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NEWSLETTER

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News from the Forest Service

Mogollon Rim Ranger District, Coconino National Forest

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Save the Frog Day was April 28th



In an effort to raise awareness of the plight of amphibians, the scientific community has declared April 28th, 2009 the first annual "Save the Frog Day". The Mogollon Rim Ranger District will be displaying information at the Blue Ridge Office regarding the local amphibian species during the month of April, additionally, the Red Rock Ranger District in the Village of Oak creek will be displaying information at the Visitor Center. We encourage the appreciation and celebration of amphibians by people from all walks of life.

Why do amphibians matter? Frogs, toads, and salamanders play an important role in nature as both predator and prey, sustaining the delicate balance of nature. They eat pest insects, benefiting successful agriculture around the world and minimizing the spread of disease, including malaria. The skin of amphibians has substances that protect them from some microbes and viruses, offering possible medical cures for a variety of human diseases, including AIDS. In addition, frogs have had a special place in various human cultures for centuries, cherished as agents of life and good luck.

Of all groups of vertebrate animals, amphibians face the most threat of extinction. Since 1980, 122 species of amphibians are known to have disappeared. Nearly a third of all amphibian species in the world are facing extinction. On the Mogollon Rim Ranger District, one quarter of the frog and toad species (3 of 12) have declined enough to warrant protection by various agencies special status listings. For more information concerning Save the Frogs Day celebration and the local amphibian species display, please contact the Mogollon Rim Ranger Station at 928-477-2255.

Summer is Fast Approaching!



Wood permits are now on sale and available at Blue Ridge Ranger Station, Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. Forest roads have been opened, Campgrounds are opening on May 1st and lakes are being stocked with trout. Soon school will be out for summer and there will be many people recreating in the forest.

Most of our seasonal employees have started, and have begun their training for the 2009 summer season. Our other seasonal employees will be coming to work when school is out, the second week in May. People and motorized vehicles are on the increase so please be looking out and be SAFE!

Arizona Trail and Fossil Creek Receive Scenic Designation



The Arizona Trail (and five others) became National Scenic Trails, a designation which has not been awarded for 26 years! The Arizona Trail began in 1988 with only seven miles of trails in place. It has grown to over 800 miles beginning at the US-Mexico border running north to the Arizona-Utah border. It winds through a range of ecologically diverse land, from mountain ranges to canyons, woodlands and forest to the Sonoran desert and even the Grand Canyon! The trail is maintained by volunteers and members of the Arizona Trail Association.

The Arizona Trail has been added to the list of National Scenic Trails. Since the National Scenic Trail act was first passed in 1968, Congress has recognized “open-air”, outdoor areas and historic resources of the nation. This exclusive list of protected trails has only contained eight footpaths of national and historic beauty for the past 26 years, but when President Barack Obama signed HR 146 on March 30th, 2009, the Arizona Trail and five other trails were added to the list!

In 2005, Arizona Public Service decommissioned their two plants at Fossil Creek, thus returning the creek to its natural channel for the first time in over 100 years. Even the native fish got a place of their own, free of the exotic species they had been forced to compete with. There was great concern, everyone knew that all the work spent restoring Fossil Creek was of little value if it could not be protected. That hurdle was crossed on March 30th, 2009 when President Barack Obama signed a bill designating Fossil Creek as a Wild and Scenic Waterway, which adds substantive protection.



It is a big step and something worth celebrating for those who have worked, and continue to work, on protecting Fossil Creek. Sam Frank of the Arizona Wilderness Coalition says “The next step is the creation of a comprehensive river management plan, which is required whenever a river is designated as Wild and Scenic.” Since APS pulled out, the area adjacent to the creek has been subjected to increased usage, threatening to overwhelm the minimal resources available for its protection. Frank says “The truth is, there are so many people and only one Fossil Creek.”



Mogollon Rim Welcomes.....

Gary Garner! Gary has recently been hired as our new Budget Analyst. Gary was raised in Winslow and graduated High School from there in the 70's. Upon graduation he married the former Joi McLaws, also of Winslow, and enlisted in the US Air Force. While in the Air Force, Gary was stationed, either permanently or temporarily in over 40 locations world wide, ranging from Guam in the Pacific to his last duty location in Italy. Gary retired from the military in August of 1998 and became a Conductor on BNSF for a short time then moved to Phoenix, and was a Realtor for about 4 years, then became the statewide Facilities Manager for National Bank of Arizona until accepting his current position with the Forest Service. Gary and Joi have two children that live in Phoenix, Geoff and Jennifer, along with two grandsons, Brett and Dylan, who are both 7 years old. Welcome Gary!

Until next month,

*Jean Gilbertson
Editor*

