



# THE CREEKSIDE ALMANAC

Prescott Creeks • Spring 2011 • Volume 17 Issue 1

## The End of Construction

By Jay Crocker

This past December, Prescott Creeks reached a milestone. We finished the final phase of the construction and revegetation project in the Watson Woods Riparian Preserve.



*ACE Planting*

In the spring of 2009, the first phase of the restoration project was completed. Four “reaches” or stretches of Granite Creek were moved into newly constructed creek beds that were engineered to function more naturally than the narrow, straight channel that the creek had been placed in during the gravel mining days of the mid-twentieth century. The new reaches were designed and built with banks that were shallow to allow the creek to flow out onto the floodplain in moderate flow events to deliver its silt load and nutrients to the plants on the flood plain rather than carrying them straight to Watson Lake.

The banks were planted with willows and seeded with native grass seed to stabilize soils and protect them from erosion during high flow events. During the first summer even though the monsoon was dryer than normal plant survivorship was very good and the newly constructed reaches stayed intact. However, on January 21, 2010 a large flood event occurred on Granite Creek and the new

creek reaches were damaged. The damage was greatest at the top (south) end of the Preserve and diminished toward the downstream (north) end. The damage to reaches 1-3 required new engineering and construction which was added to the list of work to be completed.

By the end of the summer of 2010, we were ready to start implementing the plan. We needed just short of 3,000 12 to 16 foot tall willow and cottonwood cuttings to be harvested and soaked in water for several weeks by the end of November. In October donor trees were identified throughout the Watson Woods and GPS readings were taken so that the trees would be easy to find again when harvesting began. It took most of the month to identify enough donor trees to supply the needed cuttings. At the start of November volunteer teams began harvesting, trimming and storing cuttings in water-filled dumpsters that were supplied by the City of Prescott. The harvest went slowly at first but the numbers of volunteers increased almost daily and by the end of the third week of November all the cuttings were harvested and soaking in water.



*ACE Harvesting*

During the last two weeks of November, operators and earthmoving equipment from

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Prescott Creeks is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission to promote, protect and celebrate the ecological integrity of riparian systems and associated wetlands in the central Arizona watersheds through conservation, restoration and education.



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## From the Executive Director



With the recent warm weather we're all venturing outside more and more to see the earth waking up from its winter slumbers. I just love seeing the cottonwoods and willows pushing their buds, and trying to identify all the unidentifiable plants bursting up through the soil.

While describing efforts during the winter, our cover story is just about the recent work at Watson Woods Riparian Preserve which had us moving lots of soil in the name of restoring Granite Creek. Now in the spring is a time when we start to see things happen.

As some of that soil moved we discovered "treasure" that will play a major part in the Granite Creek Cleanup event this year. In an effort to reach broader audience with meaningful activities on the creeks, we are working to add recycling, up-cycling and art into the Cleanup. As many as 500 volunteers will learn about what's out there and devise creative ways that we can deal with it. You can pre-register on our all-new website at [www.PrescottCreeks.org](http://www.PrescottCreeks.org).

Prescott Creeks volunteers, who participate in the Cleanup and who make restoration happen at the Preserve, are growing in numbers. During 2010 volunteers contributed almost 5,000 hours to the Cleanup, restoration work, and water quality monitoring, among many other tasks. Featured this month is Randy Watson who was a steadfast assistant in the field this fall. Gene Schmidt also logged countless hours in the pursuit of helping Prescott Creeks understand trends and attitudes of the local community when it comes to water quality. I thank these two, along with all of our volunteers, for their dedication.

Finally, Prescott Creeks has moved its office to a new location. Here we will build on the solid foundation our time at The Grove (119 Grove Ave. in Prescott) provided for us, and with your help we'll continue the preservation, restoration and celebration of our local watershed.

## Come See Us at Our New Location



Prescott Creeks has recently relocated to 822 West Gurley Street. The space formerly occupied by TBK Landscape Architecture will allow Prescott Creeks more outdoor space to better suit our growing organizational needs and programs. Over the past few years we have added our Rambling River, an interactive educational piece that needs outdoor space, along with our gear trailer, flatbed trailer, and truck – all of which are important to our ongoing work on preserving and restoring our watersheds.

Appreciation for our time at The Grove (119 Grove Ave.) is great. For the past eight years it provided opportunities that saw Prescott Creeks go from an organization with a single staff member to one with a professional staff of four with support from students and AmeriCorps VISTAs; from contemplating restoration at Watson Woods Preserve to



completing restoration work and planning watershed wide water quality improvement projects. We look forward to new growth and new opportunities in our new home.

Our contact information will stay the same. You can reach us by phone at (928) 445-5669 or through our website at [www.PrescottCreeks.org](http://www.PrescottCreeks.org). We look forward to an opportunity to give you the nickel tour at the new place in the near future.

### Prescott Creeks

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Ian Thompson  
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Colin Thompson  
*Watershed Technician*

Mary Simmering  
*Cleanup Coordinator*

This year don't just cleanup trash –  
recycle it into art



Saturday, April 23rd at 9am

Granite Creek Park

Join us in cleaning up Prescott's creeks

For more information or to pre-register:

[www.PrescottCreeks.org](http://www.PrescottCreeks.org)

## One Man's Treasure

By Ann-Marie Benz

The idiom says that "One man's trash is another man's treasure". This year we are hoping to prove that as part of the annual Granite Creek Cleanup on Saturday, April 23rd at Granite Creek Park from 9 am to 11 am. We're trying something different this year to help remove trash that would otherwise go to the landfill and to educate everyone about the type of trash found in our waterways. This year Prescott Creeks is adding art to the Cleanup. We're encouraging participants to separate out anything that could be made into art projects and keep those items in designated bags. The art materials can then either be brought back to the Park, where a celebration and art-material-separation will ensue, or can be piled at the pickup locations where volunteers will retrieve the materials.

We are looking for people to take some of the materials with them and turn the trash into art. Later this year we will host an art show and auction (details to follow) where we can all enjoy the artistic talents of our community, and learn more about what was in our creeks. We are also planning an on-site interactive art project for the day of the Cleanup where everyone who comes back after cleaning up the creeks can participate in making art. All of this is something very new and different for us. There might be a little bit of muddling through this first year as we figure out how this works.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for the Cleanup. If you would like to continue seeing our creeks and lakes cleaned up and want to support this annual effort, contact me at our Prescott Creeks office number.

Pre-registration is also available through our website and will make the check-in for that morning go smoother. We look forward to seeing you all there and hope that many of you participate in making treasure out of what was once trash.

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Fann Environmental began the earthmoving work that included reshaping the damaged creeks banks, excavating a new wetland, re-contouring the floodplain, and many other tasks.

On December 1st, a crew of nine American Conservation Experience (ACE) volunteers arrived at Watson Woods. ACE is an organization that supplies teams of international volunteers to work on outdoor projects in the Western United States. They travel to the project site and camp out so every morning at 7:00 am, they're ready to start. During eight straight 10-hour days they planted 174 cottonwoods, 3,300 willows (many of the original cuttings were long enough to cut in half). Planting these cuttings is no easy task as they need to be planted 6 to 10 feet deep to reach groundwater. This was done using backhoes and excavators with auger bits attached. ACE also spread native grass seed and raked over 1½ acres of disturbed areas, and installed over ¾ acre of erosion protection cloth. They were a great crew and got a lot of work done. When the ACE crew left, the project was essentially complete.



*Harvesting*

However, we have created a list of jobs that still need to be completed. There's still more raking and shoveling to be done, more areas that need protective cloth laid, more creek bank that needs brush revetment installed and this spring, our supplemental irrigation needs attention after the winter. So, even though the project has been declared "complete", there is still plenty of need for volunteers who want to be a part of the restoration of Watson Woods Riparian Preserve. You can sign up to the Volunteer section of our website at [www.PrescottCreeks.org](http://www.PrescottCreeks.org) or calling the office at (928) 445-5669.

# Watershed Residents' Survey Reveals Public Support for Local Waterways

Amanda Richardson & Gene Schmidt



*Jay monitoring Lower Miller Creek*

Between December 15, 2009 and March 15, 2010, the Watershed Improvement Council conducted a survey to gather information about watershed residents' knowledge of watershed and water quality issues; perceptions of water quality; attitudes and values about protection and restoration of local water ways; and environmental behaviors. The goal was to identify gaps in

public knowledge and to develop an outreach and public education strategy to accompany the Watershed Improvement Plan to address local water quality issues.

Many of you may have responded to this survey, having received it in your City of Prescott utility bill, the Valpak envelope, or taken it online. We received 1,482 responses—an impressive response! After months of compiling and entering the data, Gene Schmidt, a retired statistics professor, volunteered his time to explore the data and what it tells us about our community. Data analyses were extensive; we are able to share only a small sample of the findings here.

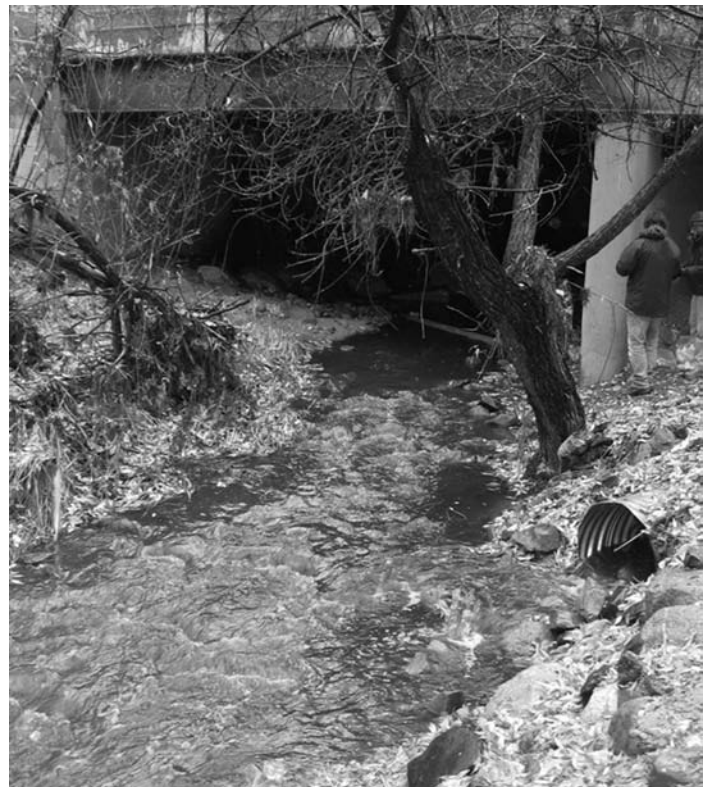
## Support for Watershed Protection and Restoration Efforts

A strong majority of respondents favored the protection and restoration of our local waterways despite differences in education level, income, age, and gender. Respondents falling into the “protection” category indicated agreement that “ecology,” “general stewardship,” and “wildlife habitat” were important reasons for improving water quality. Respondents in the “restoration” category indicated that “economic stability” and “quality of life” were important reasons. A sense of urgency about addressing water quality problems invoked a ‘just fix it’ attitude. Men were more likely to prescribe restoration with a ‘just fix it’ attitude while women were more likely to favor protection with an attitude of pollution prevention. However, it was common for respondents to favor both restoration and protection. Favoring both was associated with having greater knowledge of watershed issues, involvement in the community, and commitment to these issues, far more so than demographic characteristics like age, occupation and income.

## Commitment to our local waterways

Respondent's commitment to the protection and/or restoration of our waterways was explored through questions that asked whether they would be willing to pay a monthly fee to “support local watershed management activities,” an amount they would be willing to pay, and whether they were “interested in learning more” about the project. Respondents concerned with local ecology were more willing to support a monthly fee and also to learn more about watershed improvement. Respondents favoring economic reasons protection and restoration were less willing to support a fee and less willing to learn more. These differences are not great on their own until gender was considered. Females more than males were more likely to be willing to pay a fee and to learn more, while also more often indicating ecological concerns over economic reasons for waterway protection. Overall, higher commitment was associated with greater community involvement, having knowledge about watershed issues, and reliance on state and federal agencies for water quality information. As commitment and involvement indicators declined so, too, did general support for protection and/or restoration.

We already know that the creeks and lakes are an important part of community identity. We hope that the survey data can help us better engage the broader community and bolster our current and future watershed work.



*Monitoring stormwater*

# Volunteer Profile – Randy Watson



Randy Harvesting

Randy Watson is Vice President of Dal Media Solutions, primarily located in Arizona, but with nationwide offices. Randy spent 20 years in the US Air Force serving overseas tours in Germany, Italy and a few other interesting spots. Randy retired from the Air Force and held a number of positions, including a year-long stint providing race coverage's for NASCAR and

Indycar. He spent 2 years working at the US Capitol providing Television coverage of US Senate activities. Randy then went on to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs, first inaugurating a new video facility and then introducing the

facility onto VA's nationwide video network. He then moved over to a position as deputy director of telecommunication services for VA's entire Washington DC complex. In December of 2008, Randy left government services and became a partner and VP in Dal Media Solutions Inc., allowing him to move out to the Prescott area two years ago. Randy graduated from the University of Maryland with a Business Management degree. He is also a Certified Broadcast Television Engineer, from the Society of Broadcast Engineers and a Member of the Society of Motion Picture & Television Engineers.

Randy has two children, Nevada and Sierra that reside and attend school in the Washington DC area. He is a Past President of a Lions Club and was a volunteer and council member of Lions Camp Merrick, helping provide disabled children a positive summer experience.

Randy enjoys hiking, motorcycling, golfing and providing community service when he can. He likes working with Prescott Creeks because the work provides positive and impactful community changes and provides for a great day outdoors.

Randy was recruited for volunteer service by Prescott Creeks' Field Project Coordinator. Although Randy's background is mostly technical, he can often be found at Watson Woods harvesting and planting trees, or just enjoying the outdoors.



## Spinning Webs

Nathaniel Hoag

Prescott Creeks' website (<http://www.PrescottCreeks.org>) has come a long way since initiating the upgrade process in the fall of 2009. What began as a mix of html, javascript, duct tape and bubble gum has grown into a coordinated and integrated web strategy that will better serve everyone. While the old site certainly had its "Hey Day" (in the 90s!), it had degraded to the point that techies *would shudder with disdain* at the thought of making even minor changes. In contrast, the technical barriers have been significantly lowered for the new site, which now provides avenues for everyone to participate.

The new website was built with Drupal (<http://drupal.org>), an open source Content Management System (CMS) that's simply amazing. The choice to use Drupal (over other CMSs) was simple, in that it's unparalleled in flexibility and modularity. This means the new website can be easily modified or extended to serve new purposes and audiences. I envy whoever will perform Prescott Creeks' next major website upgrade, as their task will be significantly less involved than our latest undertaking.

My charge since the beginning of this project has been to produce a website that above all else is sustainable – by which I mean that it will serve the needs of Prescott Creeks for a long time to come. "Sustainable" is quite a big word actually, and building a sustainable product is a deceptively significant undertaking. What started out as a single website has turned into a complex of five-

plus websites that fit together to provide a seamless experience for users, contributors, and administrators.

Some of the major accomplishments with the new website are blog posts, images, and event listings that are all contributed by staff members on a regular basis. The simplicity of adding new content has enabled staff to communicate their needs and accomplishments in a timely manner, and helps the larger community to stay in the loop. Memberships, donations, and the Prescott Creeks Online Store were all incorporated into the website, making it easier than ever to make a monetary contribution to the health of our local watershed. Additionally, Prescott Creeks has received a non-profit technology grant from HostGator (<http://www.HostGator.com>) for a comprehensive free web-hosting package!

It seems silly to condense so much effort into just a few paragraphs, but this job has acquainted me well with the isolating nature of technical work. Most of the things I'm most proud of with this project hardly seem worthy of notice, outside of the fact that I've spent gobs of time wrestling them into place. I've come to understand that the less there is to say about a website, the better. On that note, I hope to receive lots of silent praise about Prescott Creeks' new website over the coming months and years. However, if you do find something that needs attention, Prescott Creeks wants to know. Please contact us.



# Membership Form

- Individuals/Family \$25/yr
- Institutional \$50/yr  
*(Non-Profit, Educational & Membership Organizations)*
- Corporate \$100/yr  
*(Business & For Profit)*
- Lifetime Membership \$1000

Payment Method:  VISA  MasterCard  American Express  Discover  Check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Make payable to Prescott Creeks)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card # Exp.Date CVV Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

*In addition to my yearly membership dues, I would like to make a tax deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to Prescott Creeks.  
All contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

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Address City State Zip

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Email address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone Cell Phone

***Thank you for your on-going support!***

For questions, concerns or comments, contact Prescott Creeks at (928) 445-5669 or [Info@PrescottCreeks.org](mailto:Info@PrescottCreeks.org).

Mail this form to: Prescott Creeks, P.O. Box 3004, Prescott, AZ 86302

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