

CURRENTS & FLOWS

Spring Renewal Along the Verde

IN THIS EDITION

***Upper Verde
Considered for Wild &
Scenic Status***

***Meet W. David
Gressly - Friends of
the Verde River New
Executive Director!***

***Recent Riparian
Restoration Efforts***

***Join the River
Friendly Home
Movement***

Spring 2024



Who are
Friends *of the*
VERDE RIVER

This magazine is lovingly created by Friends of the Verde River, a purpose-driven community benefit organization and 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Friends envisions a healthy, flowing Verde River and tributaries that support our natural environment, vibrant communities, and quality of life for future generations.

Learn more at
verderiver.org



Watersheds are wonders of nature.

intricate networks that connect land, water, and communities. They are the lifeblood of healthy ecosystems, providing essential services such as clean drinking water, flood control, and habitat for wildlife. By understanding the importance of watersheds and actively participating in their conservation and protection, we can safeguard not only the Verde River but also the well-being of future generations.

As we approach the upcoming State of the Verde Watershed Conference, I find myself reflecting on the true essence and purpose behind this significant event. Working through plans for event workshops and trips, my thoughts turned to the real reasons for the conference.

You came to mind. You make a healthy and flowing Verde River possible. Your continued support - whether you are a volunteer, long or short-time donor, an e-news subscriber - is essential for the future of the great River that is home to countless species.

The River has been around longer than any of us. It is your love of this great River that continues to preserve its nurturing waters.

You are greatly appreciated.

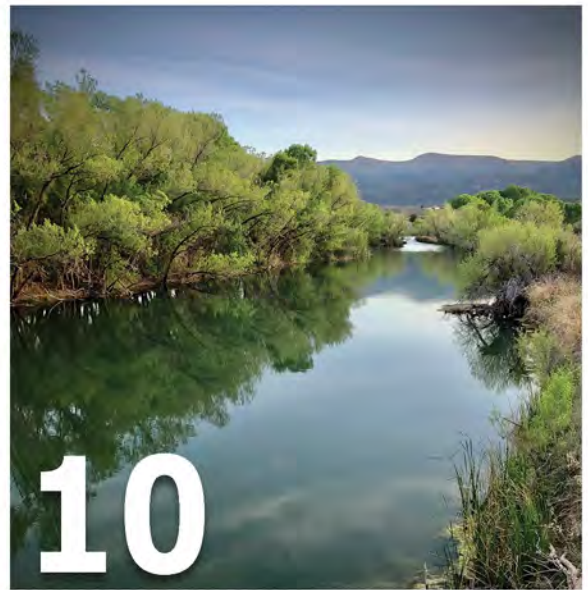
As we gather at the State of the Verde Watershed Conference this fall, we'll remember that each of us has a part to play in this ongoing journey of stewardship. Together we can make a difference, ensuring that the wonders of our watershed endure for years to come.

The Heart of the Verde thanks you -

William David Gressly
Executive Director

W. D. Gressly





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Recent Stories in the News: Verde River

Upper Verde Considered for Wild & Scenic Status

Exciting developments on the horizon! The U.S. Forest Service has identified thirty-six miles of the Upper Verde River as "suitable" for protection as a Wild and Scenic River. Pending congressional approval and the president's signature, this designation will highlight the river's exceptional scenic, recreational, cultural, and ecological significance. Your ongoing support has played a crucial role in reaching this milestone. Let's rally together to officially designate the Upper Verde as a Wild and Scenic River!

Go to

tinyurl.com/upper-verde-status

for more information.



*Photos by Friends of the Verde River (left)
Beach's on Location (bottom)*



Phoenix Adopts Water Conservation Measures

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego and the City Council have unanimously passed a water conservation ordinance targeting large water users. Under this ordinance, entities consuming over 250,000 gallons per day must submit and gain approval for water conservation plans. Additionally, companies using more than 500,000 gallons daily must allocate 30% of their water usage to recycled or conserved methods. This initiative, part of Gallego's Sustainable Desert Development Policy, underscores the city's commitment to securing water resources for future generations amid challenges such as Colorado River shortages.

Go to
tinyurl.com/phoenix-water-update
for more information.



Photos by Herbert Goetsch (top) Arizona State Parks (bottom)

Rockin' River Ranch State Park Opens in Camp Verde

Discover the latest addition to Arizona's natural treasures! Rockin' River Ranch State Park, nestled at the confluence of West Clear Creek and the Verde River, has officially opened its gates. Spanning 209 acres, this day-use park offers a serene escape for outdoor enthusiasts. Explore scenic trails winding through mesquite bosques and along the verdant riverbanks, all while encountering diverse wildlife. Don't miss the opportunity to experience the beauty of central Arizona's riparian landscape firsthand! Open Friday-Sunday 9am-5pm.

Go to
azstateparks.com/rockin-river
for more information.



For more updates and news about the Verde River, stay tuned to our magazine!

MLK Day Volunteer Highlights

Thank you to all who volunteered on Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service this year! Please take some time to watch our thank you video from Executive Director, David Gressly, who was at the Clear Creek Fishing Site in Camp Verde (see page 9). You can help our online efforts by viewing the video all the way until the end.

MLK Day volunteers accomplished so much this year. Tasks included removing invasive plants, planting willows, constructing erosion control structures, and removing trash.



Photos by Franki "Birdy" Finch (top), Vivki Uthe (left), Cynthia Butler (right)

Here are some of the accomplishments from that day. Thanks to your volunteer help, we:

Planted 320 native willow poles in a riparian restoration site.

Removed one stand of tree of heaven from a Verde River riparian habitat.

Removed two stands of giant reed from another Verde River riparian habitat.

Removed one large stand of Himalayan blackberry from an Oak Creek riparian habitat.

Removed dispersed stands of tamarisk from Watson Woods riparian areas.

Maintained 1/4 mile of trail near the Verde River in riparian habitat.

Installed 79 erosion control structures in a restoration site in the Upper Verde area.

Placed 40 feet of riprap to prevent erosion.

Removed over 90 pounds of trash throughout the watershed.



Photo by Vivki Uthe

HELP SPREAD THE WORD

Support Friends of the Verde River and our mission by purchasing extra copies of our magazine and distributing them around town.

Here are some ideas:

Purchase a copy and leave it at your doctor's office after reading.

For hotel owners, buy copies for all your hotel rooms to educate guests about our cause.

Bring copies to local libraries or schools for others to discover.

Gift a copy to a friend or family member to share our work and inspire others.

Leave copies in coffee shops, community centers, or other public places for people to pick up and learn more.

Together, let's raise awareness and make a positive impact on our beloved Verde River!





Here are some moments captured by our employees, partners and volunteer photographers on that day. If you'd love to volunteer, please visit our website at verderiver.org/volunteer



Photos by Jim Hardetsy (top left), Shawngela Pierce (top right), Katherine Sirimarco (middle), Vicki Uther (bottom left), Chance Yocum (bottom right)

MLK Day Videos

Executive Director David Gressly

Join us at Clear Creek Fishing Site, Camp Verde, where Executive Director David Gressly extends heartfelt thanks to over 20 volunteers who planted 300 willow poles along the riverbank, enhancing the Verde Valley's ecological resilience. Friends of the Verde River mobilized 100+ volunteers across locations for tasks like invasive plant removal, willow planting, erosion control, and trash cleanup.

Check it out on
youtu.be/w7A69REujVU



David Gressly
Executive Director
Friends of the Verde River

Supervisor James Gregory

Supervisor James Gregory, resident of Yavapai County, District 2, for 37 years, describes his volunteering experience on MLK Day. He joined fellow volunteers from Friends of the Verde River in service on that day.

Check it out on
youtu.be/Fu-JaLjU4sw



James Gregory
Yavapai County Supervisor

Francisco Anaya

Francisco Anaya, Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants Program Manager for the U.S. Forest Service - Prescott National Forest explains why volunteers were planting willow poles at the Clear Creek Fishing Site in Camp Verde, AZ.

Check it out on
youtu.be/r-v5CvZqVTU

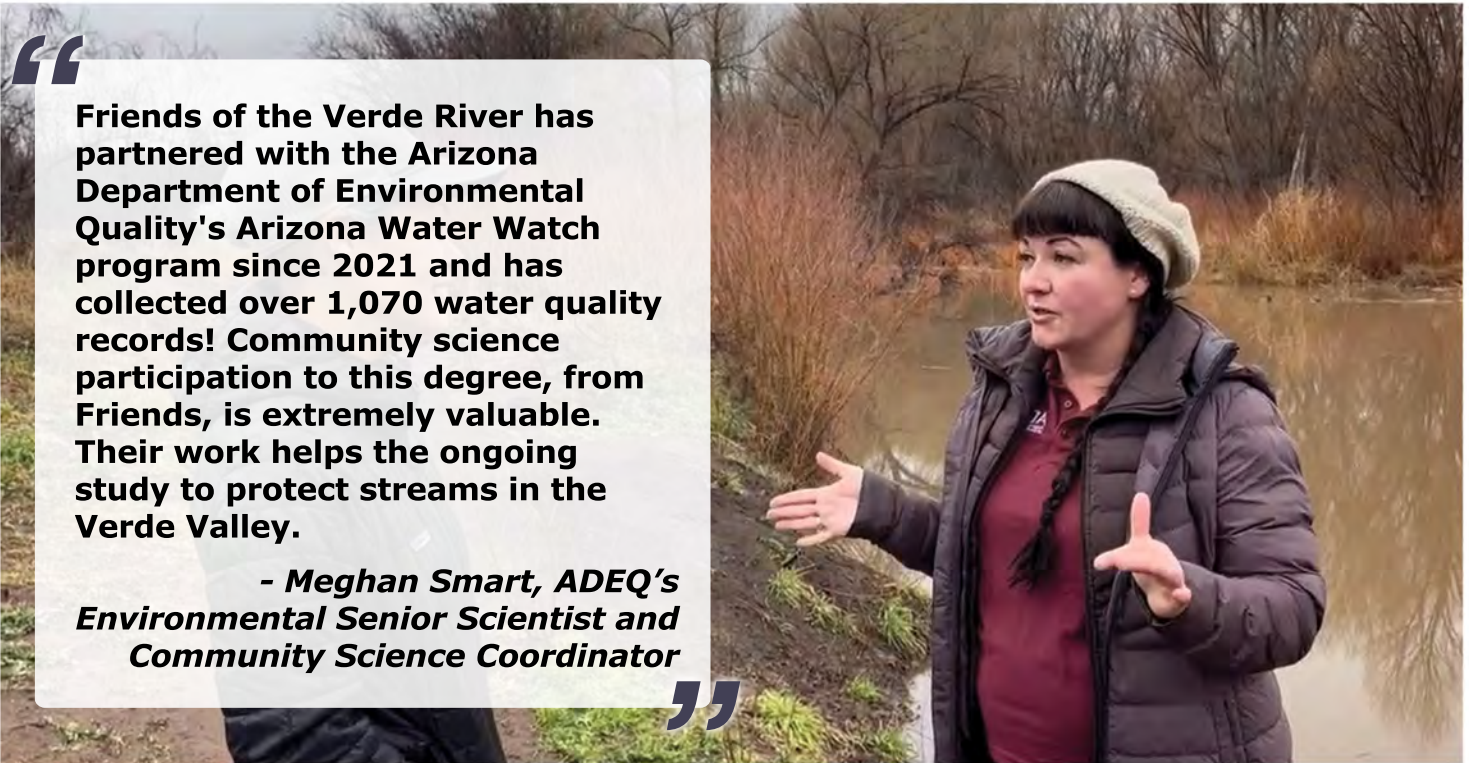


Francisco Anaya
Forest Biologist
Prescott National Forest

Verde River Stories: Embracing the River Spirit

In the heart of the Verde Valley, a community of dedicated individuals known as the Verde Water Watchers is making waves in the realm of water quality awareness. With a strong partnership between Friends of the Verde River and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's Arizona Water Watch program since 2021, these volunteers have become the unsung heroes of stream preservation, collecting over 1,070 water quality records.

According to Meghan Smart, ADEQ's Environmental Senior Scientist and Community Science Coordinator, the contribution from Friends is "extremely valuable" and aids in the ongoing study to protect the streams in the Verde Valley. In the words of Hamilton Wallace, one of the volunteers, it's more than just learning about the river system; it's about doing a small part to protect and support a river that is "alive and vital" to the community.



Friends of the Verde River has partnered with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's Arizona Water Watch program since 2021 and has collected over 1,070 water quality records! Community science participation to this degree, from Friends, is extremely valuable. Their work helps the ongoing study to protect streams in the Verde Valley.

- Meghan Smart, ADEQ's Environmental Senior Scientist and Community Science Coordinator

Photos by Friends of the Verde River staff



Matthew McCawley, another dedicated volunteer, expresses his anticipation each month to contribute to Friends, highlighting the sense of community involvement and the shared appreciation for the rivers. As he urges readers, "volunteer with Friends when you have a chance, you will not regret it."



I look forward to volunteering with Friends each month. It gets me outside and keeps me involved in my community. Everyone I've met while volunteering has shown appreciation and respect for our rivers, and that gives me hope for the future of the Verde. I recommend to anyone reading this to volunteer with Friends when you have a chance, you will not regret it.

- Matthew McCawley

Photo by Chance Yocum

Gregory Yori, a committed volunteer, shares his passion for the great outdoors, environmental solutions, and the joy of working with like-minded individuals at Friends of the Verde River. His commitment to water testing plays a crucial role in supplying vital information on water quality in the Verde Valley, aligning with Arizona's mission to preserve and protect this precious natural resource.

I thoroughly enjoy being a dedicated volunteer at Friends of the Verde River, where I am driven by my passion for the great outdoors, assisting in environmental solutions, and working with genuinely good people who share the same goals and values as myself. Our commitment to water testing plays a crucial role in supplying vital information on water quality in the Verde Valley, aiding the State of Arizona in its mission to preserve and protect this precious natural resource.

- Gregory Yori

The testimonials extend beyond the scientific realm, delving into personal experiences with the Verde River. Joan Bourque recounts a transformative day on the river, where worries melted away, leaving only "beauty and peace." Steve Leininger emphasizes the connections forged with good people while floating down the river, reflecting the community spirit that permeates the Verde Valley.

Maybe 5 years ago, I woke up and said to myself, I need to be on the river. I called a few friends and we all agreed to meet at the river with our kayaks. It was one of those days in the spring with perfect temps, and calm water where you barely need to paddle. We floated down in peace and quiet. I lost any worries life had thrown my way, I saw only beauty and peace wherever I looked. And for at least three days after that trip, I remained quiet, joyful and filled with peace. Thank you Verde River, a marvelous gift you are.

- Joan Bourque

Sam Schoch narrates a magical encounter with desert bighorn sheep and javelina, showcasing the diverse wildlife that thrives along the Verde. Brandon Hart shares memories of a father-son adventure, kindling fires with flint and steel, and sleeping in hammocks—a testament to the lasting impressions created by the river.

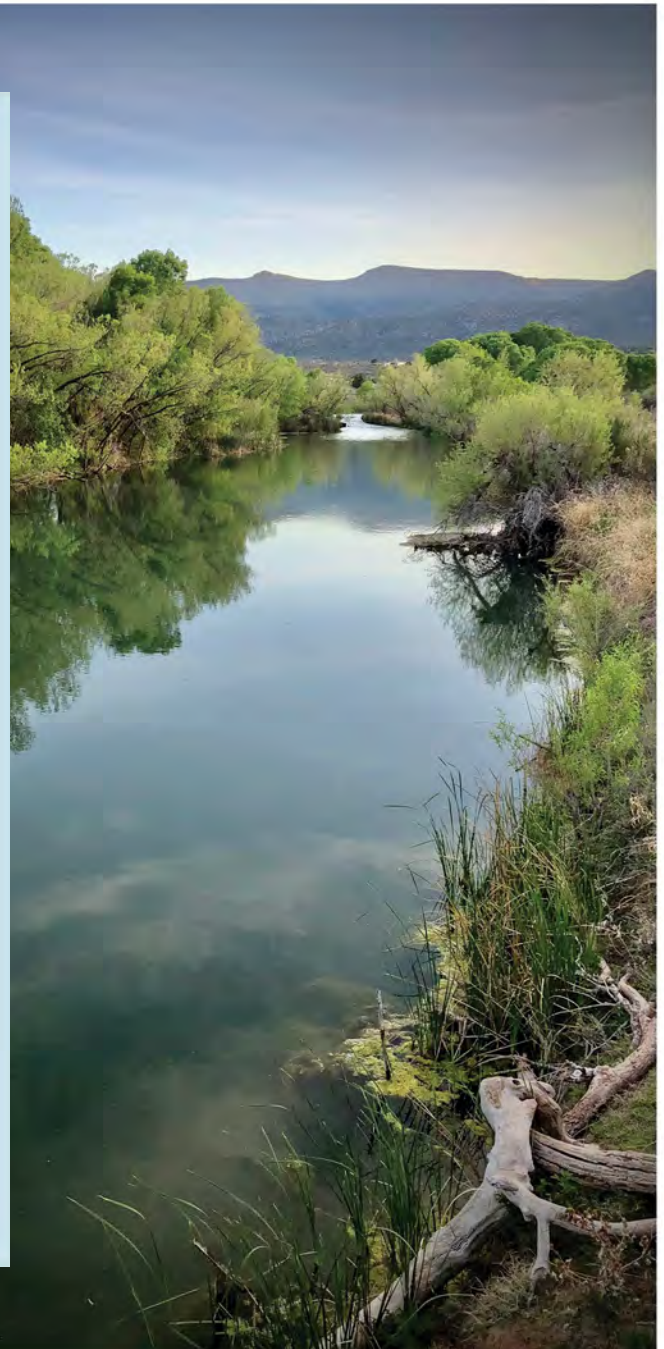
As the Upper Verde River inches closer to potential Wild & Scenic designation, the community rallies in support. The Arizona Wildlife Federation celebrates the "terrific update," emphasizing the significance of protecting the scenic, recreational, cultural, and wildlife habitat values. Comments from Southern Arizona Paddlers Club, Kristin Hunt, Daniel Traxler, and others express enthusiasm and appreciation for the ongoing efforts.



"We have a terrific update regarding the suitability of the Upper Verde River for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Late last month, 36 miles of the Upper Verde River were found "suitable" for protection as a Wild and Scenic River by the U.S. Forest Service. Their finding clarified that this portion of the Verde River has "scenic, recreational, cultural and fish and wildlife habitat significance" — all values that would be protected by a Wild and Scenic designation. The next step? Congressional approval and the president's signature would add these 36 miles of the Upper Verde River to the U.S. Wild and Scenic River System. Many conservation organizations, including us, are working to make that happen — so keep an eye out for more updates!"

- Arizona Wildlife Federation

Photo by Dennis Schmeuer



Susan, the Stewardship Director, engages with Friends of the Verde River donors, hearing stories of passion and commitment. From the dedication of monitoring the water quality of our river to Jacqueline Brevik's emotional connection to Sedona and support driven by a love for conservation, these stories highlight the profound impact of community stewardship.



I fell in love with Sedona when I went there in Jan 2023. My favorite trip ever. It had just snowed the night before. Full disclosure- Bay Area girl here, so desert snow was a totally alien concept to me. Climbing Cathedral Rock and seeing that wintry view... damn. I'm getting emotional just thinking about it. I'd step foot on a plane back to that place any day, any time.

I found out about your organization through Sedona Beer Co mentioning it on their Instagram. I'd been intending to donate for a while and finally did!

Best of luck to you and your conservation efforts.

- Jacqueline Brevik



In the vibrant tapestry of the Verde watershed, we all weave a narrative of environmental guardianship, community bonds, and the enduring spirit of the river that sustains them all.

Read more stories about the Verde and submit your own by visiting verderiver.org/blog



Photos by Friends of the Verde River staff



Meet ▶▶▶
SUSAN VAN NORMAN
Director of Stewardship

Susan Van Norman is Friends of the Verde River's Director of Stewardship. She leads a team of four and is an innovative visionary, recognized for successfully leading multiple fundraising projects from start to finish while effectively steering and coaching team members.

Recent Riparian Restoration

Our restoration crews have been working along the river to remove invasive plant species since early October. During our 2023-24 field season, Friends contracted with three crews of young adults and recent era Veterans from Arizona Conservation Corps, Verde Earth Technologies, and Wild AZ.

Our crews worked to remove invasive plants throughout the Verde River watershed, including areas near Perkinsville and Cottonwood, and on tributary streams including Oak Creek, West Clear Creek, and Fossil Creek. The invasive plants of focus include giant reed (*Arundo donax*) salt cedar (*Tamarix* spp.), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), and Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*).

These plants are a threat to the riparian forest because they can form dense monocultures that do not allow room for a diversity of native plants to thrive.



Photo of Verde Lakes before



Photo of Verde Lakes after



Read the full article by visiting

verderiver.org/blog



BIRDIE'S ADVENTURES



Photo by Friends of the Verde River staff

Our restoration crews have been working hard in the fields, removing invasive plant species, testing water quality, and restoring gullies! Here's a photo from their time out in the field. Thank you to all of you who donated to last year's AZ Gives Day and made our truck purchase possible!





Do you know about Invasive Species Awareness Week?

Our restoration crews work tirelessly to remove invasive species from the Verde watershed. National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) was February 26th to March 3rd this year and our crews did some great work! We posted on social media and sent out some educational content in our e-news.

Not only do we do this work during NISAW, we do it year round! On MLK day we removed stands of tree of heaven, giant reed and Himalayan blackberry. This was done all through the hard work of our volunteers! Keep up the good work!



A neat trick to tell when the last frost has passed

Winter is wrapping up and Spring is just around the corner. Fun fact: Keep an eye out for mesquite trees beginning to leaf out. Mesquites are one of the best indicators for signaling when the last frost has passed. If you enjoy gardening in the Verde Valley, this can be a helpful hint when deciding to plant out your vegetable crops and more frost-sensitive plants.

Photos by Friends of the Verde River staff



Meet ▶▶▶

ELAINE NICHOLS

Restoration Project Manager

Elaine Nichols is Friends of the Verde River's Restoration Project Manager. She helps organize our MLK Day volunteer activities and the Verde BioBlitz! She also coordinates Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition restoration projects, working with public and private landowners, crews, and volunteers.

Water Quality Matters

Arizona Water Watch is an Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) program driven by volunteers. The program aims to get communities involved in science-based water quality testing throughout the state.

As of 2023, Friends of the Verde River and our committed volunteers have consistently collected data at all our Oak Creek sites. Volunteers who participate in the Water Watch program have provided valuable information that helps ADEQ assess water status while also helping us understand watershed health and plan for future land management and local stewardship.

On March 9th, we conducted a Spring Break weekend sampling to help assess recreational influence on E. coli levels. In addition to spring break, we also monitor water quality over Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends and over the Fourth of July holiday. For last year's Labor Day sampling, we were assisted by Hamilton Wallace and Matthew McCawley who continue to support our water quality efforts. Their help is greatly appreciated.



Here are five things you can do to help maintain good water quality in your area

1. Practice leave no trace and pick up trash when you see it.
2. Reduce or eliminate your use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers.
3. Reduce the use of household chemicals and pharmaceuticals and ensure proper disposal.
4. Limit runoff and erosion from your property.
5. Advocate for low-impact development.



Learn more by visiting verderiver.org/blog

Photos by Friends of the Verde staff

Double Earth Day Celebrations!

We'll be at two different events for Earth Day! If you miss this year, we would love to see you next year!

The First Earth Day was in April of 1970. It may be hard to imagine that before 1970, a factory could spew black clouds of toxic smoke into the air or dump tons of toxic waste into a nearby stream, and it was perfectly legal. They could not be taken to court and held accountable for it. How was that possible? Because there was no EPA, no Clean Air Act, no Clean Water Act. There were no legal or regulatory mechanisms to protect our environment. In the Spring of 1970, Senator Nelson created Earth Day as a way to force this issue onto the national agenda. Twenty million Americans demonstrated in different U.S. cities, and it worked! In December of 1970, Congress authorized the creation of a new federal agency to tackle environmental issues, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Nation's Environmental Protection Dept. is primarily funded by EPA's General Assistance Program. The grantor encourages Tribes to take charge of finding solutions to their environmental issues. In 2010, The Nation decided to host their own Earth Day event to celebrate the land and water that they love and cherish. After several years of the event being no more than 50 attendees, the event grew into what it is today. A multi-collaborative effort that now surpasses 300 attendees annually!



Meet ▶▶▶

CYNTHIA BUTLER

Water Quality Monitoring Technician

Cynthia Butler is Friends of the Verde River's Water Quality Monitoring Technician. She works with the Verde Water Watchers. Along with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, volunteers collect water samples along the Verde River and its tributaries to assess biological and chemical changes that contribute to water pollution. This work helps guide land management practices within the Verde River Watershed.



**Verde Valley
Birding & Nature
Festival**



**COMMON BLACK HAWK
FEATURED BIRD FOR THE
VERDE VALLEY BIRDING
AND NATURE FESTIVAL**

THE BLACK HAWKS ARE BACK!

Spring migration is in full swing and our volunteer photographer, Tom Crosby has been capturing some awesome images of them around Page Springs. Check out these photos and join us for the 2024 festival. It is going to be great!

Festival Dates: April 25 to 27, 2024
Location: Dead Horse Ranch State Park
in Cottonwood, AZ

***Register for the
festival today!***

tinyurl.com/vvbnf-2024



Youth Engagement

2024 Verde BioBlitz

Help discover the incredible biodiversity throughout the Verde River Watershed by joining Friends of the Verde River for the Fourth Annual Verde BioBlitz! The event will take place April 18-28. Community scientists will again use the free iNaturalist app to upload photos of plants, bugs, and birds to the Verde BioBlitz2024 project. Anyone can participate using a smartphone or tablet! You don't have to identify the species you photograph, that can be done through the app as long as you submit high-quality photos. The BioBlitz is a great opportunity for all ages to participate in science!

Want to participate in the BioBlitz and need help getting started? Come see Friends at the Family Nature Fair at Dead Horse Ranch State Park on April 27. We will help you set up your iNaturalist app, join the project, and get started as a community scientist to help us learn more about the plants and animals in the Verde River system!

Are you already an experienced iNaturalist user? We could use your help identifying observations or leading field trips!



Photos by Greg Bernstein

Will you help us reach our goal?

Last year, the Verde BioBlitz had 509 community scientists make 5,136 observations. They recorded a whopping 964 species! The most observed species was the great-tailed grackle with mallards and blackfoot daisies in close second and third place.

This year we would like to **DOUBLE** that!

Will you help us get to
10K OBSERVATIONS?

Learn more by visiting
verderiver.org/bioblitz

Join the iNaturalist project
tinyurl.com/verde-bioblitz-2024



Using iNaturalist is easy!



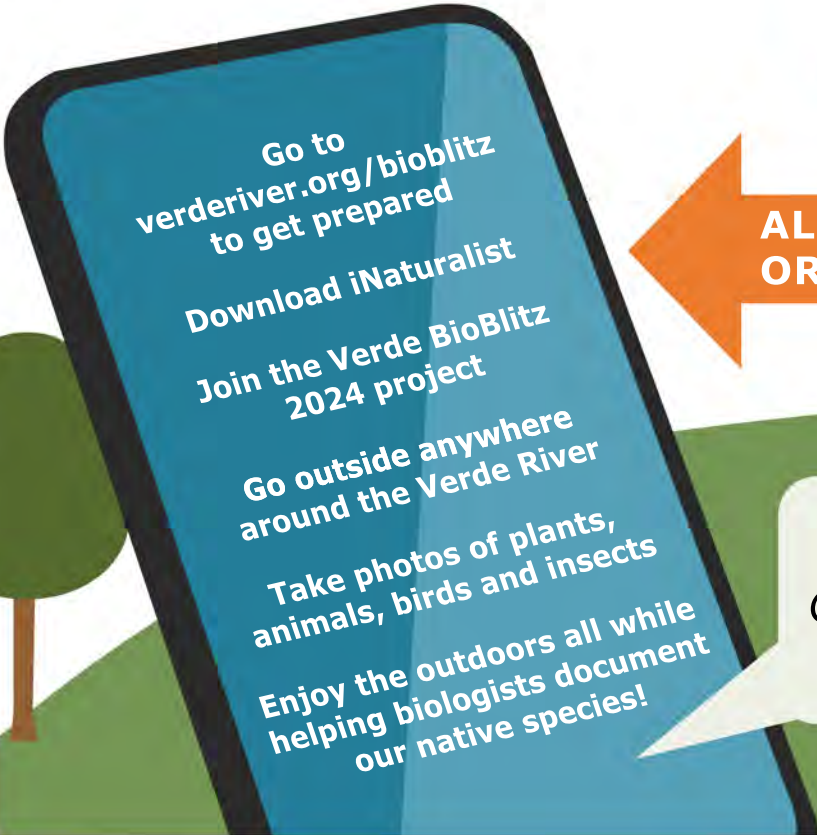
Take a photo!



Upload to iNaturalist



Learn from the Experts!



Go to verderiver.org/bioblitz to get prepared

Download iNaturalist

Join the Verde BioBlitz 2024 project

Go outside anywhere around the Verde River

Take photos of plants, animals, birds and insects

Enjoy the outdoors all while helping biologists document our native species!

ALL YOU NEED IS A TABLET OR A SMARTPHONE!

Use **#purdyverde** and tag **@friendsoftheverderiver** with any photos you share while you're out on the Verde!

Youth Engagement

Family Nature Festival

Attention families!

Saturday, April 27
from 9am–3pm

Join birding enthusiasts and nature lovers between the lagoons at Dead Horse Ranch State Park for a free day of family fun in nature.



© WorldwideDroneSolutions.com

Photos by Greg Bernstein (left), Katherine Sirimarco (right)



Photo by Issac Dudley (above)

When your family joins one of our free nature walks, you'll have the opportunity to participate in our 2024 Verde BioBlitz by helping to collect observations about the species you see along your walk. By recording the creatures and plants you see, you will help create valuable data that helps our habitat restoration experts understand changes in our environment and make decisions about how to keep the Verde healthy and flowing.

Learn about our species and habitats, and leave inspired to become the river protectors of the future.

Meet Pauli the Pollinator!

There will be activities and exhibits for the whole family to enjoy! Exhibitions include live reptiles and birds, paintings from featured artists, plus bird and watershed activities and free family nature walks!



Photos by Greg Bernstein (left) and Friends of the Verde River staff (right)

Featured Activities

Mobile STEM Discovery Lab



Come and experience the Mobile STEM lab where you can explore forty different STEM modules offered by Pathways to Learning.

Reptile Educational Presentation



Sonoran Reptiles offers a live reptile presentation that provides a positive learning experience with the opportunity for hands-on interaction.

Nests, Eggs, Feathers, Talons, & More!



The Highlands Center for Natural History offers a unique opportunity to observe nests, eggs, raptors, wings, feathers, and talons up close.

What is River Friendly Living?



Three years ago, Friends of the Verde River developed a program called River Friendly Living. This program is designed to inspire a culture of voluntary river stewardship in our communities. We currently have four categories of certifications: Home, Business, Agricultural Producer, and Development. Through the certification process we are able to identify areas of improvement such as water use efficiency, stormwater control, and habitat improvements. We are then able to support these projects through grant funding and other resources.

The annual River Friendly Living Grants help support on the ground conservation projects. These grants are made possible by businesses that participate in the program. This fund is then made available annually to all program participants. Homeowners are able to apply for up to \$1,000 to support their conservation projects, while businesses/orgs can apply for up to \$5,000 annually to support projects. Some project examples are: lawn removal, water efficiency upgrades, habitat improvement, community education programs.



Learn more at tinyurl.com/river-friendly-living

Photo by Issac Dudley



Meet ►► **ISAAC DUDLEY** **Flows Project Manager**

Isaac Dudley is Friends of the Verde River's Flows Project Manager. He works closely with community partners, business leaders, developers and agricultural businesses on the River Friendly initiative. He also loves to give talks on rainwater harvesting!

River Friendly Home Checklist

Our goal is to certify **15 additional River Friendly Homes** by June! Will you help? It's simple, just go to our website, fill out the checklist to see how river-friendly your home is, and pay the annual fee.



Learn more at tinyurl.com/river-friendly-living

HOW RIVER FRIENDLY IS YOUR HOME?

Is less than 30% of your property landscaped with grass?

Are your indoor areas free of leaks?

No use of pesticides within 200 ft of waterways?

Are at least 50% of the plants on your property native to the areas?

Do you irrigate any of your landscaping with rainwater or greywater?

Transform Your Landscape with Xeriscape Designs!

Bring the beauty of the Sonoran Desert to your doorstep with Phoenix's desert landscape designs!

Why Xeriscape?

Effortless Maintenance: Spend less time tending to your landscape.

Biodiversity: Enjoy the natural splendor of native plants.

Water Conservation: Save water and money with efficient irrigation practices.

Not sure where to start?

Download our plans tailored to various lot sizes. Customize the designs to suit your preferences. Explore resources and partner pages for additional guidance.

Create a sustainable and stunning outdoor oasis with Phoenix's Xeriscape designs. Download your plans today and embrace the essence of the desert landscape!

MEDIUM DIMENSIONS: POLLINATOR-PROMOTING STYLE

DESERT LANDSCAPES IN YOUR FRONT YARD



DESERT PLANTS: WATER-WISE, LOW MAINTENANCE, AND BEAUTIFUL!

Visit tinyurl.com/desert-landscapes for inspiration.



Community Water Champions

As spring hits the Verde Valley, River Friendly Homes and Businesses are taking big steps to conserve water and protect the Verde River system. Rain harvesting, irrigation efficiency, and even septic tank repairs are some of the projects that are making a splash.

Each year, local businesses support on-the-ground conservation projects through tax-deductible donations. These funds are then made available to support community projects. This year, 20 funded projects are estimated to help save roughly 26 million gallons of water, improve habitat, and protect water quality.

Jenny Bellows completed her rain harvesting system in February.

“

I think it is a great step in the right direction for me personally, and us collectively, to work toward high water quality and higher flows.

- Jenny Bellows

”

Tamara Faust recently completed septic system repairs.

“

The River Friendly Living Grant for Homeowners helped fund septic system repairs at my home which improved my property and the quality of the Verde River watershed.

- Tamara Faust

”

**Learn more
by visiting**

verderiver.org/blog



Photo by Issac Dudley

Save Water, Save Money for Your Business!



PHX WATER SMART

GRASS INCENTIVES

Convert grass to desert landscaping and save **55 GALLONS** of water each year per square foot.

Source: (Sovacol 2005)



Did you know Phoenix offers financial incentives for non-residential customers to remove grass and switch to desert-adapted landscapes?

With the Non-Residential Grass Removal Program, businesses can receive \$2 per square foot of grass removed, up to \$250,000 per site. By opting for desert landscaping, not only can you save water, but you can also reduce outdoor water use by up to 85% and cut down on landscape maintenance costs.

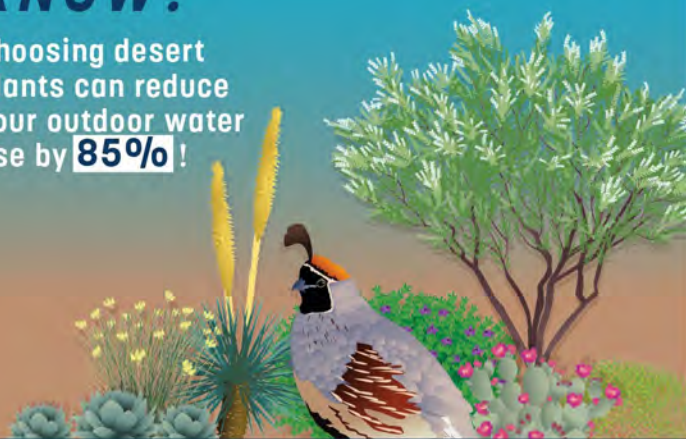
Make a positive impact on water conservation while benefiting your bottom line. Join Phoenix's initiative to create sustainable, water-efficient landscapes today!

For more information, visit tinyurl.com/grass-removal



DID YOU KNOW?

Choosing desert plants can reduce your outdoor water use by **85%**!



PHX WATER SMART

FREE LANDSCAPE PLANS NOW AVAILABLE
PHOENIX.GOV/SAVEWATER

We're Looking for More River Friendly Developers!

We are working with the developer of Sycamore Vista Apartments, a new affordable housing community in Camp Verde, Arizona, on the River Friendly Living certification! One of the ways that we will be supporting them is through communications of the project. They have a current need to get 161 people signed up on their waitlist in order to qualify for the Affordable Housing Tax Credit.

Check out their website and sign up for the wait list. We also have a goal to get three developers to join our River Friendly Living certification for 2024. Will you help?

Learn more at tinyurl.com/river-friendly-living



Photo provided by Sycamore Vista Apartments

Check out Sycamore Vista Apartments

Join as a River Friendly Developer

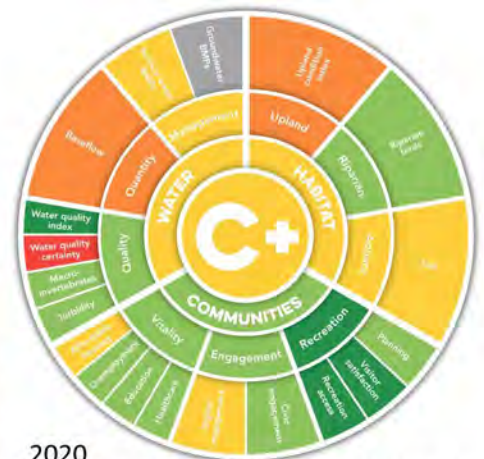
Save the Date!

**September 24-26, 2024
at Cliff Castle Casino, Camp Verde, Arizona**

Join us for the 2024 State of the Verde Watershed Conference, Ripples of Impact: Strengthening Watershed Partnerships

Discover the latest insights and innovations in watershed management.

Mark your calendars for this essential gathering hosted by Friends of the Verde River.



2020 **VERDE RIVER WATERSHED** REPORT CARD

Grade scale

A Very good (100-80%)	C Moderate (59-40%)	F Very poor (19-0%)
B Good (79-60%)	D Poor (39-20%)	U Unscored

Learn more at verderiver.org/watershed-conference

THANK YOU FROM OUR STAFF!

W. David Gressly,
Executive Director

Tracy Stephens,
Program Director

Susan Van Norman,
Director of Stewardship

Mark Troksa,
Finance & Operations Director

Isaac Dudley,
Flows Project Manager

Elaine Nichols,
Restoration Project Manager

Grace Filson,
Fundraising Outreach Coordinator

Katherine Sirimarco,
Fundraising and Communications Coordinator

Danielle O'Callaghan,
Marketing and Design Coordinator

Cynthia Butler,
Water Quality Monitoring Technician

Hudson Keffer,
Restoration Technician / GIS Specialist

Virginia Weis,
Accounting Administrator



Donate

We need to raise \$200,000 in working capital by June 1st in order to keep our government grants afloat! Yes you read that right. Sometimes things are a little tight around here. We often have to shell out hundreds of thousands of dollars to complete restoration projects before we ever see any grant funding!

Will you help?



***Go to
verderiver.org/donate
to help***



Meet ►►

W. DAVID GRESSLY **Executive Director**

W. David Gressly is Friends of the Verde River's Executive Director. He came to us after retiring from the United Nations as its Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen. He has held many positions with the United Nations, most recently working collaboratively to prevent what could have been the world's largest oil spill in the Red Sea. David has worked extensively in Africa and Asia, building teams to effect positive goals in the world.

All staff photos taken by Franki "Birdy" Finch

Did you know about our new partnership with Verde Valley First Books?



As part of AZ Gives, we're raising funds to purchase 1,200 books for kids in need. For just \$20, you can contribute a book! Your support fosters a love of reading, aids in education, and helps create future river stewards.

About Verde Valley First Books: Their mission is to ensure that 3 and 4-year-olds living in poverty in the Verde Valley of Arizona have age-appropriate books in their homes. Currently, they're reading to and providing books to 554 children each month.

Join us in making a difference through literacy and education! Thank you for your support. Remember, you can give to AZ Gives year-round.

Go to
www.azgives.org/verderiver-az



Verde Valley First Books



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