

So it seems that, in addition to repairing fencing in the Sonoita Creek State Natural Area (SCSNA) (see below), such structures along with Dr. Pete Stacey's "digger logs" (logs actually placed in the Creek, with one end embedded in the bank to serve as ways to zig-zag the Creek enough to slow the water into creating pools for endangered fish and dropping soil here and there to preserve its natural flows), planting more trees and native plants in the arroyos and along Creek banks, educating our kids and community will all be a huge help in meeting our mission of protecting the Sonoita Creek's watershed.

But guess what? Borderlands Restoration is already doing a lot of this, upstream of town and in town with their plans for Doc Mock park! As our new President (oh, by the way, I'm Anne Townsend; more about me later), I called a bunch of little meetings with various Board members and advisors (including Ron Pulliam, representing Borderlands as well) and I've talked with a bunch of Friends' members. As a group, I think we've pretty much agreed that it would be a delight to help Borderlands with their efforts in any way we can while at the same time knowing we're both serving our mission and collaborating on an important community effort.

We've been busy, too, with our friends at Arizona State Parks (AZSP) and its Natural Area Programs Advisory Committee (NAPAC). We're excited by the prospects of assisting them in their efforts to first survey the status of the entire fencing stretches around the Sonoita Creek State Natural Area (SCSNA) with an eye toward procuring funding for its repair and maintenance (hopefully in collaboration with our friends, the ranchers, who have been adjacent to these lands for decades and decades and whose land has thus served to protect the watersheds of Sonoita Creek from too much development, also for decades and decades); and then to assist these same folks and the ranchers in continuing to monitor the fencing, as well as to monitor the levels of wells and wet/dry areas in the SCSNA watershed (and perhaps above town as well, with Borderlands).

We've also met several times with Luke Reese, manager of the Patagonia-Sonoita Nature Conservancy Preserve and have suggestions for the upcoming Board members regarding how we as Friends of Sonoita Creek can help The Nature Conservancy (TNC) celebrate its 50th anniversary next March, 2016. We will be assisting Luke in that celebration by holding mini-workshops on Pete Stacey's Rapid Stream Riparian Assessment techniques (including how "digger logs" would work), as well as using our watershed model (and perhaps a new one if Kathy Pasierb, one of our former Presidents, and Yunghi Choi can get it constructed) to help educate kids and their parents on how watersheds work. Luke likes the ideas of these interactive activities, especially as they will appeal to families as well as the general public, so if you have any additional fun ideas for Friends, please contact me! (See below for contact information.)

I am also now involved in the Town of Patagonia discussions regarding the town's water supply, its uses, its treatment, its losses, the Creek, the aquifers, etc., and hope to continue as a member of an official Town Committee (Flood and Flow Committee) if the town council approves this tomorrow night. Other representatives include The Tucson Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Borderlands, Deep Dirt Farm, and the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center, as well as Carolyn Shafer, who is our Chair.

I think the September collaborative meeting of local organizations interested in protecting our beautiful area came up with a phrase called “Restoration Economy,” meaning all stakeholders have to buy in to what we're trying to accomplish, thus requiring lots of individual and community meetings and education. (Kathy Pasierb and Yunghi Choi attended this meeting, along with Ron Pulliam, so please contact one of them if you have questions about that meeting.) And we think we can get them to buy in once they understand the nature of our work and the benefits it will bring to them as land and business owners. After all, humans as well as plants and animals depend on water to survive. This era of global warming brings many uncertainties and we must be prepared as best we can, for our own protection, while at the same time enhancing the natural joys of this area for all of us as well as for tourists with \$\$ in their pockets.

You can see we'll need your input and your help. We need to make friends with as many of the interested parties as possible (yes, including old-timers, mining families, ranchers, and other stakeholders) and work with them as best we can. We'll need volunteers to go with us when we're monitoring the SCSNA's fencing, experts to help us learn the techniques and protocols we'll need for accurate well- and wet-dry monitoring, data experts to input accurately the data we acquire, and – most of all – to go with us on some fun hikes with the public to encourage their understanding and “buy-in.” There are other areas I could go on about, but I think this is quite enough for now. But stay tuned!

Now, who am I? Well, at the September Board Meeting, we reluctantly accepted Allyson Armstrong's resignation as our intrepid President due to her upcoming move to Colorado (how COULD she?!). I was nominated and equally reluctantly accepted this position, as I see no way to “replace” her. Allyson has more information stored in that brain of hers than I'm likely to acquire in a century, but anyway, here I am.

In my pre-retirement life, I was both entrepreneurial (incorporating and running my own energy consulting business as well as co-founding two others doing the same thing) and functional in fund-raising for and running several not-for-profits. As my minor was in science, I have always been interested in the environment, and worked for many years during the 70's and 80's assisting the Department of Energy, its national laboratories, the Solar Energy Research Center etc. in pursuing alternative energy policies. In addition, I acquired over the years substantial knowledge about pollutants of streams and Environmental Protection Agency pursuits of ways to control them. Finally, my last job was as deputy director of a large foundation in the District of Columbia (Public Welfare Foundation, Inc.) that pursued program areas of interest to me, including one for environmental justice.

During our retirement, my husband, Bob Brandt, and I traveled widely throughout our country and Canada. We know well and cherish our beautiful open spaces and natural treasures, including this one in the valley of Sonoita Creek. We volunteered for years living in our RV part-time for AZSP both at the San Rafael State Natural Area and at SCSNA/Patagonia Lake State Park before buying a little place in Patagonia in 2012.

We've hiked just about every nook and cranny of these and the Natural Area's foothills, canyons and mountains that we could. We love this area so much that as of this September we are now full-time residents of Patagonia and Arizona. And we have been members of Friends of Sonoita Creek since, I believe, 2006 (or so).

So I'm definitely an ardent supporter of Friends' dual mission to protect the surface water and natural habitat of Sonoita Creek and its watersheds and to educate the public sufficiently that it can understand our efforts and help us in that pursuit. Working with the FOSC Board, I'm also relieved and excited to know that our efforts can be coordinated with those of others in these pursuits. We must be careful to not bite off more than we can chew, and we must gear up both our funding and our membership bases for the long haul as none of this will get done overnight. I'm pretty excited, because I think we can do it!!!

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone, and don't forget to renew your membership for next year.

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