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Trail Tracks

Spring 2010

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

We've had a great winter with a lot of moisture. Our lakes are full and the creeks are running, making our trails an even greater pleasure to hike, ride or bike. Yavapai Trails Association has had a busy year working on the many trail issues in our area and we anticipate another active year for 2010.

Potential road crossings of the **Peavine Trail** have been an ongoing project for YTA. Many public meetings were held on this issue and were well attended by different trail user groups.

At the request of Prescott City Council (PCT) and city engineering, the different user groups joined together as *Trail Advocates* to make a single presentation to PCT. After meeting many times for input and revision, Rob Hehlen put together a power point presentation for them and the public. This presentation stressed all the reasons the Peavine is a special trail and should remain a scenic, safe, free-flowing trail uninterrupted by vehicular traffic. The presentation was given by Rob to Council at the February 23rd workshop.

The **Black Canyon Trail** has received a grant from "The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act" which will help to complete this non-motorized, 79- mile trail from Black Canyon City to near Mayer. A significant milestone occurred in the history of this trail when work began on the north end along Big Bug Creek, a few miles east of Mayer. Trail crews plan to meet somewhere in the middle. Cathy Schultz, YTA board member, was there to work on the trail. Anyone wishing for more information should contact Black Canyon Trail Coalition at www.bctaz.com.

Yavapai Trails Association needs more volunteers and board members. We have 3 adopted trails in the Prescott National Forest and they are in need of maintenance. Our mission is to "Preserve, promote and maintain trails in the Prescott area" and to do this we need a more active membership. We encourage you to attend our board meetings, which are the first Thursday of every month, and to volunteer in any way you can.

Please email Joyce Mackin at joycemackin@gmail.com if you wish to volunteer or attend a board meeting.

—Joyce Mackin

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



ROCKY TRAILS

by Ron Smith

The abundant rain and snow of the past couple of months has filled our normally dry washes and creeks, producing some dramatic changes to the landscape in the Granite Dells area. I visited one such area this past month to a seldom visited portion of Granite Creek immediately below the Watson Lake dam. What was usually a difficult, though short trek through and over rocky bluffs and crevices has been made accessible via a new hiking trail into that remote corner of the Dells.

Through the efforts of the “Over the Hill Gang” a volunteer crew of trail builders, and planning by City of Prescott Trails Manager Chris Hosking, there are now twin access routes to this beautiful spot. Accompanied by my son and two of his friends, we explored this trail on a bright, warm March morning. The route is a loop of a mere 3 miles. It is a combination of a wide footpath, rock scrambles, and even a stream crossing at Boulder Creek. But the rewards are some spectacular vistas, streamside paths, and a visit to other segments of the Peavine Trail.

To reach this area, travel north on Hwy 89 from Prescott to where the highway approaches the rocky palisades on either side of the road. Watch for “Granite Dells Road” on the right. Take this road for approximately 0.3 miles to a disturbed spot on the right that is being developed as a parking area and trailhead. The easily recognized path heads east from here, passing through a series of clefts in the rocky landscape. Continue on this path for another 0.3 miles, being on the lookout for an unmarked fork in the trail. The right branch (**Watson Dam Trail**) contours up and around a granite bluff

and returns to the creek bottom and a trail junction below the dam.

To enjoy more of the brim-full creek, continue straight at this junction (**Flume Trail**). After hiking this easy path for about 1 mile, you begin a scramble along the rocky gorge bordering the creek. You will come to a spot where a newly constructed 2-section foot bridge provides an easier crossing of rocky crevices. Continue scrambling and climbing to where the trail finally descends to the creek. This charming spot is immediately below where water cascades from the dam spillway.

A narrow girder currently serves as a bridge over the creek and access



Watson Lake spillway as it enters Granite Creek Photo: Alan Smith



to a connection to the **Over the Hill Trail** and eventually the Peavine Trail. After crossing Granite Creek, continue downstream (north) for about 100 yards through the flattened sedges, watching carefully for rocks on the right that have been marked with white circular paint spots. Follow the markers to the crest of the ridge overlooking the creek. Continue for a total of about 1.6 miles to where you will come to a trail junction and a trail map and marker. This is the **Lakeshore Trail** portion of the Peaving Trail. Turn left (north) here for a short distance to where this segment joins the wide main part of the **Peavine**. Continue north on the Peavine for another 0.4 miles to the four-way stop signs.

Turn left onto Storm Ranch Road (private) for a short distance to another road. Turn right here until you reach Granite Dells Road. Go left to the creek, then left again to the bridge crossing and access to your vehicle on Granite Dells Road. The total roundtrip distance is just barely over 3 miles.

QUARTZ MOUNTAIN

by Nigel Reynolds

Quartz Mountain is on your right as you drive out of town on White Spar Road, which is named for the mountain. White spar is another name for quartz – you may also have heard of feldspar and fluor-spar, which are other crystal-line minerals.

If you haven't been to Quartz Mountain, it is well worth a visit. The huge mounds of native quartz – white glistening rock – are amazing. As a child, you probably picked up small pieces of quartz because they were so different from other common rocks and demanded a closer inspection. If you hike much around Prescott, you will remember trails which go for a short distance through fields of broken quartz, some pieces being quite large, but rarely too big to pick up in your hands. The quartz on top of Quartz Mountain is as big as a house, and a challenge to clamber over to reach the highest point!

The views from the top are panoramic, looking down onto Prescott below, with the San Francisco Peaks in the far distance. In between, there are many other landmarks you may recognize, including the Granite Dells, P Mountain, Mingus Mountain and Bill Williams Mountain.

You can either hike or drive to the summit if you have a high clearance or four-wheel drive vehicle. Drive out from the Courthouse Square on White Spar Road for about 2

miles. When you see the Comfort Inn on your right, continue for about ½ mile and then turn right on Jack Pine Road, adjacent to the Prescott Pines Resort. This is Forest Road 9707V, with a sharp right bend almost immediately as you climb up from the main road. You can drive up a short way with most cars until you find a parking place along the road, where it flattens out a bit. Start your hike from here, following the road. With the high clearance vehicle, you can drive the 1.9 miles to the top, but expect lots of ruts and steep climbs along this badly eroded road.

Stay on the most traveled road, but at 0.2 miles at a Y junction, go straight (the left turn is likely blocked by a gate). At 0.4 miles, go left up the steep and rutted road – the right fork used to connect into the Cathedral Pines subdivision but a gate now blocks access. The road soon leaves the pines behind and travels across a treeless area, burned by the Indian Fire in 2002. At 1.8 miles, go right, climbing steeply on the north side of the mountain. When I took the YTA board members here in January, there was snow on the shadowed side of the road. .

At 1.9 miles, you will reach the high point, at a junction of various roads and trails. On your right, there is an open area with plenty of space



YTA volunteers & friends, Quart Mtn.

for parking. On the far side of this space, you will see a sign for trail #9415, which is an alternate route of 2.5 miles to Quartz Mtn. from the Aspen Creek trailhead on Copper Basin Road.



From the road high point, there is a rough road that climbs up to the left – hike this to reach the top. It's only a couple of hundred yards to the summit, but the way is steep in places. There are various routes you can take, but I suggest you walk up this rough road for about 100 feet then go left, still climbing on an old road that soon curves sharply to the right. Go left at the second road, and then look for a rough narrow path on your right that leads up to the quartz outcroppings above. Explore along the white ridge, enjoying the views, scrambling over and around the jagged rocks – take care, it's easy to sprain an ankle!

After returning to your vehicle, continue on as the road you descends around the south side of the peak, but keep to the left at the first Y fork near the high point.

BLACK CANYON TRAIL

by Catby Schultz

Black Canyon Trail south of Hwy. 69 in Yavapai County is being developed out of the Spring Valley area this year by the Black Canyon Trail Coalition. The 2010 work has begun from just west of Spring Valley toward the southern portion of the trail that is being created northward from the Bumble Bee Exit area. Almost a half mile has been sculpted from the earth on the south side of Hwy. 69, between mile markers 266 and 267. From this work location, the trail heads uphill, along Big Bug Creek, toward the Spring Valley area and will turn south into the desert from there.

Currently the creek is flowing strongly and provides a nice background sound bite as the work is being done on Saturday or Sunday. After lunch and work, it is a nice area to explore toward the south and plants are currently preparing their blooms. The Black Canyon Trail Coalition spearheads the work and information regarding the work events, as well as other parking / trailheads and trail paths, can be found on their website at bctaz.com. For work events, please click on same from their home page and then scroll the whole page to find the future dates as they are updated. YTA will be getting a map or link to

the trail for their website so you can view from that area if it is one of your 'favorites'.


During the spring and early summer, the Big Bug Creek and Agua Fria River have water so be prepared to get your feet wet! One of the benefits of this trail for hikers with dogs and equines is the availability of water at various locations, along with the wildlife taking advantage of same. For the plant enthusiasts, we will soon be able to go from high chaparral environment to the desert splendor.

Work will continue into the spring and early summer, usually stopping when the temperatures get more extreme. It will resume again in the fall when it starts to cool down a bit. Water is provided during the work day along with some type of snack and often lunch is provided as well. If you haven't visited any part of the trail yet or worked on a trail creation segment, this is a fun, though physically intensive method of finding out what is available in AZ.!

PRESCOTT ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

PAT again brings you Bike Month: April 13 - May 21 – events and activities, for all ages and interest levels, celebrating bikes as clean, healthy, cost-effective transportation and recreation. And they're just plain fun!! Throughout Bike Month, enter the raffle for a chance to win a new Gary Fisher Mountain Bike or a New Belgium Brewing Custom Cruiser Bike!! Events include group rides, trail work, movie nights, parties, and more! Contact us at www.PrescottAlternativeTransportation.org for a calendar of events, updates and news; plus, join us on Facebook. Or, call us at 928-708-0911.

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OPEN SPACE IS KEY TO PRESCOTT'S PROSPERITY

by J. D. Greenberg, Pres. Open Space Alliance

Often in the past, the Courier has editorialized that Prescott should concentrate on “needs” rather than “wants.”

Recently, the Courier and some public officials have said that the continuation of our Open Space program is questionable because it is not a “need.” While initially this viewpoint might seem reasonable, further analysis shows it is erroneous.

In 2000, Mayor Sam Steiger and the Prescott Council presented a proposition to the public: Extend the 1 percent Streets tax for 10 years ending 2015, and split the proceeds between streets and open space. The plan was to divide the proceeds between streets and open space for 15 years until \$40.7 million for open space was allocated, and then dedicate the remaining money to road improvements.

Before the public vote, the city council attached a resolution to the proposition that included a list of 11 open space properties including Badger “P” Mountain, Glassford Hill, and Granite Dells Preserve. The city promised: “City staff is hereby directed to use its best efforts to acquire that open space” listed.

Many open space supporters worked diligently to help the city promote the proposition, which citizens approved. However, almost immediately, the city shifted the bulk of open space spending to the end of the 15-year period, allocating almost all of the first few years’ expenditures to streets. The city has allocated annual amounts in line with the \$40.7 million total for open space, but to date only about \$16 million has gone for open space purchases.

It is unethical for the city to promise something to the public after voters approved a tax proposal, and then renege. In addition, it would be dishonorable if the city does not spend the \$40.7 million on open space by 2015 as promised.

Even with our recent economic downturn, the 1 percent tax extension is estimated to produce more than twice what the city originally projected. Streets have received all the increased money. The initial 10-year spending estimate for streets was \$34 million. Currently streets are projected to receive \$144 million for these 10 years. Further, this past year the

public approved an extension of .75 percent in taxes solely for streets. We did not ask for, nor do we expect, any of that money to go to open space. We just want what was promised in 2000 when the voters made their voice heard about the importance of preserving open space by approving the tax extension.

Prescott is an incredibly beautiful area. Prescott citizens consistently have declared that they want a city that is not just another carbon copy of all the others that merely offers the basics. Our citizens have made it clear that a high quality of life is paramount to maintaining the gem of Arizona that is Prescott.

Do we want to preserve Badger “P” Mountain for eternity? Do we want to protect critical areas in the Granite Dells? The public still supports these efforts, yet others say we do not need to fulfill the promises of the open space program.

Around the nation, open space has been shown to raise the values of nearby properties. Open space also has proved to enhance the inflow of tourism dollars. The Trust for Public Lands (www.tpl.org) cites many scholarly papers noting the positive payback for land conservation investments. Included is a recent study of conservation investments in Colorado, which found that \$595 million investment in conservation easements returned \$3.51 billion in public benefits. That’s a return of \$6 for every \$1 invested!

But even more, we need Prescott’s open space program in the Dells and elsewhere to maintain Prescott as a great place to live and work now, and into the future. With proper eco-tourism promotion, open space acquisition will result in greater city tax revenue through more visitor days spent in Prescott, with associated lodging, meals, and incidental costs.

We have a choice: The city can provide only for so-called “needs,” and condemn future Prescott to become the same as any cookie-cutter suburb of a megalopolis; or the city can honor its promise to the electorate and complete Prescott’s voter-approved open space program.

Reprint with author’s permission of Daily Courier “Talk of the Town” article

LOCAL HIKING GROUPS

Here are some internet links to some great organizations and opportunities for exploration, hiking, and volunteering for outdoor projects. We will provide information on equestrian groups in a subsequent issue.

Trekabout Walking Club: http://www.cityof-prescott.net/_d/trekfebruary2010_v2.pdf This schedule is only current through Feb., 2010. This group is hosted by the City of Prescott Recreation Department. Hikes are led by city staff and volunteers from the Recreation Department, YMCA, and Yavapai County Health Department. The groups hike on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning at 8:00am.

Prescott Hiking Club: www.prescotthikingclub.com/. This club is based in Prescott with members throughout the tri-city area. Membership is open to anyone. Activities include, in addition to a regular schedule of several hikes per week, picnics, campouts, and parties. The website has posted schedule though May, 2010 with additional summer events noted. Hikes are categorized as slow, fast, and nature or exploratory and provide a tailored experience for almost every

level of interest and ability.

Prescott Outings Club: <http://prescottoutingsclub.webs.com> The Outings Club is one of the oldest in this area, having been in existence since 1975. An experienced guide leads their hikes, each of which is scouted in advance. The schedule offers hikes through 2010 at almost every level of ability with distances ranging from about 3 to 10 miles distance and elevation gains ranging from nil to 2400 feet.

Sierra Club Outings with the Yavapai Group , Northern Arizona Chapter: <http://arizona.sierraclub.org/Yavapai/outings.html> This is a group with a mission for ecological education and advocacy, outdoor excursions, and trail maintenance. Their schedule for this April and May focuses on the upper reaches of the Verde River as well as a hike on Sycamore Creek to Mormon Pocket.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Individual or Organization Name (s) _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____

What related organizations do you belong to? _____

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

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

If you did not receive this newsletter in the mail, we would like to know where you picked up this copy:

Retail Store _____ Public Facility (e.g. Library) _____ Friend _____ Organization _____

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

If you would like membership in the YTA Historic Trails Committee, please check here (no added fee) _____

Annual Membership Fee: Annual \$15.00 for individual/Family; \$25 Organization/Business

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

A coalition of non-motorized trail users

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

