



Coalition may save little oasis

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Not far from downtown Prescott lies a little forest of cottonwood trees and willows, a green canopy hanging on to life along Granite Creek.

The little oasis nearly vanished amid the spread of gravel mining, livestock grazing and firewood cutting. Once an imposing 1,000 acres, the Watson Woods now cover just 126 acres. Granite Creek is listed by the state environmental agency as an impaired waterway.

But this isn't an obituary for another of Arizona's dying creeks and rivers.

This is the start of a success story, one written by hard-working volunteers and the city of Prescott.

Prescott Creeks, the non-profit group leading preservation efforts, says it now has about \$1.4 million to fund the work, most of it from two grants.

Plans call for restoration of the natural Granite Creek stream channel and its riparian habitat, along with education and monitoring programs.

Ecologists have found that riparian life can lie dormant under poor conditions and re-emerge with just a little water and some patience.

Prescott Creeks says the Woods preserve has become a top bird-watching spot, which isn't surprising for a cottonwood forest.

You can read more about the preserve and the efforts to restore it at www.prescottcreeks.org.

Learn about the state water protection fund at [www .awpf.state.az.us](http://www.awpf.state.az.us).

A version of this story originally appeared on azcentral.com. Read more about water and rivers at water.azcentral.com and read Shaun McKinnon's blog at [waterblogged .azcentral.com](http://waterblogged.azcentral.com).

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