

# Trail Tracks

A PUBLICATION OF THE YAVAPAI TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Winter 2006

## National Trails Day Relay Roulette

It's not too soon to put together a team for our National Trails Day **Relay Roulette** on April 29th, 2006 at Pioneer Park. Each team will consist of a hiker, horse/rider and cyclist. There will be a different route for each type of trail user.

Horses will leave first on a designated trail and along the way they will draw a number out of a bag from someone posted about 1/2 way through the course. When they return to base, their number will be entered on a scoreboard.

When the horse/rider team member returns, his cycling partner will leave on the trail mapped for them. They also will draw a number from a bag about 1/2 way through their route. On return to base, the number of the biker will be added on the scoreboard to that of the horse/rider.

Last but not least, as soon as your cyclist teammate has turned in his number, the hiker of the team will take off on their designated route. Again, they will draw a number from someone posted along the trail and that number will be added upon return to base.

The numbers for your team will be added and the prizes are 30/20/10 percent payback to first, second and third place teams. The entry fee is \$15.00 per team.

There will not be any racing or speed involved as this is a "luck of the draw" event. Start putting together your team now. If you would like to enter but do not have a partner(s), call Joyce Mackin at 778-4985. She will take your name and area of interest, then do her best to help you connect with teammates. Register with Joyce as soon as possible.

This is a fun event and we hope to have some donated prizes to add to the payback. The entry deadline is April 20th, 2006. This is an American Hiking Society national event co-sponsored by the City of Prescott and the Yavapai Trails Association.

Jan Alfano

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## National Trails Day



For a complete list of National Trails Day events, visit our website at [www.yavapaitrillsassociation.org](http://www.yavapaitrillsassociation.org)

# Log Cabins Hidden on Spruce Mountain

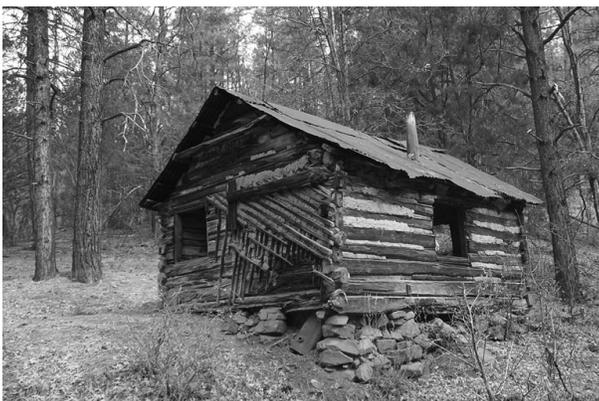
I always prefer loop trails over “out-and-back” trails, although you often see quite different views if you walk the same trail in both directions. One of the better loop trails in the Prescott National Forest is the Groom Creek Loop trail, which goes to the top of Spruce Mountain, also known as trail 307. This is a fairly strenuous hike, and really tough if you mountain bike.

To reach the trailhead, drive 5.5 miles from Gurley Street south on Mount Vernon, which soon becomes the Senator Highway and passes through Groom Creek on the way. Park on the left (east side) off the road in the large parking area. This is the next turn-off after the road signed to Camp Wamatochick, and is opposite the Horse Camp. There is a forest-parking fee of \$2 (free on Wednesdays), unless you have a Golden Age Passport.

The trail starts to the right of the restrooms, where you will soon see a sign indicating the two different mileages to the top, depending on whether you go to the left (hiking the loop counter clockwise) or to the right. The total loop mileage is about nine miles, with the trailhead at 6000 feet and the summit lookout tower at 7696. There is a cut-off trail that shortens the distance by two miles, but only reduces the elevation climb by 200 feet. This alternative, and other shorter variations, are described in the last two paragraphs. When I went around this loop with a group of hikers at the beginning of December, we chose the shorter but steeper route, going to the left from the trailhead. You should allow about 5 hours for the whole loop, including a stop at the top for a snack and the views. Bring plenty of water, especially if you take this hike in the summer. However, it's more enjoyable in the spring or fall when it's cooler – expect snow if you try it in the winter.

You will start climbing almost immediately, but the trail breaks you in somewhat gently – you'll encounter the steeper slopes nearer the top. The trail soon passes through an area where logging operations have cleared some of the trees killed by the pine beetle. The trail then crisscrosses the route of a transmission line that takes power to homes near the top of the mountain – there are extensive views to the right across the Hassayampa Valley through occasional gaps in the trees. After about an hour, the trail levels off for a short distance and there is a trail “crossroads” towards the end of this flat area. Keep straight on for the full loop hike, or turn right for the cut-off referred to above (sign says Transcendent Mine). The main loop trail continues upward, with a steep valley below on your right. Keep an eye out on your right for the ruin of an old log cabin near the head of the valley, which you can spot where the first switchbacks start. You should reach the top in less than two hours. There you will find a picnic table on your left, a washroom on your far right, and surprisingly, maybe, a good dirt road. You could have saved yourself a lot of effort by driving to this point up Spruce Mountain Road (FR 52A)! However, chances are you would have encountered a locked gate about    mile before the top. For the fire tower and a great view of Prescott, hike up to your left, along a side trail or up the tower access road that turns into the side trail.

To complete the loop, look for the trail signs between the Spruce Mountain Road coming up the hill and the new road that climbs up to the right to some microwave towers. Enjoy the different views on the easier but longer path going back down to the trailhead. Look for traces of past mining activity beside the trail in the form of shallow pits and cuts – you may have noticed similar remains on your way up too. About 1 hours down from the top, there is a well-preserved log cabin, hidden a short distance off to the right of the trail, just past where it hairpins at a stream. If you can find this old cabin, it is interesting and quite photogenic in the right light. Later, after the descent has flattened off, there is a maze of trails and old roads – just follow the signs. For the last    mile or so, the trail is close to the Senator Highway. You can shorten this hike by taking the cut-off trail – turn right at the trail crossroads, mentioned above, where the sign says Transcendent Mine. The cut-off trail drops down quickly to a valley – you may have to negotiate fallen logs. It then climbs steeply for about    a mile to rejoin the loop trail at another flat area with signs, where you would turn right to complete the loop. If you have above average route-finding skills and a good map:



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<http://sharlot.org/archives/maps/trailmaps/>, there are other shorter loop variations you can take. These lesser and unsigned trails go off to the right before you reach the cut-off trail. They are in the Camp Wamatochick area and can be quite confusing, so only try this if you have the right expertise, enjoy exploring and don't mind getting a little lost!

**Nigel Reynolds** [nigelaz@aol.com](mailto:nigelaz@aol.com)

## Prescott Outing Club

The PRESCOTT OUTINGS CLUB was founded 30 years ago in 1975. We have 3 hikes of varied difficulty going out every weekend September through May. Saturday's hikes, one strenuous (8-10 miles), one Moderate, (6-8 miles) , & Sunday afternoon a more leisurely hike of about 3 miles. We also have "Special Events" once monthly - either a local trip or longer. Our hikes have been scouted & are led by experienced hike leaders. Our community service project is to maintain Thumb Butte Trail twice a year, usually October & April. We have Two planned social events/business meetings; A potluck Picnic in the summer & a Luncheon at a local restaurant in the winter. Our members ages range from middle-aged adults to senior citizens & have varied occupations & lifestyles. What we do have in common is a love of the outdoors & hiking. We have a Web Page - [www.geocities.com/prescottoutingsclub](http://www.geocities.com/prescottoutingsclub) with schedules of our hikes, pictures, & more information. For more information call (928) 708-0843

## Yavapai Horsemen's Association

On Dec 14, the YHA met with two county representatives of transportation, Chris Bridges and Mike Willett. The discussion regarded crossings on Williamson Valley Road (and other areas of expansion) for equestrian users. The areas mentioned for either traffic signals or below grade crossings were at Pioneer Pkwy and Williamson Valley Road (Circle trail continuation), Pemberton and Cliff Rose, Singletree and Rainmaker, Williamson Valley Road and Granite Oaks Dr., American Ranch and Black-jack Ridge, and Outer Loop and Williamson Valley Road . Traffic signals were the preferred method but unless the traffic ingress/egress warrants it, those may be slower in coming. 1, 3, and 6 may meet the warrants as soon as the improvements are done. 2 is an area with a few washes so the main interest was in a below grade crossing to accommodate both the washes and the riders. The Williamson Valley Road will definitely need something but is the least likely to meet the warrants for a signal anytime soon.

Also mentioned in the discussion was general county road expansion and connecting trails/crossing including such areas as Whispering Canyon for Almosta Ranch Rd/Nancy and Side Road for the Peavine Trail. And finally, the end of the year potluck dinner with 'horsey' gifts for drawing was a fun success!!! Elections in Jan. 2006.

HAPPY TRAILS, Cathy Schultz

### COMMITTEES & LIAISONS

Historic Trails & Outreach: Nigel Reynolds

Newsletter/Website: Natasha Casteel

Cartographer: Derek Brownlee

Boone Court Project: Ann Colella

Trails Maintenance: Bob Sutton

Special Events: Susan Brook

Prescott Outing Club: Ruth Peterson

Prescott National Forest: Doug Buck

# Get Ready for the Big Event!

National Trails Day is set for April 29th at Pioneer Park in Prescott. The bed event is cosponsored by the City of Prescott and Yavapai Trails Association. The national sponsor is the American Hiking Society.

**Morning Event: "Relay Roulette"** This is a "luck of the draw" event, no speed is involved. Each team will consist of a hiker, horse/rider and cyclist. This should be easy and fun. Team members can select a name, color or anything creative to identify themselves and bring their own cheering sections. Register with Joyce ASAP.

**Afternoon Events:** The Jan Alfano Trail will be dedicated. This is a connector of the Prescott Circle Trail from Embry-Riddle University to Gheral Brownlow Trail System.

We will also have our Team Leader Training Workshop, under the direction of the City of Prescott. Sign up for this event to learn trail maintenance/construction and become qualified to lead groups interested in volunteering. Call Jan at 445-2942 to get on the list.

**Daylong Events:** A silent auction will be held so you can bid all day on donated items. Winners will be announced at the end of the afternoon.

There will be a tack and gear swap table available for equestrians and cyclists. You are responsible for your own set-up, clean-up and money handling. YTA will not charge a fee for this event.

Educational programs such as Wilderness First Aid, Orienteering/Geo-caching/GPS, bird identification, rescue dog and packing will be presented throughout the day. Food concessions will be operated by Yavapai College Ag Club as a fundraiser for that group.

Various vendors and displays related to local trails will be set up in the park. Any club is welcome to display your wares or advertise your organization at our National Trails Day event. You need not be a member of YTA, but we sure would welcome you if you want to join us. Should you decide to participate, you will be responsible for setting up, manning your area and removal of your items at the end of the day. Everyone will be expected to leave the site clean when they leave. If you would like us to reserve a space, please call Jan at 445-2942 or Susan at 541-7538

A minimum of 15 volunteers will be needed to assist in this endeavor and more will be better.

**Help Needed Prior to the Event:** Design posters/flyers, distribute posters/flyers, stuff bags for contestants of Relay Roulette, write letters to merchants for sponsorship/donations, call members of YTA or your trail-using friends and encourage them to participate, design map of location, trail routes and workshop, publicity

**Help Needed During the Event:** Man a YTA table, dispense numbers on Relay Roulette trails, help with registration, distribute maps, keep scoreboard, act as M.C. and announce winners, coordinate vendors and show them where to set up, handle silent auction, give general directions to attendees, direct parking, coordinate music, handle raffle, help with Team Leader Training Workshop, clean up after event

# Calendar of Upcoming Events

## **YTA Board Meeting**

First Thursday of each month, 7:00pm

119 Grove Street, Prescott

## **Open Space Alliance Executive Committee Meeting**

First Wednesday of each month, 12:00pm

119 Grove Street, Prescott

## **National Trails Day**

April 29th, Pioneer Park, Prescott



## Goals of YTA

The primary goal of Yavapai Trails Association is to assist in the development of a system of interconnecting trails for hikers, horseback riders and cyclists throughout Yavapai County; to foster cooperation and communications among all trails user groups; to promote communication and cooperation with all government agencies regarding trails; to create higher visibility for trail opportunities and issues; and to seek development of new trail resources.

Yavapai Trails Association is a nonprofit organization recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. Donations are tax deductible but dues are not.

## Team Leader Training Workshop

YTA will be holding their 3<sup>rd</sup> Team Leader Training Workshop in conjunction with National Trails Day on April 29, 2006 at Pioneer Park. This time it will be co-sponsored by the City of Prescott Parks & Recreation Department with Eric Smith, Prescott Parks & Trails Superintendent and Bob Sutton, YTA Trails Maintenance Chairman doing the instructing. The workshop takes about three hours and participants will learn how to use the various heavy-duty tools, trail construction/maintenance techniques, various procedures for leading a group of volunteers (pick up tools, bring water and first aid kit, count heads, get waivers signed, etc.).

Everyone in the workshop will get a certificate and be put on a list to possibly lead small groups of volunteers on trails that we have adopted or others where we are asked for assistance. Leaders are not expected to do the actual work unless they are so inclined, but will give instructions and over-see a group such as Scouts, 4-H kids, high school or college students that are interested in doing community service projects. Leaders would probably not be called more than once a year and are not obligated in any way. It is fun to get a group of young people out and interested in improving the trail system.

# Conserving State Trust Lands for the Future

As many of you know, 10.5 million acres of land in Arizona were awarded almost 100 years ago by the Federal government to the State of Arizona as a means of raising money for public schools and other beneficiaries. The revenues for education accrue from the sale or lease of these Trust lands. About 9.3 million acres remain to be disposed of.

As you can see from the slow pace of disposition, the original model for the disposal of these lands is now completely outmoded and inefficient. The sale or lease of lands takes years and many open space areas critical to wildlife are being lost to development, since there is no provision in the law that allows for conservation. There have been many efforts to achieve reform of the system, but even after three years of work, an independent committee of various stakeholders failed to reach consensus on how to get the job done. No legislation has yet to reach a vote of the Arizona legislature.

Rather than deal with all of the marginal issues of various special interests, the initiative concerns mainly the classification of the 690,000 acres of lands for conservation purposes. The initiative further requires that state and local communities cooperate in planning and controlling the development of trust lands that are sold. Finally, the initiative protects and guarantees that classroom funding will be improved through better management of state trust lands. Born of frustration and failure, a coalition of state conservation organizations has drafted the new Initiative for the November 2006 ballot. It will achieve, if passed, the safeguard of approximately 690,000 acres of critical open space. What would it mean to Yavapai County? About 1,800 acres on Badger "P" Mountain, 2,200 acres on Glassford Hill, and over 54,000 acres among checkerboard sections in the upper Big Chino Valley would be protected from development. According to The Nature Conservancy, the Big Chino Valley is perhaps the largest expanse of high quality unbroken grassland in a 30-million acre area in the southwest. It is host to one of the largest herds of pronghorn in the world. The Big Chino also supplies about 80 percent of the surface flow of water in the upper 24 miles of the Verde River.

There are three types of reserve status included in the initiative. Permanent Reserve status would protect the land from development at once and any future uses of these lands would have to be consistent with conservation purposes. The second classification is a Provisional Reserve. These lands would have to be purchased by a public agency or non-profit organization at fair market value but without the need to go to auction. The lands could then become part of a city, town, or development plan. The final classification is an Educational Reserve. Under this classification, lands would be transferred to universities for conservation or research purposes and restricted permanently from commercial development. There are no lands in Yavapai County that have that classification.

However, of the aforementioned 1,800 acres of Badger Mountain, 1,406 acres would be transferred under Permanent Reserve to a political subdivision without cost. Likewise, of the 2,200 acres on Glassford Hill, 654 acres would also receive that same treatment. The rest, 1,555 acres, would have to be purchased by either Prescott or Prescott Valley. There is, however, a generous period of time within which that could be accomplished.

What is the chance of this initiative getting voter approval? Consider this. There must be at least 180,000 valid signatures on the petitions by next July to receive approval for the ballot. The initiative has only been circulating for about 3 months. Yet over 100,000 signatures are already recorded. That might be a clue to the interest and likelihood of passage.

Many of your friends and neighbors are already involved in circulating petitions and soliciting signatures. Want to join this important effort? To find out more, check out the following websites: [www.sonoran.org/programs/state\\_trust\\_lands/index.html](http://www.sonoran.org/programs/state_trust_lands/index.html) or [www.aztrustlands.com/maps/places.htm](http://www.aztrustlands.com/maps/places.htm). Finally, give me a call at 928-445-6678 if you have questions or want to find out where and how to become a petitioner.

Ron Smith

# YTA Launches New Website

The Yavapai Trails Association is pleased to announce the publication of their new website: [www.yavapaitrailsassociation.org](http://www.yavapaitrailsassociation.org). The new site features information about YTA, trail maps (including the Prescott Circle Trail), the YTA newsletter and articles, YTA news and events, and links to related websites that are useful to all trail users.

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Visit the YTA website today and leave your feedback. For more information contact Natasha Casteel: [yta@yavapaitrailsassociation.org](mailto:yta@yavapaitrailsassociation.org).

## YTA Membership Form

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

How do you use trails (horseback, bike, hike, etc)? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_ How? \_\_\_\_\_

Membership in other groups: \_\_\_\_\_

Application Fee: (annual) \$12.00 individual/family, \$24.00 organization/business

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Application Fee Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

*Clip this form and send to: Yavapai Trails Association, PO Box 403, Prescott AZ 86302*

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P.O. Box 403  
Prescott AZ 86302  
Email us:

[yta@yavapaitrailsassociation.org](mailto:yta@yavapaitrailsassociation.org)

[www.yavapaitrailsassociation.org](http://www.yavapaitrailsassociation.org)

## Sharing Our Trails Makes Sense

The Yavapai Trails Association advocates the benefits of hikers, cyclists and equestrians sharing the trail system in our area. Some of these benefits include:

1. Multiple use trails can best accommodate the needs of the most users. A generally open backcountry disperses users across an entire trail system. Single use or restricted use trails tend to concentrate users, increasing environmental and social impacts.
2. Multiple use trails help build a trail community by increasing the need for all users to cooperate to preserve and protect a common resource. Encountering other users on a trail offers the opportunity to meet and talk. Separate trails breed ill will, territoriality and rivalries.
3. Multiple use trails are most cost effective for land managers. They require fewer signs and less staff. Monitoring and enforcement is simplified.
4. Multiple use trails enable responsible, experienced users to educate outlaws and novices. Because they share the same trail system, the opportunity for peer regulation is enhanced.



**Be a courteous trail user!**