



# Friends of Ironwood Forest

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Friends of Ironwood Forest works for the permanent protection of the biological, geological, archaeological, and historical resources and values for which the Ironwood Forest National Monument was established through education, community outreach, service projects, and advocacy.



Left to right: Brian O'Donnell (National Conservation System Foundation), Lori Andersen, Congressman Grijalva, Mike Quigley, Christina McVie, John Scheuring, and Scott Jones

## Celebrating National Landscape Conservation System Permanence

On July 2nd, Friends of Ironwood Forest hosted a community celebration of passage of legislation permanently establishing the National Landscape Conservation System, of which Ironwood Forest National Monument is a part. Sponsored by Friends of Ironwood Forest, with assistance from The Arizona Wilderness Coalition and the National Parks Conservation Association, the event was attended by more than 100 people, including conservation leaders,

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Below, Ragged Top, Ironwood Forest National Monument



I believe there are certain places humankind simply cannot improve upon – places whose beauty and interest no photograph could capture, places you simply have to see for yourself. We must use this time of unparalleled prosperity to ensure people will always be able to see these places as we see them today. – President William Clinton 2000



*Volunteers are a critical part of Friends of Ironwood Forest. Projects like the removal of buffelgrass (above left) and restoration of illegally created roads to protect wildlife like Big Horn sheep (above right) make a real difference on the ground. Past projects have been successful due to partnerships formed with other organizations like the Big Horn Sheep Society, Native Plant Society, Bureau of Land Management, Unitarian Universalist Church of NW Tucson, and others!*

***Save The Watermans Project Off to a Great Start!***

Invasive, non-native plant species such as buffelgrass currently threaten native plant and wildlife populations in the Sonoran Desert. The Waterman Mountains, with their limestone soil composition, are highly sensitive to these fast spreading species. Without treatment, buffelgrass will crowd out native plants and increase the frequency and intensity of fires in a region where fire frequency has been relatively low.

Buffelgrass infestation in the Waterman range was reportedly started during the mitigation phase of the illegal Harlow Jones landing strip cleanup in the mid 1990s. By the early 2000s the entire landing strip was choked with buffelgrass

Ironwood Forest volunteers and BLM staff toured the area to locate additional patches of buffelgrass needing attention and to create a plan of action. The Waterman Mountains are an exceptionally precious resource as home to endangered plants such as the Nichols Turk’s Head cactus, rare species like Elephant and Canotia trees, and important habitat for wildlife like Desert Bighorn sheep.

Since April, dedicated volunteers have conducted numerous “pulls” on steep slopes and drainages with of North and West facing exposure. Friends of Ironwood Forest would like to thank our partners in this effort – the Dove Mountain and Heritage Highland Hiking

**Become a member today!  
Join Friends of Ironwood Forest – see page 4.  
Your support will help us continue buffelgrass removal in the Watermans and other important restoration projects in Ironwood Forest National Monument.**

*“...I gazed upon the moon-dead landscape and asked myself: what is out there? And each time I concluded: **something** is out there – maybe everything.” - Edward Abbey, Fire on the Mountain*

and was spilling into adjacent drainages. Over the years, small colonies have taken root high on the slopes of the Watermans and even spilled over to the main eastern drainage.

In August 2008, BLM applied an herbicide spray to plants on the landing strip. By Spring 2009, native vegetation around the sprayed buffelgrass was showing positive signs of regrowth.

This March a team of Friends of

Clubs, Pima County Weedwhackers, and the Tucson chapter of the Arizona Native Plant Society.

This fall, Friends of Ironwood Forest will remove the large and small infestations of buffelgrass on the Eastern and Southern slopes. Our goal is to focus eradication efforts on the Watermans and have the entire mountain under control by the end of 2010.

**Join us for the Marana Harvest Festival  
Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>  
from 9am to 2 pm at the Marana Heritage River Park  
12375 N. Heritage Park Dr  
Marana, AZ  
West on Tangerine Farms Rd. from Tangerine Rd Exit from I-10**



Friends of Ironwood Forest booth at Marana Heritage Festival, 2008

**Friends of Ironwood Forest Hires Lahsha Brown as Executive Director**

Lahsha grew up enjoying life in the great outdoors as her parents often took her hiking, camping and fishing all over the forests, lakes and wilderness of Idaho, where she was born and raised. Her love of the outdoors became more than just a favorite hobby when she began doing outreach work for The Wilderness Society's Idaho office in 1994. At The Wilderness Society she led campaigns to protect Wilderness areas, Wild & Scenic Rivers, National Monuments, NCAs, and other public lands. Lahsha has experience working with the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service, and she has policy expertise in a number of land use areas, including land-use planning, recreation, off-road vehicle use, livestock grazing, and military training.

Lahsha attended Boise State University and University of Arizona and is certified in Riparian Area Restoration and Monitoring from Oregon State University. She has served as an appointed member of the BLM Resource Advisory Council in Idaho

and as co-chairman of the Owyhee County Recreation Task Force. She stayed with The Wilderness Society for 11 years, directing the Idaho Office National Landscape Conservation System program, until moving to Tucson from Boise. She worked for Sky Island Alliance from 2007 to 2009 as a landscape conservation campaign leader in Cochise County and the surrounding area. Besides working, Lahsha, who considers herself a "bona fide desert rat," enjoys doing anything outside and being a wife and mother.



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volunteers, advocates, Monument neighbors, and BLM staff from southern Arizona. Friends of Ironwood Forest are particularly pleased at the diversity of attendees. Besides the leaders of many influential conservation organizations, there were residents of Red Hills—the nearest community to the Monument, including owners, archaeological site stewards, buffelgrass removal volunteers, hiking club members, and a significant number of BLM staff and Student Conservation Associates. Also, Mary Aguirre—a direct descendent of the Aguirre family-- which has been ranching on Monument lands since Spanish colonial times, and longtime Southern Arizona conservation leader Frances Werner attended.

Special guest at the celebration was Congressman Raul Grijalva (AZ-7) who was the lead sponsor for the National Landscape Conservation System Act. As the Chairman of the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee, Rep. Grijalva worked diligently to see the legislation enacted. Years earlier, as a Supervisor for Pima County, Mr. Grijalva was a leading supporter of creating the Ironwood Forest National Monument.

After words of thanks from Brian O'Donnell, Executive Director of the National Conservation System Foundation, the Congressman was presented with an award from Chris McVie of Friends of Ironwood Forest. He was also given an award from Kevin Gaither-Banchoff, Executive Director of Arizona Wilderness Coalition for spearheading the effort to protect Fossil Creek as a Wild and Scenic River in the same omnibus public lands legislation.

Over food, drink, and music, the Congressman chatted with Friends of Ironwood Forest, FIF Board members, and guests. He made warm remarks about the lasting importance of the new System and of his appreciation of the hard work and dedication of advocates and volunteers throughout the country towards preserving our natural heritage and most special places.

The July 2nd celebration was the most visible public event hosted by Friends of Ironwood Forest to date. Its success has gained visibility and credibility for the organization, generated a long list of contacts for membership and future advocacy, and spotlighted the importance of both the NLCS and Ironwood Forest National Monument.

*"We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope."*

**Wallace Stegner**, the Wilderness Letter



# Friends of Ironwood Forest

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## Did you know?

*Ironwood Forest National Monument is part of the National Landscape Conservation System - over 27 million acres of nationally significant landscapes set aside for current and future generations because of their outstanding cultural, ecological and scientific importance. From spectacular red rock canyons to ancient archaeological sites, national monuments to remote wilderness areas, historic trails to wild and scenic rivers, all managed by the Bureau of Land Management.*

*Created in 2000, the Conservation System joins the existing National Park and National Wildlife Refuge Systems as another way Americans can preserve and enjoy their history and their land. It reflects our new understanding that truly conserving natural and cultural values means protecting large landscapes - entire ecosystems and archaeological districts - more than small, isolated tracts surrounded by development. And it encourages the increasingly rare opportunity for Americans to escape crowds and create their own outdoor adventures in the wild beauty of the West.*

Learn more at <http://www.blm.gov/nlcs>