

Trail Tracks

Fall, 2015

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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YTA President's Message

Since YTA's last newsletter there have been approximately 10 miles of new trails constructed in the Prescott area. Notable trail milestones include the completion of the Prescott Circle Trail and expansion of the Greenways trail system along both Miller and Butte creeks. The Prescott

General Plan was recently approved by the voters, which includes support for ongoing expansion and connectivity of area trail systems. The following is a list of area trail projects which are being planned and designed, and in a few cases already under construction. Most of these projects have been already included in budgets, but are not yet funded.

- Pioneer Park Improvements (9miles): BLM, YC, City
- Greenways Butte and Miller Creeks: Easements/License agreements
- Goldwater Lake Expand existing 160 acres: PNF/City
- Acker Park new and improvements (2miles): Acker Park open space/City
- Granite Dells Estates (9miles): Public/Private open space
- Circle Trail – Badger/Ranch (Turley)(4miles): State Trust Land/ PNF
- Circle Trail to Prescott Gateway Mall: State Trust Land
- Glassford Hill Trails (9.5miles): State Trust Land
- Yavapai Hills trail restorations(new): Resident requests
- Prescott Misc. - Peavine, Touchmark, VA, Deep Well, Storm Ranch, AZ Eco, Waldon Ranch, etc.
- PV Glassford Hill and Fain Park trails: State Trust Land, PVT Easements
- Yarnell Trail System (not the memorial): Multiple ownerships in plan

Several of the projects listed will also receive financial support from Private ownerships, other jurisdictions, and outside funding sources such as grants and donations. The recent primary election which included a proposition for funding additional open space, improvements, and maintenance, failed approval by the voters. Had it passed, it would have provided financial resources to make some of the above projects more spacious and robust, with added amenities, parking, restrooms, etc. The community with its 'Over the Hill Gang' still plans to move ahead with these projects.

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Our Mission

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

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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.



(Cont. from p.1)

The Circle Trail expansions and Glassford Hill projects, using leases of State Trust Land, will provide the City with the most trails and access to adjacent open space for the cost. These projects are expected to create new venues and trail destinations bringing in more visitors and associated economic development and revenues.

The Goldwater Lake expansion project is also expected to almost immediately return monies spent several times over. This project is unique in that even though the City already owns 160 acres of open space and lakes at Goldwater, there is a shortage of parking, shelters, and amenities that would accommodate many more visitors. The recent completion of the Feldmeier Trail has created an 8 mile loop trail system around both lakes and a new destination, but lacks adequate access and parking. The Prescott National Forest has done extensive forest treatment for defensible space/firewise in this area. This will make the installation of amenities much easier, if the City adds this acreage to the existing park.

The City currently has about 75 miles of non-motorized trails within its annexed and projected land use jurisdictions. The above list adds about 40 miles of trail to the City portfolio. There are also projects in the above list in nearby jurisdictions which will complement the City and PNF trails, but were not counted in the above mileages. Visitors and residents enjoy the wide array of trail systems and varied scenery in the Prescott area. One of the big attractions is that due to our ongoing construction, there are always new trails to experience.

Come take a hike or go for a trail ride on a bike, horse, or mule!

— *George Sheats*
Pres. Yavapai Trails Association

OPEN SPACE ALLIANCE

A JOINT YAVAPAI TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE ALLIANCE meeting was held on September 3. Several guests and other non-profit representatives attended to discuss upcoming trails and related open space plans. This interest has been magnified by the recent failure of an open space funding measure during the August City of Prescott elections.

It was recommended by those in attendance that at our regular November 5, YTA/OSA meeting, we invite other non-affiliated outdoor recreation and quality of life organizations to be represented. There was consensus that Open Space Alliance should resume and rebuild its past *Alliance* mission by bringing together other organizations in order to develop a plan to speak as *One Voice* when addressing open space issues with local administrators and their public constituents.

COMMUNITY FOREST TRUST

GREETINGS FROM COMMUNITY FOREST TRUST! We are the folks who organized and conducted the symposium "Get Off the Couch, the University of Outdoor Recreation" January 31, of this year with: Sponsorship from the Open Space Alliance and Arizona Community Foundation of Yavapai County. Great support from Prescott College, and of course the talents of generous efforts of our presenters

We are now laying out the groundwork for a bigger and better symposium on Saturday, April 2, 2016 at Mile High Middle School. We have a larger perspective and in the coming year will present up to 28 hours of workshops and, weather permitting, large outdoor interactive educational hands-on arena to apply some of the workshop techniques which is why we are choosing April and the great facilities at Mile High.

We will be offering local businesses, not for profits and various local organizations a chance to demonstrate their wares and applications to use them such as biking, hiking, birding, canoeing, kayaking, sailing and equestrian among the many. We expect to have a larger demonstration of outdoor equipment and their usage and more emphasis on outdoor learning skills. The unique quality about this symposium is that it is educational in nature and free, though it will be a fundraiser as well for the Prescott Unified School District.

—*Gary Worob, Pres. CFT*

PRESCOTT NATIONAL FOREST TRAILS

The following information was supplied courtesy of the Jason William, Trail and Wilderness Coordinator for the Prescott National Forest.

ALMOSTA TRAIL SYSTEM HAS BEEN COMPLETED. This combination of trails is part of a group of mainly horseback or bicycle trails northwest of the Granite Mountain Wilderness boundary. These are not trails suitable for one-day hikes because they are in more remote and rugged country despite the relative proximity to William Valley Road and the Prescott city limits. The interconnecting system is great for planning round-trip adventures into the very immense and rugged semi-arid regions of the Prescott National Forest.

Much of the trail work cited above was constructed by the Prescott National Forest under contract with American Conservation Experience (ACE) who finished constructing these 9 miles of new non-motorized trails north of Granite Mountain around the end of June. This is the same non-profit organization that rebuilt portions of the Turley Trail on the east side of Prescott in 2006. The organization's main purpose, aside from real work projects, is to break down cultural barriers and increase global awareness of critical ecological issues. The crew that YTA engaged in 2006 was comprised mostly of students from northern Europe. They did a great job of repairing this popular trail, although the trail is currently being rerouted to provide a less undulating track and will be much more attractive to cyclists..

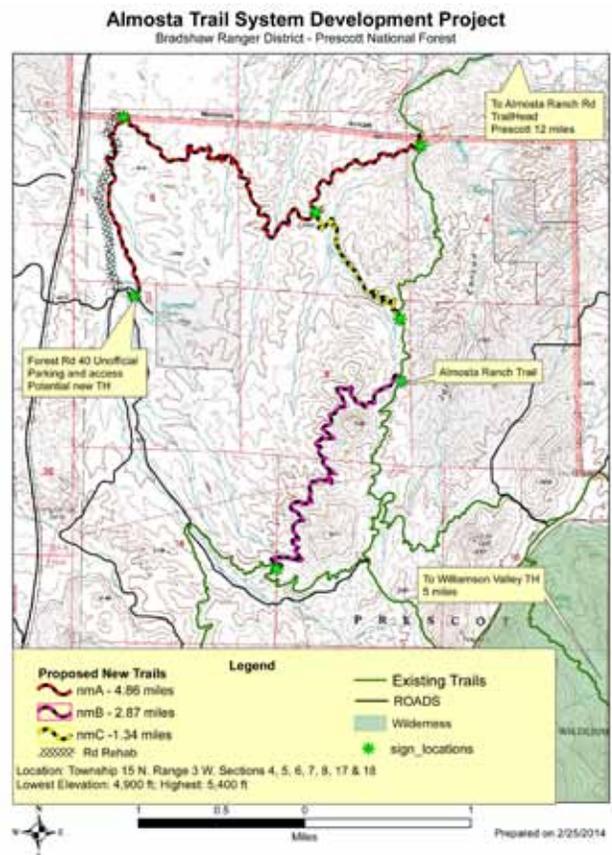
Current development of the Almosta trail system was funded in part from by the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) under a grant from AZ State Parks and matching monies and volunteer labor from Backcountry Horsemen of Central Arizona. This was part of an older PNF trail plan that was a priority of the PNF Greater Prescott Trails Plan. The accompanying older map is not current with respect to its legends but gives an overview of the area and trail connections.

Temporary signs are already in place and will eventually be replaced in the coming months with more permanent wooden trail signs

This project was greatly assisted with the support of Backcountry Horsemen who packed water for the crews. Because this is a more remote long distance trail

system, cell phone service is undependable. Although the trails are open to all non-motorized users, it is intended to provide longer distance opportunities for mainly equestrian trail users. For this reason safe travel and courteous behavior become especially important.

By Ron Smith



The **Prescott National Forest** has issued a press release asking us to be mindful and respectful of the rare occurrence of *'Wet Trails'* during our time on the trails and they have placed Safety Brochures at their area offices. Though happening just a few times a year, use of trails when wet can cause severe erosion by all users and long additional hours of trail maintenance. Perhaps a 'wet trail' can be built at some future date to relieve other trails!

PNF OVER THE HILL GANG:

OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF MONTHS THE GANG HAS BEEN BUSY WORKING ON THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THE FELDMEIER TRAIL (#330) at Goldwater Lake area. With much of this project now completed the gang will move over to the Garden Party Trail #324 (north of Thumb Butte) when they finish work on the work at Goldwater Lake.

The group has worked extensively on the Goldwater Lakes trail earlier this year and helped reroute and re-establish the Prescott Circle Trail through the Emanuel Pines area after completion of the area timber sale.

Remember everyone is welcome to come out on Thursdays to join in the fun of building and maintaining trails. The gang meets every Thursday at 7:50 am at our Cortez Street Office (344 S. Cortez) and leaves promptly at 8:00 am to head to the trail and returns to base around 1200. Contact Kelly Koch at trail.volunteer.2@gmail.com to get set to come out

— *Jason Williams, PNF*



CONNECTED TRAILS, GRANTS, ENDOWMENTS

The connectivity of trails within Yavapai County continues to expand and intertwine due to volunteers working at all locations. These volunteers put in the majority of the work in trail creation as well as in sharing their vision. Their efforts are funded by grants that come from a number of sources. Yavapai Trails Association has been fortunate in receiving some grant monies, notably those awards from the Arizona Community Foundation (ACF).

This Foundation has been a long time source of money for YTA efforts to create, maintain, preserve, and protect trails in Yavapai County. YTA received \$3,000 in 2013 for signage for trails throughout the county. Then, in 2014, we received \$5,000 for the portion of Miller Creek trail that is within City of Prescott boundaries. This spurred an «adopt-a-trail» section by the Dexter Neighborhood. This year we received another \$5,000+ for the portion of Butte Creek trail that passes Prescott College. The college will be conducting student studies, installing interpretive signage, and other environmental work along this section. These additional collaborations in our con-

nectivity of trails will bring more awareness and involvement, and hopefully more dollars for expansion.

The ACF also has an endowment program that YTA hopes to explore as an avenue to receive and direct more donations to our mission of preserving, protecting, and developing recreational trails.

— *Cathy Schultz*

MILLER CREEK GREENWAY TRAIL

The Greenways III Trail along Miller Creek, supported by a grant from the AZ. Community Foundation of Yavapai County, is nearing completion and the next phase, along Butte Creek will be getting underway later this year. Volunteers are always helpful and it makes getting to know the trails within Prescott a truly unique experience!

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

Saturday, September 26th, PNF will host a volunteer smorgasbord at Granite Basin and surrounding areas with opportunities to do trails work, noxious weed pulling, trash clean up, painting, and other activities. PNF is looking for organizations and businesses to help coordinate and sponsor this event so that we can have a great party after all the work. Call 928-843-8000 for more info.

GROOM CREEK NATURE TRAIL

THIS ATTRACTIVE LITTLE TRAIL WAS BUILT SOME YEARS AGO by the Prescott Sunrise Lions Club with the cooperation of the Prescott National Forest for blind walkers. This 1500 foot trail was intended to accommodate handicapped people who use a cane, walker or wheelchair. It is a paved asphalt path that winds gently through a beautiful pine forest where you are likely to see a variety of birds or forest animals. Tassel-eared tree squirrels were very active one day when I was walking the trail.

While I was recovering from an accident I wanted to be outside on a trail that I could enjoy but safe enough that I could manage with a walker. The trail was perfect for me. There are logs placed parallel along the side of the trail that blind people can use as a guide. The displays along the trail tell about the forest animals and the pictures of them can be felt by a blind person to learn about the shape of the animal.

Benches are provided for resting and enjoying the scents and sounds of the forest.

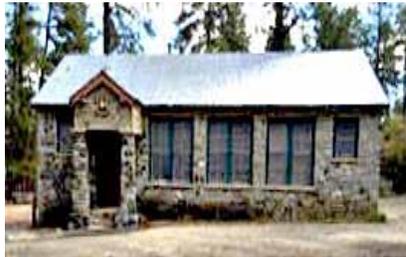
At the time I last visited this trail there were children playing among some of the large boulders along the trail. This is a wonderful place for children to explore and learn about the forest and its wildlife.

The Groom Creek Nature Trail is 6.1 miles south of Gurley Street. Go south on Mt. Vernon (Senator Highway) to the Groom Creek area. You will pass Maripai Road on the right and the Friendly Pines Road. At 6.1 miles from Gurley Street

there is a marker and sign the for the Groom Creek School and the Lions Handicapped Nature Trail. Turn left here onto a gravel road for just a short distance to the parking area.

Aside from the attractive trail, the old Groom Creek School is an important local historic site. This school, originally built of wood in 1896 was reconstructed in the 1930s of native stone and was an active school until about 1952. The building can be reserved for private use for weddings or other group gatherings through the Prescott National Forest office in Prescott. Amenities include 10 tables with wheel chair access.

The altitude at the site is 6,200



feet and may have snow in the winter. In summer it is likely to be cool and shady under a canopy of tall pines.

There is a \$5.00 fee except on Wednesdays when parking is free. The Golden Age card and some other passes are accepted. at the parking kiosk. The fees are used to help maintain the trail.

— Carol Stafford

PHENOLOGY TRAILS

WHILE OUT ON THE TRAIL WE ALL ENJOY THE SKY, the views, the flora and fauna, rock formations, and riparian areas. These are all changing in some way throughout the day, season, or year(s). The key changes to the flora and fauna can be assessed under a term - Phenology (not to be confused with other scientific terms of similar spelling). This is the study of both plants and animals through the seasons, over a period of years. Scientists nationwide have started using long-term phenology studies to help better understand the if/when/how of allergy seasons and climate change.

The USA National Phenology Network (www.usanpn.org) is the website where you can learn about some of the key times of the year to regularly observe and, as a member of their Natures Notebook, regularly record some of the those changes as you experience the great outdoors. I think of it, rather than geocaching, as phenocaching my way down a trail, experiencing the surprises of nature that please me to find.

Prescott individuals have recently started the process of placing 'Phenology Trails' in the area, under the name Central AZ Phenology Trails Group (<https://www.usanpn.org/Central-AZ-Pheno-Trail>). The first is being completed near the Highlands Central For Natural History. But, any trail can be a phenology trail if you are the person who gets excited about such things as new emerging or

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budding plants, falling colorful leaves (any flora), or the type of person that is awed at seeing new young animals, a color change in a species of bird, or the migration of butterflies (or any fauna)!

If you are a naturalist (that's most of us most of the time), educator, resource manager, researcher, or partner with others in science, the *usanpn* has a place for you to share your trail experiences in a different way with the whole nation. So if being on trails is your highlight of the day or week, you can share the joy of change as an individual or part of a group!

—Cathy Schultz

CIRCLE TRAIL FUND RAISER

If you have completed the extraordinary feat of completing the 54-mile Prescott Circle Trail, you can reward yourself with the purchase of one of these souvenir memorabilia: a bolo tie (\$10) or garment patch (\$6) at either Manzanita Outdoors or The Hike Shack in downtown Prescott. Each purchase comes with a self-congratulatory "Certificate of Merit."



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. _____ Additional Donation Amt. _____

Please make checks payable to: YTA

Please clip out this coupon and send to:

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

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We're on the Web at:
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