



Trail Tracks

YAVAPAI TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Summer, 2021

Trail Projects Need Your Support

By Ann Hendrickson

Our 2021 project year is getting under way and we need your financial help. YTA has a variety of projects that require funding and or “matching” dollars for grant projects. Of course, we always need our volunteers to come out and lend a hand, either behind the scenes or working on a trail. Please note, we recognize our sponsors, donors, and volunteers on our website, in our newsletters, and on social media. If possible, we include signage when requested.

In early May 2021, YTA was one of 48 organizations in the nation to be awarded funding by the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA) to restore Groom Creek Loop 9.5-mile trail. (See Hike of the Month.) This is an immensely popular trail on Spruce Mountain for hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. The grant award is for \$15,000 and is part of a total restoration budget of \$37,000. YTA has partnered with Back Country Horseman of Central Arizona (BCHCAZ), Prescott Mountain Bike Alliance (PMBA) and the USFS of the Prescott National Forest to complete this project. YTA needs “matching” \$2,300 cash donations. This project will commence after the spotted owl breeding season in early fall 2021.



Fire Tower on the Groom Creek Loop Trail

Also in May, YTA received \$17,500 from the Arizona Community Foundation (ACF) to restore several trails within the Almosta Trail System, a network of over 30 miles of multi-purpose trails in the Williamson Valley area. The budget for this restoration project is valued at \$43,000. YTA will be partnering with the PNF and BCHAZ on the Almosta project. Our matching cash requirement for this project is \$3,000.



View of Granite Mountain on the beautiful Almosta Trail

One other project in need of funding is our scheduled Dry Rock Masonry training program we will hold in conjunction with the Groom Creek restoration. YTA is offering a two-day professional workshop for 12 dedicated trail maintenance volunteers to receive training in “rock work”. The cost of this training program is \$2,400.

This is a sample of our trail project plans for 2021. Please watch for volunteer workdays that we will offer on our projects. Your generous and continued support make it all happen. Please consider making a gift. Go to the www.yavapai-trails.org website and click on the donate now button. You can designate which project you would like to support (YTA is a 501c3 non-profit). Thank you for maintaining the future of our trails.

*From the president
Ann Hendrickson*



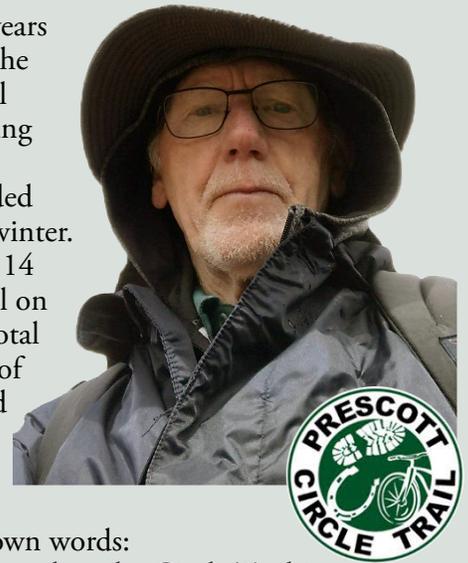
Recently someone commented about YTA being “lucky” to be the recipient of multiple grant awards. In reality, and in a nutshell, we are good at what we do, and we are funded accordingly. YTA works closely with our communities and partners to discern trail needs and whether it is something we are capable of or willing to take on as a project.

Frequently, a grant award will determine if a project is a go or not for us; it is the cornerstone funding. For example: YTA was awarded a \$10,450 grant to renovate the Chino Valley Peavine rail-to-trail. The total project budget was over \$70,000 which included sponsors, in-kind contributions/dollars, over 2,000 volunteer labor hours, and generous cash donations.

Throughout the course of a project, we monitor our progress, ensuring that we fulfill all the goals we set forth in our proposal. Our results are indicative that YTA has a strong record of being careful stewards of all funding, being honest with our “promises”, and accomplishing what we set out to do. I strongly believe YTA is a good investment for trail dollars, and “we” are committed to maintain that status.

Jim Thordahl's Prescott Circle Trail Challenge

Jim Thordahl (80 years young) had hiked the Prescott Circle Trail previously, but hiking alone due to the pandemic, he decided to do it again this winter. He started January 14 completing the trail on February 11, in a total of 9 outings, most of which were out and back (so double the mileage) in varying conditions. In his own words:



“I planned to complete the Circle Trail in fewer outings with less out-and-backs. Three treks in the high teens and three taxi rides did it. Before the big snowstorm I knocked out those segments that I know get muddy; then plowed through 20 miles of snow after it melted a bit.

“I don't think you could hike the complete trail without having a memorable experience or encounter. . . I also had a cute encounter with a Roadrunner. I do not hike for the views, but when I reach a point (Quartz Mountain top) that gives you a 360-degree view, I cannot deny my sense of awe. . . As for 80 years young; I have not yet decided how to behave. Say the word ‘challenge’ and you'll get my attention.”

Trail of the Month — Groom Creek Trail #307 - Spruce Mountain

Distance: 9.6 miles

Difficulty: moderate

Elevation Gain: 1,640 feet (6407' at the trailhead, 7,684' at Spruce Mountain Tower)

This popular Prescott Trail is used by solo hikers, groups of hikers, mountain bikers, horseback riders, birders, and trail runners. This hike can be modified to be an out and back adventure as well as a shorter loop by taking the Lower Spruce Mountain Bypass. This hike has it all. It includes the pine mountain forest feel, the mountain peak experience with a lookout tower, and the interest of a loop hike. It will leave the hiker with the feeling that Prescott's hiking opportunities are incredible.

Fun facts: Groom Creek (area) is named after Col. Bob Groom (Kentucky 1824-1899) who came to Arizona in 1862.

Although he lived principally by prospecting and mining, Groom was also a surveyor or who surveyed the town site of Prescott. He was a member of the first Arizona Territorial legislature. There is an old miner's cabin just off the trail; see if you can find it!



Cabin circa 1930s photo courtesy of former YTA president Nigel Reynolds

Meet Matt Middleton



In fact, if you frequent the Chino Valley portion of the recently upgraded Peavine trail, you may have already met him.

Matt and his wife of 42 years, Lori, hail from Michigan. Matt's long history of trail riding and volunteering began there. When the couple moved to Chino Valley last February, Matt brought with them a dedication to service he honed in four Michigan state parks within a few miles of their home there.

You will find Matt on the trail all times of the day. This ubiquitous biker loves seeing the pronghorns, coyotes, and even a bobcat once. Morning, evenings, and even nighttime, Matt is on the trail checking out all the facets that nature offers in this area.

Perhaps Matt's most telling accomplishment is that he has ridden 2,780 miles on this trail since he and Lori arrived February 10, 2020. Now, that tells us, this robust fellow is out there a lot! His Garmin documents his progress as he rides along on his Trek mountain bike.

When I asked Matt how he became involved locally, he referred to Ann Hendrickson contacting him to help. Way to go, YTA president Ann!

Matt's love of the outdoors, and his gratefulness to "give back" and positive nature make him a fellow to know.

Remembering George Sheats

Sad News for the Trail Community. George Sheats was the face, name, and staunchest of leaders for Yavapai Trails Association for oh so many years. George was one of the first people I met when moving to Prescott. I wanted to be active in the trail community and all signs pointed to George. After George passed the presidency baton to me (along with boxes of files) I became even more impressed with the imprint George has made, not only on the trail community, but also on the greater Prescott community as well.



A relentless supporter of his community, not just as a volunteer, but as an organizer of volunteers with the creation of the Over the Hill Gang trail maintenance crew, as a former Planning & Zoning Commissioner, as the backbone of the Greater Prescott Outdoor Fund and Prescott Alternative Transportation — the list goes on and on. Anything that remotely spoke of trails, George had a finger in, and was the first to get his checkbook out to support it.

As the "keeper" of George's records, I admire his tenacity, brilliance, knowledge, and dedication. Yavapai County trail systems exist in part due to George's perseverance, vision, and financial contribution.

"We" are better because of you, George. You will be forever missed in Prescott. Our heartfelt condolences to George's wife Karen.

Ann Hendrickson, President

Make a Difference With Your Time and Talent

Yavapai Trails Association is a small group of dedicated volunteers who perform "behind the scenes" work to continually maintain and improve the non-motorized trail systems throughout the county. YTA needs more of our members to help accomplish these goals. Specifically, if you have experience or an interest in **website maintenance, social media platforms, communications**, or simply the willingness to get involved, we have a special spot for **you**. Please drop us a note at:

yavapai.trails@gmail.com Our trails will benefit from your service.



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

For Membership, \$30 annually visit:
www.yavapai-trails.org/volunteer

New YTA Board Member

Tom Reilly

Tom Reilly comes to YTA with a long history of community service. He has served on numerous Prescott Chamber committees, Salvation Army Board of Advisors, Prescott City Council, Yavapai County Planning and Zoning Commission and has been a member of the Prescott Frontier Rotary club since 1984.

Tom worked as both an architect and general contractor in Prescott for close to 40 years. He has two adult daughters and is married to Sandy. They both love to hike the trails in and around Prescott and when they take road trips a few times each year. "Joining the YTA Board gives me a tangible way to give back to the trails community."



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YTA installs the finishing touches on the Chino Valley Peavine

Step by step, the aspiration of connecting the Chino Valley Peavine and the Prescott Peavine trail is becoming more and more of a reality as YTA added final touches to the Chino Valley segment during a community workday on Saturday, April 10.

The Peavine trail is considered one of the few Rail-To-trails projects in Arizona. For the past few years, YTA has taken a leadership role in improving this unique trail segment. This revitalization of the CV Peavine has all been made possible by a community effort in which over 2,100 volunteer hours of labor in 2021 were dedicated. That is the equivalent of a full-time employee for a year!



Car crossing plank used by the SF, P & P railroad (circa 1900s) and some of the many volunteers who helped finish the Chino Peavine Trail

Currently the Chino Peavine has well over 40,000 trail users a year. This gem of a trail is "right out the door" for so many Chino Valley residents and is becoming popular as well by out-of-town users. The trail is well equipped for hikers, bikers, and equestrians with plenty of parking at multiple locations.

On top of all the dedicated volunteers, many thanks go to the following: the Arizona Community Foundation, the Greater Prescott Outdoor Fund, The City of Prescott, The Prescott National Forest, The City of Chino Valley, Olsen's Grain, Granite Creek Vineyards, Chino Valley Historical Society, Chino Valley Safeway, and several private donors. In total, donations, volunteer hours, grants, and in-kind materials translated into over a value of \$65,000 worth of improvements. A wonderful demonstration of communities and people working together to get a job done.