



Friends of the Sandia Mountains

Annual Newsletter 2024



*FOSM and Forest Service group photo from the 2023 Volunteer Appreciation Event
(photo credit: Patricia E. Johnson, PAO, Cibola National Forest and Grasslands)*

On October 19, 2023, the Sandia Ranger District (SRD) hosted its annual Volunteer Recognition Event. FOSM was recognized repeatedly by Forest Service officials Crystal Powell, Julie Padilla, Russell Berman, and Sandra Coombs. FOSM members recognized individually: Sam Beard, Joelle Hertel, Jamey Browning, Lou Romero, and Mike Madden. Jenny Blackmore received special recognition for her leadership of the Challenge Trail extension project.

September 2024

From the President

by Mike Madden

At our last Annual Meeting, Oct 3, 2023, three new Board Members were elected for a two-year term: Jenny Blackmore, Joe Meade, and Jamey Browning. Our four Officers (Mike Madden, President; Cliff Giles, VP; Silke Bletzer, Secretary; Tim Brown, Treasurer), who have a one-year term, continued to stay, as did the remaining five Board Members (Steve Roholt, Sam Beard, Eric Russell, Byron Garner, Sim Cook).

This year, Tim Brown, our Treasurer for 15 years, is stepping down, as well as Eric Russell, a Board Member for 5 years. Eric will continue to participate in FOSM projects. Tim will likely move out of town next year. Thank you so very much for your service! This summer Steve Roholt chaired the Nominating Committee composed of the three new Board Members. They nominated Jeff Young for Treasurer and Susan Gregory for the Board. An election ballot has been sent out with their bios. An election will be held at our upcoming Annual Meeting, Oct 1, 2024.



Having taken over leadership of the weekly Thursday trails crew for a number of years once Bob Galloway took ill, Jenny Blackmore had to give it up after starting full time work December 2023. Laura Leon, newish to the crew at the time, assumed that responsibility, and continues to lead the group today. At the request of the SRD, this was the first year FOSM started tracking its own volunteer hours. Silke Bletzer created the spreadsheets, and the crew leaders and Rav Nicholson did the data entry. As it turns out, this tool gives us a much better handle on our level of involvement on the District. Sally Lowder will be assuming the monitoring of Sawyer Certification. We have a strong sawyer program consisting of 23 sawyers: 11 sawyers certified in both chainsaw and crosscut saw, plus 6 in chainsaw only, and 6 in crosscut only.

A special thanks goes to our VP, Cliff Giles, who arranges guest speakers for each of our 7 general meetings, AND proactively manages our website. Thanks also goes to Sam Beard for assembling this Annual Newsletter, and to Silke Bletzer for formatting it. Sam has been producing it faithfully since 2003, and believe me, it's a mountain of work! Back issues are found on our website. 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. 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 get the job done, and to the Sandia Ranger District staff whose partnership and appreciation are vital to us fulfilling our mission. This concludes my fourth year as President, and it continues to be my pleasure to serve you!

Respectfully,

Mike Madden, President

A Friend We Have Lost
by Bet Gendron

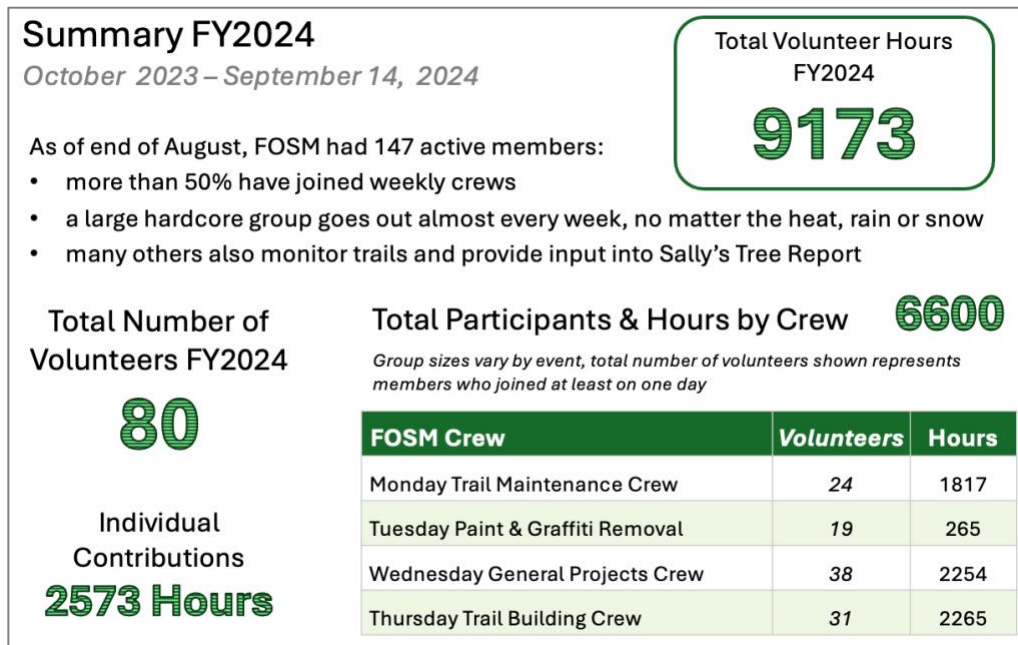
We are sorry to announce the passing on September 7 of Carl Smith, 86, a long-time friend and sawyer in the Friends of the Sandia Mountains. In the words of Sam Beard, *"Carl and I were friends and colleagues for more than 45 years. We shared our love of the outdoors in the Friends of the Sandia Mountains and the New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club. A skilled photographer, Carl contributed many pictures to my **Ski Touring in Northern New Mexico**, and he used his chain saw to remove trees from ski trails in the Sandia and Jemez Ranger Districts. We also enjoyed working together using chainsaws to fell hazard trees, cut logs, and clear meadows in projects organized by the Friends."* A former physicist with Sandia Labs, Carl was also a climber and an avid mountain biker as well as a road biker with the NM Touring Society. We all knew his sometimes-exacting standards, and we enjoyed hearing of his many world-wide climbing adventures, which he regaled with old-school amusement, no matter how harrowing it actually was. In addition to photographing for Sam's book, Carl contributed to Robert Julian's **The Mountains of New Mexico** and others.



FOSM in Numbers

by Silke Bletzer

FOSM volunteers had a very busy year. Thank you to the crew leaders for regularly logging the hours and to individuals for submitting them as well. A special thank you to Rav Nicholson for managing the FOSM Hours tracker.



Monthly FOSM Membership Meetings

by Cliff Giles

Meetings were in-person only in the Sandia Ranger District conference room (No Zoom). Topics and speakers for 2024 meetings were as follows:

- April 2, 2024 – Sandia Ranger District Update and Priorities, Amanda Rael
- May 7, 2024 – Talking Talons Youth Leader, John Ross
- June 4, 2024 – Albatross Counting on Midway Island, Pauline Ho
- July 2, 2024 – Climate and Weather, Kerry Jones
- August 6, 2024 – NM Forestry Division, Lawrence Crane
- September 3, 2024 – NM Cross Country Ski Club, Sam Beard
- October 1, 2024 – FOSM Year-End Update and Election Results, Mike Madden; Sandia Ranger District History, Jeff Young

Meeting attendance averaged in the upper 20s. For slides of the meetings refer to the [Membership Meetings](#) page on the FOSM website.

Results from the weighted-choice poll conducted of members of the board of directors in January 2022 continued to be used in choosing speakers. The poll identified more than 30 topics and organizations of interest to learn about and possibly collaborate with. Three additional topics were addressed in 2024; thirteen in total over the last three years.



FOSM CREW UPDATES

Trail Maintenance Crew

by Bob Lowder

The FOSM Trails Maintenance Crew is a group of volunteers who patrol Sandia Ranger District 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 minor trail 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 the 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 into the Trail Tree Report by Sally Lowder. As the trees are removed from the trails, they are deleted from that report.



Rav Nicholson and Bill Perkins cutting a large log on the North Crest Trail 130 on July 17th



Maintenance of Challenge Trail on May 6th, L to R: Jamey Browning, Susan Gregory, Byron Garner, Phil Cromer, Ken Wilson, Rav Nicholson, John Cooper, Bill Perkins and David McCreery



Trails maintenance crew on Capulin Peak Trail in January. L to R: David McCreery, Rav Nicholson, Ken Wilson, John Cooper, Bill Perkins, Bob Lowder and Byron Garner

Trail Tree Report for FY2024

by Sally Lowder

This has been an interesting year for reporting trees on trails. FOSM had 11 trees from FY2023 carried over to FY2024. Of those 11 trees reported, 20 were cleared!

FY2024 information shows that the volunteers reported a total of 225 trees (plus carry over of 11) for a total of 236 trees. Our wonderful Forest Gnome was able to help out on 7 trees. Despite the rain, snow and wind, our crews and individuals cleared a total of 422 trees from trails, plus the 20 that were carried



over, for a total of 442 trees removed. Wow! Busy beavers we have on the District! There will be some carry-overs into next year, but I am not sure that they are still present and accounted for on the trails.

We are getting reports of trees down from all over the District; some of the trails south of I-40 and also in the Placitas area and Palomas Peak area. Those trees reported as down, never seemed to get cleared. I have had **NO** reports saying they have been. This may be a time to have discussions about who clears these trees. I do know that many of these trails are in areas that our crews do not have a good working knowledge of and hesitate to drive the distance only to find they have been removed. This has been an issue in the past and still seems to persist. Some thoughts for the future!

For the most recent report, see [Sally's Trail Tree Report](#) on the FOSM website.

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 Ranger District finally hired its first full time Trails Foreman and shortly thereafter 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. But the exception to that trend is the Sandia Nordic Ski Club, which came on board in 2021 and now provides the majority of hours reported. Today we have six active AAT groups that reported 1141.5 total hours; following are their statistics for this fiscal year.

Groups reporting hours this year:

- New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club (several cross- country ski trails in the Sandia Crest area) with 138 hours (largely due to the intrepid Steve Roholt),
- Southwest Forest Service Amigos (Oso Corredor trail) with 11 hours,
- Friends of the Sandia Mountains (Tecolote and Cienega Nature Trails) with 41 hours,
- Friends of 10K South (i.e., Rav and Ken Nicholson, 10K South through the ski area) with 80 hours,
- The Happy Hoofers (Crest Trail to Kiwanis Meadow Road, i.e., Pearl's Trail) with 14 hours, and
- the Sandia Nordic Ski Club (Nordic Ski trails) with 857.5 hours.



Trail Construction and Reroutes

by *Laura Leon*

The Thursday FOSM Trail Construction and Rerouting Crew has been very busy this year. We have averaged 8-12 volunteers each week, and we have been lucky to have SRD staff with us almost every week. We even had help from the Talking Talons youths during the summer.

September – November 2023 The Thursday crew started working on the Osha reroute that has taken the place of the old 10K Trail. The crew worked until the snow and cold came calling.

November – December 2023 and March – May 2024

The Thursday crew worked on the Lower Pine Trail rerouting, pulling the trail out of the washes and onto higher ground. December work was soon called off due to snow, muddy trails and a really muddy parking area.

In March, work resumed, and the crew started at the southern end of the trail near Gear Grinder. The new trail crosses over the old drainage in several areas which required some rock work to keep the trail stable. New signage went up at the Tablezon intersection.



Bill, John, and Jen work at creating a beautiful intersection



New trail to the left and old trail obliterated to the right with a check dam





June 2024 - The Thursday crew spent two weeks working with Talking Talons Youths and SRD staff to finish the Osha Trail reroute. The trail needed some clean up after a snowy winter, and new signage went up on the trail intersections. The hikes in and out were long, and everyone was really glad to finish this work.

June 2024-July 2024 - The Thursday crew spent three weeks working on shoring up the Acequia Trail in the lower part of the mountain. We had Talking Talons Youths for two of the weeks which helped to move the work along. The trail had been partly established so we did a lot of benching and smoothing. New signs went up where the trail crosses the Cienega Picnic Area Road.

New signage & lots of workers



Jen and Chris digging. It's been great to have their leadership!



Talking Talons Youths working alongside Thursday crew



July 2024- September 2024 - The Thursday crew worked on the Ellis Trail reroutes. Most of Ellis Trail has followed the old gravel road, and the reroutes have pulled the trail to higher ground and firmer footing. Sections of the old road are still part of the trail, but six reroutes have the trail in some tree shade with views of the meadows.



New trail and some old trail obliterated



Blue Diamonds Installed on Latest Reroute of 10K North Trail

by Sam Beard and Mike Madden

On October 16, 2023, Sam Beard and Mike Madden installed approximately 75 blue plastic diamonds on trees in both directions along the recently completed rerouted segment of 10K North Trail. This rerouted segment of 10K North Trail connects with Ellis Trail approximately 100 feet south of the old junction of these two trails. We also added several diamonds along the reroute completed earlier and along the segment of the old trail just north of the trailhead parking lot.

Improvements on Five Crest Area Trails

by Steve Roholt

Improvements were made on the following trails: Switchback, Buried Cable, Crest Trail 130 South, Kiwanis Meadow Trail and portions of Kiwanis Cabin Road. These are all two-way multiuse trails that are used for winter cross country skiing and snowshoeing, and spring/summer/fall hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. These trails are also used for the annual Sandia Snowshoe Classic. The long-term goal is to provide adequate corridor and sufficient line of sight along these trails. Maintenance consisted of scattering previously placed deadfall which had piled up over the years, cutbacks of deadfall that impinged on the trail, and selective pruning. The photo to the right shows an example of a portion of Switchback Trail which has good corridor, well defined tread, and good line of sight.



Switchback Trail after improvements were made



Michael Arndt has just completed bucking this log with a crosscut saw in the wilderness area



Brushing along Forest Road 333 in Juan Tabo Canyon

by Sam Beard

On November 29, seven FOSM volunteers, Bob Gore, and Christopher Baca, Recreation Field Operations Manager, removed brush along Forest Road 333 that was encroaching on the pavement or blocking views of oncoming traffic on curves. The crew started at La Luz Trailhead and worked down the road. Bob and Chris provided traffic control, and fortunately, relatively few vehicles passed the crew. At the first switchback, the crew cut much brush that was encroaching on the pavement and tall elm brush that was adjacent to the road. The crew continued down the road until 12:30 when they ate lunch at La Luz Trailhead parking lot. They then continued cutting brush below where the one-way road from Juan Tabo Picnic Area joins FR-333 again. The plan was to return to this road and complete the brushing down to the junction with the road to La Cueva PA.

Paint Crew Projects

by Sam Beard and Anne Hickman

One of the major jobs for the FOSM paint crew is painting parking stripes in numerous lots on the Ranger District. Stripes are painted with a 4-wheel steel cart in which an inverted spray can of striping paint has been inserted. When the trigger on the right handle of the cart is pulled, a steel tab on the cart presses the spout on the can up and white paint is sprayed onto the pavement. The spout on the can is a linear slit so that a stripe about 4 inches in width is applied. Gravel and dirt are swept off the old line before the new stripe is painted. Sandia Ranger District pays for the paint, and Manny Chavez purchases it and puts it in the wood shop in the SRD maintenance building behind the ranger station.



Anne Hickman painting stripes in Capulin Snow Play Area parking lot

The paint crew completed the following projects:

- Oct. 10 – Painted vehicle gate behind the Ranger Station
- Oct. 22 – Painted Cienega Canyon Trailhead kiosk
- Nov. 7 – Painted south side of North Crest Trailhead kiosk
- May 14 – Painted stripes in parking lots at Doc Long, Sulphur, Cienega, and Balsam Glade parking lots and at Tree Spring Trailhead
- June 18 – Painted stripes in Crest parking lot with TTYL crew
- June 25 – Painted stripes in Capulin Snow Play Area parking lot
- July 9 – Painted stripes in Juan Tabo and La Cueva PA parking lots





Volunteers painting a new kiosk in the renovated Nine Mile Picnic Area that has been closed for several years

Graffiti Removal Projects

by Sam Beard

Graffiti tags on stone are removed by the paint crew 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. Tags on painted surfaces may be painted over with the same color.



Before and after graffiti was painted over on trash receptacles in Juan Tabo Picnic Area



Before and after graffiti removal in Juan Tabo Picnic Area



Graffiti tags were removed from the following locations:

- Juan Tabo Picnic Area stone shelter and boulders – Oct. 3, Nov. 16, Feb. 12 and 14, June 4 and 21
- Forest Road 333 in Juan Tabo Canyon, July 9
- Near La Luz Trailhead parking lot boulders – Mar. 29 (with SRD crew)
- La Cueva Picnic Area – Oct. 3
- Kiwanis Cabin interior – Aug. 6
- Juan Tabo Canyon CCC stone cabin – July 11
- Crest Area and Nature Trail – Nov. 7, Aug. 27
- CCC dam in Canyon at La Luz Trailhead parking lot – June 11 (with TTYL Crew)



Before and after removal of graffiti on boulder high on west side of Sandia Mountain

Hazard Tree Removal

by Sam Beard



Sawyers bucking a felled hazard tree at the lower part of Balsam Glade Picnic Area. L to R: Dan Benton, Eric Russell and 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. This 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.

Canyon Young, Sandia Ranger District Trails and Wilderness Program Manager, selected hazard trees in 2024.



During the spring and summer of 2024, FOSM felled, limbed, and bucked a total of 50 hazard trees in the nine sites listed below. At each site, the number of trees felled, and the maximum diameter of the trees felled at that site are given – Picnic Areas: Doc Long, 2, 12 inches; Cienega Canyon, 6, 18 inches; Balsam Glade, 4, 18 inches; 10K North Trail and burn area, approximately 2 dozen, 20 inches; Pine Flat, 1, 18 inches; and Oak Flat 2, 15 inches. Other sites: Capulin Snow Play Area, 1, 15 inches; Coyote Trailhead, 1, 6 inches and top of Sandia Peak Ski Area 9, 20 inches.



Dan Benton running from a burned hazard tree he has felled on 10K North Trail



Bucking felled hazard trees in Cienega Picnic Area for donation wood



Using a power splitter to split donation wood in Cienega Picnic Area. L to R: Eric Russell, Dan Benton, Byron Garner and Jerry Carroll



Jerry Carroll bucking a large hazard tree felled in Cienega Canyon Picnic Area



Sim Cook splitting a large round so that it will be easier to put on power splitter in Cienega Picnic Area



Sandia Nordic Ski Club Klaus Trail Hazard Tree Removal

by Scott Dietrich

Scott Dietrich, President of Sandia Nordic Ski Club, requested the removal of a hazard tree that was hung up over the Klaus Trail approximately ¼ mile south of the Ellis Parking Area. The top of the tree was well secured, and consequently the hazard was not so much the risk of the tree falling and injuring someone (although that was a concern), but rather that the tree would limit skiers and groomers from being able to pass under it as snow continued to accumulate throughout the winter.



Jerry Carroll preparing to remove the hang up on Klaus Trail

On December 4, FOSM chain sawyer Jerry Carroll, and FOSM members Francis Algermissen and Scott Dietrich met at the Ellis Trailhead. Earlier that morning, Scott groomed the Service Road with Sandia Nordic's 700 cc Yamaha Grizzly ATV and the club's Ginzu Groomer attachment. After leaving the Ginzu Groomer at the Ellis Trailhead, Scott used the ATV to shuttle Jerry's chainsaw and axe to the worksite. Jerry was able to fell the tree and buck it into three sections in less than 30 minutes. Skiers and groomers will now be able to easily pass this section of trail when snow from future storms accumulates. The volunteers working on this project were wearing snowshoes on the snow that had fallen earlier.

Removal of Hazard Trees from Sandia Nordic Ski Club Trail near Dan's Loop

by Sam Beard

On July 31, seven FOSM volunteers removed five hazard trees from a Sandia Nordic Ski Club (SNSC) Trail near Dan's Loop on the Crest Highway between 10K Trailhead and Ellis Trailhead. From Dan's Loop, the volunteers hiked across the Crest Highway and Challenge Trail to the trail where the five dead trees were located.

One of the objectives was to have Scott Dietrich and Sim Cook do most of the cutting for practice, because they were recently certified as USFS chain sawyers. Jerry Carroll mentored them in all aspects of tree felling – analyzing the tree for various properties including lean, making a face cut in the direction that the tree would be falling, making a back cut to make the tree fall, running away from the falling tree, reading the stump to learn hinge wood thickness and other properties of the cut, limbing the log, bucking the log into pieces small enough to handle, and cutting the stump lower for better forest appearance. The five hazard trees were felled safely, and the bucked trunks were moved off the trail.



Picnic Area Improvement Projects

Cienega Picnic Area Projects

by Don Carnicom

Cienega Nature Trail Sign - A new 4-foot Cienega Nature Trail (map) sign was designed by Ken Wilson, Jamey Browning and Don Carnicom. It was purchased and installed at the beginning of the trail and describes what one will expect to see and read about at each location throughout the loop trail.



Sign designed by Ken Wilson, Jamey Browning and Don Carnicom; purchased by FOSM

Kiosk Repair - The two 6-inch diameter posts supporting the kiosk panel rotted off, and the panel came down. After the whole thing was disassembled, two new pressure-treated posts were installed in concrete and the panel was reattached to the posts. Should be good for a long time now.

Post and pole fence - Post/pole fencing is used throughout the picnic area along roads and in parking areas. Even though it is very decorative and functional, it requires constant maintenance. Throughout the year posts and poles were replaced whenever necessary.

Bridges - As with post and pole fencing, the wood and metal bridges scattered throughout the picnic area are decorative and functional but require constant maintenance. Planks in the bridges were replaced whenever necessary.

Kiwanis Meadow Signs- Three Kiwanis Meadow Trail (maps) that were temporarily installed last fall were replaced with new high-pressure laminate signs. Additionally, one interpretative education sign that was badly degraded was also replaced. The expected life is about 10 years, except for vandalism. These are exactly like all the other signs in the Crest area.

Restoration of Short Posts on Three Picnic Shelters

by Sam Beard



Installing a short post on Doc Long Picnic Area shelter, Don Carnicom and Sim Cook

In September 2023, the following number of decayed short posts supporting low horizontal beams were replaced in the large picnic shelters: Balsam Glade, 8 posts; Doc Long Shelter A, 4 posts; and Doc Long Shelter B, 8 posts.

Replaced posts were secured with No. 14 by 12-inch black timber screws. Most of the original ½-inch by 12-inch lag screws were cut with the FOSM battery-powered reciprocating saw. On the Balsam Glade and Doc Long PA Shelter A, beams were attached to the large columns with the large lag screws at a 45-degree angle.



On Doc Long Shelter B, the low beams were attached to the short posts with a vertical lag screw into the short post that was attached to the large column with two long lag screws. Two posts on Shelter B were disassembled by chipping away the putty in the countersink hole with a cold chisel and easily unscrewing the long lag screw. The other old short posts were disassembled by various methods including cutting with a chain saw, splitting with a 3-lb sledge with tapered end on one side being hit with an 8-lb sledgehammer, simply hitting the post with a large sledgehammer, and splitting the post with a wood chisel.

The short posts on the Balsam Glade shelter were installed on September 14, and the short posts in Doc Long PA were installed on September 20, 2023. Countersink holes still need to be filled with caulk.

Fabrication and Installation of Decorative 3-foot Post on Doc Long Picnic Shelter A

by Sam Beard

On Dec. 1, two volunteers cut a 12-inch diameter log to a length of 33 inches. The log had been purchased by Joelle Hertel for another project, but it was not needed. Four bevel cuts were made on the top with the FOSM battery-powered chain saw to create a rustic appearance. Three coats of green Woodlife wood preservative were applied on each end of the post and two coats were applied on the sides. Later the post was painted with USFS brown paint, and lag screws were used to attach the post to the large wooden column on the southeast corner of Shelter A.

Restoration of Ends of Large Overhead Beams on Doc Long Picnic Area Shelters A and B

by Sam Beard

The eight ends of the large overhead beams on Doc Long Picnic Area modern Shelters A and B have been exposed to the weather for approximately 30 years. Cracks and some decay had developed in the exposed sides and ends. System Three epoxy products were used in the restoration of these weathered beams. The sides and ends of these beams were painted with liquid epoxy to harden and stabilize the wood. Epoxy paste was used to fill cracks and decayed areas. Brown USFS paint was applied on the stabilized beam ends and sides that are now weather resistant.

Bucking Logs at Doc Long Picnic Area

Several years ago, a FOSM crew felled a very large dead Rocky Mountain Juniper in Doc Long PA east of Shelter A. All the branches were cut and removed from the site, but the 10-foot-long trunk with a diameter of 24 inches remained at the site. On October 22 the trunk was bucked into ten 12-inch-long pieces that were later collected as donation wood.

One or two years ago, a FOSM crew felled several oak hazard trees near the lower end of the old paved road in Doc Long PA. On October 22 these trees were bucked into approximately 50 rounds that were to be collected as donation firewood later.





Dan Benton and Sim Cook replacing a broken fence pole in Doc Long Picnic Area

FOSM Working with Youth Groups

FOSM Contributes to Youth and Community Development

by Lou Romero

Per FOSM’s second Strategic Goal, “Broaden our community outreach (next generation members and stewards) education and development,” this year FOSM partnered with two youth groups in particular -- TTYL/YCC and SOL Forest School.

Talking Talons Youth Leadership/Youth Conservation Corps - Once again FOSM volunteers and TTYL/YCC successfully partnered to perform a variety of projects that supplement Forest Service land stewardship and provide associated benefits to surrounding communities. Projects included splitting, loading and hauling donation firewood to a church woodlot; trail construction and maintenance; wildlife drinker maintenance; painting facilities; graffiti removal and much more.

The TTYL/YCC members this summer were: Jared Moyers, Hans Martin, Dwight Olander, Robbie Larrison, Lila Eaton, Vianey Medina, Jamey Medina and Olivia Lopez. Jared, Olivia and Robbie were returnees from the 2023 summer. Jared returned as overall mentor to Olivia who returned as Crew Leader. Jared also served as the administrative liaison to John Ross, Executive Director. Robbie continued as a more experienced crew member.

Prior to beginning the work season, I met with Jared and Olivia to review key leadership principles and practices. We gave the most emphasis to developing a safe and productive teamwork culture; and to the importance of having a clear Vision, Team Mission, Team Values and Guiding Principles; Building Trust, Dealing with Conflict and Utilizing Individual Talents and Skills. We also prepared a comprehensive Orientation Plan that focused on productivity, respect, compassion and fun.



At the end of the three-week period, I met with John Ross, Olivia and Jared to debrief three primary areas of their experience - Relationships among the crew and leaders, work performance, and results accomplished. They were extremely satisfied. Everything accomplished the desired results.

Individual crew members learned new concepts about leadership; new work skills; practiced improved communications and formed new, productive relationships. Feedback from the crew and the leaders was that, once again, it was a very successful time, and they particularly enjoyed working with FOSM volunteers. The relationships and the work were meaningful and fulfilling.

SOL Forest School (Soulful Outdoor Learning) - Sally-Ann Stevens, founder, director and lead teacher, discovered our reference to youth programs in our FOSM Website. Our Webmaster, Cliff Giles, referred her inquiry to me. It reads, "Hello, I run a 100% outdoor nature program for children in the East Mountains and would like to become involved in tree planting initiatives. Do you do any tree planting in the Sandia Mountains?"

Initially the essence of her "dream" was to try to get the Forest Service to designate a plot of forest where the children could plant trees and nurse their growth. Conceptually, the idea sounded somewhat similar to our Adopt-A-Trail Program. The approach to tree planting she envisions is inspired by a Children's Forest Program in England: "Children's Forest – A movement to inspire and enable children to plant healthy forests."

Recently, Ms. Stevens informed me that a private landowner in Tijeras offered a plot for a SOL tree planting pilot event they are calling "Kinderwoods". They have already secured ponderosa pine seedlings and about a dozen families who plan to participate sometime in late November 2024. In the meantime, per Ms. Stevens request, Sim Cook and I are going to visit the site. Hopefully, our tree planting experience may offer relevant advice for their pilot project. In the meantime, I have referred Ms. Stevens to the NM Department of Forestry whose mission is more closely aligned with tree planting on private land.

Other Youth-Related Activity

FOSM's excellent Website continues to attract a variety of inquiries from individuals and groups ranging from parents, Boy and Girl Scout Troops, Eagle Scout candidates, schools, hikers, bikers, etc. Cliff Giles and I typically try to answer their inquires and/or refer them to an appropriate FOSM leader or Forest Service specialist.

Other Projects with Talking Talons Youth Leadership (TTYL) Crew

by Sam Beard and Joelle Hertel

June 10 – On this rainy day, the TTYL crew practiced using a few different crosscut saws in the SRD vehicle parking garage behind the shop. A certified FOSM sawyer also discussed the operation of chain saws and demonstrated removal of the bar and chain. In the afternoon, the crew viewed a local USFS video about wildlife drinkers in the large conference room in the Ranger Station.

June 11 – The TTYL crew removed several large graffiti tags in the Juan Tabo Picnic Area stone shelter and on three large boulders near the restroom above the stone shelter. After lunch, the crew hiked up the short canyon east of the La Luz Trailhead parking lot. From here they hiked up and around boulders to the CCC dam that was covered with blue characters outlined with silver paint. The tags were partially



removed so that the characters could not be read. Rain will remove much of the residue of paint and chemicals that remained on the rocks in the dam.

Crew members working on these projects were Joelle Hertel, Sam Beard, Jared Moyers, Vianey Medina, Robbie Larrison, Lila Eaton, Olivia Lopez, Jamie Modina, Dwight Olander, and Hans Martin.

FOSM-TTYL/YCC Project Processing Firewood in Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area and Visiting Tree Spring Wildlife Drinker on June 12

by Lou Romero and Sam Beard

We started the project by having Sam Beard give explicit safety instructions about how the work would proceed and the roles to be performed. He outlined the steps to be followed in harvesting a large 24-inch ponderosa pine log lying diagonally on a steep hillside approximately 200 feet immediately above a pair of picnic tables near a parking lot in Sulphur Canyon PA. The TTYL/YCC (Talking Talons Youth Leadership/Youth Conservation Crew) crew positioned themselves as “lookouts” above the log where the sawyers would be working.

Three sawyers, Sim Cook, Steve Roholt, and Eric Russell first bucked the tree into three shorter pieces that were then maneuvered into more efficient positioning for bucking into 12-inch rounds. The rounds were then carefully rolled down the steep slope to flat ground between the picnic tables and the sidewalk to the parking lot. The YCC Crew stacked the rounds next to Lou Romero’s mechanical splitter. Dan Benton gave the YCC crew safety instructions for rotating turns to load the rounds and operate the splitter.



TTYL crew splitting wood from a hazard tree felled in Sulphur Canyon Picnic Area

After the YCC crew finished splitting all the rounds, Steve Roholt and Dan Benton led them 200 yards up the Wagon Trail to remove a tree trunk encroaching on the trail thread. While Dan studied the chainsaw cuts to be made, Steve gave the crew an overview of trail maintenance in general and removal of down trees from trails.

Mike Oliver arrived at 10:30 with his truck and trailer. Dan and the YCC crew finished all the splitting by 11 am, and then they finished loading the split wood on the trailer by 11:30. They unloaded the trailer at Oliver’s church ministry woodlot by 12:30.

The YCC Crew, Sam, Rene Archer and Lou returned to Sulphur Picnic Area for lunch and a brief “seminar” about careers, work ethics, and leadership principles. We completed the afternoon by driving to the actual Tree Spring where the YCC Crew learned about how springs are formed and the benefits to wildlife. They also took turns shoveling mud out of the “spring drinker” and left it in good condition to hold plenty of clean water.

During the day, the YCC Crew participated in three different outdoor activities that contributed to “Caring for the Land and Serving People.”



FOSM volunteers: Sam Beard, Jerry Carroll, Rene Archer, Dan Benton, Eric Russell, Sim Cook, Cliff Giles, and Lou Romero. TTYL/YCC crew: Olivia Lopez, Jamie Medina, Lila Eaton, Dwight Olander, Vianey Medina, Robbie Larrison, and Hans Martin.

Maintenance of Cedro Wildlife Drinker with TTYL/YCC Crew

by Dan Benton and Joelle Hertel

On June 17, a FOSM crew and TTYL/YCC crew visited Cedro wildlife drinker. The tank was about one-third full and seemed to be in good shape. Joelle suspected the pile of rocks at the tank outlet covered a shutoff valve, so we had the TTYL crew remove the rocks and discovered a buried gate valve. Joelle worked with part of the crew on the float valve, which had a disconnected float, and Dan worked with others to dig out around the valve and install a box and cover. The new float valve Josh provided would not have worked, so Joelle adjusted the arm of the existing valve and reattached the float. We then waited while the valve slowly filled the drinker box. The drinker portion of the box seemed to have pits that would allow water to leak out, so Joelle and I used pipe dope to fill the holes, but a new drinker box might be a better solution eventually. While the crew sat in the shade and waited, Joelle explained the intricacies of using various concrete mixes in construction and took questions. The repaired valve eventually shut off properly, and we finished before lunch. The crew voted to hike out and eat back at the SRD. Jerrod used a GPS map to take us on a more direct route back to the main trail and road.

FOSM Work with TTYL/YCC Crew in Juan Tabo Picnic Area

by Joelle Hertel and Sam Beard

The TTYL group assembled at the lower parking area in Juan Tabo Picnic Area on June 4. After introductions, discussion of the work, and a JHA, we walked to the out-of-service CCC-era outhouse. A metal grate was locked at the entrance, and I called Manny Chavez, SRD employee, to bring keys.

While waiting for Manny, Joelle split the group into two crews. One crew scoured the area for trash. The other walked to each picnic table with loppers to trim back any brush and weeds, clearing at least 3 feet around each table. Manny was quick to arrive and stayed for an hour to help with filling the latrine. Buckets were filled with sand (decomposed granite) from the wash area and dumped into the latrine. We worked until lunch break in the cool stone shelter.

Sandra Coombs, SRD Archeologist, spoke about CCC history and the construction of the site to the group. Her talk was enhanced with poster boards with historic photos of the construction done in the 1930s. After lunch, all went back to work with a bucket brigade to fill the toilet. Sandra participated for a while with the crew. We did not complete the job that day but returned to the site on June 11. On that day some of the TTYL worked on removing graffiti with Sam Beard, and the other crew members poured more sand into the toilet. Sandra did not require it to be completely filled, so the job was declared done after a couple more hours filling the hole with sand.

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Special Projects



Tim Brown with trash picked up along the Crest Highway

FOSM Adopt-A-Highway Project

by Steve Roholt

Fall 2023 - FOSM volunteers participated in the October 17 cleanup and brushing along the one mile of the Crest Highway that FOSM adopted from Mile Marker 4 to Mile Marker 5.

Spring 2024 - On May 28, thirteen FOSM volunteers participated in our semi-annual trash pickup and brushing. The brushing was done to remove overhanging vegetation which had grown over the highway shoulder and guardrail.

Firewood Donated to Mountain Christian Church Wood Ministry

by Sam Beard

Each year, the Sandia Ranger District donates via permit several cords of firewood to the Mountain Christian Church Wood Ministry. The Wood Ministry has one or more woodlots on church members' property, and during the winter the Wood Ministry donates wood to East Mountain 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. They also process trees that have fallen due to high winds. Lou Romero's power splitter is used to split this donated wood.



USFS 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. Mike Oliver, Wood Ministry member, hauls wood with his pickup and trailer. FOSM volunteers' pickups are sometimes used as well.

Processing a down or felled tree so that it can be burned in a fireplace or stove requires one or more of the following steps: removing branches, bucking it into lengths of 12 to 16 inches, and splitting it into two, four, or more pieces. Processing of Donation Wood by Site:

Site	Dates Wood Processed at This Site
Doc Long Picnic Area	Oct. 18, Nov. 1, April 24
Sulphur Canyon PA	Nov. 15, June 12, July 3
Cienega Canyon PA	Oct. 11 & 18; Feb. 21 & 28; Mar. 6 & 27; April 3, 7, 10, 24
Balsam Glade PA	April 7, April 10, April 17, April 24, May 22, July 10
Capulin Spring PA & Snow Play Area	April 7
10K North Trailhead	June 26, Aug. 8
Kiwanis Cabin Road	Oct. 25
Top of Sandia Peak Ski Area	June 5, June 15



Adopt-A-Drop Program

by Joelle Hertel

FOSM has taken over the Adopt-A-Drop program from the Forest Service at their request. Forest Service biologists have overseen the program maintaining wildlife drinkers for years, but now will provide guidance only.

Fourteen functional wildlife drinkers are scattered throughout the Manzanita and Sandia Mountains from Piedra Lisa North Trailhead to David Canyon in the South. Each drinker has an assigned "adopter". FOSM tracks the adopters assigned to the various locations and receives reports from adopters twice each year for each drinker. Assessment of the drinkers, repairs, and enhancements have been completed for this first year of FOSM responsibility. In addition, FOSM has enlarged the program to include four drinkers on Bernalillo County open space land. The program next year will grow to include the drinkers that are in the Manzanitas but on Kirtland Air Force Base. The prolonged drought in New Mexico underscores the need for functional wildlife drinkers.



Typical wildlife water installation with rainwater collection and storage in the background



L to R: Joelle Hertel, Dan Benton, Betsy Galloway and Jean Payne at the North Piedra Lisa wildlife water trough near Placitas

Brush Cut Around Old Barro Wildlife Drinker

by Sam Beard

On November 8, seven FOSM volunteers cut brush around the old Barro Wildlife Drinker back to a radius of 50 feet so that prey animals can see mountain lions in time to escape. At both the old and new drinkers, there was no water in the rain collectors or in the drinkers. As part of the Adopt-A-Drop program, Jean Payne and Joelle Hertel check the conditions at these drinkers throughout the year.



Increasing the Slope of Two Rain Collectors in Bernalillo County Ojito Open Space

by Joelle Hertel, Dan Benton, and Sam Beard

On Wednesday, July 17, five FOSM volunteers completed the project to increase the slope of two rain collection surfaces in the Bernalillo County Ojito Open Space. Water will now flow to the gutter at the lower edge of the collector and into the pipe leading to the large black plastic tank under the collector surface. From the tank the water flows to a float valve located in a small concrete trough where wildlife can drink water.

The objective of the project was to increase the slope of the metal roofing panels so that water would drain to the lower end. The screws in the upper end of the roofing panels were removed so that wooded shims could be placed between the metal panels and 2x6 wooden cross members of the frame supporting the panels. The upper end of the panels was raised 3 inches by slabbing a 2x6 onto the upper frame member. The thicknesses of the other shims in decreasing thickness were 2-1/2 inches, 2 inches, 1-1/2 inches, and 3/4 inch. The raised panels were reattached by inserting screws through the panels and shims into the frame cross members. Joelle had cut and fabricated the shims at her home before the project started, and this preparation allowed the crew to complete the project by noon.



Dan Benton and Cliff Giles removing screws on the Bernalillo County Ojito Open Space rain collector

Heritage Program

by Joelle Hertel

FOSM supports the Forest Service Heritage Program by working with the Sandia Ranger District (SRD) archeologist Sandra Combs. One of her projects this year has been the restoration of Salas Cabin, a stone structure in the Manzano Mountains. Several trips to the cabin have been necessary to assess the needs and create a plan for work on the site and work in the SRD shop in preparation for site work. Deteriorated windows and doors were removed from the cabin and brought to the SRD shop. New windows and doors were built to mimic the original 1930s construction. A youth group has cut and prepared replacement roof vigas and porch columns using draw knives. Site work will include new porch columns, new window and door jambs built on site, installation of the shop-built door and windows, and new vigas and roof. This work will be complete by the end of September.

Also working with Sandra, the text for the new plant signs at the Tijeras Museum has been approved. Signs are in fabrication with installation planned before the end of the year.



Construction of Water Barrel Stands

by Joelle Hertel

USFS biologists planned a pollinator garden behind the Ranger Station. Part of their plan included a rainwater collection system from the roof gutters of the ranger station. FOSM constructed three water barrel stands to accommodate the barrels in May. A youth group completed the garden work.



Dan Benton and Jerry Carroll working on a water barrel stand in the Sandia Ranger District wood shop

Construction of Tool Racks in FOSM Guard Station

by Joelle Hertel and Sam Beard



New tool storage racks in the FOSM Guard Station

On June 27 and July 5, Joelle Hertel and Sam Beard built racks on the north wall of the FOSM Guard Station to store hand tools usually used in trail construction and maintenance. Pick mattocks and cutter mattocks are stored in a long rack on the north wall. Next, sledgehammers, axes, and Pulaskis are stored in one slot across the end of the rack for the mattocks. McLeods are stored in the section with the digging ends on the floor and the handles vertical. A chain on two hooks extends across the outer side of the McLeod section. Various long-handle tools are stored in the next open section, and finally, at the east end of the wall, cant hooks and rock bars are stored. A chain on two hooks extends around the rock bars. A low 2x6 frame on the floor extends around the long tools on the end so that they cannot slide outward on the floor. The following tools are stored above the mattock rack: two sets of long handle loppers, Katanaboy saws, dirt bags, and bow saws. Shovels are stored on two high horizontal hooks extending out from the wall. Three draw knives are stored on nails above the other tools are the east end of the wall.

On June 27 and July 5, Joelle Hertel and Sam Beard built racks on the north wall of the FOSM Guard Station to store hand tools usually used in trail construction and maintenance. Pick mattocks and cutter mattocks are stored in a long rack on the north wall. Next, sledgehammers, axes, and Pulaskis are stored in one slot across the end of the rack for the mattocks. McLeods are stored in the section with the digging ends on the floor and the handles vertical. A chain on two hooks extends across the outer side of the McLeod section. Various long-handle



Storage of long-handle tools



Signage and Mapping Projects

Triangle Sign Storage during Roundabout Construction by Sam Beard and Joelle Hertel

On March 22, FOSM representatives met with NMDOT and Star Paving personnel to discuss how the triangle sign, built years ago by Ross Ward, would be moved and stored during the construction of the roundabout at the intersection of NM-14 and NM-536 (Crest Highway). It was decided that Star Paving personnel would construct a 4x4 wooden frame around the sign and cut the power posts supporting it. The sign would be stored on a tarp flat on the ground at the southwest side of the construction site. The sign would then be covered with a tarp during the construction.



The historic Crest Highway sign being moved to the south-west side of the construction site

FOSM representatives monitored the removal of the large historic Crest Highway sign by the contractor, Star Paving, at the intersection of NM-14 and NM-536. The contractor cut all the wooden columns about 3 feet above grade after supporting the main section of the sign with a forklift. After the sign was lifted, the wooden columns in the ground were pulled out. These wooden posts were positioned at the southwest side of the site to serve as support for the sign to keep it above ground. The sign on the forklift was moved to the far end, and carefully laid on the wood posts. The sign was partially covered with a tarpaulin and is currently off to the side of the construction site on the ground. DOT has agreed to include FOSM in the discussion when the reinstallation of the sign occurs after completion of the roundabout.

Restoration of Tops of Cienega Nature Trail Interpretive Signposts by Sam Beard



Cienega Nature Trail interpretive signs that have been restored with epoxy paste and paint

The unique interpretive signs along the Cienega Nature Trail have been exposed to the weather for decades, and the wood around the metal panels was cracking with some decay in places. A total of 34 signposts are along this trail with a panel of English text on the left post of each pair and a panel of Braille on the right. Restoration of the wood surrounding the metal panels was done by coating the wood with System Three liquid epoxy to stabilize the remaining wood, filling large cracks and decayed holes with epoxy paste, and painting the restored tops with USFS brown paint. The restored wooden tops are now resistant to weather damage, and the posts should remain stable for several years along this trail which is one of two adopted by FOSM.



Installation of Sign to Kiwanis Cabin

by Jamey Browning

On October 12, at Sandia Ranger District's request, FOSM replaced the broken post and installed a temporary oak Kiwanis Cabin Trail sign to replace the one stolen a couple of weeks earlier. The sign was installed at the junction of Crest Trail 130 and Kiwanis Cabin Trail 93, where you turn west off Crest Trail to go up to the Cabin. This was a high priority, because during Balloon Fiesta this area is heavily used by Tram tourists wishing to visit Kiwanis Cabin. Eventually, it will be replaced with a permanent sign matching the other signs in the area.

Updating Sandia Crest Area Interpretive Panels

by Jamey Browning

Don Carnicom, Ken Wilson, and I worked this spring to update the interpretive panels in the Sandia Crest area. Some of the panels were outdated, and others were very faded from a decade in the sun. A FOSM team led by Don Carnicom installed the interpretive signs in the Crest Area over a decade ago. FOSM has the original artwork and updates the signs as needed. The Meadow Neighborhood sign north of Kiwanis Meadow was badly faded and was replaced.



Meadow Neighborhood sign



The three interpretive map panels along Kiwanis Meadow Road and Crest Trail were updated to add trails created in the last decade



Sandias Trail Sign Improvement Program

by Jamey Browning

Over the past year, I have been working closely with Sandia Ranger District on making improvements to the trail signs in the Sandias. While the current signage is excellent, there are junctions where signs are needed for new trails or reroutes. Also, occasionally signs are vandalized or have been stolen. In one case a tree fell on a sign and destroyed it.

Last year I began creating a list of needed signs. When our new Trails Foreman, Jen Medina-Gray, came on board I handed the list over to her to prioritize the work and have continued to help with getting the signs made. To facilitate new signage, FOSM purchased several sheets of the HDME sign material used for making signs. Using my CNC router, I was able to machine the lettering, arrows, and mounting holes for each sign using the USFS Trail Sign Design Specification for guidance.



The Initial batch of 7 signs. Can you guess which junction each sign is associated with?



One of the new signs shown installed for the junction of Kiwanis Meadow and Switchback Trail



Another new sign at the junction of Kiwanis Meadow and Switchback Trail



New sign shown installed for the Osha Loop Trail reroute

OpenStreetMap Mapping of the Sandias and Manzanitas

by Jamey Browning

Last year, I worked on updating the OpenStreetMap database for the Sandia Mountains. This year I updated the database for the Manzanitas which completed the updates for all trails within and surrounding the Sandia Ranger District.

What is OpenStreetMap? OpenStreetMap is similar to Wikipedia. Except it is designed as an open information source for map data. The database contains roads, buildings, natural features, trails,



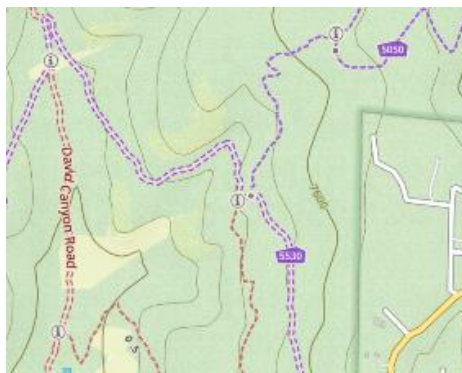
and just about anything you might want to put on a map. The data is freely available to anyone who wants to use it to create a map or a routing service.

What was done? The OpenStreetMap trail database for the Sandias has excellent trail location data and is more current than data published by the USFS. However, the OpenStreetMap database had no information on who manages different trails and what usages they are managed for. I have been able to download the USFS, City of Albuquerque Open Space, and Bernalillo County Open Space GIS data, extract this information and add it into the OpenStreetMap database.

What does this mean? Most hiking and biking apps use the OpenStreetMap database as their source for trail information. So, if you are using apps such as Gaia GPS or All Trails, you should find that the trails shown in the Sandias and Manzanitas are highly accurate. There are likely a few errors out there due to reroutes but if you find one and can provide a GPX track, I can fix it. Also, many apps such as Gaia GPS color code trails for the types of allowed usage. In the example to the right, you can see that trails within the wilderness are shown in green. This means that they are hiking/horse trails. At lower left, in red you see a part of Ellis and 10K which also allow bikes as it is outside of the wilderness.



Gaia GPS Screen Capture Showing the Area where Crest, Survey, Ellis, and 10K trails are close together. The wilderness boundary is the wide green line.



Here the Manzanitas, the purple-colored trails indicate that motorized usage is allowed, in this case dirt-bikes

I also updated all of the Forest Service trails in the Ruidoso area and Valley of Fires near Carrizozo, but that's another story.

Unmanaged Trails

An important aspect of the updates is that unmanaged trails (sometimes called user trails or unmaintained trails) are clearly marked so that hikers can tell if they are on an official managed trail or an unmanaged trail which could have unknown hazards. Here is an unmanaged trail going north from 10K trail head. It is rendered as a thin light grey dashed line and labeled "Unmaintained Trail".



Light grey line indicates an unmaintained trail



Trail Reroutes

Whenever I learn of a new official reroute, I update the OpenStreetMap database. Apps such as Gaia GPS synchronize their database to the OpenStreetMap every couple of months so eventually changes appear in the apps.

USFS Southwest Region Presentation on OpenStreetMap

by Jamey Browning

In June, Kerry Wood, Trails, Dispersed Recreation and Travel Management Program Manager for the Forest Service Southwest Region, asked if I would be willing to share knowledge of the OpenStreetMap contribution process including adding authoritative Forest Service attributes for system and non-system trails. I completed this process for the Sandia Mountain/Manzanitas areas, and Recreation and Trails Managers in other Forests were interested in the process but didn't know where to get started. Having trail usage and whether trails are managed or unmanaged in hiking/biking apps is considered by many to be beneficial to the public.

Merging data from the official Forest Service database into the OpenStreetMap database can be a tedious process. I have developed some methods to simplify the process.

I prepared a 25-page instruction manual and a 50-page PowerPoint presentation on the history of OpenStreetMap, how it is used, and how to obtain and add authoritative data. I was able to give a two-hour presentation to the Southwest Region Recreation and Trails folks on July 17, and the presentation was well received.

Collaboration with Sandia Peak Tramway

by Jamey Browning

This summer Sandia Peak Tramway asked if FOSM and I would help with a map and brochure for their new Trails, Trails, and Treats program, aka Dog Day at the Tram. The Tram has started a new program where a couple of times a year, they provide space to local pet rescue organizations such as Watermelon Mountain Ranch, and Animal Humane of New Mexico to set up booths in the parking lot.

Information on the Tram's Dog Day can be found here: [Dog Day is back!](#)

The [Paw-some hiking map](#) and brochure can also be found on the Tram's website which shows trails adjacent to the Tram Terminal.



A Section of the Paw-Some Hiking Map



In collaboration, the Tram also was kind enough to update their website and add links to the FOSM website. Their Mountain Info/Mountain Information tab now takes visitors directly to the FOSM website. And their Mountain Info/La Luz Trail tab takes visitors to the FOSM webpage with detailed information on hiking La Luz Trail. FOSM has also added a link on our website directly to the Tram website for FOSM visitors wanting information on the Tram.

New Hiking Maps for the Sandias

by Jamey Browning

This year I have been working with the Sandia Ranger District to create new hiking maps for the Sandias. We are working on new detailed maps for the:

- Armijo, Cienega, Sulphur, Doc Long Area
- Lower Sandia Crest Scenic Byway Hiking Trails
- Crest Area
- Upper Mountain Cross-country Ski Area
- Placitas Area

The review process is rather long and tedious, but hopefully these maps will be released soon.

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Other Projects

- On April 17, ten FOSM volunteers replaced two broken fence rails and felled a hazard tree in Doc Long Picnic Area. They also felled the second trunk of the large forked hazard tree in Balsam Glade Picnic Area.
- On April 21 Sam Beard and Michael Arndt surveyed the condition of two picnic shelter roofs in Cedro Reservation Campground and three shelter roofs in Oak Flat Reservation Picnic Area. We also applied Penofin redwood oil to the restroom wooden doors in the Locust and Oak sites in Oak Flat Picnic Area. In general, the roofs were in fairly good condition, but several shingles were missing. In a few places decay was found in the wooden parts of the roofs. Details were reported in an email to the SRD and FOSM management.
- On October 8, Michael Arndt and Sam Beard bucked two trees that had fallen in Las Huertas Picnic Area and stacked the wood on the side of the parking lot.
- On August 6, Jean Payne and Sam Beard removed graffiti tags from the interior walls of Kiwanis Cabin and from a concrete wall below the railing at the Crest Upper Parking lot. All the paint of some tags was removed, but some paint remained at most tags. Very little of a large blue and black tag on the concrete wall below the Upper Parking lot at the Crest was removed. Removal of this large tag with different chemicals was planned.
- On Oct. 10, five FOSM volunteers painted the automatic vehicle gate behind the Ranger



L to R: Rick Buss, Karen Greif, Pauline Ho, and Mike Madden at the Sandia Ranger Station vehicle gate that they have painted



Station. They applied Burnt Almond Behr paint, the same color used on all the small buildings near the shop.

- On Oct. 22, Don Carnicom replaced a broken board in the bridge near the lowest restroom in Cienega PA and replaced a broken pole in the fence at the group area parking lot.
- On September 27, 2023, five volunteers cut brush around Doc Long Picnic Area Shelters A and B, along the fence on the left side of the entrance, and along the highway shoulder near the entrance. The volunteers also pruned a Rocky Mountain juniper and a couple of Russian olive trees. The cut brush was placed in a half-dozen piles and was hauled to the Bernalillo County transfer station later.
- On May 14, a replacement short decorative brown post was installed at one corner of the Doc Long Picnic Shelter A where the post was very rotten. The replacement post was approximately 12 inches in diameter and 36 inches long.



Before and after pictures of a replaced decorative post on a Doc Long Picnic Area shelter

- On May 8, two volunteers swept the Cienega Nature Trail and threw the debris on the low side of the paved path. They were surprised at the small amount of dirt and the small number of leaves and pinecones on this trail, one of two trails adopted by FOSM.
- On October 22, volunteers painted the gray wooden kiosk at Cienega Canyon Trailhead.
- A new 2x4 wooden railing on the concrete steps on the Crest Spur Trail was installed in August to replace the old railing that was a safety hazard due to a linear crack.
- On September 8, brush along the Crest Highway below Tree Spring Trailhead was cut so that visitors can see the 8000-foot vegetation zone sign painted by FOSM volunteers.



New railing on Crest Spur Trail



20th Sandia Snowshoe Classic 2024

by Mike Madden, Race Director



January 20th was blessed with beautiful weather and a deep 3-foot snowpack on the Crest... 30F at 9am, with a high of 38F at 2pm, 10 mph wind, no chance of precipitation, 50% cloud cover. This was the best weather and snowpack anyone could remember!

With the early snows, we registered the 175 maximum participants on Christmas Day, another first! 153 participants checked-in and ran... a fun time, without incident! Ages ranged from 13 to 85. New this year: the race started an hour later, at 11:00am, to allow runners more time to get up

the mountain (plus it's warmer to boot). The course was lengthened 400 meters to make it a true 5 km. We thankfully hired a professional timing and results company rather than doing it ourselves.

First of all, I'd like to thank the FOSM Snowshoe Committee: Silke Bletzer, Jamey Browning, Joe Beman, and Jeff Young. They worked steadily since September to make everything come together on race day. Silke with registration, FOSM website updates, beanies, Cottonwood student coordination, poster design (with retired graphic designer Ken Wilson), timing contract, etc. Jamey handled coaster and sticker design, created a new course map, course distance and directional signs, led the course marshal crew, and served as liaison with Cibola SAR. Joe sought out race day food donors in ABQ, award donors, and handled relations with TV coverage and the Journal. Jeff Young canvassed the East Mountains for race day food and drink donors, as well as award donors.

Secondly, thank you to the 22 FOSM race day volunteers, 12 of whom were course marshals with such a high level of dedication that they walked the course on Monday to treat any obstacles, then again on Friday in case anything surfaced the day before the event. A special thanks to Jeff Huser who trailered tables, chairs, stanchions, cones, PA system, generator, etc. Jeff H took a blank three-foot deep football field area and created a whole start/finish venue.



Thirdly, to the seven Cottonwood Classical High School students and two faculty who took on parking the runners, check-in, announcing, pulling bib tabs, staffing food and drink tables, etc.

And last but not least, to our partner Cibola SAR, composed of more than 30 volunteers, both on the course and at first aid stations. SAR made arrangements for a BernCo EMS unit and three BernCo sheriffs to be there. It 'takes a village' to pull this off... all 60 of us!





Former and current snowshoe event directors: Jeff Young (2001-2005), Lou Romero (2014-2017), Steve Roholt (2019-2020), Mike Madden (2022-present)

Administrative Updates

Treasurer's Report

by Tim Brown

- **Membership** - We now have 149 memberships, including 59 Life Memberships, compared with 160 and 52, respectively, at this time last year. We welcomed 27 new memberships this year.
- **Audits** - In October 2023, Joelle Hertel completed an audit of the FOSM financial records. She reported the records to be accurate and complete. In November 2023, Tim Brown completed an audit of FOSM physical assets.
- **Financial Report** - We began FY2024 on October 1, 2023, with a checking account balance of \$26,830.43, and on September 1, 2024, the balance was \$27,198.31. We also have two CDs which total \$100,000.00 and a brokerage Insured Cash Account of \$48,546.43. The largest expense was \$6,141.98 for projects. The largest revenue was from memberships and donations of \$7,650.
- **Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains** - UNM Press reports that total sales to date are approximately 13,977 copies. They are currently selling about 250 copies each year.
- **Expenditures in Support of the Sandia Ranger District** - Total expenditures through August 2024 were \$14,005.51, the largest being projects for \$6,141.98, including signage, fuel, equipment, fencing, painting, and graffiti removal supplies.



FOSM Website, a great Source of Information

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 2024 membership meetings
- Documenting the 2024 Snowshoe Classic
- Documenting 2024 Adopt-a-Highway projects
- Documenting TV stories and newspaper articles featuring FOSM activities or members (2024 Snowshoe Classic, graffiti removal by Sim Cook)
- Adding pages dedicated to La Luz Trail safety
- Adding a page explaining the crosscut and chainsaw certification process and providing the status of FOSM sawyers
- Adding pages for member photos of winter scenes, fall colors, and wildlife
- Adding a page documenting FY2024 election results including officer and board member photos

2021-2024 Meeting Topics/Speakers Compared to January 2022 Ranked-order Poll of FOSM Board of Directors

Note: Poll was taken after Sandia Nordic Ski Club and Sandia Collaborative presentations.

- Adding a page providing access to previous annual newsletters
- Publishing Forest Service and other announcements of interest to members

Fifty-seven members renewed their memberships, 18 new members joined, and 10 people made donations using website forms in fiscal year 2024. Numerous requests for information were answered by FOSM and Forest Service members.

Microsoft 365 Account

by Cliff Giles

With a lot of help from Jamey Browning, I implemented a free (for up to 10 users) Microsoft 365 account (fosm@fosmnm.onmicrosoft.com) that provides FOSM-owned OneDrive storage for records plus shared mailboxes that eliminate the need for an annual subscription fee for webmaster@friendsofthesandias.org and info@friendsofthesandias.org email accounts used in conjunction with the website. Other features of the new account (such as Teams and SharePoint) are under evaluation.



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 230 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, and information from our partners at the Sandia Ranger District. Messages to this group require approval by a moderator.

Cibola Trail Rangers – This group of about 198 email addresses provides a forum for anyone to report trail conditions on our Sandia trails. Many of our trail maintenance projects have resulted from messages submitted on this system. Messages on this system do not require moderator approval.

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Publication of the FY2024 Newsletter

Sam Beard, Editor

A huge “Thank You” to the following people who contributed to the publication of the FY2024 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.

Project Participants in FY2024

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 (approximately 100) are roughly in alphabetical order. The volunteers who worked on FOSM projects in FY2024 were Francis Algermissen, Rene Archer, Michael Arndt, Tayo Basquiat, 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, Scott Christenson, Ella Cook, Sim Cook, John Cooper, Phil Cromer, Dennis Crowther, Luis Cuadros, Scott Dietrich, Gordon Eatman, Rich Feddersen, David Gabel, Betsy Galloway, Byron Garner, Mackenzie Gibbs, Cliff Giles, Levi Gloetzner, Patrick Gorschke, Mark Grazier, Karen Greif, Susan Gregory, Fred Hagstrom, Bruce Hansche, Joelle Hertel, Anne Hickman, Pauline Ho, Todd Hollister, Jim Houle, Jeff Huser, Paul Karas, Ralph Kopp, Karen Greif, Daniel Kuehn, Larry Larrichio, Robbie Larrison, Andrew Leon, Laura Leon, Olivia Lopez, Bob Lowder, Sally Lowder, Mike Madden, Pat Madden, David McCreery, Joe Meade, Jory Meade, Tami Meade, Kineo Memmer, Eric Messenschnidt, Lorna Morrow, Jared Moyers, Jeff Mogleston, 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, and Katie Ziegweid. The Talking Talons Youth Leadership (TTYL) young people who worked with FOSM three weeks this summer were Jared Moyers, Robbie Larrison, Vianey Medina, Jamie Mediver, Olivia Lopez, Lila Eaton, Hans Martin, and Dwight Olander.

FOSM Board FY2024

Officers

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

Board Members

- * Sam Beard
- * Sim Cook
- * Jamey Browning
- * Byron Garner
- * Jenny Blackmore
- * Joe Meade
- * Steve Roholt
- * Eric Russell

