2/20/25 GOB Grazing Monitoring Team Annual Planning Meeting

Attendees: Marcia Stout, Marty Eberhart, Denise Smith, Nancy Coates, Diane Smith, Donna Gianoulis

Much of the discussion was about the loss of employees in the Gila National Forest and how we are supporting those fired, and those still employed. This includes a wine and cheese get together with Carolyn Koury and Stacia Backensto at Marty’s one evening after work, where we listened and provided support. Several of us attended a party supporting the Forest Service employees at the Open Space Brewery. Some are attending rallys and demonstrations that are protesting the general chaotic and scary state of affairs with the government. The last week has been devastating to the Forest, the cruelty of the folks pulling the strings is unimaginable, and the effect is dehumanizing and sad. Unfortunately we don’t know what is going to happen next, but fear it may get worse before anything sees improvement.

Our discussion with Carolyn and Stacia yielded some ideas where we may be able to help. Since they have lost their entire trail crew and are down to one recreation employee, they are worried about the campgrounds in the forest and the degradation of sanitation over time.

* We can report to them when we see full//overflowing trash cans
* We can carry t.p. with us and stock the bathrooms

We won’t be carrying out any cleaning activities, however, as they will still have a contractor to do that work.

* We will get additional information about monitoring of the stream restoration projects that have been completed that need photo monitoring. We know of two places, Black Canyon and Stone Creek, but there may be others. We need to find out if the photo monitoring points have been set, and if not, offer to help get that done. Then maybe we could do the annual photo monitoring.

We decided we should keep our monitoring reports minimal, and not send emails with lots of details that could be used against us or the Forest Service.

If we have 4 or 5 folks that can go monitoring on a given day, we could split into teams and monitor different locations. For example, several folks could go upstream on the San Francisco at Cosmic Campground while others went downstream.

* Carolyn and Stacia advised us we should keep monitoring like we have been and in the locations where we have been, while adding some springs to the list. They provided us a list of the springs earlier.

Marcia had a copy of the CBD report, "Rapid Assessment of Cattle Impacts in Riparian Critical Habitat on the Gila National Forest in 2023."  (Hopefully we will get the 2024 version soon from Todd) that will be helpful to all of us in deciding where to monitor. We should all print a copy for our use.

* Make a sign that we can post on the restrooms of the campgrounds that says to please be aware of the lack of staff to keep things clean and clean up after yourself, something like that Diane had good wording that she will provide.

We told Carolyn and Stacia to disregard the letter we recently sent about the Gila Bird Conservation area as we realized it was poor timing. She passed that on to the Forest Supervisor who was grateful for our kindness.