

## PAYSON ROUNDUP

### Helping Vets And The Environment

By **Michele Nelson**

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Brian Stultz has a vision — get vets into the wild to share talents, learn a new skill, heal and, most importantly, have fun.

The only thing he finds that can add an extra punch to nature is volunteering to build trails to get more people into the wild.

“People find the wilderness to be very therapeutic,” said Stultz. “It’s even better to give back.”

Stultz should know, he is the Wilderness Stewardship Coordinator for the Arizona Wilderness Coalition and has experienced first-hand the healing effects of being in nature and caring for the land. He discovered all this after serving in the Army.

Stultz served in the Army National Guard on the border with Mexico on a joint narcotics task force.

He said he learned a lot of skills, but nothing that really helped him on a career path once he got out of the service.

“I studied chemical operations,” he said.

Since 1979, the Arizona Wilderness Coalition has organized volunteers to protect and restore the land and waters of Arizona.

Now Stultz plans to introduce veterans to volunteering to help the wilderness, while spending time healing.

“Vets have a unique skill set to offer,” he said. “They have leadership, teamwork and technical skills.”

Along with the trail work, Stultz has evening activities planned with Nick Mancini, “a yoga teacher who helps vets find their inner warrior.”

“The activities give an internal feeling of rejuvenation... Nick Mancini... helps vets with P.T.S.D.,” said Stultz. “(Hopefully) you can reboot and deal with your life.”

Stultz decided on this project to maybe help some of the more traumatized vets struggling to find a direction.

Once Stultz ended his time in the Guard, he went to college to study environmental science and outdoor education, which led him to his career with the Arizona Wilderness Coalition.

But the Army helped launch him. That’s why he’d like to help vets now.

“I’m thinking about the vets because I understand that we have a responsibility to take care of them,” he said.



Brian Stultz is the wilderness stewardship coordinator for the Arizona Wilderness Coalition and has experienced firsthand the healing effects of being in nature and caring for the land.

Unfortunately, Stultz said he didn't identify his target group before he launched his idea. He has struggled to find vets who would be interested in this program, yet have transportation, camping gear and time to get away.

Still, Stultz has gotten the word out to many media outlets in Phoenix and Tucson.

He hopes vets in the Rim Country will step forward to participate. He has a special place in his heart for the Rim Country as his parents live here.

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