

SEDONA WESTERNERS MONTHLY MEETING

MARCH 14, 2024

AT THE SEDONA PUBLIC LIBRARY

3250 WHITE BEAR LANE, SEDONA,

AZ

CALL TO ORDER-WELCOME

Trail Boss Ray LaPorte called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Ray likes to bring up Westerner history. He showed us an old hand-drawn map from the 1960s in which Cathedral Rock is labeled Courthouse, and

Courthouse is named Church Rock. This is in the great tradition of renaming our geographical sites in Sedona.

Ray welcomed new members to the monthly meeting and invited them to introduce themselves. Two new members come from Portland, OR and Michigan/California.

Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund Drive

Dick Williams, Secretary and Philanthropy Committee of the Red Rock Trail Fund, presented a RRTF hat and a certificate of appreciation to Trail Boss Ray LaPorte on behalf of the Red Rock Trail Fund to mark the participation of the Westerners in supporting the RRTF. Many of the Board of Directors of the RRTF are indeed Sedona Westerners and volunteer their services to assure the success of the RRTF. During the February fundraising drive for the RRTF, sixty members of the Westerners contributed. Two years ago, the February drive raised \$12,000; one year ago, the drive raised \$16,770. This year was a record-breaking year at \$37,000, thanks to the efforts of many, but especially the anonymous Westerner who established a \$10,000 match. Ray thanked all who worked on behalf of the RRTF and who contributed.

Special Joint Hiking Event

In an effort to get a wider participation from out-of-town hikers in the Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund, the SRRTF invited a Phoenix hiking group, the Arizona Trailblazers to donate to the SRRTF as active users of the trails and volunteers for projects. They did so. In an effort to provide an opportunity for the Arizona Trailblazers to hike with the Westerners, the Sedona Westerners Board approved a joint hike in the Turkey Creek area. The hike will take place on April 6, will be led by a Sedona Westerner, and will be about 7 miles long with 1150 CEG. Sandi requests that club members participate in this hike with the Trailblazers in a spirit of cooperation and shared interest between the two groups. She has sent an information sheet out to all members about the hike and would appreciate hearing back. Meet up will be at the VOC location.

Old Business

Voting Matters

Approval of the Minutes of February 15, 2024

Ray called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Meeting of February 15, 2024.

Hassan Hosseini made a motion. Sophia Sweeny seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Foreman's Financial Report of February 30, 2024

Ray called for a motion to approve the Financial Report of February 30, 2024.

Jim Sweeny made a motion. Donna Forsythe seconded it. The motion carried.

Officer Reports

Financial Report (Mark Bealafeld, Foreman)

Mark reported that as of the end of February, we had \$8,900 in the Wells Fargo account. There has been a drop in membership since last year. The final expense for the year will be the Spring Cookout, which usually runs around \$2,000.

Prospector Report (Sandi Heysinger)

Sandi reported that we have 386 members, including honorary members. Last year we had 440 members. There are 117 new members this year. The good news is that we are still getting new members.

Chuckwagon Report (Adrienne Pichette, Chuckwagon Boss)

Adrienne thanked the Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund for providing an array of snacks for the meeting.

She has provided sign-up sheets for the Spring Cookout and for members to bring cookies in April.

Adrienne expressed her appreciation for Lynn Moffatt, the assistant Chuckwagon Boss.

Roundup Boss Report (Sara Stiffler, Roundup Boss)

Sara related that four articles had appeared since the February 15th meeting. Three more are ready to go. She needs five more until the end of the season.

Historian Report (Margaret Davis, Historian)

On behalf of Margaret, Ray thanked all the hikers who had provided photographs of their hikes for the Scrapbook.

Ranger/Forest Service Report (Hassan Hosseini, Ranger/Forest Service Liaison)

Hassan gave an update on the work of the Sedona Westerners who have volunteered to help out at the Cathedral Rock Trailhead closure.

He explained that the volunteers knowledge of the trails is instrumental in guiding visitors to open trailheads. Shifts are from 8-12 and 12-4.

He thanked members profusely for volunteering.

HIKE BOSS REPORTS

Amblers (Jan Taylor)

Jan thanked the hike leaders and tailgaters of hikes since the last meeting. She reported the unusual sighting of a didgeridoo on

the trail. She thanked her assistant hike boss Jon Petrescu for his work.

Upcoming hikes include: Doe Mountain Lollipop; Lime Kiln/Scheuerman Mountain; Rabbit Ears Vista; and

Mescal Circumnavigation.

Rustlers (Mark Hurtt)

Mark expressed appreciation for the members who had led hikes or performed as tailgaters this month.

He expressed his thanks for the work of Deb Hicks, his assistant hike boss.

Upcoming hikes include: Dawa-Rupp Loop; Long Canyon; and Hi-line Trail.

Drovers (Kelley Malek)

Kelley noted in her thanks to the hike leaders and tailgaters that there were some hikers new to the Westerners who had volunteered to lead _____ or tailgate. Learning to lead a hike is an important part of being a Westerner. Upcoming hikes include: Loy Canyon; Carroll Canyon; Chutes and Ladders.

Dogies (Lisa Celeste)

Lisa remarked in her thanks to all the hike leaders and tailgaters that some had scouted multiple times because of cancellations due to rain and snow.

Upcoming hikes include: Huckaby Windows; Deadman Heights; Pyramids and Polygons; City Hall/Saddle Loop

Mustangs (Bob Apter)

In addition to thanking hike leaders and tailgaters, Bob expressed his appreciation of Danielle Brooks' work as his assistant hike boss.

Upcoming hikes include: Balanced Rock and Beyond; North Wilson; Hangover; Surprise Canyon

Rough Riders (Trisha Travis, Cactus Dodger)

Ray thanked hike leaders and tailgaters on Trish's behalf. Upcoming hikes include: Bridges and Ridges; Secret Canyon Loop; Woodchute/Martin Canyon; Bear Sign/Secret Canyon.

Trackers (Linda Warren)

Linda chose a photo the Polygons hike, led by geologist Ernie Pratt. She explained that we are indeed fortunate to have such expertise.

She hopes that Ernie Pratt will continue to lead Tracker hikes. Two hikes remain: Edible Mushrooms and Nature's Garden.

NEW BUSINESS

- Nominating Committee (Elected Officer Nominations for 2024-25 Season)

Donna Forsythe, Immediate Past Trail Boss and Chairman of the Nominating Committee, announced the nominations for Officers for the 2024-25 hiking season:

Trail Boss: Terri Petrescu

Wagon Boss: Kelley Malek

Wrangler: Jan Taylor

Foreman: Mark Bealafeld

Top Hands: Jim Kemper

Mary McCaffrey

Dave Vanderwater

Ambler Boss: Jon Petrescu

Rustler Boss: open

Drover Boss: Amanda Maxwell

Dogies Boss: Jim Thomas

Mustang Boss: Bob Apter

Cactus Dodger (Rough Rider Boss): Randy Dent

Tracker Boss: open

She hopes that members who are regular participants in Rustler or Tracker hikes will consider volunteering to be Rustler or Tracker Hike Boss.

-Pre-Ambler Group

Donna announced the testing of a potential new group for people that find the Ambler hikes too long. These are people who might not have hiked before or are Recovering from surgery or an illness. These hikes are open to all, Westerners or non-members alike. The hikes will take place on March 27, April 10, and 24. Donna urges people to come out to hike.

---- Break for Refreshments ----

Featured Speaker: Wendy Hodgson

"Pre-Columbian Agaves in the Southwestern United States: Rediscovering Lost Crops among the Hohokam and other Arizona Cultures."

Pre-contact agriculturists cultivated at least six once overlooked domesticated agave species in the modern Arizona landscape associated with pre-contact agricultural features, such as rock structures. Because of the longevity and primarily asexual reproduction of these agaves, relict clones have persisted to the present day, providing an opportunity to study pre-contact nutrition, trade, migration and agricultural practices.

Our research suggests that pre-contact farmers selected desirable attributes, initiating domestication processes that resulted in discrete lineages. These agaves are distinct from Southwest US and northern Mexico wild agaves and Mesoamerican wild and domesticated species. Additionally, the remnant clones present a rare opportunity to examine domesticates virtually unchanged since they were last cultivated prehistorically. These discoveries underline the need to view landscapes and some plant species from a cultural, rather than 'natural', perspective and discern potentially overlooked species. Protecting and understanding the distribution, and ecological and cultural roles of these plants require interdisciplinary collaboration between botanists, archaeologists, federal agencies and Indigenous Peoples

Wendy Hodgson has lived in the Sonoran Desert for more than 50 years. She holds a B.S. in wildlife biology and an M.S. in botany. She began working at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix as an assistant to famed agave expert Dr. Howard S. Gentry. Today she is the Herbarium Curator Emerita and Senior Research Botanist at the Garden in Phoenix where her research focuses on the Agave family, floristics with a special emphasis on the Grand Canyon, Southwest rare plant species and Sonoran Desert ethnobotany. Hodgson has extensively researched Sedona's rare domesticated Agave species in collaboration with the Forest Service and expert archaeologists. She is an advocate for community science, particularly the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the study and conservation of plants and their habitat.

Some takeaways from Wendy's talk:

There are over 270 species of agave, of which the greatest diversity is in Central Mexico.

The agave that we see in Sedona propagate through seeds and pups.

Agave plants decrease in size as you travel north.

Agave plants were a popular trade item among the Indigenous peoples before contact with Europeans and after. They traded to bring diversity to their agave crops.

The Indigenous people selected and cultivated to create different flowering times and so to elongate the harvesting season.

With the threat of changing climate, we need to bring back Indigenous plants better suited for a dry, hot climate such as mesquite beans, chia seeds, and the wild potato.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Losse, Wrangler