

Spring 2014

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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THE CITY OF PRESCOTT WAS RECENTLY NOTIFIED that the lease of 6.6 miles for a trail easement on State Trust Land for the Circle Trail segment has been approved. This will provide the missing trail segments from Badger 'P' Mountain to Williamson Valley Road.

Construction for the Circle Trail has been underway the past few months for a non-motorized trail from Senator Highway connecting to the Ranch Trail which starts on Walker Road. This new trail will provide an alternative to the Watershed 299 Trail now shared with motorized OHV vehicles. Additional trail work has also been underway from the Peavine near Yavapai Block over the top of the old City landfill and connecting to County land behind the new Juvenile Justice Center along Prescott Lakes Parkway. Plans are now being finalized for construction of the new Circle trail segments in the State Trust land.

Yavapai County Community Foundation also awarded YTA with a \$3000 grant for improved signage on the Circle Trail and other area trails. The Prescott Circle Trail logo shown here, has also been redesigned and will be the new marketing symbol and trail marker along the Circle Trail. YTA is grateful for YCCF's interest and support for improving the area recreational amenities and trails.



The City of Prescott 'General Plan' 10-year update is currently under review and is expected to go to the voters in November 2014. Included in the Plan are the trail and open space priorities as developed by a subcommittee representing area non-profits, land managers, tourism and hospitality, and neighboring jurisdictions. Be sure to vote your preferences this November.

The Open Space Alliance and YTA were joint hosts of a public information meeting held at the Prescott Library in June of 2012. The presentations and Q&A panel covered the Prescott Circle Trail status and plans at this well attended gathering. We are teaming up again for a Circle Trail status report on both trail construction and other area trail priorities.

The event will be at the upper ramada at Watson Lake on May 15 from 4-8PM, Thursday, May 15. The Circle Trail coincidentally passes a short distance away, between the ramada parking area and the lake. We expect the tone of the meeting to be one of celebration for all the successes.

*George Sheats,
President, YTA*

Our Mission

Yavapai Trails Association is dedicated to protecting, preserving, and developing recreational, non-motorized trails. We are an all-volunteer group that represents the interests of hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians.

YTA evolved from the Yavapai County Trail Advisory Committee appointed by the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors in 1989. One of the chief reasons for forming was to find ways to prevent the loss of access to existing trails as the county becomes increasingly urban.

There was also a need to help individual communities develop and coordinate their trail systems and to work closely with developers and others to secure new trails and maintain continued access to existing trails.

We are a non-profit corporation with federal 501(c)3 designation, and our operating expenses are funded by dues and donations. We are supported by many other organizations and recognized by the cities of Prescott, Prescott Valley, and Chino Valley, as well as Yavapai County, the USDA Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the State of Arizona.

Yavapai Trails Association

Officers

George Sheats, President
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 Jim Pessin, Treasurer
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 Call Membership Chair Jim Pessin at 771-2707
 or go to:
www.yavapai-trails.org

Join Us!

If you are not yet a member of YTA, we welcome you to join us in active participation. We have many different projects requiring a variety of skills. We need help with everything from making phone calls to constructing trails. Individual/family memberships are only \$15 a year, and organizational/business memberships are only \$30 a year. You will find a membership application on page 7.

Please keep in mind also that all monetary donations are tax deductible.



COMMUNITY FOREST TRUST



THE COMMUNITY FOREST TRUST (CFT) IS A 501(C)3 NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION whose mission is to advocate outdoor recreation for Central Arizona. Board members are or have been active in pursuing and promoting that mission and working with diverse political and recreational groups. CFT successfully provided programs with the Forestry and until recently organized the Volunteer program for trail maintenance, management and signage. Board member(s) have promoted projects in the Verde Valley area for watershed improvement and greenways and coordinated the local government agencies there to pursue stronger cohesive management techniques with financial support from a major foundation.

The board and advisory staff of CFT is committed to advocating and helping to unify the many organizations that represent the different aspects of outdoor recreation. These efforts will enhance economic development through the marketing of the many wonderful aspects of outdoor recreation in Central Arizona while at the same time preserving a strong quality of life philosophy.

*Gary Worob
 President, Community Forest Trust*

ECO-SYSTEM CORRIDORS: A STRATEGY FOR CREATING MORE SPACE FOR TRAILS

With an expanding development base and growing population, a system to protect, enhance, and restore “corridors” that promote ecological sustainability, protect water resources, provide recreation and inter-connected transportation options is needed to sustain a high quality of life in the Prescott area.

An inter-connected web of eco-system corridors that encompasses riparian areas and wildlife habitat corridors can also provide the links to an inter-modal transportation network, from roads to trails to rails to other public or cooperative transportation methods. Eco-system corridors can also provide for mitigation areas intended to off-set

impacts caused by “habitat fragmentation” due to development and roadway corridors.



The American pronghorn has completely vanished from quad-city urban and suburban landscapes. This phenomenon is almost entirely due to the fragmentation of this species’ habitat. Photo courtesy of Walt Anderson.

The new Transportation Re-authorization Bill known as MAP-21 can provide the impetus for forming a regional eco-system framework that can integrate ecological preservation and growth with the expansion of transportation systems in a growing “sub-rural” environment. MAP-21 provides a pathway for State Transportation Agencies, in cooperation with local jurisdictions, to develop Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) that include the development of eco-system corridors in tandem with highway corridors. A regional eco-system framework could also develop into a regional system of trails that conceivably could result in the option for a significant portion of the population to bike all the way to work on safe trails through beautifully rejuvenated riparian and wildlife corridors. If the system is impractical for bike-to-work systems, at a minimum, this system would provide a significant layout for recreational trails that lead from homes or hotel rooms to lakes, streams, National Forest amenities, rock climbing or other amenities that might emerge from this regional planning effort.

*Gary Worob
 President Community Forest Trust*

GRANITE GARDENS TRAILS



THE CITY OF PRESCOTT has over the course of several years knitted together much of the Dells into a spectacular area of great scenic drama. A 35-acre piece of this area titled *Granite Gardens* was acquired by the City in June of 2008 for a price of 2.9M from Richard Hazelwood, a Scottsdale developer. Hazelwood had intended this parcel for development into both town houses and upscale private residences. These developments would have been in the center of one of the most scenic spots within the Granite Creek drainage. This entire plan soured, however, when Hazelwood was cited by the U.S. Corp of Engineers for multiple violations of Federal law for altering the landscape and its vegetation. He had stripped this beautiful basin of its natural vegetation and bulldozed an existing man-made pond.

As a consequence of the citation, the owner was required to enter into a mitigation agreement with the Corp of Engineers and repair the damage done to the site. It also put the City of Prescott in a bargaining position to negotiate the purchase of this property. The aforementioned mitigation process continues but under direction of the City of Prescott and management by Biozone, Inc. The area has been restored to much of its natural character.

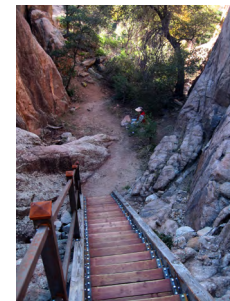
The area has been of interest to the City which has been active in the purchase of contiguous parcels along Granite Creek and within the re-

gion known as The Dells. The above mentioned parcel comprises both the Granite Creek streamside as well as sheer granite cliffs. Rock climbers have long been attracted to the Precambrian granite of the Granite Dells area. Few of us, however have the skill or even inclination to attempt the ascent of these sheer boulder cliffs. Trail specialist Chris Hosking along with a crew of volunteers has succeeded in creating a series of very short but steep and rugged pathways within these bluffs.

To reach these trails, go north on Hwy. 89 from downtown Prescott for about 4.5 miles to the round-about just west of the entrance to Watson Lake Park. After exiting the round-about continue north on Hwy. 89 for another 2 miles, but watch for a tall U.S. flag and pole on the west side of the road. This is the entrance to Granite Gate Resort. The road to the trail is immediately on the east side of the highway, where it crosses Granite Creek to the trailhead. The road may be inaccessible during times of even moderately high water. The road also provides one access to a number of private residences in this area as well as an easement for water and sewer lines to the residential area. After you leave the highway simply park before reaching the creek. It is just a short walk to the trailhead over a wooden bridge crossing of the creek. This is a delightful riparian area especially as new growth returns to the streamside in the spring. Continue walking along the road until you see a bright red-painted post on the left. The trailhead is just a few

feet to the left (west) of this post where the adventure begins.

This is the *Stairway Loop Trail*. It is a steep climb along the dirt trail and white spotted rocks that lead to a spectacular westward overlook of granite creek and a handful of residences below. From here you can see a 2-3 foot diameter steel flume that parallels the stream. This now abandoned aqueduct once delivered water from Watson Lake to the Chino Valley Irrigation District prior to the City of Prescott's purchase of water rights to the waters in both Willow and Watson Lakes. Continue on the trail as it curves around the west side of this bluff to a wooden staircase. This 37-step stairway climbs steeply through a cleft in the granite bluff and after a short distance turns north to the junction with a short loop. A wooden and steel bench here provides a rest after the steep climb.



Leaving here, the trail takes a steep descent down the bluff's east side to the basin dividing two major bluffs that enclose the area. A trail sign sits at the northern extent of this basin and marks a junction leading to the *Rock Stacker Trail* along the eastside bluff. Before leaving this basin, check out the interesting little rock grotto just a few yards north and east of the trail junction. This was apparently storage for mining supplies.

The Rock Stacker Trail takes a

clockwise twisting course around this eastside bluff. The next junction identifies another short loop before reaching the *Grotto Trail*. This latter section dives into a deep rocky cleft to a spot that requires a careful squeeze before exiting into the basin between the bluffs.

Go south from here to reach the trailhead. As you do so, notice the rocks bordering the east side of the basin. The dark gray color of the rock changes to a lighter hue immediately above. This appears to mark where a dam once held water for a small but pretty fishing pond. Any water within this little basin drains to the southwest and drops approximately 20 feet in elevation before reaching the dirt access road, exactly the reverse of the course of Granite Creek. These trails total only about 1.4 miles and an elevation gain of only 100 feet.

For more information and a map of this trail, consult the City of Prescott website at: cityofprescott.net/_d/trails/granite_gardens_trail_system_map.pdf

— Ron Smith
YTA Board Member



TRAILS GAIN GROUND ON GRANTS

FIRST LET ME SAY THANK YOU to all our members and supporters for the yearly contributions you have made to our success over the years! Because of your monetary support, YTA has been able to apply for grant monies and help build, maintain, purchase, and update trails in the Yavapai County area.

Some of our initial grant money came from the Arizona Community Foundation. It was used to purchase the basic tools we need to build trails as well as token items to encourage volunteers for trail building, including gloves, water, whistles, and lunches. Additional grant money, from the AZ Game and Fish Heritage Fund, was used to purchase the easement and create the Turley Trail in the south central part of Prescott. The Turley is being incorporated into the Prescott Circle Trail as that trail continues to expand. Along with YTA, other organizations have started to create and work on trails in the area, including Prescott Mountain Bike Association (PMBA). Their ability to use the national resources of such a large group as IMBA (International Mountain Bike Association) has allowed for additional purchase of land easements and the continuation and building of the Circle Trail.

Recent grants from the Yavapai County Community Foundation (YCCF) have allowed for the purchase of mechanized and large items for dealing with trail obstacles that are not easy to manipulate by hand, as well as the ability to create better maps for our trails. The current grant from YCCF is geared to help better identify and label trails, including new signage along the Black Canyon Trail, Prescott Circle Trail (PCT) and for trails within the Prescott National Forest. Note the new logo on page 1 that will be marking the PCT and let us know how you like it!

Without your continued support these ventures would not have been possible. Your monetary contributions and volunteer hours have helped provide additional matching funds in grants, and the hours have helped to build an aggregate of supporting members and organizations that help to increase the grant value of volunteer hours (a volunteer hour is worth over \$15.00 currently, so those hours do add up). Happy trails!

Cathy Schult
YTA Board Member

ASPEN CREEK TRAIL



THE CITY OF PRESCOTT TRAIL SYSTEM has a pretty little trail just minutes from downtown Prescott called

Aspen Creek Trail. This trail should not be confused with Prescott National Forest's Aspen Creek Trail # 48 with a trailhead on Copper Basin Rd. The City trail is a great trail if your time is limited. It is a short and easy trail, about 3/4 mile one way, but is not a loop trail; you must go up and back the same way.

The trail winds between the



About mid-trail you arrive at a place called "Slick Rock Falls". The creek flows down between huge granite boulders creating pools in the rock. Prescott Old Timers would know this place as the "Tubs."



The one drawback to the Aspen Creek Trail is parking. The trailhead is on Poplar Dr., but where parking is not allowed. There is limited parking on Middlebrook, Linden or Cherry and you may need to walk from there to the trailhead. The trail ends on Hassayampa Village Lane, but there is no public parking there either.

Aspen Creek trailhead is about 2 miles from downtown Prescott. Travel south on Montezuma St. to White Spar Rd. Turn right off White Spar onto Copper Basin Rd. Turn right off Copper Basin onto Highland Ave. and very quickly turn left onto Middlebrook. Follow Middlebrook to Poplar and turn right onto Poplar. A short walk on Poplar takes you to the trailhead. Remember you may not park on Poplar. Aspen Creek Trail is open to hikers and equestrians.

*Joyce Mackin
Past Pres. YTA*

Hassayampa Golf Course and private homes so it is very important to stay on the trail. The trail is well marked with signs and the famous white dots used by City Trails Specialist Chris Hosking and the 'Over The Hill Gang' to mark a path across rocks.

This is a beautiful trail even in its semi-urban setting. The trail runs along Aspen Creek, which has water most of the year. The many trees make it shady and cool for most of the trail. A little bridge crosses the creek and there is a bench for sitting and enjoying the gentle sound of water.

RICHINBAR



RICHINBAR IS A GHOST TOWN surrounded by the Agua Fria National Monument, south of

Cordes Lakes.

This mine produced a fortune in gold and silver - over \$6 million at today's prices. It started in the mid-1890s, and had its own post office from 1896-1912. Richinbar was abandoned decades ago but there are still many interesting remains scattered around.

An easy hike will take you there, starting just north of the Sunset Point rest area on I-17. As a bonus, you'll enjoy spectacular views into the Agua Fria Canyon and see some ancient petroglyphs.

To read more about this interesting historical site and how to get there, go online to nigel-yta-richinbar.blogspot.com/, where you will also see a map and many photos which make this hike come alive.

*Nigel Reynolds
Chair, YTA Historic Trails
Committee*



NOTICE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

The Public is invited to a *Special Trails Meeting* on
May 15, 2014
Watson Lake Ramada
4-8 p.m.

Earth Day, 2014

Saturday, April 23, 2011 at 10:00 AM

Earth Day Celebration will be held on the Courthouse Square. Come out and enjoy a mixture of fun and informative booths, food, entertainment and exploring ways to be green.

For more information go to <http://www.yavapaiosa.org/earthday>.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Individual or Organization Name (s) _____

Street address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____ E-mail _____

What related organizations do you belong to? _____

How do you use trails (horseback, hike, bike)? _____

Do you have time or skills to contribute? ____ How? _____ Want to volunteer ____

If you did not receive this newsletter in the mail, where did you pick up this copy?

Retail store _____ Public facility _____ Friend ____ Organization _____

Annual membership fee: \$15.00 for individual/family; \$30 Organization/Business

Date _____ Membership Fee Amt. _____ Make checks payable to: **YTA**

If you would like membership in the YTA Historic Trails Committee, please check box

Please clip out this coupon and send to:

Yavapai Trails Association, P.O. Box 403, Prescott, AZ 86302

Yavapai Trails Association
P. O. Box 403
Prescott, AZ 86302

We're on the Web at:
www.
yavapai-trails.org

