



Our Trails.
Our Legacy.

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VILLAGER – January 2026 Issue

For Immediate Release

Byline: Dick Williams, SRRTF President

Photo courtesy of Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund. Link to download full size image:

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Helping the Trails: Make it Your New Year's Resolution

Sedona, AZ (January 2, 2026) – Some things in life are certain: the sun rises in the east, you'll pay taxes, and Sedona's Red Rock trails won't maintain themselves. While we can't do much about the first two, there's something concrete you can do about the third: join a volunteer workday.

Community support for our trails involves both funding and volunteer labor. With over 400 miles of trails, the Forest Service can only maintain about half the mileage each year—and that doesn't include new projects. Even with 11 seasonal crew members funded through philanthropic giving, the task is enormous. That's where volunteers make the difference.

Volunteer workdays run most weeks from November through April and include tasks like pruning, clearing drains, and building small retaining walls. It's not glamorous, but participants find real satisfaction in the tangible results of a day's work in the great outdoors.

Several years ago, I joined Kevin Kuhl of the Forest Service and Matt Roberts of Flagline Trails on the Girdner Trail for a trail building workshop. About ten of us learned about fall lines, drainage structures, and how to protect the trail tread from erosion. One phrase stuck with me: "Standing water is bad." Simple, but it causes serious problems.



Caption: Volunteer work days are a rewarding and enjoyable way to lend a hand to maintaining the Red Rock Trails. No experience required.

We also learned that moisture actually helps with trail maintenance, which is why most work happens October through April. The cooler temperatures and damp ground make the work easier. I now see trails differently—not just as rocks and dirt, but as carefully engineered pathways.

My first volunteer workday experience was at Doe Mountain. We arrived in long pants, long sleeves and sturdy shoes. USFS crew members provided gloves, helmets and tools. After signing waivers and reviewing the work plan and safety protocols, we got our assignments.

I received lopping shears for pruning vegetation. We quickly caught on that there's strategy involved—with careful thought and strategic cuts, you can use vegetation to guide users along the path.



The Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund sponsors workdays throughout the season. Check the dates and locations on the website homepage: redrocktrailfund.com. The next one is January 17th. Just show up ready to work and get a little dirty. The USFS team provides tools, excellent supervision, and when you're done, you'll enjoy a free pizza lunch courtesy of the Trail Fund.

Caption: The next Volunteer Workday is scheduled for January 17th at the Templeton Trail. A complete schedule can be found at RedRockTrailFund.org.

Other groups also organize volunteer workdays. **Sedona Friends of the Forest** offers even more opportunities, sometimes tackling specialized, larger projects. They're responsible for the new figure-8 trail at the top of Doe Mesa, creating two new rim trails and closing off the maze of social trails. In 2025, they contributed over 39,000 volunteer hours to the trails! Visit friendsoftheforestsedona.org to learn more.

The Verde Valley Cyclists Coalition also hosts workdays focused on proactive trail work for mountain bike recreation—though their efforts benefit all trail users. Find details at vvcc.us.

As you think about New Year's resolutions, consider adding a volunteer workday to your list. You'll spend time with knowledgeable Forest Service personnel, learn the nuances of trail work, and meet fellow enthusiasts who love these trails.

After all, rocks don't move themselves, drains don't clean themselves, and bushes don't prune themselves.

See you on the trails!

About the Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund

The Sedona Red Rock Trail Fund (SRRTF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and official partner of the U.S. Forest Service Red Rock Ranger District. Since 2014, SRRTF has raised more than \$3.5 million to protect and enhance the non-motorized trail system surrounding Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek. By uniting residents, businesses and visitors, the Fund ensures Red Rock Country's trails remain sustainable and accessible for generations to come. Learn more at redrocktrailfund.org.

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