



Friends of the Sandia Mountains

Annual Newsletter 2025



*The Thursday trail construction & reroute crew hard at work:
Rock work on the entrance to the Piedra Lisa trail*

October 2025

From the President

by Mike Madden

Right up front, I'd like to acknowledge the new staff that has enhanced our partnership with the Sandia Ranger District (SRD) in the past year. District Ranger Ken Born is someone who listens to us, and genuinely responds to our requests, to the affirmative! This has been a breath of fresh air for FOSM. After going a few years without trails staffing, Canyon Young and Jen Medina-Gray are the best we could hope for!

Readers that pay attention to this newsletter may notice that this year the newsletter is a month late, at the end of October rather than at the end of September. The reason for this is that the Volunteer Appreciation Event hosted by SRD used to be held in mid-October, so in preparation for that event, we would turn in our total volunteer hours mid-September to SRD and issue our newsletter by the end of September. But now we track our own organization's hours, and to line up with the fiscal year of USFS, we go with data ending at our fiscal year end, September 30. This was the second year FOSM tracked its own volunteer hours. Silke Bletzer created the spreadsheets, and the weekly crew leaders and Rav Nicholson (for individual hours) did the data entry. This tool gives us a much better handle on our level of involvement on the district. SRD's [Volunteer Appreciation Event](#) took place in May 2025.

FY2025 officers and board members are listed at the end of this newsletter. FY2026 elections were held at our most recent annual meeting, October 7, 2025. Officers Mike Madden (President) and Silke Bletzer (Secretary) continue to remain in their positions. Kerry Jones was elected VP, replacing Cliff Giles, who had



served for 5 years. Scott Dietrich was elected Treasurer, replacing Jeff Young, who had served for one year. Sam Beard, Susan Gregory, Sim Cook, Byron Garner, Jamey Browning, and Jenny Blackmore all decided to remain on the Board. Laura Leon and Cliff Giles replaced Steve Roholt and Joe Meade.

A special thanks goes to our retiring VP, Cliff Giles, who arranged guest speakers for each of our 7 general meetings for 5 years, and now as a board member, continues to proactively manage our website.

Thanks also go 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 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 fifth year as President, and it continues to be my pleasure to serve you.

SRD Volunteer Appreciation Event 2025



FOSM President Mike Madden accepted the award from Sandia District Ranger Ken Born

About 60 people attended this year's Sandia Ranger District (SRD) Volunteer Appreciation Event, held on May 13, 2025.

Ken Born, Sandia District Ranger, presented FOSM with the SW Region Volunteer and Service Award, in recognition of volunteer contributions in Leadership in fiscal year 2024, to conserve and manage natural and cultural resources for the SW Region of the Forest Service.

Julie Padilla and Jen Medina-Gray presented individual awards to the following:

- Bob Lowder and Byron Garner for leading the Monday Crew – Outstanding Leadership
- Sam Beard for leading the Wednesday Crew – Enduring Service
- Laura Leon for leading the Thursday Crew – Outstanding Leadership
- Joelle Hertel for leading Special Projects – The Visionary
- Lou Romero for leading Youth Programs & Donation Wood – Community Service
- Jamey Browning for GPS, Maps, Kiosk and Trail Signs – The Extraordinaire
- Luis Cuadros for his community engagement and a deep interest in improving his trail building expertise

For the full article and pictures of the event see the FOSM webpage [Forest Service Recognition](#).



Friends We Have Lost

David Weaver (June 6, 1947 – January 9, 2025)

FOSM Life Member David Weaver passed away on January 9, 2025. In addition to his career in academia as an anthropologist, David enjoyed rock climbing, backpacking, leading Sierra Club trips, and delivering educational programs at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center. He and his wife Fran Lusso volunteered in the Forest Service Visitor Center in the Crest House. He fed the birds there every winter for many years, and the site became known as one of the locations where rosy finches can be easily viewed.



In his honor, the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center is renaming the Interp Trail to Weaver Way and worked with FOSM board member Jamey Browning to create the sign.

Don Smiset (January 10, 1943 – March 12, 2025)

Long-time FOSM member Don Smiset passed away on March 12, 2025. Don and his wife Kitsie volunteered in the Crest House Visitor Center for several years. Don would patrol the trails in the Crest area and report problems and talk with visitors on the trails. Also, he would occasionally help at the tramway visitor center.



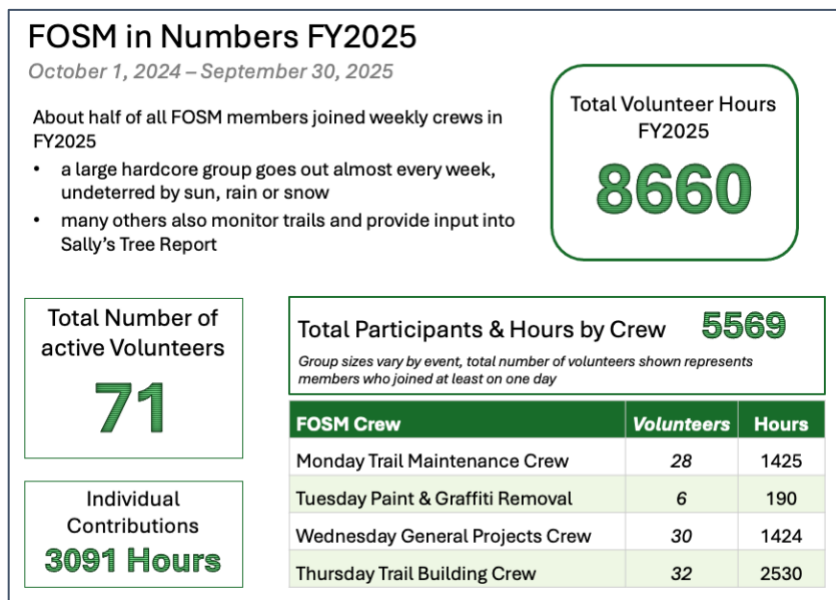
See also the FOSM website [In Memoriam](#).



FOSM in Numbers

by Silke Bletzer

FOSM volunteers had a very busy year again, logging a total of 8,660 hours. The top ten volunteers contributed almost half of those; 30 volunteers contributed more than 100 hours. 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

The monthly membership meetings were again held in the Sandia Ranger station conference room. Topics and speakers for the 2025 meetings were as follows:

- April 1, 2025 – Sandia Ranger District update and priorities, Ken Born
- May 6, 2025 – Trail construction, Jen Medina Gray and Canyon Young
- June 3, 2025 – Trail mapping, Jamey Browning
- July 1, 2025 – Public Lands Interpretive Association, Aryn LaBrake
- August 5, 2025 – Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, Quinn Mendelson
- September 2, 2025 – Sandia Mountains Medallion Trees, Mike Coltrin and John Holmes
- October 7, 2025 – FOSM year-end update and election results, Mike Madden; EarthCaches of the Sandias, Stan Davis

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. One additional topic from the poll was addressed in 2025; fourteen in total over the last four years.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



A section of the new fence near the South Crest trail

A New Fence for the Kiwanis Meadow

by Joelle Hertel

The Talking Talons Youth Leadership (TTYL) group worked with FOSM three weeks in June to build a little over 1000 feet of buck (X's) and pole fence at Kiwanis Meadow. Canyon Young, Forest Service (FS) Trails & Wilderness Program Manager, flagged roughly where he wanted fencing to cut off user trails and protect the fragile ecosystem of the meadow.

Material that was already cut to length was ordered from United Wood Products in Longmont, Colorado. I planned for the bucks to be prefabricated at the FOSM Guard Station using a jig to establish the angle for the bucks and then adding the lower crossbar. Firefighting personnel pitched in building bucks on a Saturday.

Ninety-two bucks were built and then hauled up by FS staff to Kiwanis Meadow Road with about 300 12-ft rails. The 12-ft rails had one end predrilled at the Guard Station. Prefab of the bucks and predrilling of the rails was done to minimize the use of battery tools in the field.

The road into the meadow was too rough for the loaded trailer. Therefore, material was transferred at the gate to the Kiwanis Meadow Road on trucks and brought in and then staged along the worksites around the meadow. Pieces of old fallen down wood fencing were also removed to the transfer station as part of this project. Brushing was done along the road at the meadow, and the brush was scattered onto the user trails crossing the meadow to discourage further use.



Aidan Stewart, crew leader, checking a load of bucks that Manny Chavez will haul to Kiwanis Meadow

For more information and great pictures see also the [Talking Talons Youth Leadership](#) web page.



TTYL/YCC crew and FOSM members who completed the fence around Kiwanis Meadow. Front Row: Joelle Hertel, Kaitlan Velarde (USFS Intern), Jamie Medina-Soto, Eli Iwanczyk, Rebecca Duggar, Lila Eaton and Laura Leon. Back Row: Aidan Stewart (crew leader), Hans Martin, Evan Cooney-Martin, Jerry Carroll, Sam Beard, Don Carnicom, Betsy Galloway, Dan Benton



Maintenance of Doc Long Picnic Area Modern Shelters

by Sam Beard and Joelle Hertel

The two modern picnic shelters in Doc Long Picnic Area were constructed in the early 1990s. Although they were installed on 1-inch-high concrete plinths or raised bases to reduce the amount of moisture at the base of each column, long periods of being exposed to rain and snow have resulted in extensive decay damage to several columns. These large wooden columns were tree trunks that were not pressure treated. An example of the severe decay of one column is shown in the photograph to the right.



A decayed column base in Doc Long Picnic Area Shelter B

Maintenance of the decayed columns with System Three epoxy products required the following steps:

- Removing small loose rotten wood particles from the decayed area.
- Applying Rotfix liquid epoxy to the exposed wooden surface to kill decay-causing fungus and to strengthen the remaining wood.
- Filling the voids resulting from the decay of the wood with epoxy Putty or Max Putty having compressive strengths of 4500 psi and 14,000 psi, respectively.
- Painting the hard putty surface with USFS brown paint after the putty had cured.



White resin and brown hardener are mixed manually

The photographs illustrate these steps in the maintenance process. The System Three epoxy products are originally two components, a resin and a hardener. The liquid products are mixed in a cup with two parts resin and one part hardener. The paste has the consistence of soft butter, and the two parts are mixed and applied with a putty knife to fill cracks. The white and brown putty materials have the consistence of bread dough, and they are mixed manually until the soft putty is one light brown color without streaks of white.

The putty is applied to the rough decayed wooden surface with the hands until the external surface of putty is similar to that of the cylindrical column. Putty was applied to several columns in the Doc Long PA and to three columns in the Balsam Glade Picnic Area. The cream-colored cured epoxy is painted with brown paint to match the other columns



Max Putty has been applied to the decayed void on this column; putty is smoothed with fingers or palm and is painted brown after it has cured



The lower 12-inches of the column between the two short posts has been treated with System Three products to fill the decayed void and painted brown



FOSM CREW UPDATES

Trail Maintenance

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 minor 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.



After evaluating the best way to get this hung-up tree safely on the ground, the crew begins work to remove protruding branches



Rav Nicholson and Byron Garner use a crosscut saw to remove this large fallen tree from 10K North Trail



This huge multi-branched fallen tree was completely blocking Oso Corredor Trail which is barely visible to David's right; it took the crew over an hour to completely remove it

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 118 trees ranging in size from three to twenty inches in diameter. These trees were removed from 23 different trails or trail sections, some of which were visited on multiple occasions.



*Taking a break at the old CCC wall north of Del Agua Overlook
(Left to right) Ken Wilson, David McCreery, Rav Nicholson,
Bob Lowder, Byron Garner*



Trail Tree Report for FY2025

by Sally Lowder

This year we had a carryover of 20 reported downed trees from FY2024. Of these 20 trees, 10 trees were cleared. The trees that were remaining are on trails that no one has appeared to hike this year. I say this, as there have been no tree reports in this area.

For FY2025, there were 229 reported downed trees across the trails or trees with significant hazards. FOSM'S busy beavers cleared 343 trees. The Forest Gnome came out a few times to help, but he never reported his work. He hasn't learned that it is a long way to go to carry tools only to find the work had already been done.



Springtime view of Tecolote Trail just above the trailhead at the old Dry Camp parking lot

There had been questions raised about the trees reported south of I-40. While these trees are in the Sandia Ranger District, they are on trails used primarily by bikers. Our crews do not regularly head that direction to do work as they are in the Manzanita Mountains. When they have, it was found the trees were already cleared. It is a long way to go to not find the work set out to do for the day. The consensus has been that only trees reported to CTR email group that are NORTH of I-40 will be placed on the Trail Tree Report. If they are reported on CTR (from SOUTH of I-40), they will not be placed on the tree report. It would be for your information only if reported to CTR. Please know that anyone can clear trees south on the district, if they like to hike/work in that area.

Thanks to all our FOSM members, new and seasoned, that came out to work and clear trees. Some have come out with established Trail Crews, and some have done the work on their own. When doing so, please be extra careful out there. Also, when doing this type of work, hard hat and gloves are necessary.

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



Trail Construction and Reroutes

by Laura Leon

The Thursday FOSM Trail Crew had a very successful year. We averaged 10 volunteers per week, and we were fortunate to have the direction of Jen and Chris from SRD most weeks. We also worked with the Talking Talons youth and occasionally some visiting FS staff. I love our dedicated crew!

September 2024: The Thursday Crew finished up working reroutes on the Ellis Trail.

October into November 2024: The crew worked on rerouting sections of Double Eagle and Tablazon. Tablazon was a challenge as winter set in and froze the soil.



Double Eagle rerouting through aspens



Tablazon required lots of rock moving



December 2024: We managed a few fixes on Piedra Lisa before the holidays and the cold weather settled in. Rocks were moved and trail reinforced.

February 2025: Work on the east side of the mountains included rock work and replacing signage on sections of Chalk Dust in Placitas and rock work on the entrance to the Piedra Lisa trail.





March through May 2025: Our biggest project this year was to reroute five sections of the North Faulty Trail. We started with the reroute closest to the parking area and then moved on to the farthest reroute and worked our way back.



June into July 2025: The crew took a break from work on North Faulty and spent one week rerouting eroded sections of Kiwanis Meadow with Talking Talons and then started work on the Wagon extension. Talking Talons also helped out one week on Wagon trail. Wagon trail took five weeks to complete with about 2,380 feet of rerouted/constructed trail.



Lots of oak to work through!



July into August 2025: The crew was back on North Faulty finishing the reroutes there. In total, we spent 21 weeks on the five reroutes: lots of hiking, steep slopes and digging and always just a bit more to rework! For a map of the reroutes, see also [North Faulty Improvements](#).



August into September 2025: Work began on Old Faulty reroutes and will continue into October 2025.



Part of the crew started work on the last reroute (Jim, Dan, Claudia, Roland & Byron)



Eric widening the slope on the previous week's work



Mike and Kerry reworking a couple of curves



Lots of wet, sticky clay



The afternoon finish-uppers moving a few more rocks and a lot more soil



Paint Crew Projects

by Sam Beard

The paint crew members completed the following projects at the following locations in FY2025:

- Wooden restroom at end of large Crest parking lot
- Cibola NF boundary sign on the Crest Highway
- Doc Long picnic area restrooms
- Crest parking lot shelter
- Juan Tabo picnic area restroom door
- Touch-up painted Doc Long modern shelters
- Large Cibola National Forest boundary sign on FR-55 in Mountainair Ranger District
- Stripes in several parking lots
- Steel kiosk in front of ranger station
- Brown Cabot Australian Timber Oil on 8000-foot vegetation sign on Crest Highway
- Restored Embudito Trail sign at mouth of Embudito Canyon



Painting the large shelter at Doc Long Picnic Area



Painting the bathrooms



... the large Cibola NF sign



... and parking lot stripes

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.

The paint crew removed graffiti tags at the following locations:

- Juan Tabo CCC cabin (stone walls and no roof) – Sept. 24, Nov. 4
- Otero Canyon Trailhead – Oct. 15, Dec. 30, Jan. 1
- Juan Tabo CCC picnic shelter – Nov. 20, Feb. 22, April 1, June 2
- Large culvert at curve in Challenge Trail – Nov. 26
- Painted over tags on Crest Highway guard rails – Dec. 1, Feb. 7, April 15



- Boulders east of Copper Trailhead – Mar. 5
- Lower Doc Long Restroom – April 15
- Ellis Trailhead parking lot – April 15
- Crest parking lot – April 15
- Closed Dry Camp restroom – May 20
- Boulders on La Luz Trail – June 7
- Crest parking lot and overlook – May 20, June 13
- Kiwanis Cabin – July 22



*Graffiti Removal - Before & After - at the Kiwanis Cabin
(Rick Buss, Pauline Ho, Michael Arndt)*

Hazard Trees 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. 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 2025.

FOSM sawyers felled the following hazard trees selected by USFS personnel, including number of felled trees and maximum diameters:

- Sept. 25 – Between Cienega Road and Wagon Trail, 10 trees, 15 inches
- Oct. 30 – Capulin Snow Play Area, 12 trees, 23 inches
- Nov. 13 – Across street from Ranger District storage yard, 3 trees, 12 inches
- March 19 – Doc Long and Cienega Picnic Areas, 5 trees, 25 inches
- April 16 – Balsam Glade Picnic Area, 5 trees, 22 inches
- April 30 -- Capulin Spring Bird Log, 1 tree, 15 inches
- May 21 – Capulin Snow Play Area, 3 trees, 13 inches
- June 25 – Pine Flat Picnic Area, 1 tree, 18 inches



- July 2 – Tree Spring Trailhead, 5 trees, 12 inches
- July 23 – Rocky Point Trail, 25 trees, 20 inches
- July 30 – Gravel Pit Trail, 19 trees, 28 inches
- Aug. 6 – Kiwanis Meadow Road gate, 12 trees, 24 inches
- Aug. 20 – Kiwanis Meadow Road gate, 8 trees, 12 inches
- Sept. 24 – Upper S. Crest Trail, trail to K. Cabin, and K. Cabin Road, 28 trees, 24 inches



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

FOSM volunteers processed wood (bucked, split, and hauled) to donate to the Mountain Christian Church at the following locations:

- Hazmat Building – Dec. 4
- Area across street from SRD storage yard – Nov. 13, Dec. 4
- Doc Long Picnic Area – Mar. 19, April 9
- Cienega Canyon Picnic Area – Mar. 19, Mar. 26, April 2
- Top gate on Cienega Canyon Picnic Area Road – April 2, April 9
- Capulin Spring Picnic Area – April 30
- Balsam Glade Picnic Area – April 30
- Capulin Snow Play Area – May 21, May 28
- Kiwanis Meadow Road gate – June 18, June 25, Aug. 20, Sept. 3
- Pine Flat Picnic Area – June 25, July 2
- Tree Spring Trailhead – July 2
- Ellis Trailhead – July 9



Picnic Area Improvement Projects

by Joelle Hertel

Two benches at **Balsam Glade Picnic Area** had several broken slats on the sitting area and back supports. Slats were provided by the Forest Service to match original materials. The new slats were cut to lengths, drilled to match holes in the steel supports and attached with carriage bolts, all to match original construction.



Julie Padilla requested repair on a picnic table damaged by vandals located at the gate to **Kiwanis Meadow Road**. In lieu of trying to perform major repair work in the field, Manny Chavez (SRD Maintenance Supervisor) and I swapped tables, hauling a complete table which was located near his shop at the ranger station and returning with the damaged table from the Crest. This allowed repairs to be done at the ranger station, completed by Manny and Sam.

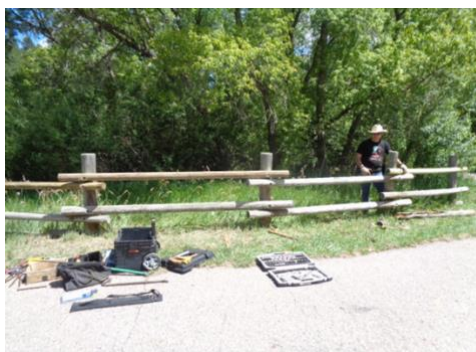


The new door with the old door on the table in the background

The men's restroom door at the lower **Juan Tabo Picnic Area** restroom was badly deteriorated. Archeologist Sandra Coombs met me in the field to discuss a possible replacement. Juan Tabo is a historic site, and any work has to match original historic work to meet SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) requirements. The door was removed and all hardware preserved. The door was taken to the shop to serve as a pattern for the replacement. Replacement wood had to be ripped and beveled to match original width and style of the boards from the 1930s.



After Sam Beard, Dan Benton, and Joelle Hertel completed the restoration in the shop, the door was reinstalled at Juan Tabo into a rebuilt jamb and painted.



Additional fence repairs were made on various dates in the lower picnic areas:

- Doc Long PA – Replaced three rotten posts and one broken rail
- Sulphur Canyon PA – Repaired split post with piece of 2X4 lumber and screws
- Cienega Canyon PA – Replaced five rotten posts and eight rails



Other Projects

by Sam Beard

A number of additional projects were completed throughout the year, including:

- On July 7, Joelle Hertel and Sam Beard repaired the large steel kiosk in front of the Ranger Station by installing several aluminum strips over the plastic strips to better secure the large black plastic letters that are used to announce events on the Sandia Ranger District. The steel kiosk frame had been painted earlier with gray paint.



- On July 16, Jerry Carroll removed a very large Engelmann spruce from South Crest Trail between Kiwanis Meadow and the upper tram terminal. On August 13, he removed a large double trunk fir tree from the upper tram terminal nature trail.
- On July 26, volunteers replaced a rotten 32-inch-tall decorative post on Shelter A in Doc Long Picnic Area. The short posts are approximately 12 inches in diameter, and two posts are located at each corner of Shelters A and B at the Doc Long shelters and at the Balsam Glade PA shelter.



Post repair, before...



... and after

- In August, redwood Penofin was applied to the redwood background of the 8000-foot vegetation sign below Tree Spring Trailhead to make the turquoise and white text of the sign more noticeable. Penofin is a penetrating oil finish designed to be applied to wood. A few years ago, the plywood back of the sign was painted with brown paint, and the text letters were painted.
- On October 2, 2024, volunteers cut brush at the intersection of Cienega Road and Crest Highway to improve driver sight distance for safe passage through the intersection. The crew used two FOSM power brush cutters and chain saws. They also cut brush around the large Cienega Canyon/Sulphur Canyon Picnic Areas sign and along the road to Sulphur PA.
- On October 15 volunteers picked up trash and cut brush along the FOSM Adopt-A-Highway mile from MM-4 to MM-5 of the Crest Highway below Tree Spring Trailhead. On October 22 the volunteers returned to complete cutting brush along the guard rail. The brush was so tall that it was leaning over the guard rail and restricting driver visibility at the curves.



- On October 16, a chainsaw crew bucked several down trees that were blocking portions of the Sandia Nordic Ski Club trail system on Sandia Mountain between Ellis Trailhead and 10K South Trailhead.
- On October 23, volunteers limbed and bucked two dozen large trees felled recently by sawyers being certified by USFS personnel near the first switchback in the Crest Highway below Ellis Trailhead. They focused on removing trees and limbs from three segments of trails groomed by the Sandia Nordic Ski Club for cross country skiing.
- After a dog's leg went through a gap between two boards on the bridge near the middle restroom in Cienega PA, Julie Padilla, SRD Recreation Staff Officer, requested that FOSM volunteers reduce the gap widths between the boards. On September 5, Tracy and Bryan Pitts, Cienega PA hosts, and Sam Beard unscrewed the middle 16 boards and replaced the boards with smaller gaps.



- On September 30, Chuck Logan and Sam Beard removed several thick piles of rock, soil, and forest duff that had been washed onto the Cienega Nature Trail during a recent heavy rainstorm. Shortly after the work was completed, a group of about a dozen visitors with children in wheelchairs walked on the trail.

Discovery of Historic CCC Fence

by Sam Beard

The site of a CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) swinging fence across a creek was found adjacent to the large Cibola National Forest boundary sign on the Crest Highway. The two 4-foot-high stone columns have a large eye bolt in the top of each column, and part of the cable that would have supported the wooden fence between the columns was still there. The swinging fence was wood, and during a high flow rate, the fence section would swing up due to the water flow. After the water flow rate had decreased, the fence would drop back down and serve to prevent livestock from going past the fence. Two stone columns like these are also located in Cienega Canyon Picnic Area. Sandra Coombs, SRD archeologist, documented the locations of the two swinging fences.



YOUTH OUTREACH

Leadership Development Training - Talking Talons

by Lou Romero

This is the third season that the TTYL-YCC (Talking Talons Youth Leadership/Youth Conservation Corps) management has asked me to provide this training to its crew leaders who will supervise a crew of 6 – 8 young women and men prior to working on a variety of on-the-ground projects with four partner organizations. The purpose of the training is to prepare the Crew Leaders to orient and successfully lead the crew in a productive and safe manner. They will work in a variety of field projects with adult leaders who will have different working styles. The leadership workshop sets the stage for orientation and work culture the crew will engage in. The two Crew Leaders this season were Jared Moyers and Aidan Stewart.

The TTYL youths worked with FOSM (Friends of the Sandia Mountains) volunteers on the following projects:

- Major Project — Kiwanis Meadow buck and pole fence construction
- Rocky Point Trail, felling trees
- Gravel Pit Trail felling trees
- Kiwanis Meadow Road work
- Work at Kiwanis Meadow Road gate
- Processing wood at Kiwanis Meadow Road gate
- Upper South Crest Trail and Trail to Kiwanis Cabin

The training workshop included three broad themes: Teamwork, Leadership, and Work Ethics, including Key Leadership Principles and the training topics:

- Define Leadership, distinguish from Management
- Growth Curve of teams
- Team Compass/Map (team mission; vision; goals; skills/talents)
- Earning/Building Trust and Credibility
- Individual Work/Social Styles
- Dealing with Conflict
- Teamwork Assessment Scale
- Elements of a Healthy Work Environment; Productive, Respectful, Compassionate, Fun

The following 12 attributes were introduced as discussion points to help the Crew Leaders engage crew members in adopting self-awareness concepts into their own developmental goals:

1. **About Self Awareness:** Identify your core values and gain clarity about your intentions, level of commitment, courage, comfort, fear, motivations, patience, openness, understanding, tolerance, versatility and fulfillment
2. **About Vulnerability:** Know your vulnerabilities, seek and allow support from others, let your intentions and purpose be transparent, disclosure about your vulnerabilities builds trust
3. **About Instinct:** Listen to and trust your intuition and imagination as a deep source of knowing, even if initially the insight doesn't seem objective



4. **About Creativity:** Search creative solutions to problems; pause and consider the larger purpose and surrounding context. Resist obvious, easy answers already tried; explore the “edges” of causes and potential fixes
5. **About Commitment:** Rely on the expanding nature and power of a commitment once made...notice that unforeseen ideas, resources, and options surface and become available once you definitely commit to begin
6. **About Adversity:** When faced with complex adversity consider short and long -term consequences. Chart a course, take action, remain optimistic and flexible to adjust if necessary, avoid dwelling on negative speculations
7. **About Ego:** Avoid ego attachment to outcomes, allow creativity and interdependence with others to help shape results you are striving for
8. **About Recognition:** Generously give earned credit to others; avoid seeking credit; graciously accept earned credit offered to you
9. **About Fixing Others:** We do not “fix” anybody. We can manage expectations and positively influence by BEING the change we wish to see
10. **About Self-Development:** Maintain an attitude of continuous learning and personal growth all of your life; resist a sense of “having arrived”
11. **About Growing as a Leader:** Adopt a meaningful, fulfilling, personal leadership vision and philosophy that defines and guides you to be an authentic leader in whatever position or role you hold
12. **About Who We Become:** Let your actions (your doing) flow from and align with your being, who you really are, the essence of your character

We concluded the workshop with an in-depth discussion of a definition of leadership: “Leadership” means that as a leader, my intentions, choices, and commitments are aimed at helping those I lead have Purpose, Meaning, Fulfillment and Personal growth. Realizing these commitments rewards me with the same results and ultimately determines my leadership identity and credibility.

At the end of the work season, we meet again to review the experience with each of the four partner organizations in an After Action Debrief. What were the different projects, what key skills were learned, what leadership and working styles were observed, and overall feedback from the crew about their collective experience. Finally, we discussed how this season’s experience influence Jared’s and Aidan’s personal development goals.

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SPECIAL PROJECTS

Adopt-A-Highway Project

by Mike Madden and Steve Roholt

In October 2024, FOSM volunteers went up twice to perform the semi-annual Crest Road Adopt-A-Highway cleanup for mile 4-5. Work included removal of densely overgrown brush using pole saw, chainsaws and loppers.

On Tuesday May 13, 2025, FOSM volunteers performed trash pickup and brushing along this section. The goal of brushing was to improve visibility and line of sight, making the guardrail on the downhill side completely visible to all traffic and creating full clearance of the highway shoulders.

This program is done in conjunction with the NM Department of Transportation. For more information and pictures see also [Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup](#).

Adopt-A-Drop Program

by Dan Benton

Adopt-A-Drop program is the name given to the USFS program for volunteers to adopt wildlife drinkers. Forest Service Wildlife biologists and technicians have overseen this program for years, but now they have requested that FOSM take over the program. The USFS will provide guidance only.

Wildlife drinkers are scattered throughout the Manzanita and Sandia mountains, from the Piedra Lisa North trailhead near Placitas in the north to David Canyon in the far south. There are twenty drinkers, fourteen of which are presently functional. They range from commercial steel and fiberglass units to historic concrete cattle troughs and fountains, to enhanced natural springs, and to one lined pond. Surface water is limited in the Sandias and Manzanitas, especially in late summer, so these drinkers provide a valuable resource for wildlife stressed by drought and human encroachment. Volunteers are expected to make at least two site visits per year to their adopted drinker and report their findings to the USFS Wildlife Biologist on the prescribed form. Volunteer actions include such things as cleaning debris from troughs, clearing water lines, and adjusting float valves.

FOSM also provides advice and technical assistance to Bernalillo County Opens Space, which operates four wildlife drinkers on lands adjacent to the Ranger District.

Volunteers participating in the program in the past year were Robert and Stephanie Long, Jean Payne, Joelle Hertel, John Simuli, Don Carnicom, Lou Romero, Rene Archer, Sam Beard, Ken Nicholson, Susan Gregory, Betsy Galloway, and Dan Benton.

Brushing of Trails

by Steve Roholt

Brushing of selected trails, with guidance from USFS and Luis Cuadros, has become a focused effort to improve trails for hikers and bikers. The trails we concentrated on this year included Challenge, Sulphur Canyon, and the official Forest Service trails in the Placitas area. The main objective was to improve line of sight for various trail users and enhance public safety.



Adopt-A-Trail Program

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 about half of hours reported. Today we have four active AAT groups that reported 1220.75 total hours; following are their statistics for this fiscal year.

Groups reporting hours this year:

- New Mexico Cross Country Ski Club (numerous cross- country ski trails in the Sandia Crest area) with 399 hours (largely due to the relentless efforts of Steve Roholt),
- Friends of the Sandia Mountains (Tecolote Trail and Cienega Nature Trail) with 143 hours,
- Friends of 10K South (i.e., Rav and Ken Nicholson, 10K South from its beginning through the ski area) with 66.75 hours, and
- The Sandia Nordic Ski Club (Nordic Ski trails) with 612 hours.

SIGNAGE AND MAPPING PROJECTS

Historic Crest Byway Sign Reinstalled

by Joelle Hertel

I started monitoring of work at the historic sign in April of 2024 and concluded with the reinstall of the sign in July of 2025. The historic sign at the entrance to the Crest highway was in the footprint of the roadwork to build the new SR 14 roundabout, still under construction.

Representatives from FOSM had an initial meeting onsite

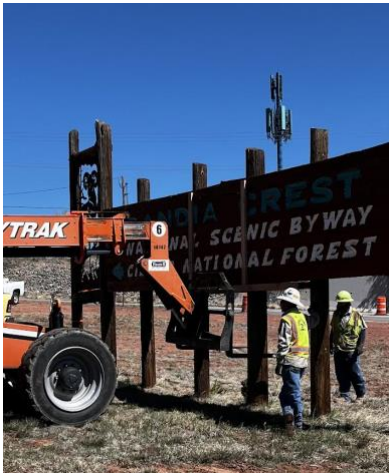
with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the contractor regarding preservation of the sign.

FOSM assumed the responsibility for oversight of sign removal, protection, and ultimately for reinstall of the sign. The signposts were cut off, the sign was picked up with a forklift for storage, and the post stubs in the ground pulled out and used for dunnage for the stored sign.



Weekly calls to DOT and many site visits were made to go over scheduling, protection, and most importantly, the method for reinstalling the sign in the location shown on the contract drawings. A few different methods were proposed and sketches submitted. DOT shared submittals with me, was interested in input, and willing to keep FOSM (me) happy within the restraints of the contract specs and drawings. The final accepted method involved splicing the post stubs back to the signposts with a metal wrap and through bolts while the sign was still on the ground. The entire unit was picked up and placed in oversized postholes and then holes were filled with 3000 psi concrete.

Paint to restore one face of the sign is still necessary (to be done later by FOSM), but the work involving the contractor is complete. The pictures show the removal in April of 2024, the splice detail of metal wrap and through bolts, and then the final reinstall into the oversize postholes in July of 2025.



Sandias Trail Sign Improvement Program by Jamey Browning

Over the past two years 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.

In total FOSM has provide some 21 new signs for Sandia Trail junctions. Some of the most recent signs are shown on the right and below.



A few of the new Forest Service signs:

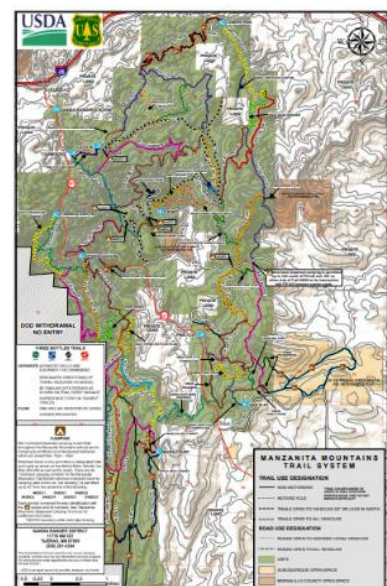


Some of the trail signs at the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center were many years old and were deteriorating so I made a few new signs for them as well:



Maps for the SRD Front Desk

FOSM received a request to print maps of the Manzanitas Trail System for the SRD front desk to hand out. As an experiment we printed them on legal size paper which matches the map's aspect ratio. FOSM printed 50 copies on cardstock and provided them to the SRD front desk. This has worked out very well and the maps are more readable than when printed on letter-size paper. FOSM will print additional copies as needed.





CCC Cabin Brass Plaque

The brass plaque on the front of the Kiwanis Cabin was stolen this summer. There was also one on the inside above the fireplace which was stolen long ago. We believe that the two plaques were identical. These plaques were installed in the 1990s as part of a restoration effort at the site. I found an old photo and was able to reproduce the design by tracing it using CNC software. A photo of the original plaque is shown to the left (top). The recreated artwork is shown below. FOSM has offered to work with the Forest Service to get the plaques remade and replaced on the cabin. We are in the process of getting a quote to determine the cost.



Plant Identification

by Joelle Hertel

Signs at the Tijeras Museum marking names and locations of plants on the museum grounds had badly deteriorated. Archeologist Sandra Coombs requested replacement. FOSM provided funds, and I ordered signs predrilled to match steel inserts. The steel stands, about 18 in high, predrilled, were bent at an angle to make viewing easier. Installation of the 20 signs was completed by myself, Dan Benton and Betsy Galloway.



OpenStreetMap Mapping of the Sandias and Manzanitas

by Jamey Browning

Two years ago, I worked on updating the OpenStreetMap database for the Sandia Mountains. Last year I updated the database for the Manzanitas which completed the updates for all trails within and surrounding the Sandia Ranger District. This data is used as the trail data source by hiking/biking apps such as AllTrails and Gaia GPS

This year my focus was on improving the centerline data for trails in the Sandias. To support this, I bought a mapping grade GPS receiver. Cibola NF approved the use of the model I proposed. Mapping grade GPS receivers with one to two meters in accuracy were once thousands of dollars but have dropped into the \$500 range. FOSM also bought two more mapping grade receivers and provided them to Canyon and Jen, our Trails & Wilderness Program Manager and Trails Foreman.

Using these receivers we have been systematically collecting trail centerline data for many trails in the Sandias. This data will be used to update the national trails database and will be used for map making in the future. This spring I collected the centerline data for all foothills trails between the Tram and I40. This summer I collected the data for all the trails between the Crest and the Tram.

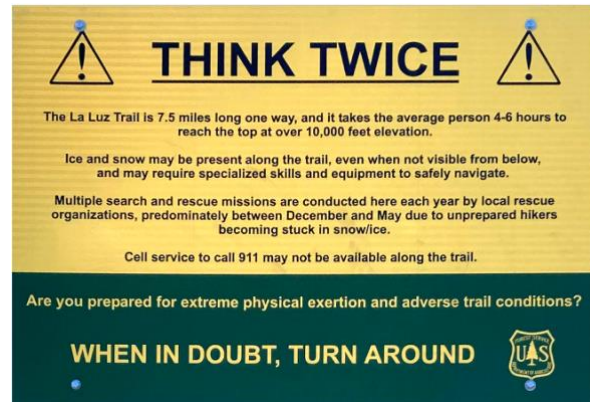


Sandia Hiking Safety Campaign

by Jamey Browning

- A Collaboration with Sandia Peak Tramway, Cibola National Forest, Cibola Search & Rescue, and Area Search & Rescue Organizations -

In 2023, Cibola Search & Rescue (S&R) gave a presentation at our August membership meeting. Afterwards, I spoke with the folks at Cibola who expressed an interest in improving hiking safety in the Sandia and in particular for the La Luz trail. Since 2012 there have been some 91 search and rescue missions in the Sandias. These rescue missions can be very dangerous, and Cibola S&R wanted to see if the number could be reduced. We studied the incident dates, locations, and types to develop an understanding of the causes behind the missions.



In 2024, FOSM, Cibola S&R and SRD began working on materials for the campaign. To help disseminate the information, FOSM created a [La Luz Trail webpage](#). Here you can find much of this material including detailed safety information on both summer and winter hiking on La Luz.

Last winter, Canyon Young began hiking La Luz regularly and creating reports on the trail conditions. The Sandia Peak Tramway has also been providing regular safety bulletins on their Facebook as well as on their website. He also worked to create a new SRD safety sign for the start of La Luz. The new sign was installed in late September and is located at the lower La Luz trailhead.

In 2025, the marketing folks at Sandia Peak Tramway kindly offered their services to help further the safety campaign.

In late October the State Police, who coordinates all S&R activities in New Mexico, and the New Mexico Search and Rescue Council plan to announce a press release entitled **Sandia Smart: New Safety Campaign Targets La Luz Trail's Dangerous Winter Conditions**. This will help to get the hiking safety information out to many interested parties.

FOSM will be adding information in the press release to our website once it becomes available.

Scenic Byway Signs along Crest Highway

by Don Carnicom

Last year we replaced five Scenic Byway Signs. The status of all 40 signs was reviewed resulting in five diminished signs being replaced with new aluminum backed signs. In the future, the remaining plywood backed signs will be replaced with the newer aluminum backed signs which provide better visibility and longevity.

The QR symbols posted at each fee station were replaced as some had gone missing. The QR symbol enables the visitors to download the complete Scenic Byway booklet which explains each point of interest along the highway. The booklet is now out of print and unavailable.



Oak Flat Recreation Site Sign

by Sam Beard

In July, Don Carnicom and Sam Beard installed a new aluminum sign on Oak Flat Road that states that a recreation site is located one-quarter mile ahead. Julie Padilla, Recreation Staff Officer, had purchased the sign to replace the badly faded old wooden sign.

Interpretive Education Signs

by Don Carnicom

The interpretive Education signs, primarily located in the Crest Highway picnic areas and in the Crest/Tram area, will now become the responsibility of Jamey Browning. Jamey's extensive background with graphics and in producing actual signs will be extremely helpful. Replacement of damaged and degraded signs resulting from weather, UV, and graffiti is an ongoing activity. There are well over 150 signs that fall into this category.

In addition, Jamey has in his possession the extensive Sandia Ranger District Sign Inventory which was created in about 2010 over a period of 2-3 years and covers all signs (excluding trail signs) existing on the entire District. This total is likely in the 300-400 range. This inventory was produced at the request of the district at that time.

Sandia Ranger District Interpretive Signage

by Jamey Browning

Don Carnicom chaired a project in 2010-2011 to inventory every USFS sign in the Sandia Ranger District. The work resulted in 2,248 files in 201 folders with about 9 gigabytes of data.

While reviewing this data, I learned that FOSM has the original artwork files for many of the interpretive signs in the Sandias. FOSM monitors and replaces many of the interpretive signs in the Sandias as they deteriorate with age or are damaged by falling trees or vandals.

I have been planning to replace some deteriorated signs; however, it has been a challenge because it was difficult to locate the original design files and order specifications. After learning of the work which Don has done, I reviewed the original data files and reorganized them to facilitate the on-going management and replacement of interpretive signs. This project took about three weeks working part time.

Additionally, I located and scanned many of the original purchase orders for the signs. This makes reordering the signs far easier as the PO's contain valuable information such as the vendor, sign size, materials, and finish. In total there are some 481 files which adds up to about 7 gigabytes of data.

Now that we have this information readily available, we will be reprinting and replacing a half dozen of the interpretive signs in the Crest area in the coming year. FOSM is also working with the Sandia Peak Tramway to add some new interpretive signs and maps in the deck area to help guide tourists.



Sandia Ranger District (SRD) Workshop Repairs

The following updates were made to the SRD Workshop by FOSM volunteers.

Workshop Lights

by Joelle Hertel

The workshop in the maintenance building at the ranger station has had inadequate lighting for years. The only source of light was daylight when the garage door was open. With approval of the Forest Service I purchased, with FOSM funds, LED overhead hanging light fixtures that did not require direct wiring.

SRD Workshop Tool Repair Project

by Jamey Browning

Earlier this year I had observed some safety issues with the table saw and drill press in the SRD workshop. The table saw was missing the anti-kickback pawls and the blade safety guard. These are two very important safety features for folks who are fond of their fingers and would like to keep them.

The drill press had three broken parts. The worktable rotation lock was not working. Also, the worktable height adjustment feature wasn't working properly, and it would not lock into place. Without these features, a workpiece can get caught in a drill and the one-horse motor can swing a workpiece around potentially striking and injuring the operator.

These tools are all obsolete, so it was a challenge to track down parts as there are no cross-references to other suppliers. I found the anti-kickback pawl easily. It took about two weeks to find a Chinese company which claimed to have a blade guard for the machine. I bought and tried to install both parts. However, the mounting slot was undersized a few thousandths and they would not fit. These are home grade tools



which can sometimes have poorly fitting parts. It may be that these safety features were never installed because they didn't fit. Using a fine metal working file, I adjusted the slot width and finished the table saw repair. FOSM also bought a new high-end carbide blade for the saw.

The drill press table rotation joint is supposed to be a clean dry joint. After disassembling it I observed that someone had generously lubricated it. Because of this the friction brake was not functional. (Lube = No friction). I cleaned the joint and reassembled the table which fixed the rotation issue.

I could not find a replacement for the set screw which locks the table height in place. The handle was broken and lost. So, I bought a similar one, removed the holding pin and swapped the new handle into the original set screw. The table can now be locked in place.

The photo below shows the new handle mounted onto the original set screw. It is not easy to see in the photo, but the threads are different for the two set screws so I could not directly use the new part. I installed a new pin and peened it into place.



Drill Press Set Screw and Handle

Finally, there is a crack in the metal ring which holds a rack bar gear in place which is used to raise and lower the table. I have not been successful in locating a new one. So, this winter when things slow down a bit, we will disassemble the drill press and weld the crack. That should fix this part. For the time being it is jury rigged using a C-Clamp to hold the ring in place. It's a bit ugly but this gives the tool full functionality.



The USFS HAZMAT Building: A New Hanging Rack for Saws

by Joelle Hertel



In addition to updates to the SRD workshop, a hanging rack for saws was added to the USFS HAZMAT building:

The white fireproof building across from the FOSM Guard Station was disorganized, had accumulated gas cans, and did not have a good way to store FS chain saws. FOSM stores materials in this fireproof shed also. A rack was needed but as this is a fireproof building attaching a rack to the structure is problematic. I used a clip which can be fastened to the structure without drilling. A custom metal angle iron was designed with welded hooks for the saws. The angle rack was slipped in above the conduit and attached at each end to the building structure with the special clip. Saws can be hung, bar down, over drip trays provided by FOSM.



21st Sandia Snowshoe Classic 2025

by Mike Madden, Race Director

Once again, we were able to run a successful event on January 18, 2025.

It was so cold and windy, the bananas and oranges froze!

We had enthusiastic participation from racers:

- we reached our 175 online registration limit!
- we had more women than men! (54% female, 46% male)
- we had 155 check-in at the event! (20 no-shows is not bad for a 0 degree wind chill day)
- ages ranged from 14 to 79
- 10 racers came from out-of-state! (5 CO, 1 AZ, 1 CA, 1 WI, 1 NJ, 1 MD)
- winning time: 25:19
- last finisher: 1:34:23
- 150 finished, no injuries

Volunteer participation was equally enthusiastic:

- we had 24 FOSM folk, 10 Cottonwood Classical Prep students & 2 faculty, 30 Cibola Search & Rescue (SAR), 3 Bernalillo County Sheriff SAR, and 1 Bernalillo County EMT unit.
- new this year - 3 Bernalillo County Sheriff SAR swept the course on snowshoes!

New this year: Jamey Browning fabricated 20 wooden medals for the winners... and all volunteers received swag!

I can't thank my Race Committee enough: Silke Bletzer, Jeff Huser, Jamey Browning, and Jeff Young. For more information and many great pictures see the webpage [2025 Sandia Snowshoe Classic](#).

Till next year! 😊



Setting up for the event - sunny, but cold!



ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

FOSM Chainsaw & Crosscut Sawyers

by Sally Lowder

FOSM is blessed with a total of 21 certified sawyers. There are 16 chainsaw sawyers and 5 crosscut sawyers. Certifications are done every 3 years for both types of saws. The medical part of the certification is done every 2 years for First Aid and CPR/AED and yearly for Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP). In the past, FOSM was able to have one instructor for the medical program and was able to have one or two classes available to get the certifications done. This worked very well with the classes held in the conference room of the Sandia Ranger Station. Currently, there is no available instructor for the medical classes; therefore, each of the sawyers is arranging for their classes through the American Red Cross or other available on-line classes. It takes approximately 3-4 hours to complete all medical certification work.

There are five crosscut-only sawyers certified at the B bucking level with certifications good for three years. All are current with their medical certifications. Crosscut sawyers are now only certified for "bucking". This is done due to safety concerns with the amount of time it takes to fell a tree safely. Some of our B crosscut sawyers have had training in felling and were B fallers in the past. The Forest Service removed the training for felling and the certification for felling. There are nine crosscut sawyers with chainsaw certifications. Eight of these sawyers are fully medically certified as of 10/9/ 2025.

Chainsaw certification requires training for both bucking and felling, and the certification is good for three years. They also must be medically certified for full certification. Currently there are 9 fully certified buckers and fallers. There is one A buckler only. There are three A buckers/fellers. There is one B buckler only. There are two B buckers with A felling requirements. There is also one B buckler/A faller with no current medical certification. It is the choice of the sawyer as to what type/level of certification they wish to pursue. The final level of certification is based on testing in the field of your ability to buck and to fell a tree. The instructor has the final say in your final level of A or B. If there is time and an instructor available later, that sawyer can ask for another chance to "recertify" at a higher level if they wish. It takes a lot of practice to gain the B level certification.

Of interest is that two of our certified sawyers are with one of the local East Mountain Fire Departments and are First Responders. A big thank you goes out to Lorna Morrow and Jerry Carroll for their dedication to this tough work

Treasurer's Report

by Jeff Young

- **Membership** - We now have 159 memberships, including 69 Life members. We welcomed 23 new members this fiscal year. The categories for being a FOSM member are Individual (\$15), Family (\$20), Sustaining (\$30), Sponsor (\$50) Benefactor (\$100), & LIFE (\$250).
- **Audits** - In November 2024, Joelle Hertel completed an audit of the FOSM financial records. She reported the records to be accurate and complete.
- **Financial Report** - We began FY2025 on October 1, 2024, with a checking account balance of \$26,880.53, and on September 30, 2025, the balance was \$7,263.94. We also have two CDs which total \$60,004.26 and money markets of \$94,020.32. The largest expense was \$26,365.89



for projects. The largest revenue was from fundraising including snowshoe race and Field Guide revenues of \$7,662.44.

- **Field Guide to the Sandia Mountains** - UNM Press reports that total sales to date are approximately 14,277 copies. They are currently selling about 250 copies each year.
- **Expenditures in Support of the Sandia Ranger District** - Total expenditures through September 2025 were \$32,708.39, the largest being projects for \$26,365.89 including signage, fuel, equipment, fencing, painting, and graffiti removal supplies.

Revision of FOSM Bylaws & Policies

by Silke Bletzer

At the February board meeting an update to the FOSM Bylaws & Policies was decided: The policies had been updated as needed over the years, but not recently (last on Sept. 11, 2019). The bylaws had not been changed since the original incorporation of the New Mexico Friends of the Forest in 1997.

A core team reviewed the bylaws from several other non-profits and revised the FOSM bylaws. The policies were streamlined and reworded where needed, new policies were added for FOSM sawyer requirements, FOSM documentation, and the Sam Beard award.

After a review period, the revised bylaws and policies were approved by the board at a special session of the board in August.

Per FOSM bylaws, Mike Madden distributed the new bylaws (and policies) to the full membership for review August 9, 2025. A majority of the members present at the October 7th annual membership meeting approved the new bylaws.

The latest documents can be viewed on the FOSM website under [Our History](#).

FOSM Website, a Great Source of Information

by Cliff Giles

The FOSM website kept the membership informed and provided a portal for non-members to learn about our organization as well as the Sandia Mountains throughout the year. Incremental changes were made to the site during the year including:

- Announcing and documenting 2025 membership meetings.
- Documenting the 2025 Snowshoe Classic.
- Documenting 2025 Adopt-a-Highway projects.
- Announcing FY2026 election results including officer and board member photos.
- Publishing Forest Service and other announcements of interest to members.
- Adding a new page entitled "About the Sandias" that provides historical information about the mountains, links to the Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway, and descriptions of medallion trees and aircraft crashes in the Sandias.
- Adding new pages providing access to project reports and photographs since 2018. The files are stored on SharePoint under our Microsoft 365 account.



Forty-nine members renewed their memberships, 23 new members joined, and 18 people made donations using website forms in FY2025. Numerous requests for information were answered by FOSM and Forest Service members.

The website averaged about 2,300 visits and almost 4,000 page views each month. About a third of these visits resulted from search engines, which indicates that many people besides FOSM members use our site. The Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway website steered over 300 visitors to our site during a 30-day period encompassing the annual International Balloon Fiesta. Almost 600 visits each to the Hiking and La Luz Trail webpages occurred during this period providing important hiking safety information and a significant public service.

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 233 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 199 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 posted on this system do not require moderator approval.



Publication of the FY2025 Newsletter

Sam Beard, Editor

A huge “Thank You” to the following people who contributed to the publication of the FY2025 Friends of the Sandia Mountains Annual Newsletter: Silke Bletzer for 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 FY2025

About 70 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. The volunteers who worked on FOSM projects in FY2025 were:

Andy Ruddle, Anne Hickman, Bart Vander Plas, Bet Gendron, Betsy Galloway, Bill Perkins, Bill Savage, Bob Lowder, Bruce Hansche, Byron Garner, Chuck Logan, Cia Reil, Claudia Bergsohn, Cleve Sharp, Cliff Giles, Courtnee Bennett, Dan Benton, Dan Burwinkle, Dave Gabel, David Galbraith, David McCreery, Dennis Crowther, Don Carnicom, Eric Messerschmidt, Eric Russell, Gordon Eatman, Heather Farrell, Jamey Browning, Jay Wulf, Jeff Huser, Jean Payne, Jeff Young, Jerry Carroll, Jim Houle, Joe Meade, Joelle Hertel, John Braly, John Cooper, John McNett, John Quinley, John Simuli, Karen Greif, Ken Nicholson, Ken Wilson, Kerry Jones, Larry Larrichio, Laura Leon, Lorna Morrow, Lou Romero, Luis Cuadros, Mackenzie Gibbs, Michael Arndt, Mike Madden, Mike Oliver, Paul Karas, Pauline Ho, Phil Cromer, Rav Nicholson, Rene Archer, Rich Fagioli, Rich Feddersen, Rick Buss, Robert Long, Roland Stumpf, Sally Lowder, Sam Beard, Scott Christenson, Scott Dietrich, Scott Forman, Silke Bletzer, Sim Cook, Stephan Martin, Stephanie Long, Steve Roholt, Susan Gregory, Tim Kirkpatrick, Tony Pachelli.

The Talking Talons Youth Leadership (TTYL) young people who worked with FOSM three weeks this summer were Aidan Stewart (crew Leader), Hans Martin, Lila Eaton, Evan Cooney-Martin, Jamie Medina-Soto, Rebecca Duggar, and Eli Iwanczyk.

FOSM Board FY2025

Officers

- * President – Mike Madden
- * Vice-President – Cliff Giles

- * Treasurer – Jeff Young
- * Secretary – Silke Bletzer

Board Members

- * Sam Beard
- * Sim Cook
- * Jamey Browning
- * Byron Garner

- * Jenny Blackmore
- * Joe Meade
- * Susan Gregory
- * Steve Roholt

