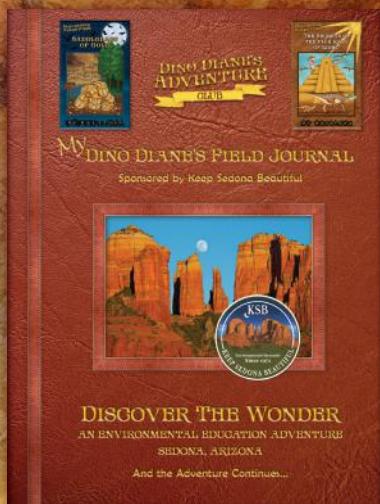


KEEP SEDONA BEAUTIFUL

# Preserving the Wonder

*Environmental Education*

Xeriscaping





# Preserving the Wonder

Winter 2025

**KSB's Quarterly Environmental Message:**

**In Sedona, the Environment ...IS...the Economy.**

**Keep Sedona Beautiful's mission is to protect and sustain the scenic beauty and natural environment of Sedona and the Verde Valley.**



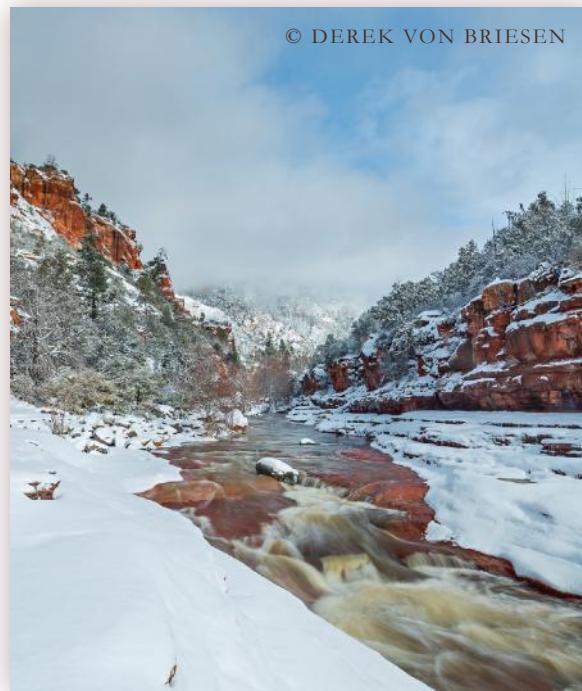
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Robert Redford, actor and environmental activist, said, *"I think that artists and art have the power to affect change."* These words resound to us working in both environmental and art spaces. Keep Sedona Beautiful recently brought environmental artist James Havens from Alaska to Sedona to paint a mural at the Ranger Station Barn. James is a large-format oil painter and sculptor who has many of his works in museums. While in Sedona he gifted a 4' x 8' original oil painting of Sedona to KSB to sell, without an artist's commission, to continue our mission. See photo below of Sedona Canvas One if interested.

Incorporated into James' time in Sedona was instructing local children how to oil paint on a mural with a professional artist. Incorporating education into our projects is not new to KSB. Our October speaker series program brought Secretary Bruce Babbitt to the EcoHub to speak on water planning. In early 2026, KSB is hosting local school children to our interpretive garden to learn about native plants, rocks, swales, xeriscape, pollinators and many other aspects of our new garden.

You'll read more about the garden program and other educational subjects in this issue on education. My early education consisted of a Minnesota country school (K-8), called Roosevelt School, when a lot of schools were named after presidents. My education was a lifetime gift that keeps on giving. My curiosity was nurtured at Roosevelt School, and it never left. The school was demolished due to neglect and asbestos, but my memories remain of an exciting, vibrant, nurturing environment, which brought me through life to where I am today, KSB's president.

Carla Williams, KSB President



**10,000+ VOLUNTEER HOURS  
OVER 5,000 HOURS  
LITTER LIFTING**

**Join KSB and help us protect the environment of Sedona and the Verde Valley through our programs and initiatives.**



## DISCOVER THE WONDER: EDUCATING STUDENTS IN THE ECOHUB GARDEN

When KSB embarked on rehabilitating our long-neglected garden, we set out to demonstrate how Verde Valley residents and visitors can garden responsibly. We selected plants that are native to the region, attract pollinators, require minimal water, were used by Indigenous peoples, or have a combination of these qualities. We also designed and installed interpretive signs on xeriscaping, native plant use, conserving water through thoughtful design, Firewise landscaping, and planting for pollinators. These efforts were initially aimed at educating adults.

A chance encounter at a Sedona Women's meeting expanded that vision. Trustee Lynn Zonakis met Diane Kristoff who immediately recognized a golden opportunity to engage students.

An author, adventurer, and dinosaur digger, Kristoff, aka Dino Diane, proposed bringing local students to the EcoHub Garden on an environmental education field adventure. She envisioned creating a field guide that would allow students to explore the garden independently, learning directly through hands-on experience. We embraced the idea and began planning how to implement *Discover the Wonder* field adventures.

Since that serendipitous meeting, Diane discovered a strong interest among Verde Valley educators, secured a generous grant

from the Arizona Community Foundation, developed the KSB Field Journal, and identified the first group of middle-school adventurers.

In conversations with teachers, Diane learned that most would like to bring approximately 40 students at a time. Because the garden couldn't comfortably accommodate such a large group at once, she created another opportunity - dividing students into two groups. One group would begin outdoors on an exploration in the garden, while the other participated in an indoor session in the KSB meeting room. Midway through the visit, the groups would switch places.

To support this model, Kristoff created an interactive, visually engaging presentation that introduces students to the area's geology, now-extinct megafauna, Indigenous cultures, and the seven principles of Leave No Trace. And since nearly all kids love dinosaurs, Dino Diane made sure to include them, too. Even the roaring Dilophosaurus from the movie *Jurassic Park*!

KSb is thrilled to host our first *Discover the Wonder* field trip in early 2026, with many more to follow. We look forward to sharing updates about these exciting educational experiences in future issues of *Preserving the Wonder*™.

### PRESERVING THE WONDER SPEAKER SERIES SAVE THE DATES!

All events will be held at the KSB EcoHub, located at 360 Brewer Road in Sedona. Events begin at 5:00 PM, with doors opening at 4:30 PM.

**January 21, 2026:** Sedona's Fire Chief Ed Mezulis will discuss the services the Sedona Fire District provides as well as some context to the area we serve. He will also be discussing Firewise and how to become a Firewise community. Chief Mezulis has been with the Sedona Fire District since 2000. Starting as a Firefighter/EMT he moved up the ranks assuming the position of Fire Chief in September of 2022. Prior to SFD he served in the United States Navy and worked for the U.S Forest Service. Chief Mezulis is committed to life-long learning and currently holds an Associate's in Fire Science, a Bachelor's in Leadership, and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. When not at the station, he is busy raising his three children, Aiden, Abby, and Ava. None of this would be possible without his wife of 20 years, Kristen.



**February 18, 2026:** Dr Tom Ginn will present a review of the ecological relationships among important aquatic species in the Verde River. For example, he will discuss the importance of variable flow relationships to native fish species. He will also discuss the limiting factors for native fishes, including the negative effects of introduced species. An overview of fishing opportunities in the Verde River and tributaries will also be included. Finally, he will discuss various restoration projects that have been implemented in the Verde River system, including invasive species controls and riparian habitat improvements.



**On March 18, 2026:** Wendy Hodgson will discuss Arizona's agaves. Ms. Hodgson is the Herbarium Curator Emerita and Senior Research Botanist at the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix and has extensively researched Sedona's rare domesticated Agave species. She has lived in the Sonoran Desert for more than 50 years. She holds a B.S. in Wildlife Biology and an M.S. in Botany. She began working at the Desert Botanical Garden as an Assistant to famed Agave expert, Dr. Howard S. Gentry. She is also an ethnobotanist, and believes in citizen science and the involvement of Native Americans in the study of plants and their habitat.



## JAMES HAVENS MURAL PROJECT

In another moment of serendipity involving environmental education, Alaskan artist **James Havens** reached out to KSB President Carla Williams with a unique proposal. After a recent visit to Sedona, where he was inspired by the beauty of Red Rock Country, he suggested holding a community “pop-up” mural-painting event with support from Keep Sedona Beautiful. We would invite residents, especially children, to help paint.

Carla recognized yet another golden opportunity to engage the community in an educational project. She brought the City of Sedona on as a co-sponsor, secured grants from both the city and the Arizona Community Foundation, and set the project in motion.

Through the efforts of Arts and Culture Specialist Nancy Latanzi, the City of Sedona provided the barn at the new Ranger Station Park as both the event venue and the permanent home for the completed mural. James, Carla, and Nancy



agreed that the mural should depict the restored Ranger Station with Sedona's iconic red rocks rising behind it. The foreground would highlight elements of Sedona's cultural history: Lilian Wilhelm Smith who lived and painted here in the 1930s and 40s, a ranger on horseback, an Indigenous pot, and native vegetation. Nancy then had the inspired idea to illustrate movement through time by transitioning the mural from black-and-white to full color—a concept James enthusiastically embraced.

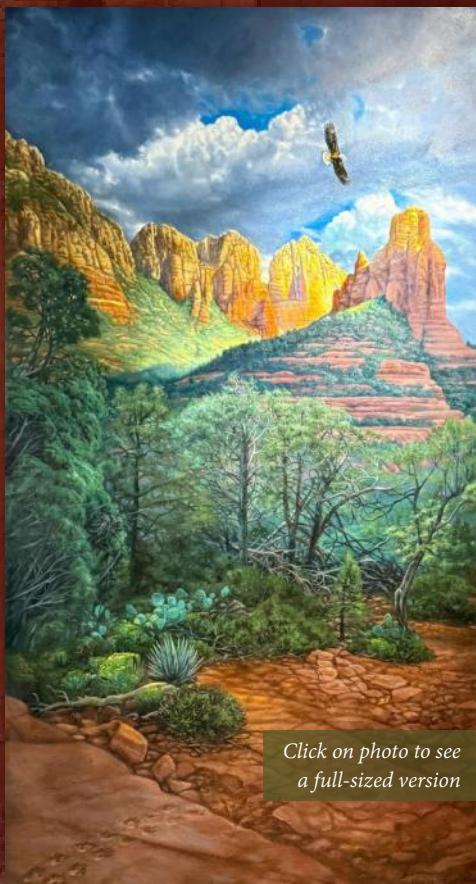
More than 100 residents and visitors, including dozens of children, participated—learning basic painting techniques as James patiently guided and encouraged them.

James describes his artistic approach: *“Education and conservation drive my creative process. Through immersive public art projects, I aim to ignite artistic spark in newcomers, raise awareness for critically endangered species and habitats, and inspire positive change. Witnessing smiles and sparking passion fuels my artistic fire. With every piece, I strive to illuminate meaningful themes, fostering a better world.”*

The Ranger Station Park project perfectly embodied this philosophy. Once the barn interior is remodeled, the mural will fill nearly an entire wall, serving as a lasting reminder of its collaborative origins.

At the conclusion of his visit, James donated the magnificent canvas he painted after his first visit to Sedona for KSB to use in fundraising. We've had the canvas professionally stretched and prepared for sale, with proceeds supporting our educational initiatives.

“Sedona Canvas 1” is available for purchase at \$17,500. It measures 8 feet tall and 4.3 feet wide. If you are interested in acquiring this remarkable piece, please contact us at [ksb@keepsedonabeautiful.org](mailto:ksb@keepsedonabeautiful.org) or by calling 928-282-4938.



# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Since our founding in 1972, we at Keep Sedona Beautiful have understood a fundamental truth: lasting environmental protection begins with education. While we're widely recognized for our hands-on conservation work, from litter lifting to dark sky advocacy, our educational programs have been equally instrumental in shaping a community culture that values and protects the natural wonder of Sedona and the Verde Valley.

## Preserving the Wonder™ Speaker Series

The cornerstone of our educational outreach is the Preserving the Wonder™ Speaker Series, our free monthly program that features experts on environmental topics relevant to the Verde Valley. Held from September through May, these presentations provide a forum where you can engage with specialists, ask questions and develop deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our community. Please see the article above highlighting our upcoming presentations.

## Our Publications

Our educational reach extends beyond in-person events through our newsletters and this quarterly magazine. These publications keep you informed about environmental issues, conservation successes, upcoming programs and volunteer opportunities. They translate complex environmental topics into accessible, actionable information you can use.

## Digital Resources

We've developed comprehensive online resources at [KeepSedonaBeautiful.org](http://KeepSedonaBeautiful.org) that offer information about important environmental issues and topics. The [Dark Skies](#) page explains why our night sky is precious, educates you about light pollution's effects on wildlife and human health and provides step-by-step guidance for responsible outdoor lighting. Our [Wildland Fire](#) page provides extensive resources on how to make your property Firewise and how to prepare for and respond to a wildland fire.

Our newest initiative, [PreservingTheWonder.org](#), is tailored to provide visitors with information they need to prepare for trips to Red Rock Country and to visit responsibly when here. We urge you to recommend this website to friends and visitors.

## Native Plant Education

Few programs demonstrate our long-term commitment to education more powerfully than our Annual Native Plant Workshop. First created in 1979, this workshop educated thousands about native plant landscaping and water conservation. Topics included selecting appropriate native plants, rainwater harvesting, non-toxic pest management, creating pollinator gardens and understanding how native plants support local wildlife.

During COVID-19, we transitioned to virtual presentations, featuring speakers like Dr. Doug Tallamy, whose "Nature's Best Hope" presentation addressed how you can create landscapes that support biodiversity. Most recently, we've incorporated native plant topics into our Speaker Series. In September 2025, Master Gardener Graelyn Deslauriers presented on attracting backyard birds with fire-wise native plants.

## Dark Skies Education

Our dark skies education exemplifies how sustained outreach can effect change. Beginning in 1999, we embarked on a comprehensive campaign to educate about light pollution and the importance of protecting our night skies. This effort combined scientific information, practical guidance and advocacy, resulting in Sedona becoming the eighth International Dark Sky Community worldwide in 2014.

Our dark skies initiative continues through multiple channels. Speaker Series presentations feature astrophotographers and astronomers who help you appreciate what we're protecting. Our website offers extensive resources about dark sky compliance. And, we participate in dark sky events that combine astronomy education with conservation messaging.

## Awards of Excellence

Our Annual Awards of Excellence program, running for over 50 years, teaches by example. By publicly recognizing businesses, organizations and individuals whose work exemplifies environmental stewardship, we demonstrate what excellence looks like in practice. Award categories include landscaping, architecture, signage, dark sky lighting, education, environmental stewardship, cultural heritage, sustainability and community service.

## The EcoHub Educational Garden

With the completion of our EcoHub Educational Garden, our grounds and property provide an example to the community. Our building is now a net positive supplier of energy to the grid because of new solar panels, a new insulated membrane roof and a new electric heat pump. Our grounds are Firewise and our garden demonstrates responsible landscaping in our arid environment. Plants have identification signs to help you determine if these species are right for your garden. We've installed interpretive signs about native plants, xeriscaping, pollinator gardens, indigenous plant use, water capture and Firewise practices. Please visit the garden, learn about responsible gardening and enjoy the serenity it provides.

In Spring 2026, we're thrilled to begin hosting field trips for area students to explore the garden and learn about environmental issues. We're calling these outings *Discover the Wonder—An Environmental Education Adventure*.

In this issue of Preserving the Wonder™ you'll find articles describing the fantastic environmental education work being done by other organizations in the Verde Valley: Gardens for Humanity, Friends of the Verde River, the Red Rock State Park School Connection program, Science Vortex, Verde Valley School and the Forest Service Junior Ranger program.

## Looking Forward

Our educational mission remains vital. Climate change, population growth, water scarcity and development pressures present increasingly complex challenges that demand an informed and engaged citizenry. Through continued innovation in our educational programming, we will help ensure that you and the Verde Valley community have the knowledge and tools necessary to preserve the wonder that defines this extraordinary landscape.

## ALL "MIX'D" IN

On a cool September morning, KSB Trustee Barry Mallis joined an Arizona PBS film crew at the West Fork trailhead up Oak Creek Canyon. Barry was the featured guest for a 27-minute "Trail Mix'd" episode filmed that morning and scheduled to air around February 2026. *Trail Mix'd* is a PBS program exploring Arizona's outdoors, focusing on hiking trails and diverse landscapes of the state.

The *Trail Mix'd* crew of four was fun, professional, and open to Barry's suggestions. On one of the multiple takes, Barry talked to host and producer Kristen Keogh about *Preserving the Wonder*, KSB's new visitor-focused website that incorporates early KSB litter lifting activity into current, comprehensive advocacy that includes earth, air, water and fire education in and around Sedona.

With so many volunteers dedicating their efforts to maintaining the quality of our area, this PBS program promises to give viewers insights into the scope of concerns, hopes and opportunities. KSB is proud to have one of our own featured on this state-wide program. Look for *Trail Mix'd* in your 2026 TV lineup.



## GARDENS FOR HUMANITY AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### GARDENS FOR HUMANITY

Connecting people to place and to one-another by cultivating gardens and celebrating the arts.

*"We believe that the natural world, the marvelous interwoven communities of plants, animals and other creatures ....is truly our first Teacher, our first Classroom, and our first Curriculum."*  
– Adele Seronde, founder, Gardens for Humanity

Gardens for Humanity's programs, from the Seed Library to the afterschool clubs, strengthen the link between people, Nature and each other. Nature thrives through cooperation, diversity and balance, with every element playing its part. In that harmony, we see the true meaning of Community.

At its heart, environmental education nurtures our bond with nature and community. From this connection grows our sense of belonging - and with it, the desire to care for, protect and preserve the world we call home.

In their after-school clubs, *Exploring Ecosystems through Gardens and Art*, kids explore the garden habitat – soil, seeds, plants, water, climate and critters – and create artwork about the garden through painting, sculpting, singing, writing poetry or making music. They've found that when children explore Nature in their garden and art clubs, it is truly transformative!

One parent noted that she could never, ever get her son to eat a salad. Then, she was amazed one day when he told her about the delicious salad that he had grown in the school garden and enjoyed with his classmates! Connecting with the food he ate through growing it, transformed yuck to yum! A 3rd grader, after learning about the color wheel through art using a basket of fruits and vegetables, and after exploring all the varieties of flowers and their parts by drawing and coloring them, said, *"I will never look at a vegetable or a flower in the same way again."* This is how Gardens for Humanity's programs awaken the senses.

Environmental writer, Richard Louv coined the term "*nature deficit disorder*" to serve as a description of the human costs of alienation from nature that has deepened humanity's disconnection from the natural world. This is largely due to social and technological changes, and by life in built environments shaped by urbanization and the digital age. Spending less and less time outdoors is taking a toll on our health and well-being. In nature we do better physically and emotionally, benefiting from positive feelings, stress reduction, and a greater sense of confidence and focus.

Through their clubs, Gardens for Humanity re-connects children to nature through art and gardens, and they fall in love with it. They want to nurture and protect it. It is so important to give people, and especially children, opportunities to have fun and rewarding experiences outdoors. Camping, hiking, gardening and just playing outdoors are ways that people have positive personal connections to Nature.



## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF RIVER STEWARDS

In Cottonwood, the Verde River winds through the heart of the community, providing water, wildlife habitat and a place of discovery. [Friends of the Verde River](#) is ensuring that future generations understand and care for this vital resource by blending science, stewardship and storytelling.

Through a partnership with the Cottonwood School District, the organization leads the [Verde Watershed Fellowship Research Project](#), where students step into the role of scientists. Armed with turbidity tubes and dissolved oxygen meters, they measure water clarity, temperature, pH and nutrient levels. Their findings don't just stay in the classroom—they're shared with conservation staff and local farm managers, giving students the satisfaction of contributing real data to river health.

Younger learners are introduced to the river through the [Verde BioBlitz](#), a hands-on program where fifth graders become citizen scientists, exploring biodiversity and the delicate balance of ecosystems. Building on that foundation, the [Water Stewardship Program](#) for middle school students deepens their



understanding of how surface water and groundwater connect, emphasizing the importance of conservation.

Friends of the Verde River also reaches beyond the classroom. With its children's book, *On the Verde River*, the organization invites young readers on a journey that celebrates the wildlife and beauty of this ecosystem, sparking curiosity and care at an early age.

From water testing to wildlife discovery, Friends of the Verde River is weaving education into experience, ensuring the Verde is not only studied and protected, but also cherished.

## CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH NATURE



Red Rock State Park's School Connection Program uses environmental education to connect knowledge gained in traditional classrooms with engaging outdoor learning experiences at the 286-acre nature preserve along Oak Creek. Students are inspired by personal discoveries that help them develop an understanding of interconnections in nature. Lessons are aligned to Arizona State Standards and facilitated by park rangers and volunteers dedicated to fostering wonder in young learners. Abundant volunteer opportunities are available to those looking for ways to give back to the community and inspire future generations of nature stewards.

The program has educated more than 12,000 children since 2010, working to advance environmental literacy and eliminate nature-deprivation - one child at a time. The [Benefactors of Red Rock State Park](#) provide financial assistance for field trip transportation, making the program accessible to schools throughout Yavapai and Coconino Counties.

The park's diverse riparian habitat along Oak Creek, with trails winding through manzanita and juniper to reach green meadows framed by red rock formations, provides an ideal setting for hands-on environmental learning.

## OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE DEATHS SURGE OVER PAST DECADE: THE MAJORITY OF FATALITIES OCCUR ON PUBLIC ROADS

The past decade has witnessed a significant increase in off-highway vehicle (OHV) fatalities, according to comprehensive data compiled by the Consumer Federation of America (CFA). The 2024 death toll of 632 represents a 27% surge from the previous year alone, marking one of the deadliest years on record for OHV-related fatalities.

These vehicles have claimed over 6,600 lives between 2013 and 2024 based on CFA's tracking of news reports, state crash investigations and federal data sources. CFA notes that their data likely represents an underestimate of actual fatalities, as it is compiled from news reports, state crash investigations and federal sources.

### The Public Road Crisis: Two-Thirds of Deaths Occur Where OHVs Don't Belong

Perhaps most disturbing is where these deaths are occurring. Analysis by CFA found that between 65% - 67% of these deaths take place on public roads, a trend has persisted for nearly two decades. This is particularly alarming because OHVs are explicitly not designed for public road use. These vehicles lack the fundamental safety features that are standard in passenger vehicles, including:

- Adequate rollover protection systems
- Air bags
- Child restraints
- Proper lighting for highway visibility
- Sufficient braking systems for paved surfaces
- Stability controls designed for higher-speed travel
- Crash-tested structural integrity
- Safety restraint systems comparable to automobiles
- DOT approved tires

### Manufacturers and Industry Groups Are Clear: Keep OHVs Off of Public Roads

OHV manufacturers and industry organizations have consistently warned that these vehicles should never be operated on public roads. Despite these warnings from the manufacturers themselves, federal agencies and consumer safety advocates, an increasing number of states, including Arizona, have passed laws allowing OHVs on public roadways. These laws directly contradict the safety guidance from the manufacturers who design and build these vehicles.

Contact your elected officials today. Visit <https://www.keepsedonabeautiful.org/contact-your-elected-officials> to find contact information for your representatives at the local, state and federal levels.



### Children are Paying the Ultimate Price

The data reveals a heartbreak toll on young people:

- Children under 16 have consistently represented approximately 18-21% of fatalities throughout the tracking period.
- Children as young as three years old have been killed in OHV accidents.
- Children six years and under continue to make up a substantial portion of fatalities.

Based on the average annual fatality rate, approximately 115-120 children under 16 lose their lives each year in preventable OHV accidents.

### Where Are We Headed?

If recent trends continue unchecked, the situation will only worsen. Conservative projections suggest that by 2035, annual OHV fatalities could reach 700-750 deaths per year. And, if the year-over-year growth rate seen between 2023 and 2024 represents a new pattern driven by expanded road access, the numbers could be far higher.

### The Time for Action Is Now

These deaths are preventable. States that have allowed OHVs on public roads have essentially created a two-tiered traffic system where vehicles without proper safety equipment share roadways with passenger cars, trucks and motorcycles, a recipe for disaster that the data clearly confirms.

We urge you to contact your elected officials immediately to request support for legislation that would:

- Ban off-highway vehicles from operating on public roads
- Reverse existing laws that currently allow on-road OHV use
- Strengthen enforcement of existing restrictions
- Increase public education about the dangers of road-based OHV operation

## TAX-FRIENDLY WAYS TO GIVE

Remember when you turned 21? Did you know 71.5 and 73 are also significant milestones? Become aware of these special ages and what you need to do to avoid 10% to 25% tax penalties.

Let us explain:

- The Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) is the least amount you need to withdraw from your pretax IRAs and 401Ks if you are 73 or older in 2025. If you turned 73 in 2025, you can wait until April 1, 2026 to withdraw your distribution; otherwise, the deadline for everyone who turned 73 in 2024 or earlier is December 31, 2025. If you don't need the RMD and would like to save taxes, you can send full or partial payments directly to KSB (or other charity) using the below QCD process.
- The Qualified Charitable Contribution (QCD) is available to people 71.5. If you became this age or older in 2025, you can donate money tax free up to \$108,000 to qualified charities like KSB from your IRA. It needs to come directly from your IRA via checks directly from your brokerage account or a QCD form, not your regular checking account.
- The Individual Retirement Account (IRA) can be a Traditional IRA or ROTH IRA. However, the RMD and QCD distributions come from Traditional IRAs, not ROTH IRAs.
- A Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) allows you to give a gift now that will benefit a charity in the future, while providing an immediate tax deduction and regular cash distributions.

KSB urges you to review decisions about charitable distributions with a financial professional to ensure accuracy.



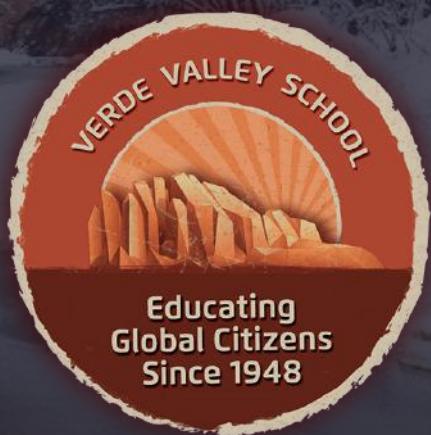
## RMD QCD IRA CRT

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AT VERDE VALLEY SCHOOL

Verde Valley School in the Village of Oak Creek integrates environmental stewardship as one of its five guiding principles, shaping both academic and residential life for its students. In 2022, KSB recognized Verde Valley School with an Award of Excellence for Sustainability.

Students and faculty work together to make the campus greener by reducing consumption and implementing recycling and composting programs throughout the residential community. The school provides a strong foundation in traditional sciences with emphasis on the environment and anthropogenic factors, while integrating long-term environmental research projects into the standard curriculum that often inform the school's sustainability strategy.

The campus features an organic school garden that's ethically farmed using student-harvested compost incorporating 100% of kitchen waste. As an approved food source for the school dining hall, the garden program helps students understand the complete cycle of food waste, composting, growing and harvesting. Surrounded by national forest land on its 140-acre campus, the school's natural setting serves as a living classroom for field-based learning experiences in anthropology and geology, with hiking, biking and horseback riding trails originating from campus.



## SPARKING STEAM EDUCATION IN THE VERDE VALLEY

Science Vortex, an educational nonprofit in Cottonwood founded in 2019 by Laurie Altringer, has steadily grown into a community hub for Verde Valley families and schools. Science Vortex provides opportunities for children to explore science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) in creative, hands-on ways. Their mission is to positively impact children's critical thinking abilities, creativity and STEM literacy.

The organization's STEAM center, located at 301 N. Willard St. in Cottonwood, features interactive exhibits and engaging learning materials for children ages 2 to 14. Science Vortex also provides programming through outreach at schools and libraries across the Verde Valley.

Programs include: field trips, afterschool clubs, summer camps, workshops and weekend exploration hours. Two free programs bring families together each week: Family Makerspace Night on Thursdays from 4:30 to 6 p.m., and Little Learners STEAM Time on Fridays from 10 to 11 a.m. for children ages 2 to 5 with a caregiver. Programs feature experiments and projects designed to spark curiosity and reinforce classroom science and math lessons.

Environmental education is also woven throughout Science Vortex programming. With support from the Verde Natural Resource Conservation District, the center emphasizes water education, offering hands-on activities both at the Cottonwood facility and in public libraries across the region. Additionally, Science Vortex partners with Friends of the Verde River every spring to include all Verde Valley 5th grade students in the annual Verde BioBlitz community science project.

Older students can participate in the Science Vortex Chief Science Officer (CSO) program. CSOs are 6th through 12th graders who are trained as STEM leaders and advocates in their schools and communities.

Thanks to funding from the Rosenbluth Family Foundation, Science Vortex is able to offer free field trips for Title 1 schools. Already this 25-26 school year, Science Vortex has had over 700 students visit their center for a field trip.

In addition to its regular programs, Science Vortex is a driving force behind the annual Verde Valley SciTech Festival, held each February to showcase free STEM learning opportunities. Last year's festival drew over 1,500 people to 62 different STEM events throughout the Verde Valley. In recognition of its contributions to education, Keep Sedona Beautiful honored Science Vortex in 2023 with its Award of Excellence for Education. For more information about programs and upcoming events, visit [ScienceVortex.org](http://ScienceVortex.org).



## THE JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

Every summer, thousands of young people across America earn their Junior Ranger badges through the U.S. Forest Service's educational program. Designed for 4th graders, Junior Ranger introduces kids to forest ecology, wildlife conservation and outdoor stewardship through hands-on activities.

Participants complete age-appropriate activity books filled with scavenger hunts, nature journaling, and environmental puzzles. They learn to identify tree species, understand fire ecology, spot animal tracks and practice Leave No Trace principles. After finishing their booklet and taking the Junior Ranger pledge, kids receive an official badge and certificate.

The program plants seeds of environmental awareness that can grow into lifelong conservation values. Former Junior Rangers frequently return as volunteers/seasonal workers, or pursue careers in natural resources. By connecting children to their public lands early, the Forest Service cultivates the next generation of forest advocates.

The Junior Ranger program is free and available at most national forest visitor centers. Families can also download activity books online to complete during their forest visits.





## NEW TRUSTEES

We're happy to welcome two new members to our Board of Trustees, each of whom has been active in KSB projects and initiatives: Diane Kristoff and Barry Mallis.

**Diane (D.J.) Kristoff**, aka Dino Diane, earned her nickname digging dinosaurs in Montana at the excavation site of Jack Horner, the real-life dinosaur expert featured in the movie *Jurassic Park*.

Award-winning teacher and author of the Dino Diane's Adventure series, she's considered by her friends to be a female version of Indiana Jones. Kristoff has backpacked and rafted the Grand Canyon, scuba-dived the Great Barrier Reef, ridden a camel around the Pyramids in Egypt and explored the tombs of the pharaohs. She's trekked the outback of Australia and the tropical rainforests and flowing lava fields of Hawaii. Kristoff has gone on photo safari in Tanzania, helicoptered over Victoria Falls, walked with lion cubs in the South African bush, hot-air ballooned over the Maasai Mara and witnessed the male elephant gathering on the Zambezi River. She is a recipient of the Silver Apple Award as the Best Teacher of the Year and Salt River Project's Science Teacher of the Year Award for the State of Arizona. While teaching, she founded an environmental awareness club and guided as many as fifty eighth-graders backpacking through the deserts and canyons of Arizona and Utah. On the trail, they learned geology, ethnobotany, archeology, paleontology and how to survive in the wild.



Experiencing first-hand the health crisis of today's young people, she founded [Dino Diane's Adventure Club](#), a 501(c)3 with the mission to inspire our kids to come out of their electronic caves, strap on their hiking boots and discover a natural world much bigger than their screens. The club is designed to inspire a love for learning through adventure, empowering our young people to become confident, resilient adventurers who respect, appreciate and care for Mother Earth while getting healthy in the process.

An article earlier in this issue discusses Diane's work creating our new Discover the Wonder field trips for students.

**Barry Mallis** is a graduate of Oberlin College and received a master's degree from Middlebury College. He has taught English, modern languages (Spanish, French and Russian) and theatre. The recipient of a N.A.I.S. Braitmayer Foundation Fellowship, he studied mime and movement with Jacques Lecoq in Paris and then used that experience to prepare a curriculum for teaching Mime at the Putney School in Vermont.

In addition to his work with students, Barry facilitated strategic business planning workshops with top management teams of Fortune 500 companies in the United States, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Germany. His experience includes: working on the ski patrol at the 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympics, service as interpreter for Rotarians visiting northwest Russia in 1998, high-school varsity soccer coaching and referee instructor and assessor for the USSF. He has led geology hikes for Friends of the Forest and has presented at the KSB Speaker Series on "Sinaguan Echoes in the Verde Valley" and on "The Paleogeology of Sedona."



An article earlier in this issue discusses his work representing KSB for the Arizona PBS show "Trail Mix'd"



Scan to Join

# KSB Business Sponsorship

KSB Business Sponsorship is an excellent way for businesses to support the protection of Red Rock Country.

Join now & begin utilizing the various benefits listed below by benefit level. Email us at [ksb@keepsedonabeautiful.org](mailto:ksb@keepsedonabeautiful.org) or call us at (928) 282-4938 for more information.



Good for Business

Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



## Chimney Rock \$250

- Two KSB decals, one transparent, one solid
- Your logo plus link on KSB website, and if tourism related on Preserving the Wonder.org website for 1 year
- KSB front vehicle plate
- KSB stainless steel water bottle



## Bear Mountain \$500

- All of the above, plus
- Your logo in electronic newsletters for 1 year



## Wingfield Mesa \$1,000

- All of the above, plus
- Your logo on Our Sponsors page in KSB magazine *Preserving the Wonder* for 1 year



## Thunder Mountain \$2,500

- All of the above, plus
- Your logo featured on Page 1 in *Preserving the Wonder* magazine for 1 year
- Honorable mention at the annual KSB Awards Ceremony



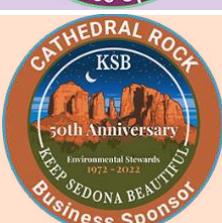
## Bell Rock \$5,000

- All of the above, plus
- Honorable mention at each KSB Speaker Series event



## Mingus Mountain \$10,000

- All of the above, plus
- Dinner with KSB President and Executive Vice President
- our logo on all KSB social media platforms



## Cathedral Rock \$20,000

- All of the above, plus
- Your logo featured on Page 1 in *Preserving the Wonder* magazine for 5 years
- QR code in Sedona Monthly magazine directed to your business



## KSB Membership

Our members are concerned citizens sharing a common goal to preserve the scenic beauty and natural environment of Sedona and the Verde Valley. Join today and receive the below-listed benefits by donation level.

Join today and receive the benefits (per household) by donation level, along with the beautiful KSB 50th Anniversary front vehicle plate. For more info, contact [ksb@keepsedonabeautiful.org](mailto:ksb@keepsedonabeautiful.org) or call (928) 282-4938.



Scan to Join

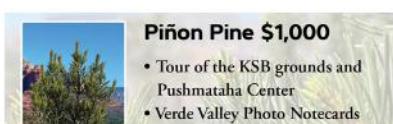


### Agave \$50



### Ocotillo \$500

- Tour of the KSB grounds & Pushmataha Center



### Piñon Pine \$1,000

- Tour of the KSB grounds and Pushmataha Center
- Verde Valley Photo Notecards



### Juniper \$2,500

- One breakfast for two with a Board Member



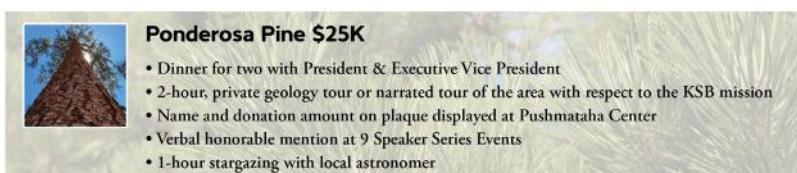
### Gambel Oak \$5K

- Lunch for two w/ President & Executive Vice President
- Honorable mention at KSB Award Ceremony
- 1-hour historical tour of KSB grounds and Pushmataha Center



### Cottonwood \$10K

- Dinner for two w/ President & Executive Vice President
- Verbal honorable mention at 9 Speaker Series Events
- 2-hour, private geology tour or narrated tour of the area with respect to the KSB mission



### Ponderosa Pine \$25K

- Dinner for two with President & Executive Vice President
- 2-hour, private geology tour or narrated tour of the area with respect to the KSB mission
- Name and donation amount on plaque displayed at Pushmataha Center
- Verbal honorable mention at 9 Speaker Series Events
- 1-hour stargazing with local astronomer

360 Brewer Rd. Sedona, AZ 86336 | 928-282-4938 | [ksb@keepsedonabeautiful.org](mailto:ksb@keepsedonabeautiful.org) | [www.KeepSedonaBeautiful.org](http://www.KeepSedonaBeautiful.org)

## Keep Sedona Beautiful, Inc.

### 2025 BOARD OF OFFICERS

**Carla Williams, President**

**Craig Swanson, Executive Vice President**

**Abbie Denton, Treasurer**

**Lynn Zonakis, Secretary**

### 2025 TRUSTEES

**Rob Adams**

**DeAnna Bindley**

**John Black**

**Peggy Chaikin**

**Kevin Cook**

**Hollace Davids**

**Mark Lawler**

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**Bob Rothrock**

**Richard Sidy**

**Barry Mallis**

**Diane Kristoff**

**Office Manager: Jan Wind**

**Executive Assistant: Wendy Heald**



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**KEEP SEDONA BEAUTIFUL  
360 BREWER ROAD, SEDONA, AZ 86336**

### INVITATION TO OUR MEMBERS:

**If You Care About the Beautiful Nature that Surrounds Sedona, THEN IT'S YOU WE ARE LOOKING FOR!**

**Put your special volunteer talents to work for the greater good of Preserving the Wonder!**

**[www.KeepSedonaBeautiful.org](http://www.KeepSedonaBeautiful.org) or call KSB at 928-282-4938**



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THANKS TO KSB's 2025 BUSINESS SPONSORS  
WHOSE FINANCIAL SUPPORT HELPS US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**D**<sup>A</sup> DENTON ACCOUNTING INC



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*Graphic designer*



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Mii amo



VERDE SOLAR POWER

SEDONA  
PIZZA & PASTA  
COMPANY  
PASTA • WOOD FIRED PIZZA • FULL BAR

