



# THE CREEKSIDE ALMANAC

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## Let the Restoration Begin!

Pieces fall into place for restoration of Watson Woods, By Brad DeVries

With sufficient time, nature can go a long way toward healing even the scars of decades of intense human use. Once home to large-scale gravel mining, illegal dumping and heavy off-road vehicle use, Prescott's own Watson Woods Riparian Preserve bears witness to the power of natural systems to recover. A riparian gem that is fast being surrounded by suburban development, the Preserve is home once again to a wide variety of wildlife and a delightful respite from town.

But even to the untrained eye, some of the legacy of decades of abuse is still apparent. Floodplains don't function as they should, many mature cottonwoods stand "perched" on odd raised islands of soil above the surrounding ground, and Granite Creek itself takes some decidedly unnatural



twists and turns as it wends its way among the old gravel pits.

More than a decade ago, Prescott Creeks signed a long-term lease the city that designated the organization as manager of the Watson Woods Riparian Preserve, which began the long process of inventorying the natural bounty there and planning for restoration.

With funding from the Arizona Water Protection Fund, Prescott Creeks finished work on the full

Watson Woods Restoration Plan that details the restoration design, monitoring, education and more that will be associated with this huge project. With the plan in place, the organization raised more than \$1.4 million dollars for the restoration. Primary funding for design, construction, revegetation and public awareness comes from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality – Water Quality Improvement

*(Restoration Continued on page 5)*

### *Executive Director Update*



**I**t is hard to believe I first visited Granite Creek in Watson Woods Riparian Preserve thirteen years ago. I was just learning about how rivers work and only understood part of the story Watson Woods had to tell. As with most good stories, the plot was complex and there

were many characters, both heroes and villains. But the real challenge was to understand the story below the surface. I learned to look upstream and downstream in the watershed, to understand its history, to see the current situation, and to envision the future.

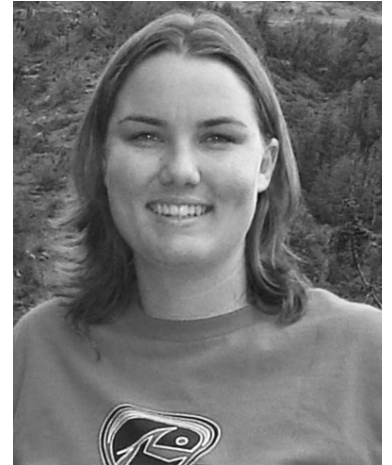
Prescott Creeks assembled a team of experts and set to work comprehending how Granite Creek and Watson Woods Riparian Preserve function and to understand how we could help them function better. The result is the Watson Woods Riparian Preserve Restoration Plan – completed last June!

This issue of the Almanac will update you on how Prescott Creeks approached “restoration” at Watson Woods, and on how community members (like you) make it a reality. We’ve placed a spotlight on a few of our volunteers and some of the Watson Woods and watershed projects they’ve worked on. We also introduce you to a new Director on the Prescott Creeks Board – the volunteers who assist with keeping the day to day projects in focus with our mission. And don’t miss the bio for Renee Hoover, our new Outreach Coordinator, at the right.

Hopefully these stories will inspire you to participate in the creation of your own watershed legacy.

## Meet Renee Hoover

**R**enee Hoover recently became part of the Prescott Creeks team as the Outreach Coordinator, through the AmeriCorps VISTA Program. After moving here in 2003, Renee quickly fell in love with Prescott’s historical charisma, natural environments, and local communities. Working in a public capacity for her first three years in Prescott Renee decided, in 2006, to continue her education in Environmental Studies by attending Prescott College. She was first introduced to Prescott Creeks through class activities and later introduced to the AmeriCorps VISTA position.



With past experience in community participation at Joshua Tree National Park, Alaska and Prescott, Renee has a strong appreciation for the involvement of whole communities in addressing local environmental issues.



## Why I Volunteer by Judy Rikkenbach

I "retired" in Prescott during 2001. Arriving from Denver I decided retirement was over rated and became involved in many non-profit organizations, including Youth Count, Yavapai Volunteer Center, Boy Scouts, and Prescott Area Leadership. I am presently part owner of the Worm Bookstore.

I graduated from the University of Northern Colorado and the University of Oslo, Norway, with a degree in Communication. As a professional speaker and author I lectured on cruise ships and traveled extensively as a keynote speaker, specializing in the topic of Business

Body Language. I served as President of Denver's The Women's Press Club and was honored as Mentor of the Year with Denver Community Resources, INC.

My biggest thrill was appearing on NBC's The Late Show many years ago analyzing the Presidential candidates' body language. The dressing room with my name on it is forever etched in my memory as is the Limo ride to the Famous Amos cookie factory!

I look forward to becoming an integral part of the Board's mission and outreach program.



*Photo: Matthew Turner*

## Going Down the Drain

### Storm water has a big impact on Creeks, by Brad DeVries

When we get rain in Prescott, it often comes in torrents. Almost all of that water ends up in our creeks, sometimes with some serious side effects. Prescott Creeks has taken the initiative on stormwater issues in our watershed, both big and small.

All around downtown, you'll see colorful badges on storm drains, with the message "Rain Only, Drains to Creek" to help remind people that what goes in the streets, gutters and drains ends up in our creeks. Student volunteers from Northpoint Expeditionary Learning Academy placed the badges.

"Many people mistakenly believe storm drains flow to water treatment facilities, but this is not the case," explains Ann-Marie Benz, Prescott Creeks' watershed program coordinator. "If we want to keep trash and pollution out of the creeks, we've got to keep them out of the storm drains."

On an even bigger scale, Prescott Creeks just finished major construction of a large storm water basin near the



(DOWN THE DRAIN *Continued on page 7*)



Photo: Erica Ryberg

## Slipping by: Prescott's Creeks in space and time, By Erica Ryberg

*Over several seasons, I've passed a single stretch of Granite Creek near home in rain gear, snow gear, and sun screen. I've seen it frothy and wild with the burden of heavy rains, fecund and glassy with snow melt, and at times between, sandy and caramel in repose. Now, the desiccating motions of late spring are nurturing blooms of algae, and I know that soon enough both algae and water will go until the monsoons call them back. ▼*

*The creek delights my small friend Sophie, who engineers atlatls out of elm branches in order to launch strands of bubbly slime just as far as she can. None of it bothers her, not the algae and not the fragrant creek mud working its way into the cables of her white tights. ►*

*Hers is a different relationship to the creek. I admire the grasses, the sound of the water, the deep shade for lazy reading. She loves the detritus, the old pipes crusty with expanding foam and leaking ancient water. When I was a child here, I caught crawdads in my own barefoot explorations and wondered at how small and perfectly formed they were. After I grew up, I saw dace in the creek, just once, and delighted again in how small and perfectly formed they were.*

*The creeks furnish passages through space as well as time. I wander downstream to El Gato Azul each Sunday to eat soup with my friends. And I hike across the rogue open space surrounding Aspen Creek to buy my groceries. Aspen was running 80 feet wide over a concrete dam last February. Now the chalk-white whispers of algae and a trickle of water are all that remain. I take care not to turn my ankles on the dry creekbed.*

*In a short time, I'm leaving the house that's afforded me my watery passages and rituals. The loss is real, but the town's full of creeks and while my rituals will change, they'll continue, and soon enough I'll be tracing Prescott's waters through another set of seasons.*

# Watson Woods Restoration

(RESTORATION *Continued from page 1*)

Grant Program and the Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission.

The plan involves restoration of more natural contours to four sections of the Granite Creek channel, as well as re-establishment of the creek's floodplain, backwaters, and natural wetland areas. The Prescott Creeks staff and community volunteers will revegetate disturbed areas with cottonwoods, willows, grasses and other native plants, and monitor the health of the Preserve and improvements in water quality along the creek.

Volunteer support will be key to the success of the restoration, with hundreds of opportunities to help harvest and plant tree cuttings, monitor the health of Granite Creek, and many other ways you can help.

Email Renee Hoover at:

[RHoover@PrescottCreeks.org](mailto:RHoover@PrescottCreeks.org)

to reserve your spot as a volunteer, or

learn more online at:

<http://www.PrescottCreeks.org/restoration>

## Manure Management by Ann-Marie Benz

The Granite Creek Watershed has two waterbodies that are listed by the EPA and ADEQ as being impaired (not meeting water quality standards). Granite Creek has too little dissolved oxygen in the water. Watson Lake has too little dissolved oxygen, high pH, and too many nutrients.

The same nutrients that make manure such a great fertilizer can negatively affect water quality. If manure enters a waterway, it adds nutrients to the water and removes dissolved oxygen. The nutrients increase algae growth, producing an "algae bloom." Algae

blooms create a thick mat on the water's surface, which can make creeks and lakes unsightly and unpleasant for fishing, boating, and swimming. Algae blooms also adversely impact the plants, insects and wildlife that make up a healthy, functioning ecosystem.

Prescott Creeks has a brochure available that discusses Best Management Practices for Manure Management. For more information: [www.PrescottCreeks.org](http://www.PrescottCreeks.org)



# Preserve. . . Restore. . . Celebrate. . . and Connect

by Frances Thomas

**G**ary Snyder’s poem, “For All,” pictures a barefoot boy in an icy stream. Nose cold and dripping, he sings “creek music.” The poem meanders into a pledge of allegiance: to the soil and its inhabitants, to one diverse ecosystem, and “with joyful interpenetration for all.” Committed to the ecological health of the Granite Creeks Watershed, Prescott Creeks was born humbly in Prescott homes and our board used to meet in a doublewide. We’ve accomplished a lot since those simple beginnings, yet more needs to be done to fill in our community’s picture of the creeks that sustain life here.

We need you to help us paint that picture as a supporter and volunteer.

In planning the future, we have learned about the necessity of telling Prescott Creeks’ story. One of preservation and restoration, ours is ultimately a story of connection, one to another, through water. We have built a strategy for sharing the story through increased board membership, created a real “toes in the water” opportunity for a Field Project Coordinator, and will have hundreds of opportunities to support Prescott Creeks as a volunteer in the coming year.

Expanding the board will broaden our ambassadorship in the City of Prescott. To the question by prospective members, “Do I have to be an environmentalist to serve?” we say “Come as you are!” Bring what you’ve learned in business, in fundraising, in the field or the lab, bring your connection to others in your community, and be a part of building this organization.

The Field Project Coordinator position will require conservation experience. Overseeing projects including on-sight teaching and native vegetation planting and restoration, this employee will enjoin volunteers, organizations, and yes. . . bulldozer operators.

Our 2008 clean-up effort saw participation increase 100% over last year’s. Thanks to all who helped, more of us in Prescott will hum the music of Granite Creek. Settlers surely heard it in the 1800s when they gathered around this source of life. Over time the creek retreated as background noise to an industrious community. Still, it sang, and sings today. To join in that chorus, call us at 928-445-5669 or click on <http://prescottcreeks.org/organization/volunteer.htm>

## Show your Prescott Creeks Colors!

Just in time for summer, Prescott Creeks is adding our new hats to our Creek Store!

Made entirely in the USA of 100% cotton, the new ball-caps feature an embroidered full-color Prescott Creeks logo and easy clip strap fastener at the back.

With a soft, low crown, you’ll be stylish and cool in any weather, and you’ll show the world that you care about our creeks!

Colors include khaki or sandstone orange for only \$15 – and we’ll ship your order for only \$3 extra. See the colors and order online at [www.PrescottCreeks.org](http://www.PrescottCreeks.org) or mail your order with payment to:



***New embroidered hats now in stock!***

**Prescott Creeks  
P.O. Box 3004  
Prescott, Arizona 86302**



Photo: Bill Arnold

**Granite Creek Cleanup 2008: On April 19, more than 300 volunteers removed two and a half tons of trash from creeks all over our community.**

*(DOWN THE DRAIN Continued from page 3)*

intersection of the Prescott Lakes Parkway and Sundog Ranch Road. The previous basin had failed, and huge erosion scars a dozen feet deep and nearly 100 feet long dumped tons of sediment and contaminants washed off the parkway into Granite Creek and Watson Lake. Working with the City and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), Prescott Creeks raised funds to design a new basin, oversee its construction, and organize volunteers to replant cottonwoods and native grasses on the site.

"This project was a statewide-model for how 319 funds should be used," said ADEQ's Matthew Capalby. "It will help to abate silt flowing into Granite Creek and Watson Lake and it will also improve the impaired water quality of both."



## The Clean Water Act

by Ann-Marie Benz

Much of the work on our local creeks and lakes is funded through the Clean Water Act (CWA), the primary federal law in the United States governing water pollution. The purpose of the CWA is to protect the quality of the nation's waters from pollution. The main parts of the Clean Water Act cover:

- Discharge of any pollutant from a point source (a direct source like a factory or sewage system) into a waterbody, which is prohibited without a permit.
- A permit that can allow for the discharge of particular pollutants with limits, monitoring and reporting requirements.
- Regulations based on water quality that limit the amount of discharge based on the quality of the waterbody and how it is used (recreation, drinking water supply, etc.).
- Provisions for the prevention, reporting, and monitoring of toxic chemical spills and oil spills.
- Limits on the development of wetlands specifically to protect aquatic habitats.

**If you spot a spill or discharge into our creeks, contact the City of Prescott at 928-777-1140 or 928-445-5357 after business hours.**

**Prescott Creeks**

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- Anne-Marie Benz  
Watershed Program Coord.
- Renee Hoover  
Outreach Coord.  
VISTA Volunteer

**GRANITE CREEK CLEANUP 2008—THANK YOU!**

**332 Volunteers  
2.5 tons of trash out of our creeks**

**Thanks to our Major Sponsors:**

**Prescott Lakes Parkway Wal-Mart, the City of Prescott, Prescott College, the Sierra Club's Yavapai Group, Unisource Energy, Starbucks Coffee, Fann Contracting, Waste Management, APS and Whiskey Row Screen Printing.**

**And to our Additional Sponsors:**

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