

AWC's efforts on behalf of wilderness continue to make a difference, both on the ground today, and through many tomorrows. The healing benefits of nature strengthen our resolve to face the many challenges ahead.

Support AWC



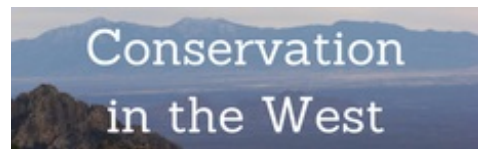
February 16, 2017

Greetings!,

January was tumultuous, generating many uncertainties for the conservation community in the wake of national policy changes. Yet we continue to see strong opportunity to preserve additional lands for wilderness enjoyment in the future. Why are we optimistic? In large part, because of you - individuals who help us clear trails, voice concerns to land management agencies, and organize with others to support issues critical to land and water preservation.

In this issue, you'll find specific reasons for hope, including opportunities to take action today to conserve public lands in Arizona. And a recent poll of Western voters reflects broad support for conservation measures on public lands - we're not alone in our concern to protect natural resources. February is also Black History Month, a time when we can learn from African-Americans' endurance through struggles - and celebrate African-American contributions to our understanding of nature, like those of Harriet Tubman, explored below.

The most important reason for optimism is February's hallmark, expressions of love. When we show our love for nature through outdoor activity, nature loves us back. We've collected heart-warming insights into the health benefits of nature - read on, and spark your wild passion!



Yours in support of wilderness,



Barbara

Barbara Hawke
Executive Director

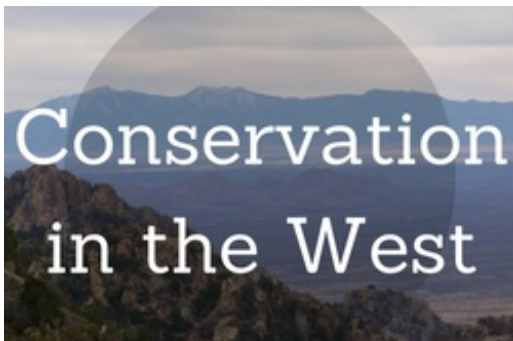


The Tonic of Wilderness: How Nature Loves You Back

Did you know that smelling tree sap lowers your blood pressure? Or that "forest bathing" helps alleviate stress, anxiety, and depression? Explore the health benefits of nature and Wilderness, and how nature loves you back. [Here are some of the latest perspectives \(and science\) on the health and nature connection.](#)

Already convinced? Our upcoming events are great ways to get outside!

[Learn More](#)



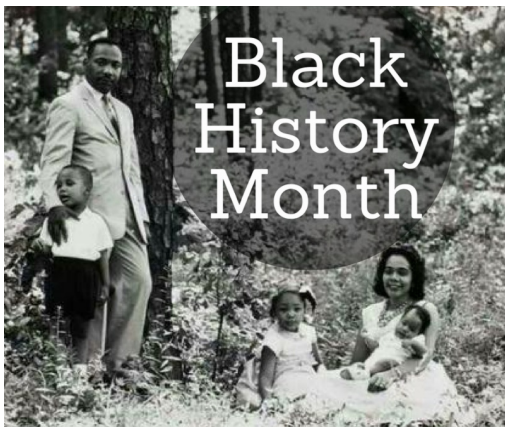
Westerners Clearly Support Conservation

A poll of westerners from all backgrounds shows overwhelming support for conserving natural resources on public lands. In Arizona, 70% of respondents felt loss of habitat for fish and wildlife was a serious problem, and 80% supported promoting the outdoor economy. The majority of respondents also supported retaining existing

national monuments, and keeping national public lands under federal management. These are clear messages for elected officials and agency managers that the public wants to preserve the natural values of our public lands.

Read the [Arizona summary here](#), the [detailed Arizona report here](#), and [more background here](#).

[Learn More](#)



Reflecting on Harriet Tubman's Relationship to Nature

An excerpt by Outdoor Afro Leader Zoë Polk:

Before we began our return trip, we spent time describing Harriet Tubman in one word. The words "brave," "courageous," "spiritual," "strong," "hero," and "legend" rang out. In addition, we called her "astronomer," "forager," "hiker," "botanist," and "birder." ... Black people on the Underground Railroad weren't traveling via loud machines on trails made of

concrete, iron and steel. They quietly hiked on grass, dirt, moss, and through rivers. ... They studied bird calls and mimicked them to communicate danger and safety. They used their relationship with nature to get them to freedom. [Read the whole story here.](#)

[Read More](#)

Outdoor Afro celebrates and inspires African American connections and leadership in nature. They connect thousands of people to outdoor experiences, who are changing the face of conservation. [Find upcoming Outdoor Afro outings in Arizona here.](#)

Celebrate Black History Month by reading some of these contemporary [African American perspectives on Wilderness.](#)



Show Your Love for Tonto Wilderness!

The Tonto National Forest is assembling a video with perspectives on wilderness, and they are seeking contributions from the public. Let's give them some great testimonials about the importance and benefits of wilderness! [Contact Beth Rumpza at tontoplan@fs.fed.us](mailto:tontoplan@fs.fed.us) for more information.

[Learn More](#)



Speak up for Resources in Sonoran Desert National Monument

The Bureau of Land Management has released a plan for managing recreational target shooting in the Monument. This unique National Monument harbors extensive archaeological and ecological resources that deserve protection. A public meeting is scheduled for **Feb. 21, from 4pm to 7pm** at the Burton Barr Central Library in Phoenix. You can still submit comments, until March 15, 2017.

[Learn More](#)



Thanks, on behalf of Fossil Creek

Thank you for getting involved and speaking up for Fossil Creek! Our efforts can help preserve the wild features and natural values of this special area. **You can read the joint comments from Sierra Club and AWC on the proposed Fossil Creek management plan here.**

[Read More](#)



FEB
18-19

President's Day on the Arizona Trail

If you have ever wanted to explore some of the Arizona Trail, join us over the Presidents' Day weekend. Wild Stew volunteers will maintain a section of trail just north of Reaves Ranch within the spectacular Superstition Wilderness. **Click here for more information and to RSVP.**

[RSVP](#)

FEB

25

Baboquivari Peak Trail

Once again AWC is partnering with Climbers Association of Southern Arizona to improve trail conditions on the Baboquivari Peak Trail. This one day event is sure to draw a large crowd of volunteers, so don't miss out on this great opportunity to enjoy one of Arizona's premier climbing destinations. Dinner will be provided by members of the Tohono O'odham Nation. [Click here for more information and to RSVP.](#)

RSVP

FEB

25-26

Restoring Red Rock-Secret Mountain

Join us in the beautiful Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness on the outskirts of Sedona. This is a watershed restoration project to remove the remnants of a marijuana growing operation. Participants will use sledge hammers to break up sections of concrete that was placed to divert water, and the skilled Backcountry Horsemen will employ pack mules to haul all the debris from the area. [Click here for more information and to RSVP.](#)

RSVP

MAR

3-5

Adventure in Skeleton Canyon

Pack your bags and head on down to the far Southeast corner of the state. Wild Stew volunteers will reestablish access to Skeleton Canyon in the Peloncillo Mountains. This area, rich in cultural history, was once a final destination for adventurers seeking opportunities for complete solitude and exploration. Lack of access across private lands has closed several of the access points to this area. During this project we will restore an old route which will provide an opportunity for exploration once again. [Click here for more information and to RSVP.](#)

RSVP

MAR

13-17

Spring Break Wilderness Experience

Haven't made plans for Spring Break 2017 yet? Look no further! AWC is teaming up with the Arizona Trail Association to tackle some of the most remote sections of the Arizona Trail within the Mazatzal Wilderness. This week-long adventure is guaranteed to provide you with an experience you won't soon forget. Volunteers will hike into the heart of the wilderness and participate in trail maintenance activities during the day and enjoy the complete solitude and company of others at night. All your meals will be provided for and packed in by the Backcountry Horsemen, so don't let meal planning deter you from experiencing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. [Click here for more information and to RSVP.](#)

RSVP

MAR
31-2

Yew Thicket Trail Restoration

As spring is in full swing come on up to the high country to the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness. Spring flowers will be in full bloom and Sycamore Creek running with clean, clear snow melt. The Yew-thicket trail restoration effort has been an annual priority for the Prescott National Forest, and each year with your help we continue to make this trail safer for all users. [Click here for more information and to RSVP.](#)

RSVP

APR
7-9

Kendrick Mountain Native American Students from NAU

AWC has created a new partnership this year with the Native American Student Services department at Northern Arizona University. This 3-day trail restoration project will include a variety of educational discussions including public lands management and wilderness ethics. We are looking for additional guest speakers for this outing, if you are interested please contact brian@azwild.org.

Email Brian



DONATE FOR A
WILD ARIZONA

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition actively engages and empowers citizens like you who care about Arizona's wild lands. For more than 35 years, we have been working with volunteers to conduct wild land inventories, educate citizens about the unique attributes of Arizona's landscape, and empower our activists to build support for their lasting protection. We need your help protecting our wild lands for the future...join us today!



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