Friends of the Verde River – GIS Internship

Friends of the Verde River is a nonprofit organization that works collaboratively for a healthy, flowing Verde River system. Friends is headquartered in Cottonwood, Arizona, and currently most staff are working remotely. This project will be conducted remotely.

The Verde River is one of the few remaining flowing rivers in Arizona, endangered by overuse, increasing population, drought, and climate change. Friends of the Verde River has been promoting riparian health in north-central Arizona for over ten years. To keep the Verde flowing, we are implementing innovative solutions to reduce both groundwater and surface water withdrawals, such as the Verde River Exchange. Our scientists and crews monitor and restore habitat, primarily along the riparian corridor of the Verde River and its tributaries. We host festivals and conferences to inform, inspire, and motivate people to protect the Verde.

Friends is finding new ways to engage people in stewarding this land and water to protect wildland ecosystems. By highlighting the value of this river to Arizonans, we increase the supporters and stewards of the Verde River. The goal of this project is to improve our communications and increase understanding about the challenges and solutions we have identified for the Verde River system.

Project Description:

(1) Telling our Story through Maps: Friends of the Verde River has various story maps that were developed at different times in the past. These need to be updated and rethought; we may need to develop additional story maps. In addition, some are missing links and feature outdated materials. Below is the list of story maps we currently have.
   
   (a) Top ten things we love about the Verde River Need to add references to other tributaries, like Oak Creek, Sycamore Canyon, Granite Creek, West Fork, West Clear Creek, East Verde, etc.)
   (b) A birder’s guides to the Verde Valley Needs a new orientation to the entire Verde watershed)
   (c) Oasis in the Desert Emphasis is on habitat restoration and how we do this work. We’d like to see the story focus more on the whole organization, our successes and plans. In addition, the Verde is not in the desert, so we might need to completely rethink this one. We would like to have a map that highlights challenges and solutions.
   (d) VWRC Invasive Inventory and Monitoring This story map outlines inventory completed throughout the Verde Watershed. This information will be used to plan future monitoring.

(2) Updatable, printable representation of the organization’s work: To help us tell our story, we need a visual representation of the work we have done throughout our history. This tool should be designed to allow us to update it each year. Below is an example of a map showing habitat restoration in the Cottonwood region. We want to tell where we have worked, size of projects (acreage, river-miles), who we have worked with, how much funding we have brought to each project, and maybe the number of people we have hired (might be harder to do this as it is not tied to a specific place). We want to be able to both show this information on our website but also to be able to extract hard copies for specific purposes, such as a leave-behind for elected officials or graphic for a funder.
Assets:
The student would be working with our biologists and our communications staff. We have geodatabases, shape files, and a webmaster. Several people on staff have GIS skills and we have a project-based GIS consultant under contract who works with our habitat restoration team.

Hourly salary range: $16-20

Qualifications:
- Minimum of one-year of demonstrated skills utilizing Esri GIS software, ideally Story Maps and ArcGIS Online
- Coursework in environmental planning, conservation biology, sustainability, or environmental sciences as well as GIS
- Excellent data analysis and data presentation skills
  - Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively to develop creative solutions
  - Ability to stay on task to meet deadlines and goals while working remotely using own computer and internet

Academic Credit: Enrollment in GIS or GPH 484 or 584 internship course is an option for this position. For more information, see http://sgsup.asu.edu/interncredit.

To apply:
Kegn Moorcroft, Stewardship & Development Manager, Friends of the Verde River
jobs@verderiver.org

Include:
- your resume
- a short cover letter summarizing
  - your background and skills,
  - why you are interested in this project, and
  - links to any comparable work.