

Trail Tracks

Winter 2007

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Searching for the Original Roads to Prescott

The Historic Trails Committee is a small group of dedicated individuals who enjoy tromping around in the wilds of Yavapai County. What's their excuse for doing this? A love of the outdoors coupled with an interest in finding historical trails, in particular the two freight wagon roads that supplied the various needs of both civilians and the military when Prescott became a town and Fort Whipple a military center in 1864.

The roads both originated at the Colorado River, one to the south at Ehrenberg, the other to the north at Hardyville, near modern Bullhead City. The freight to these two river ports was supplied by paddle steamers and riverboats from the mouth of the Colorado, delivered there by sailing ships and steam-

boats from Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco.

How do you find the route of wagon roads that were scratched in the dirt 140 years ago and were only in use for about 20 years (because after that railroads provided cheaper and faster alternatives for moving freight over longer distances)? Well, first of all, you need to do some research in the archives – mainly old surveys and maps, but also articles from early newspapers, especially the **Arizona Miner**, which was published in Prescott.

In 1863, the Homestead Act became law, allowing citizens to claim a free quarter-section of land (a section of land is one square mile, so a quarter is 160 acres). As a result, the government began surveying Arizona in



Swale and windrows, evidence of freight wagons of the past.

– Photo by Nigel Reynolds

1865, from a starting point near the confluence of the Salt and Gila Rivers, southwest of mod-

see *Roads*, page 7

An Enchanting Trek to Grapevine Springs

Originating from deep within the east flank of Big Bug Mesa, a perennial stream, Grapevine Creek, courses east under a dense canopy of deciduous trees. It finally disappears beneath the deep silts and boulders of this wash before reaching the trailhead, thus hiding its gentle beauty from those unwilling to explore beyond easy reach of a vehicle.

Within the upper reach of the canyon there is a cluster of springs that seep from the north-facing slope and feed a lush riparian forest gallery. With



The gentle beauty of Grapevine Springs on a day in November.

– Photo by Ron Smith

their dependable water supply, they support a dense stand of deciduous trees. Even a small stand of aspen occurs near the headwater area and stands of white fir cover the north-facing canyon slope. Walnuts, oaks, box elders, and an unusually dense stand of alders also thrive in the cool microclimate. In the fall, their leaves smoothly carpet the canyon floor in pastel hues of yellow to ochre. On a cold, blustery day in November 2006, we noted signs of bears at work

see *Trek*, page 6



“...the local trails have an eclectic make up and provide an extensive network with a wide variety of trail types, dirt, vegetation, and views.”

Observations of a Dirt-Worshipping Newcomer

One of the main reasons that my family and I moved to Prescott is the endless, year-round cycling opportunities that the area offers. Since moving, we have discovered, like much of the population of Prescott, that the local trails have an eclectic make up and provide an extensive network with a wide variety of trail types, dirt, vegetation, and views.

This is evident in everything from the family-friendly Peavine Trail, which meanders through massive granite boulders and cactus fields, to the rocky-to-technical Trail No. 307 in the pine forests of Spruce Mountain -- and everything in between.

Another feature that some may take for granted is the quality of the trail surfaces in this area. After rainstorms, the

ground dries out, making the trails very durable for the multi-use crowds who travel them. Coming from the bottomless pumice trails of Mammoth Lakes and the mud of England, I truly appreciate this quality.

In my six months here, I have explored many local trails, and I have yet to be disappointed. They offer a wide variety of terrain and topography, and they can be linked together quite successfully. The trails of Granite Basin, Thumb Butte, the Bradshaw Mountains, Watson and Willow Lakes, and Pioneer Park -- which make up the Prescott Circle Trail, or PCT -- are excellent individual networks in themselves.

The ever-popular Granite Basin system, for instance, offers the technical thrill of Mint Wash Trail (No. 345), the smooth,

rolling uphill workout or downhill thrill ride of Willow Trail (No. 347) and Balancing Rock Trail (No. 349), the serpentine Link Trail (No. 332), and the gonzo, abusive Clark Spring Trail (No. 40) and Granite Mountain Trail (No. 37). The PCT, or what I like to call The Perfect Cycling Trail, will link these highly individual trail networks, crowning Prescott as a premier mountain biking destination.

- *Chris Hosking*

*Great resources for those who wish to experience the trails are the **FREE Bicycling Opportunities Map** published by the Prescott Bicycling Committee, which is available at all local bicycle shops. Chris Hosking is the trail specialist with the Prescott Parks and Recreation Department, and he is an avid mountain biker, hiker, and dirt*

YTA Receives National Award for Local Achievement

Yavapai Trails Association recently received a national honor accompanied by a grant from the Kodak American Greenways Awards Program. The \$880 grant will be used to purchase much-needed tools and signage to maintain and protect non-motorized trails. In addition to receiving the grant award, YTA will be showcased

as a national model for its innovative efforts to maintain, preserve, and develop trails for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians in Yavapai County.

The Kodak American Greenways Awards—administered by The Conservation Fund, a recognized leader in working with local communities to expand the nation's network of linked open

spaces—provides seed grants of up to \$2,500 to nonprofit organizations and government agencies to help develop new greenway projects. The awards are meant to provide initial funding to spark creativity in conservation, outdoor recreation, and trail and greenway development. .

Yavapai Trails Association

Officers

Jan Alfano, President
Ron Smith, Vice President
Carol Stafford, Secretary
Jim Pessin, Treasurer

Contact Us

Yavapai Trails Association
P.O. Box 403
Prescott, AZ 86302
928.445.2942
alftrail@cableone.net
yavapaitrailsassociation.org

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Rob Hehlen, Forest Service Representative

Please send questions, comments, and suggestions to the editor, Mike Druckenmiller, at mike@banningcreek.com



National Trails Day 2007: 15 Years of Celebrating Trails

As it marks its fifteenth year of existence, National Trails Day inspires trail enthusiasts to explore, discover, participate, and celebrate trails. Events take place in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Canada. The day honors the hard work, dedication, and countless volunteer hours contributed by individuals, non-profit groups, government agencies, corporate sponsors, and community organizations across North America.

The official date of National Trails Day is always the first Saturday in June; however, National Trail Day events can also take place at other times during the year. Yavapai Trails Association takes advantage of that flexibility.

"We have held our events in early June in the past," said Yavapai Trails Association President Jan Alfano, "but our

members, partners, and guests told us they prefer an earlier, cooler date. This year, like last, we are scheduled for late April, and, once again, we are partnering with the City of Prescott."

On Saturday, April 28, at the Brownlow trailhead at Pioneer Park, YTA and the City of Prescott invite the public to Prescott's 2007 National Trails Day celebration. According to Susan Brook, Yavapai Trails Association Special Events Chairperson, "The main event will be the Second Annual Trail Rally FUNd-raiser, where hikers, mountain bikers, and horse riders team up to win prizes, have fun, and raise money for Prescott's trails." (See sidebar below.) Other events are in the works, so keep checking the YTA website (yavapaitrails-association.org) for the latest developments.

Past National Trails Day celebrations in Prescott have included workshops on trail maintenance and construction, silent auctions, wilderness first aid and orienteering educational programs, horse packing demonstrations, and fun runs. There have also been National Trails Day-related service projects, such as the construction of a new trail near Lynx Lake to replace a trail located in a riparian area near an endangered petroglyph site.

- Susan Brook

If your organization or business would like to sponsor a non-commercial, trail-related activity during the National Trails Day celebration, contact Susan Brook, 928.541.7538, brooksusan@hotmail.com. Here's a chance to highlight your group to other like-minded folks.



Second Annual Trail Rally FUNd-Raiser Set for April 28

Calling all hikers, trail riders and mountain bikers! Are you looking for a fun event to celebrate National Trails Day, enjoy the great outdoors, raise money for local trails, and maybe even win a prize? Sign up now for the **Second Annual Trail Rally FUNd-Raiser**, to be held on Saturday, April 28, 2007, at Pioneer Park in Prescott.

Teams will be composed of a hiker, mountain biker, and a horse and rider, who will navigate separate loops of the Brownlow trail system and pick up playing cards along the way. The three highest "scoring" teams win cash prizes. This is not a timed event, so it's fun for everyone!

If you've formed a hiker, biker, and horse and rider team already, great! But don't worry if you don't have a complete team. We'll take your name (and form of locomotion) and match you up with others seeking teammates.

Registration fee is \$15 per person, \$45 per team. Deadline for registering is April 21. There will be a limit of 25 teams. Half of the fee will be used for payout, and half will be used for trail projects in the Prescott area.

To register, please visit our website at www.yavapaitrailsassociation.org and click on the word "Rally" under the National Trails Day logo to access a printable registration form or call Joyce at (928) 778-4985 or contact Susan at brooksusan@hotmail.com.





..and they're off at the Rails to Trails Run (above) while participants stretch near the YTA table (below).

-Photos courtesy of the YMCA



News Briefs and Updates

Openings on the YTA Board:

We are seeking additional board members to help us in our mission of preserving, maintaining, and expanding our trail system. We meet the first Thursday of the month, January through November, at 7 p.m.

This is your chance to express your thoughts and be part of the county's recognized voice for non-motorized trails. If you are interested, please contact our nominating committee: Carolyn Mason (636-0660) and/or Joyce Mackin (778-4985). Ballots will go out in the Spring issue of **Trail Tracks**, and officers are elected from within the current board.

Rails to Trails Run: The YMCA held their first annual Rails to Trails Run November 18 with four separate competitions. All profits generated benefited the Prescott YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Arizona. Included was an

11-mile run, 10K run/walk, 5K run/walk and 2 mile fund run/walk. Susan Brook assisted along the route handing out water and fruit, while Carol Stafford and Jan Alfano manned a table distributing YTA literature and providing information..

Fourth of July Parade:

We are planning an entry in the Prescott Frontier Days parade: a hiker, a bicyclist, and a horse, plus two people carrying the YTA banner and possible two others distributing flyers on the sidelines. Contact Jan Alfano at 445-2942 or alftrail@cablone.net if you are interested and/or want more information.

Brochure Update: Our popular brochure, **Take A Hike**, has been updated by Derek Brownlee, and the City of Prescott will donate the printing. The Chamber of Commerce had requested additional copies, which Carol Stafford has been distributing. If

you are interested in copies, please contact Carol at 445-8975.

State Trails Conference:

The Arizona State Committee on Trails will be holding a State Trails Conference at Prescott Pines Camp October 4 through 6. YTA's planned involvement includes: Rob Hehlen doing a presentation on the Prescott Circle Trail; Irene Cox leading a hike to the Hassayampa Waterline Monument, an interesting piece of history on Prescott's early water supply; Nigel Reynolds discussing trail exploration, mapping needs and availability, and interface with GPS units; and Joyce Mackin leading a trail ride for equestrians.

Welcome to New Members: Brenda Howard, Richard and Nancy Greene, Randy and Linda Weatbrook, Ann Tingley, and K. Eastvold.

- Jan Alfano

Prescott Outings Club

The Prescott Outings Club, founded in 1975, sponsors three hikes each week from September through May. The hikes are usually take place in the Bradshaws and on Mingus Mountain, but they can be as distant as the Vulture Mountains to the south or the San Francisco Peaks to the north. Each hike is planned and scouted in advance and led by an experienced hike leader, and each hike is rated on a scale from 1 (most strenuous) to 10 (least strenuous).

The Saturday Regular Hike is the most vigorous of the scheduled hikes, typically being six to 10 miles in length and rated approximately 2 to 5 in difficulty. The Saturday Alternate Hike is an intermediate level hike, setting a more lei-

surely pace typically rated 4 to 7 in difficulty. The Sunday Hike is the least difficult, usually 3 miles in length, and rated 6 to 9 in difficulty. Check out the website (www.geocities.com/prescottoutingsclub) for meeting places, schedules, and more information about the hikes and the club.

In addition to the scheduled hikes, the club participates in a number of special events such as trail cleanups, lecture hikes,

picnics, dinners, and special projects. A group of 30 hikers spent October 16 through 20 at Zion National Park, and the Thumb Butte Trail semi-annual cleanup was held October 25. One of our members, with help from other hikers, has an ongoing project of collecting cans along the trails and donating them to the Yavapai Humane Society.

- Irene Cox



Prescott Outings Club members prepare for the semi-annual Thumb Butte Trail clean-up on October 25.

-Photo courtesy of Irene Cox



Forest Service, Local Trail Updates

Circle Trail Progress

The Over the Hill Gang completed the re-routes at the top and bottom of the **Garden Grove Trail** No. 392 in the Thumb Butte area. The re-routes connect Trail No. 332 on the bottom off Thumb Butte Road and Trail No. 322 at the top.

Work has begun on **Goldwater Lake Trail** No. 396 that leads from Senator Highway across the street from the Watershed Trail No. 299. This trail leads west on the south side of both Goldwater Lakes to the Banning Creek Trail No. 61. A new addition to this trail has been flagged and is awaiting an archeological survey. The extension will lead to the parking lot at White Spar Road next to the campground.

In the next month, the Sweco (trail bulldozer) will be back in town and will rough cut the last piece of Trail No. 332 near the Cayuse Parking area in Granite Basin. After the trail has been roughed in, the Forest Service will bring in a hand crew to put on the finishing touches.

We are planning on implementing a **National Environmental Policy Act** document to make four changes to the Circle Trail. Two involve new trails to bypass motorized sections. One will bypass the southeast section of Trails No. 299 and 9854. The second bypass is around FS Road 51. The third change is to convert the Wolverton Mountain Trail No. 9415 to non motorized as well as to convert the road between this trail and the Aspen Creek Trail No. 48. The last change is to build a new trail from White Spar Road, across the street from the parking lot, up to the Wolverton trail, thus avoiding Quartz Mountain Road (one other option we are looking at, though,

is to convert Quartz Mountain Road to non-motorized and then not build the new trail).

Speaking of the **Aspen Creek Trail** No. 48, YTA and the FS are applying for a Heritage Grant to build a Trailhead where the trail meets Copper Basin Road as well as re-routing the first quarter mile or so of the trail for better grade.

Non-Forest Service Circle Trail News

I'm building a new section of the trail for the City of Prescott in **Watson Lake Park**. The trail will go from the roundabout at highway 89 behind the campground, along the lake (above the boulders), and connect with the existing trail through the Watson Lake Preserve. This should be done by the end of February.

As Volunteer Coordinator, I'll be contacting YTA members who have indicated an interest in trail work. In addition to the trails that YTA has adopted, I'm looking to get other trails adopted. If you are part of another organization that would be interested in adopting a trail, email me (rhehlen-@fs.fed.us) and I'll send you information on the program.

Other News

A **new all-woman trails group** is forming. February 18, 12:30 p.m., is scheduled as the first trails day and the group will be working in the Lynx Lake area. The plan is to work

one Sunday afternoon per month. The group will be led by Julie Spear. If you are interested, contact Julie at jlspear@fs.fed.us.

Another opportunity to learn about trails and how they are built will be on Saturday, March 10th. The **International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)** Trail Crew is coming to Prescott to hold an all day seminar. There will be a class in the morning, free lunch, and an afternoon trail building session. This is a lot of fun, a great way to give back to the community, and you get to learn how to build trails the right way. If you have any questions or are interested in attending, send me an email.

Since Camp Yavapines has closed public access, **Trail No. 316** has also been closed to all users (including the camp). We (the Forest Service) called the Camp to see if this would be an issue and their reply was that they did not care to use the access either. We are planning on talking to the Kingswood Estates Homeowners Association about the easement to the forest through their neighborhood and re-routing the trail through there.

- Rob Hehlen

For more information on any of the preceding topics, or to volunteer for trail work, you can reach me at: rhehlen@fs.fed.us or (928) 443-8072.



Peavine portion of the Prescott Circle Trail.

- Photo by Rob Hehlen

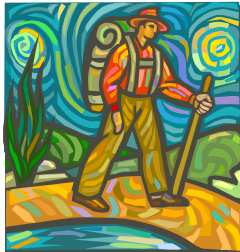


Storm Ranch section of the Prescott Circle Trail.

-Photo by Rob Hehlen

Watson Lake in the snow.

- Photo by Rob Hehlen



*“Grapevine
Creek...hiding its
gentle beauty
from those
unwilling to
explore beyond
easy reach of a
vehicle.”*

Trek from page 1

as evidenced by rolled rocks, ripped rotten pine stumps, and deep soil rooting.

This 800-acre area was nominated by the Nature Conservancy for special protection and management because of the uniqueness of its plant associations and the abundant springs. It was subsequently designated in November 1997 by the Forest Service as the “Grapevine Botanical Area.” Under this designation, cattle grazing has been excluded, and the area is limited to hiking, bicycling, and horseback use.

To get there from downtown Prescott, drive 26.5 miles east on Highway 69 to just beyond milepost 274. It is the first turn to the right after Poland Road. At 0.4 miles from Highway 69, and after crossing Big Bug Creek, continue to bear left, staying on the main graded dirt road for about 1.5 miles. The next half-mile is studded with rocks and suitable only for a high-clearance vehicle. At 2.3 miles, you will come to a green Forest Service gate. If the gate is locked, park here. If it is open, you can drive another 0.4 miles to the trailhead.

Hiking time round-trip is about 3 hours, depending on how much you explore the



area. The distance from trailhead to the springs is about 2.1 miles and fairly easy. You are unlikely to encounter anyone, and no motorized travel is permitted.

The trail, Forest Trail No. 4, first passes the junction with Trail No. 9434, and at 1.2 miles, a rock cairn marks a second junction. The left fork trail drops to the creek. The right fork, a much better trail, contours parallel to the creek along a south-facing slope. It eventually returns to the creek.

Before reaching Grapevine Springs, there are two fence gates enclosing a Forest Service study plot. The trail here was

recently improved by Mike Keller as part of an Eagle Scout Project of Troop 147. Explore it as far as it goes. A trail built about 35 years ago continues to the rim of Big Bug Mesa, but I do not know its current condition.

- Ron Smith

*I have written many other journals of trips like this one in a book titled, **A Guide to Prescott and Central Highlands Trails**. It is available at most local book, hiking, bicycling, and outdoor stores.*

Yavapai Horseman's Association Year-End Wrap-Up

Yavapai Horseman's Association had a number of accomplishments in 2006. Highlights included: representing horsemen at the City of Prescott Parks and Recreation Master Plan public meeting and providing written feedback in support of equestrian interests; supporting Senior Olympics equestrian events; representing horsemen in the Central Arizona Trails Partnership; developing relations with 4 H horse



clubs, with YHA members also spearheading youth programs; promoting YHA at EquiFest and National Trails Day; sanctioning Pioneer Parks Equestrian Center Association as an offshoot of YHA; providing feedback at the Aqua Fria BLM Open Space meetings; becoming a member of Yavapai Trails Association with representation on the YTA board; con-

tacting Yavapai County Public Works regarding safe crossings on Williamson Valley Road; and providing input to the Williamson Valley Corridor Planning Committee to advocate for equestrian interests.

Roads from page 1

ern-day Phoenix. Baseline Road is so named because it goes through this point. The surveys of the areas of interest to us began in the 1870s. Most of these old documents are still available and provide much useful information, both from the survey notes and the simple maps that were produced. By transposing these old maps onto modern topographical maps, using the section corners as points of reference, we have a good starting point for field exploration.

Another technique is to study satellite or aerial photos of the likely route to see if any traces appear from the bird's-eye perspective. I learned about this from my father when I was growing up in England. In places, the arrow-straight routes of roads built almost two thousand years ago by the Romans can still be seen from the air if the light is right or if there has been a light snowfall!

Development has obliterated most of the old routes close to Prescott, but when you get a dozen or more miles away from town, remnants can still be found. Fortunately, in many places no modern roads exist along the same route as the two historic trails, so visible

evidence still remains for a keen eye to discover.

The most obvious sign of an old road is a "swale" – a linear depression in the ground, a foot or so deep, and about eight feet wide. The heavy freight wagons, coupled together in pairs or even quads, had large wooden-spoked wheels with iron-rims. A team of eight to twelve mules usually pulled them, although oxen were sometimes used instead. That's where the name Bullwhacker Hill came from, as oxen had to be "encouraged" to pull the wagons up the steep hill. Freighters would travel in groups as protection against marauding Indians who liked to eat the draft animals and take the goods they deemed usable.

The repeated passage of these wagon trains would pulverize the ground, or cut into it if it was soft. Wind would blow the dust away and rain would wash it out, especially on a slope, causing deep gullies over time. Even very shallow swales, which would otherwise be undetectable, sometimes become apparent because they collect more water than the adjacent land. This results in a more lush growth pattern, quite obvious when the grass dies.

Another sign of an old road in rocky areas is "windrows" –

lines of large rocks on one or both sides of the road, moved there by the road builders or the freighters to make their journey easier. Occasionally, we find ruts in soft rock, or a groove on the edge of an individual rock, cut by the wagon wheels. Supporting evidence includes rusty cans of the right age, or broken glass from old bottles discarded by the freighters. Rarely, we find whole bottles that have been lying undisturbed for over a century. Metal pieces from the wagons, and mule or oxen shoes are sometimes found, providing additional confirmation. The iron rims rubbed on the rocks they passed over, which could result in spots of rust that can be seen by a discerning eye on rocks of the right color and hardness – subtle evidence!

- Nigel Reynolds

In the next issue, I will write about the two trails: the Ehrenberg Road and the Hardyville Road. Arizona State Parks has a map and description of these two trails and many others. Copies of this brochure, titled "Historic Trails of Arizona," can usually be obtained from Sharlot Hall Museum.



A rare find: an unbroken bottle undisturbed for more than a century.

-photo by Nigel Reynolds

"Development has obliterated most of the old routes...but when you get a dozen or more miles away from town, remnants can still be found."

Hiking Opportunities

There is a great selection of hiking trails in our county, and most of you have probably enjoyed many of them – on foot, on horseback or on a bike saddle. In this and future issues of **Trail Tracks**, I plan to highlight groups in Yavapai County that organize fee-based local and regional hikes for both their members and other interested parties. These groups are not part of YTA, but they do provide varied opportuni-

ties for hiking enthusiasts.

First up is an opportunity to hike in Northern Arizona and Southern Utah, to places quite different in scenery from Yavapai County. In May, I am leading a three-day hiking trip there sponsored by Sharlot Hall Museum. I have spent many weeks exploring in that region and have discovered some amazing hikes, some to places little

known, some essentially unknown. If you join us, I guarantee that it will be a memorable experience. For details, please contact me at 717-2466 or visit the museum website at: sharlot.org/excursion/.

- Nigel Reynolds



A coalition of non-motorized trail users.

Yavapai Trails
Association
P.O. Box 403
Prescott, AZ 86302
928.445.2942
alftrail@cableone.net

We're on the web:
yavapaitrailsassociation.org

Prescott Senior Olympics Equestrian Event

Equestrian Events were added to the Prescott Senior Olympic Summer Games three years ago, a nod to public interest and the horse-oriented heritage of the Prescott area. The City of Prescott Parks and Recreation Department and the Prescott Senior Olympic Games Steering Committee are pleased to present the 2007 Prescott Senior Olympic Summer Games, to be held throughout the Tri-Cities area August 10 through August 26.

The equestrian event is open to any rider who is at least fifty years old during the calendar year. Classes are scheduled to accommodate riders' interests, such as Western Pleasure, Dressage, and Gaited Horse classes. Also, the commissioner is open to adding classes if

there is an interest. We invite riders of all levels to join us with your horses or mules. Medals are awarded according to age group at Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels. The tentative date for this event is August 26, 2007.

Our judge, Joe Pennacchio, is an American Quarter Horse Association-certified judge and is graciously donating his time and expertise. Because this is a fun show and we encourage all levels of riders to join us, Judge Pennacchio has volunteered to conduct a workshop that will focus on rules and safety aspects of showing. Also, Al Crook, who retired from showing in 1998 after 20 years with several championships and reserved championships in Western Pleasure, Trail, and

Reining, has volunteered to coach anyone who wants to refresh or learn more about riding techniques for showing. We hope this will increase our participant's level of confidence and comfort.

Prior registration is recommended although on site registration is available. Parks & Rec will provide T-shirts and goodie bags for all registered participants -- and apples and carrots for equine participants. The event must have a minimum of 18 entries to make it a go. For additional information, contact Parks & Rec at (928) 777-1122, ext. O, or the event Commissioner, Carolyn Mason, at (928) 636-0660.

- Carolyn Mason

