

Currents & Flow

Spring 2020

Laura Jones, 8 years of supporting the Verde River!

When I moved to Clarkdale in 2006, I joked to my friends that I couldn't find the Verde River. Fast forward to 2011, and I became a volunteer with Friends, a group dedicated to preserving the very river that five years earlier I couldn't find.

First, I joined a group known as Marsha's Dirty Dozen, and removed invasive Tree of Heaven at Dead Horse Ranch State Park. Next, I volunteered with the Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition (VWRC) presenting at community meetings and developing workshops to show landowners how to remove *Arundo donax* (Giant Reed) from their property.



By: Laura Jones
Community Engagement Coordinator

As luck would have it, in July 2012 an outreach coordinator position became open, and I would become part of the team that would take Friends from a volunteer organization, to a professional one.



Over these last 8 years, I learned to love the river and the value that it brings to our community. People say to me, "well you're a river person." The truth is that I am an administrator and community engagement professional that happened to fall in love with a river. I have worked in many fields over the years, scientific publishing, higher education, and HIV/AIDS services; until Friends I had never been involved with an environmental cause. It has become a calling that has helped me join together with the people of the Verde Valley and the State of Arizona to preserve our river.

Continued on Page 4

MISSION

Friends of the Verde River works collaboratively to restore habitat, sustain flows and promote community stewardship to support a healthy Verde River system.

VerdeRiver.org



**Friends of the
VERDE RIVER**



Also in this newsletter:

- Celebrating Trees with the crew.
- Run the Verde River Raffle.
- Arizona Gives Day.
- Join Circle of Friends.



Habitat Restoration

Celebrating Trees

The power of water is often unstoppable. After days of steady rain, the saturated ground of the Verde Valley could not hold any more, and the river began to rise. The high water swallowed the banks, and washed out a bridge that the conservation crew of military Veterans were using to access habitat on the opposite bank.

In many places along the Verde, the natural habitat and beauty offered by the Cottonwood-Willow gallery forest is crowded with thirsty invasive species. This year, even the destruction of an important bridge on the Trust for Public Lands property couldn't keep these dedicated Veterans from completing their goal of removing these stubborn plants.

The crew was able to complete 1,000 hours of restoration work on the confluence of Beaver Creek and the Verde River. They made their way through the flowing water on foot with all of their gear on their backs. By removing 362 mature

Tamarisk trees, and opened the way for replanting efforts. Thanks to the help of 21 volunteers from multiple groups, 87 Willow branch poles were planted, with many on their way to becoming adult Willow trees. These Willows make ideal habitat for a variety of native Birds, like the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher.

The crew also planted 20 new cottonwood trees, using a method that increases their chances of survival. After completing the project, the crew saluted the trees with a yoga tree pose.

Steve Ayers, Camp Verde's Economic Development Director, volunteered on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to help plant the new Willows. "I like digging holes," laughed Ayers, "It is great to see that section of Beaver Creek and the Verde get some conservation work done. I think it is great to get people involved with the river."

1000 Hours of Restoration 21 Volunteers 87 Willows Planted 20 Cottonwoods Planted

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YOU Made a Difference!

Run the Verde Raffle!

Thank you to Verde River Adventures, Kokopeli Packraft, Alpaca Rafts, and NRS for donating the package items for our Run the Verde Raffle, valued at \$1,500. This raffle was a fundraiser that ran from October 29, 2019 through March 21, 2020. Proceeds from the raffle ticket sales support a healthy Verde River.

At a Glance:

Tickets Sold: 285

Money Raised: \$6,280

Winner: Jocelyn Gibbon



Arizona Gives Day

Arizona Gives Day is a state wide day of giving! This year, even with the unforeseen challenges that we have had to face, donors like YOU made this day successful. Thanks to YOU, we were able to raise important funds that will support a healthy Verde River despite economic challenges.

At a Glance:

Number of Donors: 87

Money Raised: \$6,347.17

Thank YOU for Your Support!

Your River Needs YOU!

Page 1 Continued:

Thank YOU for supporting a healthy Verde River

This modest, though sometimes mighty river, manages to do so many things. It provides recreational haven for people, it provides habitat for birds, animals and fish, it provides fresh water to nourish fields for our farmers, and it ultimately provides drinking water for millions of people in Phoenix. Over the years, friends have asked, “do you get paid to do this?” and I would say, “yes, I have the best job in the Verde Valley.” This may that job will come to an end, but my love and dedication to this river will continue for the rest of my life.



Join Circle of Friends

If you have supported Friends of the Verde River with an annual gift in the past, thank you! We invite you now to renew your support, as well as consider upgrading your contribution.

Scan Here to Become a Friend of the Verde River!



www.VerdeRiver.org

Leave a legacy:

When you make a lasting gift to Friends of the Verde River, you are investing in the organization that works the hardest to keep the Verde River and all of its tributaries healthy and flowing. Contact Kegn Moorcroft, 928-641-6013 or kegnm@verderiver.org, to learn how you can leave a legacy for the Verde River.

Thank You Laura Jones! For giving of your time and expertise, and for your dedication and commitment to the Verde, you will be missed!

“I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver.”

Maya Angelou

