

Trail Tracks

Spring 2012

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President's Message

The YTA Board appointed me to serve as YTA President for 2012. Nigel Reynolds will be our Vice President and act as Chairperson in the President's absence. Because of my extensive involvement doing trails construction with the Over the Hill Gang, I will emphasize planning and advocacy for new trail routes. As a member of the City of Prescott General Plan Committee, my work will include working on Plan sections such as Land Use, Transportation/Circulation, and Open Space/Trails. Within its municipal boundaries the City of Prescott currently has 42 miles of trails. A 'sub-committee' of stakeholders from the Prescott area has developed a strategy for the expansion of the City of Prescott's Mile High Trail System. The consensus is to effectively double the miles of City trails over the next 10 years, resulting in 80 miles of trails.

The City Trails Specialist, Chris Hosking, produced a map showing possible trails in areas of potential City jurisdiction. His map showed that approximately 200 miles of additional trails could be added, many of which could be in Dells areas such as Storm Ranch and Glassford Hill. This sounds like a lot of trails for that area, but a hike up the rough terrain of Glassford Hill quickly convinces you how massive the Dells and Glassford Hill areas are. The sub-committee then selected and prioritized trail segments which would provide connectivity between existing trails, access the planned Prescott Circle Trail, or provide non-motorized transportation routes between Prescott and outside communities.

The current list has now been reduced to approximately 90 miles of additional trails. Approximately 20 miles of this number can be added from the list without the acquisition of Open Space or trail rights-of-way. The planning team will now further prioritize and refine the list to define the likely trail segments that can feasibly be added over the next 10 years. Trail 'easements and license agreements' are currently the preferred method used by the City for acquiring trail rights-of-way. Purchases of blocks of Open Space are only considered in special circumstances and when/if funding is available.

Expansion of the Prescott Circle Trail is a high priority and is the next proposal being presented to the Community and Prescott City management. On the agenda will be a proposed lease of 6 miles of right-of-way from the State Land Department. If approved, the Prescott Circle Trail can be expanded from the Turley Trail on Badger 'P' Mountain to the Peavine Trail. In addition, the section of trail along Pioneer Parkway can be constructed to replace what is currently running along the highway fence line.

A Circle Trail presentation and public informational meeting is planned for 7 PM, Wednesday, June 13 at the Prescott Public Library.

See you on the trails. The Over the Hill Gang is always looking for additional volunteers.

— George Sheats, President —

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

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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.



CONSTELLATION TRAILS

by Ron Smith

This network of short trails was established in 2011 and is one of the newest in a catalog of 21 trails built by the City of Prescott over the last couple of years. It traverses a stunning landscape of small canyons and vistas within the Granite Dells rock formations. A crew of volunteers, the "Over the Hill Gang," built this trail under the direction of City Trails Specialist Chris Hosking to complement and connect to other "slick rock" trails within an 80 acre open space acquired by the City in 2008.

On February 28, 1959, a U.S. Air Force Lockheed Constellation enroute from Litchfield Park Naval Air Facility to Phoenix crashed during a training mission killing all five U.S. Navy crew members aboard. This trail and monument have been dedicated to the memory of these service members who died in service to their country. The monument was built as an Eagle Scout project by teen Cody J. Walker, Troop 10, Old Capital District of the Grand Canyon Council.

How to get there:

From downtown Prescott, at the intersection of Grove Av and West Gurley, drive north on Miller Valley Road passing the interchange at Whipple and Iron Springs Road. Continue on Miller Valley Road for 5.3 miles to Willow Lake Road. Turn east on this road for 2 miles to the intersection with Hwy. 89. Go north on Hwy. 89 for another 2.4 miles to the turnoff to the Phippen Museum. Turn right into the trail parking area (suitable for several vehicles). The trail begins here before passing through an underpass to the west side of the highway. I have arbitrarily chosen the start of these directions from the County Courthouse; there are several other approaches including using Hwy. 89 from its intersection with East Gurley St.

Hiking time is only about 1.5 hours, 2.7-mile round-trip, including all side trails.

The trail is easy with a vertical gain of only about 213 ft. It is suitable for hiking and biking only. Depending on weather conditions, this trail should be great in all seasons of the year.

In addition to the map shown here, other City trail maps can be downloaded and printed from <http://www.cityofprescott.net/services/parks/trails/>

General information:

The trail begins within the property of the Phippen Museum on the east side of Hwy. 89. Pass under the highway through the tunnel to where the trail actually begins at the Constellation monument. My description of the route is in a counter clockwise direction and describes only the perimeter sections of the trail. After leaving the monument the trail passes through a rather dense stand of oaks and brush and goes directly west through more open terrain for about 0.3 miles before turning south.

At 0.6 miles is the first of several trail signs marking spots where trails connect to interior and east perimeter portions. Along

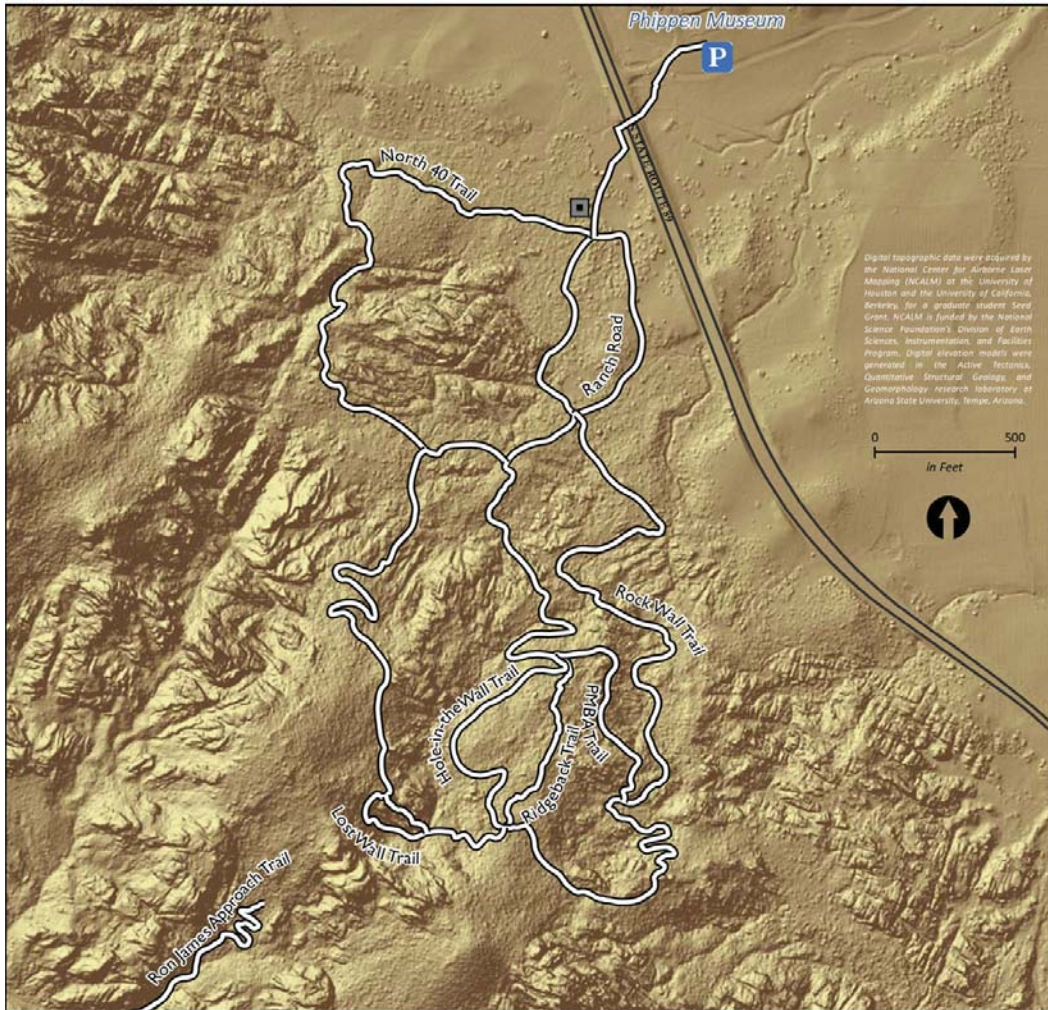
this section of trail there are some good viewpoints of Mingus Mountain, Bill Williams Mountain and the San Francisco Peaks.

At about 1 mile, now on the Lost Wall Trail, a second sign directs to a small canyon to the east. Then at 1.4 miles another sign is posted at the intersection of three trails, two of which explore the interior of this rocky landscape by way of the Hole in the Wall and Ridgeback Trails. Continuing along the perimeter on the Rock Wall Trail another sign at 1.45 miles marks a junction with the PMBA Trail. Then at 1.9 miles there is a sign at a 4-way junction and a choice of a final leg of the trails back to your start. The east-most leg is along a Ranch Road back to the monument and was the route I chose.

See map on following page, courtesy City of Prescott.



Panoramic view looking north from the Constellation Trails



THE FIRST RUNNING OF THE PRESCOTT CIRCLE TRAIL

by Matt Muchna

Editor's Note: This is a report by Matt Muchna who ran the Prescott Circle Trail last November. He took slightly under 10 hours, starting early one morning – quite an endeavor!

My name is Matt Muchna. I grew up in Prescott and currently attend college at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix. I and my ultra-running brother-in-law James Madson from Eugene, OR, set out one morning in 2011 at 6:35 am at the Jack Drive Trailhead in Pioneer Park (near my house). I finished back there at 4:31 pm (9 hours 56 minutes total). We estimated the total mileage of our route to be 43 miles, but could be off since we were without a GPS. We circled Prescott clockwise.



To get around the first unfinished section from the south end of the Peavine to the Turley trail, we took the trail underneath Prescott Lakes Pkwy, through the industrial park to Sundog Ranch Road, then on the left shoulder of 89 facing traffic. We got onto the pathway across from the VA

Hospital to the 69 underpass tunnel, and eventually connected with Butterfield Road and Wells Fargo which goes to the Turley Trailhead.

My brother-in-law started feeling sick around mile 22 with nausea, but he pushed through to mile 27 where he began having chills mixed with dizziness. He stopped at Copper Basin Rd. and spent the rest of the day throwing up and trying to get warm. We think he had bad altitude sickness mixed with dehydration. He told me to continue in his honor, so with his blessing I did just that. He is feeling better now and is back to eating and drinking in the comfort of his own home in Oregon.

After that, the Circle Trail was then fairly easy to follow all the way to the Granite Basin area, where the second unfinished section lies. To conquer the section from Hokaygon trail (#341) to the other side of Williamson Valley Road, I took the Willow trail (#347) down to Katahn Road which connects with Williamson Valley Road. I then went north to the traffic light at Pioneer Parkway, where the Circle Trail starts up again. From there, all that was left was to finish at the Jack Drive trailhead, which happened just before the sun set.

Our family supported us by meeting us at major road crossing by re-supplying our food and water. Overall, the Circle Trail as a great way to experience much of Prescott's diverse terrain. The weather was great and sunny with a high of 61.

Our inspiration to run the Prescott Circle Trail began in August after stumbling across a recent "Biking Opportunity" Prescott trail map done by Prescott Mountain Bike Alliance. We realized how close the Circle Trail was to being complete. We saw "The Circle" as an awesome challenge, so we began training. To my knowledge, it is the first recorded circumference of Prescott by trail running. We saw it as an opportunity to get a FKT (Fastest Known Time) supported. It was my first run over

22 miles, and I'm glad it could be done in my hometown, "Everybody's Hometown." James and I both hope that our run around Prescott will bring out some challengers, especially once the Circle Trail is finished. It is a rare ultra-running location because once completed one will be able to run 50 miles all on trail, without backtracking. We weren't really sure how it would turn out due to the unfinished sections, but we wanted to give it a go, mainly just because it was there.

Thanks for letting us use your trails! Keep up the good work in finishing the Circle Trail, it is and will continue to be a great amenity for Prescott. I look forward to running it again soon, but not too soon.

If you would like to find out more about the Prescott Circle Trail and its history, join us at the Prescott Library at 7 pm on Wednesday, June 13. We will be handing out a Guide to the trail and maps so you can explore it yourself – probably not in a single day!

BIKES AND HORSES: COMPROMISE OR CONFLICT

By Joyce Mackin

The increasing popularity of mountain biking as a sport and Prescott as a great destination has created a conflict between mountain bikers and equestrians on local trails.

In May 2, 2011 separate encounters between bikes and horses sent 4 horse riders to the hospital.

The accident raised public awareness and became a cause for concern for all trail users on the safety of Prescott's trails.

As a result, representatives from most non-motorized groups decided to meet with Prescott National Forest to work on making trails safer for all users. The group included members of Prescott Mountain Bike Alliance, Backcountry Horseman of Central Arizona, Prescott Saddle Club, Yavapai Trails Association, Prescott Outings Club and Granite Mountain Riders. The name of this group is The Prescott Trail Safety Coalition (PTSC). The single goal of PTSC was to keep

trails open by making it easier for bikers, riders and hikers to use them safely.

PTSC, along with Prescott National Forest, decided the 3 most important ways to reach this goal were education, trail design and signage. Much has already been accomplished. Signs have been created and posted on high-use trails. Trails have been brushed and sight lines improved. Bypasses have been created on some difficult trails. Meetings have been held at various trailheads with bikes and horses to educate on trail encounters. Clinics have been planned to help riders accustom their horses to what they might meet on the trail. These efforts have already had an impact on trail safety and there is still much to be done.

Although the recent accidents in Prescott have brought this conflict to the to the forefront, it is not a new issue. It has become a problem nation wide. Administrators of some public lands have created separate trails, resulting in fewer trails for all and more regulation. While others in Prescott, have worked together to create safer trails that are open to all.

Despite the efforts being made here to bring the community together with a common goal, some people believe that horses and bikes cannot co-exist on trails together. Therefore, Prescott National Forest has engaged the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution to help resolve the issue. They will conduct listening sessions and make recommendations. Hopefully, the issue will be resolved by a community effort to promote shared, safe trails.

YTA supports the efforts to bring the community of trail users together in a positive approach toward a resolution. Shared trails benefit both equestrians and mountain bikers. Public land is decreasing due to development and population pressure, while the number of users is increasing. It is in the mutual best interests of the trail community to promote, protect and develop open multiple use trails for non-motorized recreational users.



OVER THE HILL GANG

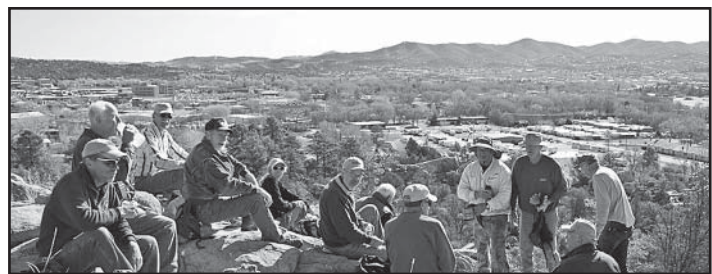
Prescott Alternative Transportation this month recognized the Over the Hill Gang for its amazing and continuing contributions to the building of hiking trails in the Prescott area. The event was held on Saturday, April 14, in the form of an Awards Gala at the Adult Center of Prescott on East. Rosser.

Other OHG news:

In late 2011, the City of Prescott added a mini-excavator to assist in Trails construction. This was accomplished primarily with the help of private donations. The John Deere 17D is now the newest member of the Over the Hill Gang. The construction of the Circle Trail can be expedited by using this new piece of equipment. The Open Space Alliance is currently working on an agreement with the Prescott National Forest, to use the new OHG member for the Watershed 299 Trail re-route. The YTA logo has already been added to the 'mini-ex', in recognition of its leadership in the Circle Trail planning and construction.



Mini-Excavator



OHG members on break from work on Centennial trail on the Prescott Preserve

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 q

Please clip out this coupon and sent 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



**Open Space Alliance & Prescott College
will sponsor
EARTH DAY 2012**

**April 21, 2012
Courthouse Plaza
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**