



Trail Tracks

YAVAPAI TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Winter, 2022

A Look Back on 2021

*By Ann Hendrickson,
YTA President*

Wow, 2021 was quite the year! YTA had set out to accomplish several lofty goals for the year. Little did we know that we would be required to continue to operate and work under a continued COVID protocol and respond to the trail damage from a record monsoon season.

A million thanks to our volunteers who stepped up and came out whenever sign-up sheets were posted. Over 2100 volunteer hours were logged in 2021. Not only is that equivalent to one full-time employee, but it is also “worth” \$59,934 in matching grant dollars! Our volunteers are truly the backbone of our organization.

With the combination of grants, donations, partnerships, including Town of Chino Valley, Prescott National Forest, Back Country Horsemen, Prescott Mountain Bike Alliance and volunteer efforts, YTA finished its two year renovation project on the Chino Valley Peavine; restored the very popular 9.5 mile Groom Creek Loop trail #307; conducted a professional workshop that trained 12 volunteers to become the dry rock masonry trail maintenance crew to work on COP and PNF trail projects (see page 2); partnered in the development and implementation of the



“bell program” for trail users in the Granite Creek Basin trail system; and commenced phase one of a two-year restoration project of the Almosta Trails system in Williamson Valley.

The triumvirate team of Russ Lyon Sotheby’s International Realty, donor Jill Anderson, and volunteer Joanne Polayes make the continued success of the Prescott Circle Trail Challenge program possible. Once again, we celebrated National Public Lands Day by hosting a trail event encouraging our partners and all trail users to join us on the trail.

Looking forward to 2022, YTA will continue to provide leadership in being good stewards of our outdoor (trail) spaces. With your continued assistance, we will support the trails that connect you to the outdoors. Your financial contributions are essential to our success in planning, building, educating, and maintaining the area trails and trail amenities.

Watch for notices on our continued effort on the Almosta Trail system, efforts at eliminating some of the trail maintenance back log, work efforts of the rock crew, Prescott Circle Trail improvements, and “share the trail” ethics and etiquette education. A main theme of 2022 is to ensure all trail users have a safe and positive outdoor experience!

A Rockin' Good Time



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In September, YTA brought in Flagline Trails LLC to train a selected group of dedicated volunteers the technical skills needed to perform various dry rock masonry work on our trail system.

In the past, when a trail “fails” and needs rock armoring for example, the work had to be hired out at quite an expense. Training our volunteers to be able to address this type of work fulfills a distinct trail maintenance need.

Our intrepid dozen volunteers spent 265 hours completing a serious restoration project. Look at the before and after shots. 18,000 pounds of rock were moved and built into the trail to mitigate the significant erosion. This volunteer crew will be called on in the future to apply their new techniques/skills on designated projects.

Volunteers ROCK!

Featured Trail - Almosta Trail #622

Restoring and improving the Almosta Trail for hikers, bikers and horseback riders is YTA's next major project. HikeArizona describes the trail as “possessing a remote quality that encourages experiences of tranquility and solitude. Travelers are left to their thoughts and the subtle rhythms of slow-moving shadows, snakes, and scrub jays. This trail traverses a landscape of rolling hillsides strewn with granite boulders. Pinyon pine, alligator juniper, cactus, and scrub oak line the path. There are stunning views of both Granite and Baby Granite Mountain from various points along the way.”



Distance one way 6.9 miles • Accumulated gain 578 feet • Easy to Moderate • Connects to other nearby trails

Directions to trail: From its intersection with Iron Springs Road, travel north on Williamson Valley Road for 12.5 miles to Almosta Ranch Road. Turn left on Almosta Ranch Road and proceed 0.7 miles to the trailhead on the left. Parking is good.

Honoring Retiring YTA Board Member

Jim Pessin

Jim has been a staple of the trail's community for over 23 years. After retiring from his first career at 55, Jim and his wife Kathy returned to the town they both grew up in, Prescott. Jim's love of hiking brought him to the attention of then YTA President Jan Alfano who asked him to be the treasurer for the YTA. Thinking the role would only last a few years, Jim agreed. Now, after over 20 years as treasurer and even longer as a board member, Jim is retiring again. These years of service reflect a level of dedication and commitment few of us have made.

Jim began as a trail maintenance volunteer. "Kinda Fun!" was his quip. This led to his spending time contributing to the early development of the Prescott Circle Trail in his role as treasurer of YTA, and also by spending many hours in trail construction and maintenance. He is quick to point out all the others who were major players along the way, characteristically downplaying his years of contributions. He fondly recalls that feeling of accomplishment when the PCT was completed. Who wouldn't!

Jim, again, mentioned how impressed he is not only with the volunteers but also by the remarkable level of cooperation between the Prescott National Forest and the City of Prescott staff and officials. He considers this unusual. "Without that level of teamwork between these two entities the Circle Trail would have remained an idea."

Jim likes all the trails, but you find him most frequently on Trail #396, that part of the Circle Trail which stretches from Senator Highway to White Spar.

So what's next for Jim? He plans to continue packing food with the Prescott Community Cupboard and delivering for Meals on Wheels, something he has done for 25 + years. When asked about his commitment to volunteerism in our town, Jim responded . . . "There is a lot to do in this town if you work for free!"

Jim we all thank you for your service!



Got Leash?

Hiking with our four-footed friends can be a valuable way to strengthen the bond between you and your pup. The relationships we develop have tremendous benefits for wellbeing, both

physical and emotional.

Hiking with a dog is different than hiking with a person. When trail hiking with our pet, it is important to be aware of proper trail etiquette and the county ordinances. Yavapai County requires that dogs be on a leash not to exceed six feet in length. The leash law keeps your dog safe from run-ins with private property, wildlife and vegetation. In addition, it helps others feel safe on the trail who may not know that your dog is friendly. Or worse yet, they may be worried that you have an unfriendly or timid animal with you.

While our multi-purpose trails are not (frequently) patrolled, it is a misdemeanor penalty to have your pet off-leash.

In one recent incident, an avid hiker and mountain biker will be undergoing several surgeries this year to repair damage to her wrist and hand that resulted from an encounter with an off-leash dog. To avoid injuring the loose dog, she swerved and crashed. She is not the first one and will not be the last. Horses often spook when encountering unleashed pets, resulting in serious injuries to both rider and pet.

Having our furry friends on a leash is the simple and courteous thing to do. A leashed dog is a safe dog.



Yavapai Trails Association
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For Membership, visit:
www.yavapai-trails.org

\$30 annually



Welcome Rita Thompson-Tinsley to the YTA Board

Trail rider Rita Thompson-Tinsley moved to the Prescott area from Texas in 2006. Retired from a broadcast advertising career, she was enthused and excited to find Arizona's finest trails right here in Yavapai County. "Not only are the trails here diverse and dynamic," she reports, "but the trail riding friends I have accumulated along the way are as adventurous and passionate as you could imagine." In the heat of summer the horse trail groups go for the cool relief of elevation. During the winter months, when trails are dry, they go for the lower trails. "One of the important rules of the trail is that you never ride out when the ground is wet or soft from moisture because of the damage that can be done to the footing," notes Thompson-Tinsley.



Being a writer by profession, and writing horse and horse people articles for a number of publications, Rita eventually became an equestrian columnist for Prescott Dog magazine.

Though desired, her time is not always spent as a trail bum in the saddle. Rita and husband David spend a lot of time working at their local business Statue-Esque, statues and yard art. Her real horse hangs out there a lot too, in between rides.

The Tintinnabulation of the Bells, Bells, Bells

In an effort to improve safety and reduce potential conflicts on the popular trail #347 as well as other trails in the Granite Basin area, the Prescott Trails Safety Coalition (of which YTA is an active member) in partnership with the Prescott National Forest has implemented a trial program to help educate trail users focusing on Mountain Bikers and Equestrians.



The program consists of bells provided at the Cayuse, Metate and Williamson Valley trailheads. These bells can be quickly installed on the handlebars of bikes and ring while the bikes move along the trails. They will alert other users that a bike is approaching from the front or behind thereby providing advance notification. The purpose is to significantly reduce the possibility of startling hikers and horses and to facilitate safe and friendly encounters. YTA, Prescott National Forest, Prescott Mountain Bike Alliance and Back Country Horsemen along with the Prescott Trails Safety Coalition are sponsoring the bells safety program.

The boxes installed at the trailheads have installation instructions and a QR code for providing feedback on the program. Users can keep the bells or return them after use. YTA along with other dedicated volunteers also performed several workdays of wide brushing on trail #347 to improve sight lines for all users.

Reducing potential trail conflicts is an important part of YTA's objectives and this project is a great example of our varied user groups working together along with the Prescott National Forest to work towards creating a safer and more enjoyable trail experience for all.