kiosk in Doc Long Picnic Area was removed from the partially decayed timbers supporting it. The board and information frames were found in the SRD Storage Yard near the shop. Don Carnicom designed a new board support structure using four pressure-treated 2x6s and two 2x4s. The wooden panel with four enamel and steel information frames were secured in the new support structure with screws and bolted to the two vertical posts at the first restroom. Considering its size and weight (4 ft by 10 ft and 350 pounds), it was a significant undertaking.



*Sam Beard and Don Carnicom at the rebuilt kiosk at the first restroom in Doc Long Picnic Area. The new lumber was later painted with USFS brown paint.*



## Scenic Byway Signs Maintenance

by Don Carnicom



*New aluminum Auto Tour sign installed by Don Carnicom at Sandia Crest parking lot*

FOSM continued to maintain the 38 Scenic Byway Signs along the Crest Highway (NM-536). This year the replacement signs were made of aluminum instead of plywood and are much brighter and more reflective. Also, at each pay station from Doc Long to the Crest, we posted a picture of the Scenic Byway Sign with a QR code superimposed so visitors can use their smart phone camera to bring up the complete booklet explaining what is important at each location.

## Mapping for the Sandia Ranger District

by Jamey Browning

After a FOSM meeting early this year, I approached Sandia Ranger District (Crystal Powell and Julie Padilla) to see if SRD could accept FOSM volunteer help with making maps for the SRD. My thought was that the numerous SRD kiosks could use some nice new hiking trail maps. Much to my surprise, they said yes.

Julie advised that SRD was already planning new kiosk maps starting with a La Luz kiosk update and was open to volunteer help. She determined that the best way to bring this about was for me to sign a volunteer service agreement directly with SRD. With this, she could provide a Forest Service laptop and direct access to Forest Service data, map templates, and kiosks templates. Because direct access to Forest Service data was involved, it was necessary to go through the full USDA hiring process. This was a lengthy process which was recently completed. The next step is to work with Cibola National Forest GIS group to access and use the official templates.

Once access to the Cibola map template is available, we will start working on a new La Luz kiosk map. There are roughly 26 kiosks in the Sandias and Manzanitas. Ideally it would be great to have a custom local hiking trail map for each one. This might take a while!

## Visitor Guides and Junior Ranger booklet

Julie has also been working with the Public Lands Interpretive Association (PLIA) on some new publications which needed maps. I have been working closely on this project with Megan Lemcke who works for PLIA. So far, we have three publications in various stages of completion:

- La Luz Visitors Guide – in review
- Junior Ranger booklet for the Sandias – in review
- Manzanitas Visitors Guide – in development



### Other Maps

Other maps being worked on include, Kiwanis Meadow Area, Placitas Bike Trails, Crest Area Visitors Map, the Armijo/Sulphur/ Doc Long area and a 3D map of La Luz.

### La Luz Kiosk and Safety Considerations

One of the key aspects to the La Luz kiosk is safety guidelines and recommendations. After the recent Cibola Search and Rescue (S&R) presentation to FOSM, I discussed the La Luz kiosk



*La Luz Trail in Winter 3D*

project with Shannon Braune and learned that they were highly interested in contributing safety information for the La Luz kiosk. As work is started on the La Luz kiosk, FOSM will be collaborating with Cibola S&R to include their recommendations for safely hiking La Luz (and avoiding having to be rescued).

### Report on Mapping the Sandias

Back in 2014, I started hiking in the Sandias and developed a love for hiking. Over time, I noticed that some of the trails in the Gaia GPS and AllTrails Apps had errors. Even some of the official Forest Service maps have trail errors. Some trails were in the wrong place, others didn't even exist. Generally, it was difficult to tell formal maintained trails from informal user trails. After reading the FAQs for each app, I learned that they obtain their trail data from OpenStreetMap. So, to make corrections, a person must become an OpenStreetMap volunteer. Or know someone who volunteers for OpenStreetMap.

*From Wikipedia: OpenStreetMap is a free, open geographic database updated and maintained by a community of volunteers via open collaboration. Contributors collect data from surveys, trace from aerial imagery, and also import from other freely licensed geodata sources.*

So, I began volunteering for OpenStreetMap with the thought of trying to improve the Sandias maps. As of September, I have made 648 change sets and made 16,672 adjustments to trails and trail data. This was mostly in the Sandias with a few items in Ruidoso. I recently started working on the Manzanitas.

As part of this effort, I investigated mapping SW and decided to learn QGIS and recently ArcGIS Pro. These are two of the main providers of professional cartography SW. The SW is very complex, and it took several months to gain some proficiency.

To support the OpenStreetMap effort, I found and downloaded the official USFS Trail database for the Forest Service southwest region. I was able to load the cartography SW with the Forest Service trails as well as trails downloaded from OpenStreetMap, overlap them, and make a comparison. With this information I was able to identify all the official USFS trails and mark



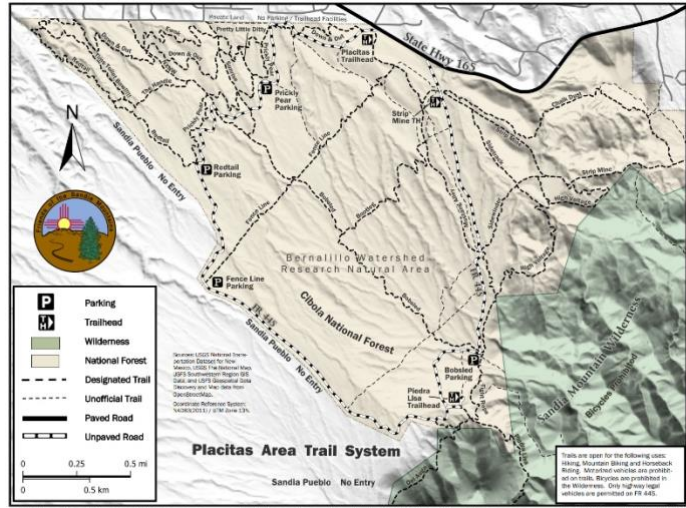


them as such on OpenStreetMap. I was also able to identify all informal user trails and mark them in OpenStreetMap. Gaia and AllTrails sync with OpenStreetMap a few times a year.

As they sync, official trails will be displayed with heavy dashed lines and unofficial trails will be displayed as a much lighter dashed line. I also updated the City of Albuquerque foothills open space trails in the same way.

In some cases, there was disagreement between the USFS database and OpenStreetMap trails. In these situations, I was able to load my hiking tracks for a comparison. If the OpenStreetMap trail was wrong, I corrected it. If the USFS trail was wrong, I reported it to SRD so that their database could be updated.

After this fun, I got more interested in cartography and started to volunteer to make maps. First was the FOSM Snowshoe Racecourse map. Then I made maps for the Sandia Nordic Ski Club. I also have made maps for the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center.



Placitas Bike Trails

### Other Projects

- On May 24, volunteers raked pinecones and swept the Cienega Nature Trail, one of their adopted trails. (Sam Beard)
- The lower Cienega Nature Trail bridge over Cienega Creek was repaired where many boards had become loose and unstable. (Don Carnicom)
- On June 6, FOSM volunteers and the TTYL/YCC crew cleaned the wildlife drinker at Tree Spring that was made long ago by cutting a 55-gallon steel drum length-wise and setting it in concrete. (Sam Beard)
- On April 6 and 7, volunteers applied two coats of Cabot Australian Timber Oil to the long wooden bench and two short seats on three wheelchair accessible picnic tables in La Cueva Picnic Area. (Sam Beard and Dan Benton)
- For several years, FOSM crews have found ice in the morning on the steps on the north side of the Guard Station from water dripping off the roof onto the steps. On April 12, volunteers installed gutters on the north and south sides of the Guard Station. (Joelle Hertel and Sam Beard)



- In May, Don Carnicom repaired the broken concrete block wall at two places in the middle of Cienega Picnic Area with a construction adhesive. He had problems finding a source for the two short top blocks. (Don Carnicom)
- On May 10, five FOSM volunteers completed the following tasks: replaced a broken fence pole in Cienega Picnic Area, checked water flow at the Bird Log at Capulin Picnic Area, and cut stumps lower in Cienega Canyon Picnic Area. (Sam Beard)
- In May volunteers restored the entrance sign at Doc Long Picnic Area by scraping off the loose paint and applying official USFS paint colors such as dark brown, white, light blue, and yellow-cream. (Sam Beard)
- Just before the Balloon Fiesta in 2022, all 12 Interpretive education signs on the observation deck and at the lower parking lot were replaced. Frequent graffiti removal plus age caused most to be graded. (Don Carnicom)
- A new Kiwanis Meadow Trails map was designed by Jamey Browning to reflect changes to the trail system over the past many years. Three temporary maps were installed around the meadow area to be replaced with permanent signs later. (Don Carnicom)



*Joelle Hertel in the Balsam Glade Picnic Shelter where the post on the right and the horizontal beam were replaced after the original components failed due to decay*



## Administrative Updates

### Treasurer's Report

by *Tim Browning*

- **Membership** - We now have 160 memberships, including 52 Life Memberships, compared with 140 and 45, respectively, at this time last year. We welcomed 39 new members this year.
- **Audits** - In October 2022, Joelle Hertel completed an audit of the FOSM financial records. She reported the records to be accurate and complete. In December 2022, Tim Brown and Joelle Hertel completed an audit of the FOSM physical assets.
- **Financial Report** - We began FY2023 on October 1, 2022 with a checking account balance of \$31,538.63, on September 1, 2023 the balance was \$27,281.76. We also have two CDs which total \$90,000.00 and a brokerage Insured Cash Account of \$47,772.00. The largest expense was \$10,813.86 for projects. The largest revenue was from Memberships and Donations \$7,448.32.
- **Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains** - UNM Press reports that total sales to date are approximately 13,700 copies. They are currently selling about 200 copies per year
- **Expenditures in Support of the Sandia Ranger District** - Total expenditures through August 2023 were \$17,508.02, the largest being miscellaneous projects \$10,813.86, including signage, fuel, equipment, fencing, painting, and graffiti removal supplies

### FOSM Website Improvements

by *Cliff Giles*

The [FOSM website](#) was used throughout the year to keep the membership informed and provide a portal for non-members to learn about our organization. Incremental changes were made to the site during the year including:

- Announcing and documenting membership meetings.
- Adding pages describing our new youth outreach initiative.
- Documenting the 2023 Snowshoe Classic.
- Documenting completion of the Challenge Trail extension project.
- Documenting TV stories and newspaper articles featuring FOSM activities or members.
- Adding safety information, maps, and links to the Recreation section.

Forty-five members renewed their memberships, 30 new members joined, and 13 people made donations using website forms in fiscal year 2023.



## FOSM Email Reporting Groups

by Bob Lowder

Communication to and between members is important for most organizations and ours is no exception. FOSM established its email notification system in 2002 using the Yahoo Groups system. Due to the unreliability of the Yahoo groups system, FOSM changed the carrier to Southwest Cyber Port, an Albuquerque company, in 2019.

**Sandia Volunteers/FOSM** – This group of about 240 email addresses is made up of all FOSM members, authorized USFS/SRD volunteers and others who have expressed an interest in receiving the information it provides. This system publishes announcements of FOSM projects, monthly FOSM meetings, information from our partners at the USFS Sandia Ranger District, etc. Messages to this group require approval by a moderator.

**Cibola Trail Rangers** – This group of about 200 email addresses provides a forum for anyone to report conditions on our Sandia trails. Many of our trail maintenance projects have resulted from messages submitted on this system. Messages posted on this system do not require moderator approval.

## Updates to the FOSM Logo

by Jamey Browning

To improve my graphic design skills, I started an effort late last year to learn a vector graphics software program called Inkscape. With vector graphics, drawings can be scaled to any size without losing fidelity. I like to have a real project when learning new software, so I thought I would see if I could recreate the FOSM logo in vector form. Looking back through old newsletters as well as signage created by FOSM I looked to see how the logo had evolved over the years. A few examples are shown at right.



Once I had captured the logo in vector form, I thought I would see if I could make some improvements. First, I made the font a little larger to be easier to read. From cartography, I have a digital elevation model of the Sandias. I used that to make a vector profile of the Sandias. Then I redrew the ski track using a vector drawing tool called Bézier curves. Bézier curves are a mathematical tool for creating smooth, continuous curves in drawings. Lastly, I worked on coloring in highlights for the tree. In the end, I created three versions of the logo. A black and white version for black and white publications. A solid color version which can be used in stitched applications. And, a full color version for color printing. The three versions are shown below.



Black & White Version



Solid Color Version



Full Color Version



## Project Participants in FY2023

by Sam Beard

About 50 FOSM members frequently volunteer to work on the weekly projects, and about three dozen members typically work each week.

The FOSM officers, Board Members, and the Sandia Ranger District Staff appreciate very much the support of all the FOSM members. These names (88) are roughly in alphabetical order. The volunteers who worked on FOSM projects in FY2023 were Rene Archer, Michael Arndt, Tayo Basquiat, Carly Beard, Garrett Beard, Sam Beard, Glenn Beard, Joe Beman, Courtnee Bennett, Dan Benton, Claudia Bergsohn, David Bernstein, John Braly, Andre Biane, Jenny Blackmore, Silke Bletzer, Tim Brown, Jamey Browning, Rick Buss, Donald Carnicom, Jerry Carroll, Ella Cook, Sim Cook, John Cooper, Phil Cromer, Dennis Crowther, Luis Cuadros, Scott Dietrich, Gordon Eatman, David Gabel, Byron Garner, Cliff Giles, Levi Gloetzner, Patrick Gorschke, Mark Grazier, Susan Gregory, Fred Hagstrom, Bruce Hansche, Joelle Hertel, Anne Hickman, Pauline Ho, Todd Hollister, Jim Houle, Jeff Huser, Paul Karas, Ralph Kopp, Daniel Kuehn, Larry Larrichio, Robbie Larrison, Laura Leon, Olivia Lopez, Bob Lowder, Sally Lowder, Mike Madden, Pat Madden, David McCreery, Joe Meade, Jory Meade, Tami Meade, Kineo Memmer, Lorna Morrow, Jared Moyers, Jeff Mugleston, Michael Oliver, Jerry Pekarek, Ken Nicholson, Rav Nicholson, Tony Pachelli, Russ and Ellie Parker, Jean Payne, Jerry Pekarek, Bill Perkins, David Radloff, Maryanne Randall, Steve Roholt, Lou Romero, Eric Russell, Mari Salley, Cleveland Sharp, Roland Stumpf, Scott Sunde, Tom Swiler, Mark Werkmeister, Ken Wilson, Ralph Wrons, Katie Zegweld.

## Publication of the FY2023 Newsletter

by Sam Beard

A huge “Thank You” to the following people who contributed to the publication of the FY2023 Friends of the Sandia Mountains Annual Newsletter: Silke Bletzer, formatting, authors who contributed articles, photographers who made informative and interesting pictures, reviewers who found errors in the various 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.

### FOSM Officers

- \* President – Mike Madden
- \* Vice-President – Cliff Giles
- \* Treasurer – Tim Brown
- \* Secretary – Silke Bletzer

### Board Members

- \* Sam Beard
- \* Sim Cook
- \* Don Carnicom
- \* Byron Garner
- \* Joelle Hertel
- \* David McCreery
- \* Steve Roholt
- \* Eric Russell

**Ballot: October 3, 2023**  
**Annual Meeting of the Membership**

We appreciate the contributions of those board members whose terms are expiring at the end of September: Joelle Hertel, David McCreery and Don Carnicom. Continuing board members are: Steve Roholt, Sam Beard, Eric Russell, Sim Cook, and Byron Garner. The one-year terms of officers are also expiring as follows: Mike Madden, President; Cliff Giles, Vice President; Tim Brown, Treasurer and Silke Bletzer, Secretary. The members listed below have been nominated for officer and board member positions. (Officers are also members of the board.)

**Only current members of the Friends of the Sandia Mountains are eligible to vote in the annual election.**

In accordance with Section 5.4.3 of the Bylaws, the Nominating Committee has put forth the following list of candidates for consideration by the General Membership:

President:

- 1. Mike Madden \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Vice President:

- 1. Cliff Giles \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer:

- 1. Tim Brown \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary:

- 1. Silke Bletzer \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Board members: (Vote for three)

- 1. Joe Meade \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Jamey Browning \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Jenny Blackmore \_\_\_\_\_

If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting of the Membership to cast your vote in person, you may vote by mailing this ballot to:

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

