

Trail Tracks

Winter 2012-2013

HIGHLANDS CENTER HIKING "SPREE"

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THE HIGHLAND CENTER for Natural History has organized a Hiking Spree every fall, starting back in 2008. The Center chooses twelve different trails each year to encourage both novices and experienced hikers to explore and enjoy the wonderful trails in the Prescott area during a two-month period. For those who complete eight or more of the hikes, a commemorative medallion and hiking stick can be purchased. Although the chosen trails are intended for hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers can also travel most of them.

We are blessed to have such a variety of trails in our area. This allows the Center to vary the trails it selects each year – some trails are easy, some are moderate and a few are strenuous. Loop trails are popular, so they are chosen as much as possible. Some interesting trails have to be out-and-back – as a bonus, you see a different view from each direction you hike! Most of the trails are in the nearby Prescott National Forest but with more and more great trails being added within the City of Prescott, at least two of the Spree trails are city trails. For the forest, a couple of trails are farther out requiring a longer drive. This will take you to areas you may never have visited, and expand your knowledge of new and interesting places.

Each trail is covered by a detailed map that shows the chosen trail and any connecting trails. Each map is a self-contained guide – as well as the map, there are easy-to-follow directions to the trailhead with the driving distance, and also helpful notations. Some notations guide you as you tra-

verse the route, while others indicate historic or scenic points of interest, or tell you how to make your hike longer if you like a challenge. Mileages are given between junctions, and contours were added this year so you can tell how much climbing is involved.



View of Watson Lake from Northshore Trail

The 2012 Spree is now over but that doesn't mean you are too late to enjoy the selected trails. If you go online to www.highlandcenter.org you will find the Hiking Spree under the Community Programs tab. Click on Maps & Information to reach all of the maps for this year and the archived maps from previous years. These maps can be printed on your color printer at home – choose a trail that is new to you or go back and enjoy a trail you haven't hiked recently.

If you aren't a member already, you can join the Highland Center and support this valuable local organization for a charitable donation. The Center is on the left (east) side of Walker Road, about 2 miles south of Highway 69 by Costco.

— Nigel Reynolds

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

Officers

George Sheats, President
Nigel Reynolds, Vice Pres.
Jim Pessin, Treasurer
Carol Stafford, Secretary

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Newsletter & Website, Ron Smith, Chair
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Contact Us

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P.O. Box 403
Prescott, AZ 86302
Call Membership Chair
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. You will find a membership application on page 7.

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



PRESIDENT' COLUMN

YAVAPAI TRAILS ASSOCIATION helped complete a prioritized list for new trails construction within the City of Prescott. The list contains approximately 90 miles of recommended new trails, of which the goal is to complete about 40 more miles over the next 10 years. This will result in about 80 miles of trails within the City's jurisdiction.

This year has been productive for trails construction. During 2012 the Over the Hill Gang has added 8 miles of trails within the City of Prescott. The number of volunteers for the Monday trail construction has grown from an average of initially 12 to the current average of 18 workers. In addition we added Friday as 'special projects day', where we typically have 6-10 volunteers. Fridays are saved for constructing steps, bridges, retaining walls, and completing difficult sections of trail.

The City of Prescott's General Plan Committee will be completing its 'Draft' during the next couple of months. The plan will then be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. The final step will be holding additional public meetings and then placing the General Plan approval on the 2013 November Election ballot for public vote. Several sections of the General Plan are of special interest to Yavapai Trails Association: land use, open space, environmental, main trail priorities, non-motorized transportation, lakes, and quality of life are a few content examples.

The next big Yavapai Trails Association initiative is to work with the City of Prescott Office of Tourism and Parks and Recreation departments preparing for the International Trails Symposium. The Symposium is being held in Fountain Hills, Arizona, April 14-17, 2013. Besides sharing a booth and providing information about YTA, Prescott, area trails, etc. we are selected to host the '90 minute entertainment period' prior to the 7PM, April 16, American Trails Awards Ceremony. We will be assembling about 90 minutes of



scenic and entertaining video clips showing the many recreational opportunities within Prescott. Arizona State Parks and American Trails Magazine have requested Clubs and Communities such as Prescott, to put together half day or full day adventure trips available to Symposium attendees both before and after the scheduled dates. If YTA would like to lead a hike or host another event for the attendees to attend here in Prescott, we need to get our plans completed and presented to the Symposium organizers.



OHG at work

See you on the trails. The Over the Hill Gang is always looking for additional volunteers. Go to www.prescotttrails.com or www.milehightrailssystem.com or call Chris Hosking at 928-777-1121 for volunteer contact information or maps within the City of Prescott.

— *George Sheats, President YTA*

Ed. note: The following is the content of a letter sent on behalf of the YTA board to Prescott National Forest expressing a policy of the board regarding the conflicts existing between mountain bikers and equestrians.

October 12, 2012

Prescott National Forest

344 South Cortez St.
Prescott, AZ 86303

RE: Prescott National Forest Land Management Draft Plan Revision

Yavapai Trails Association is opposed to any separation of users on non-motorized trails. There are designated trails for motorized and non-motorized and that is appropriate. It is not appropriate to begin separating trails for all the different non-motorized users. This will result in fewer trails for all. Cooperation, not separation, is the solution to safer trails.

As a result of recent conflict between bikes and horses, members from different hiking, equestrian and biking organizations, including Yavapai Trails Association, have joined together to form the Trail Safety Coalition. The goal is to work with Prescott National Forest to create safer trails open to all. Much has been done to accomplish this goal. Signs have been placed on high use trails, visibility has been increased and education is ongoing.

Yavapai Trails Association believes the non-motorized community needs to work together with Prescott National Forest to create safer, multiple use non-motorized trails. Shared use trails build a trail community by increasing the need for all users to cooperate to preserve and protect a common resource.

Thank you

A HIGH DESERT RIVER

JUST NORTH OF THE PRESCOTT area, before you climb the mesas into the mountains, is an occasionally rain filled lake bed and the basis of the upper Verde River. The limited rainfall in the desert southwest allows for most riparian areas to be moistened on a seasonal basis only but the Verde River is currently one of the few flowing rivers that supply water to various areas of the state as it moves southeast.

To reach the river on public land either within the Prescott National Forest or other public land east of Highway 89, drive north out of Prescott along Highway 89 passing through Chino Valley and Paulden areas. After passing underneath the railroad tracks just north of the Paulden post office, look for the Verde Ranch Road on the right/east side of the highway. Turn right and follow the road east for 1.5 miles where you will get to the railroad crossing. Drive over and continue along forest Road 635 for a brief 35 feet. Turn right (south) after passing the fence line and drive for 3.6 miles where you will get to the parking area. This parking area is on a bluff above the river canyon and suitable for horse trailers. The final half-mile, however, to the river is rough and usually suitable for high-clearance vehicles only. Neither parking spot currently has any amenities but the river is just to the south with easy walking.

The river path, particularly that going downstream from here, crosses the water multiple times as the canyon narrows and expands so be sure to wear foot gear for a wet environment or expect to get your feet wet. You may also encounter bike and horse traffic along most of the area. If you travel west from where the trail leaves the lower parking area it first passes through one of four parcels of land that are sections of the Upper Verde Wildlife Area under management by the Arizona Game & Fish Department. Within about 2 miles you

will come to a small lake and riparian oasis. This pond (Stillman Lake) is being renovated in a joint project of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Arizona Game & Fish Department to serve as a nursery for native fish. The entire Verde River system is a lifeline for the area's fish and wildlife so you may see any and all of the desert species that live here, including even a river otter.

The canyon walls vary in difficulty for an extended length and there are other drainages coming into the river which you may want to explore. In the past there were human inhabitants and you may chance upon old Indian ruins and related petroglyphs.

This sphere of nature encourages you to enjoy the Prescott area by offering sparkling water, relief from the summer heat, the opportunity to make the experience as simple or difficult, short or long, as you want, and to relax into the fresh high desert air. Happy trails!

— *Cathy Schultz*



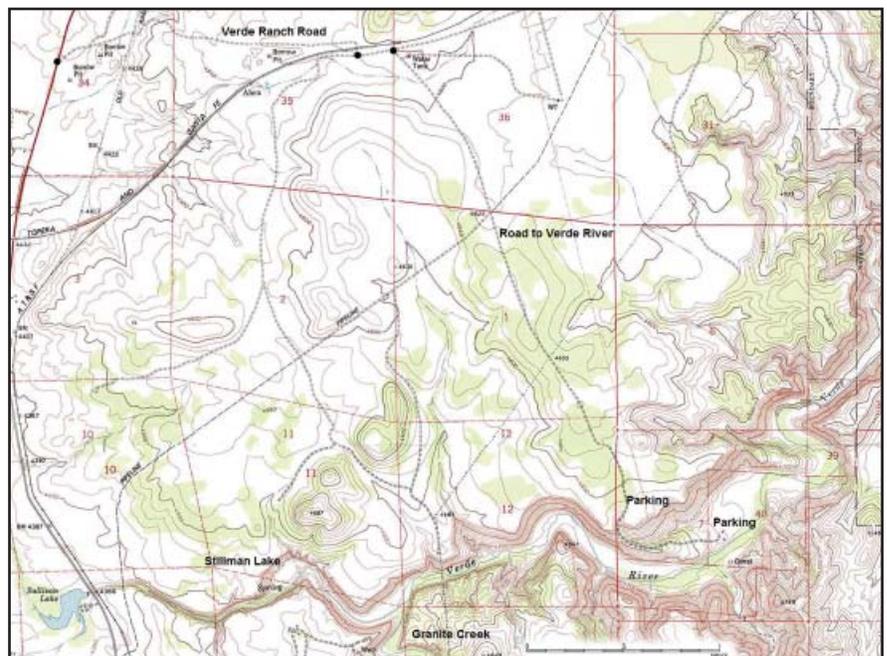
Verde River near confluence with Granite Creek



Rock Art along Upper Verde



Black Tailed Rattlesnake



SALIDA GULCH TRAIL

SALIDA GULCH TRAIL # 95, more recently named Saldida View Trail #95 (PNF) is a beautiful hike through an intermittent stream area. The trail makes a nice loop that is about 4 miles in length and is moderate in difficulty. The area offers a variety of vegetation and evidence of wild-life in the more lush areas. The north loop of the trail begins in a cool, quiet canyon riparian area with large willow and walnut trees. The canyon contains evidence of prehistoric cultures. About a mile along the trail is a large black rock covered with petroglyphs of sheep, human figures, coils and snakes. After about 2 miles the trail begins to climb up out of the canyon to the ridgeline. It passes through ponderosa pine trees, chaparral and cactus. The ridge offers spectacular views of the Prescott area including the Bradshaw Mountains, Granite Mountain and Glassford Hill. The trail then drops down, passes through a gate, and returns to the trailhead. Although Salida Gulch Trail is close to Prescott and Prescott Valley, it gets very light use. There is plenty of chance for solitude and enjoying nature.

The Trailhead for Salida Gulch is about 20 minutes from downtown Prescott. Travel east on Hwy 69 to Walker Rd. Turn right on Walker Rd. and go to the sign for Lynx Creek Ruin. Turn left on Lynx Creek Rd. (FR9401) just after the sign. Travel past the Day Use area and continue down the hill where the road dead ends at the trailhead. There is a large parking area with plenty of room for both horse trailers and vehicles. There is some private land adjacent to the parking area.

To reach Trail 95, take a motorized Trail 9263 across Lynx Creek to a point just past the gate. The north (canyon) loop of Trail 95 begins on the right. Trail 95 is open to horses, hikers and bikers. It is a non-motorized trail.

This is a great trail with ample opportunity to enjoy the great diversity of Prescott National Forest.

— *Joyce Mackin*



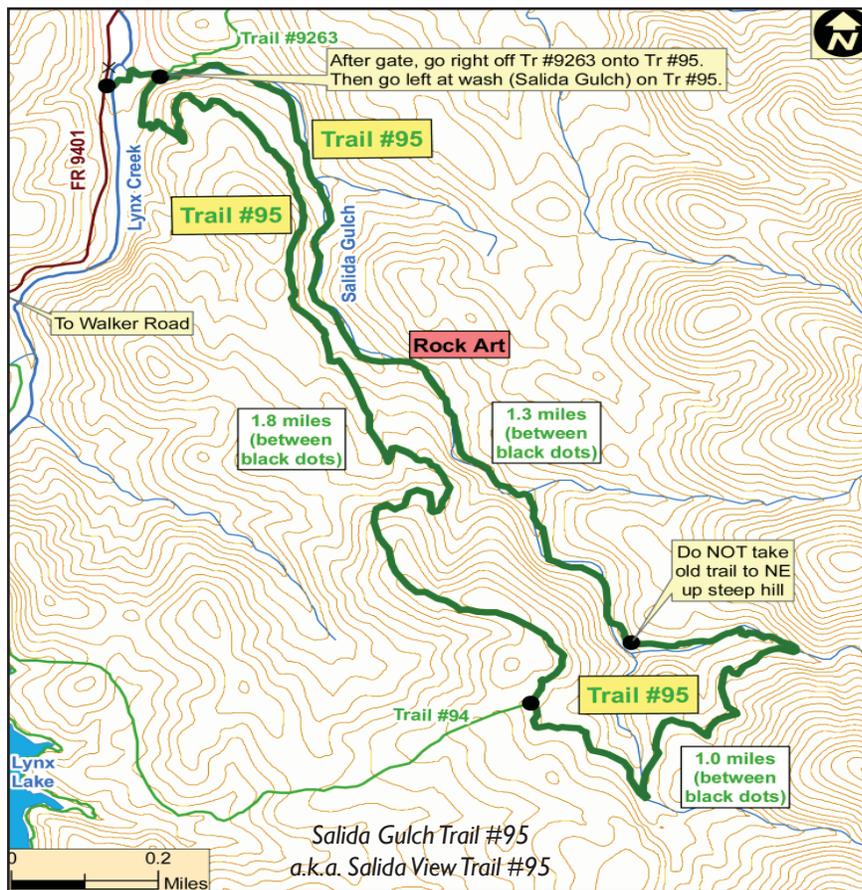
Author, and trail rock art



Petroglyphs in Salida Gulch



Salida Gulch Trail #95



HIGHLIGHTING THE “OVER THE HILL GANG”

PRESCOTT HAS THE PERFECT ingredients for constructing trails using mostly free labor. This volunteer labor comes from schools, church groups, and non-profits to non-voluntary community service and restitution programs. There are also more specialized trail building groups among the local mountain biking, hiking, and equestrian clubs. One local group that has worked constructing trails around Prescott over the past 15 years, is an ever changing group made up mostly of retirees called the “Over the Hill Gang.” The OHG has no formal organization structure, has no meetings, or membership procedures, but prides itself by completing sections of trails 2-3 mornings per week. With Prescott’s great outdoors, open areas, forests, and rugged landscapes the perfect setting exists to put the OHG to work building trails.

With leadership from the Prescott National Forest, City of Prescott Parks Department, and other land managers the design and layout for planned trails are first mapped and marked for the trail construction crews. Clearly marking the intended routes is the first step in preparation for the crews.

With the recent OHG crew size averaging 15-20 women and men, it has been important to have several hundred yards ‘marked and forged’ for both maximizing construction efficiency and safety. The volunteers are spread out to work in clusters of 4-6 persons, although some prefer working alone. Moving a large boulder may take a team of 4-5, but swinging a pick-

mattock, McLeod, or Polaski axe needs its own safe space. Most volunteers have their own preferences for tools and specialized tasks and need to be left alone to do their thing, rather than being micro-managed or forced into unneeded perfectionism. New and unseasoned volunteers are coached not to attempt to keep up with more experienced workers. Everyone is encouraged to work within their own capabilities, drink lots of water, rest when needed, and work only as long or short as they want on any given day. Three hours on any given day is about as long as volunteer crews work.

Having a regular and expanding list of volunteers, has worked best when it doesn’t take a lot of ‘red tape’ to join the crews. Paperwork such as liability waiver forms, personal application forms, don’t settle well with most volunteers. Coaching safe practices, protective clothing, has been important but always been matched to weather, location, experience levels, and specific tasks.

The scheduling of regular work days and times has been important with notifications going to each member of the pool of volunteers. On holidays and weather cancelations many regulars like to get together for breakfast or coffee. Even a few social gatherings, holiday parties, lunches, are enjoyed by those who have been working alongside one another and enjoy each other’s company. You wouldn’t always assume they have such a strong friendship if you had listened to their continuous bickering and back and forth dialog. This type of verbal sport is the world in which the OHG members thrive! Some members like to work on special projects in a small group such as constructing a bridge, retaining wall, building steps, or working an extremely challenging section of trail. These has sometimes been scheduled on another day and not be part of the regular full crew.

Nothing has encouraged the volunteers more than seeing the trail they just complet-

ed as they walk out at the end the day’s work. The accumulated trail segments add up quickly to complete a “Named Trail” or ‘Trails System’. The trail signs and maps go up and descriptions of the trails start showing up in emails, web sites, blogs, newsletters, and newspaper articles.

One final note, there are stories and memories that have replayed over the months and years. “How about the time you hit a bee’s nest, had the boulder on your big toe, the mouse that ate your cookie, the 10 foot tall boulder that looks like a butt, or the black thumb-nail.” Remember the rule, “never let the facts get in the way of a good trail building story.” To see examples of OHG-built trails go to www.prescotttrails.com.

To volunteer with this group, call Chris Hosking at 928-777-1121.

— *George Sheats – President, YTA
Volunteer Coordinator – Over the Hill
Gang*

See page 7 to see OHG at work!



OHG ON THE JOB!

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



American Trails Symposium
April 14-17, 2013

Fort McDowell Casino
Hwy. 87 & Fort McDowell Rd.
Fountain Hills, Arizona

More info will be posted on YTA website