

(Photo Courtesy of Sharlot Hall Museum)

**J.S. Acker**  
(James Samuel Acker)  
August 6, 1865 - July 30, 1955

Originally from Montevallo, Alabama, James Acker moved to Prescott, Arizona Territory in 1902. He spent much of his time alone, was very frugal and lived modestly. He owned a stationery and candy store on South Cortez Street and enjoyed the daily visits of school children on their way home.

Upon his death in 1955 he left over 100 parcels of real estate to the City, "...to be used for parks and for promotion of music, especially for children."

## J.S. Acker Trust

You've heard about the popular *Acker Night* held in December of each year here in Prescott, but do you really know what it's all about? Clearly Acker Night involves music and youth. This night of music and fun enables the Acker Music Park Association to provide scholarships to students pursuing music related careers. However, there is a bit more to the story of just how Acker Night began.

Mr. James S. Acker relocated to Prescott in the early 1900's. He was a proprietor of a general store where he provided a variety of products to include school and music supplies for children. He later operated a real estate company at which time he accumulated parcels of property around the community. When Mr. Acker died in 1955, he left a number of those parcels of land to the City of Prescott. He specified that the parcels be used for parks and music programs for children.

In 1988 Prescott resident LaVon Anderson took her dream to mesh music and Prescott's historic downtown together to begin the memorable event of Acker Night. Marion Smith, in 1991, worked with the executor of the Acker Estate in promoting performing artists, introducing the Tip Bag program supporting scholarships for our community's youth enabling a dramatic increase in funding for the existing scholarship plan. The December event now features over 100 Prescott downtown businesses and performers who donate their time and talent for this event.

The Acker Night event, coupled with the existing Acker Trust, have offered grants to organizations who promote the vision of J.S. Acker through music programs. Each year the Acker Trust

Board begins a process to receive applications for grants, review the applications, receive presentations from each of the grant requestors, and awards grants to organizations who have met the requirements set forth in Mr. Acker's will. The grant process opens in November of each year, with awards being given in July of the following year. The Trust's grants are processed through the City of Prescott Recreation Services Department by Patti Crouse, Administrative Coordinator. Information and grant applications can be found on the City of Prescott website at:  
[www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks](http://www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks)

(Contributor: Patti Crouse)

### Recreation Services Advisory Board

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## The Parks - Mike Fann Community Skatepark

With Prescott City Council approval of a skatepark at the Ken Lindley complex parking lot in September 2002, major private fund raising efforts began, headed by Mike Fann, with a one-on-one matching grant from the City of up to \$100,000. Three designs for the skatepark were put on the design company's website for the public to vote on. It went out for bid once the design was picked. The bids for the project in June 2004 came to almost double the amount budgeted. Fund raising continued and construction finally began in early 2005, with local youth keeping track of the progress. The much anticipated Grand Opening, expected in September, was finally held at 11:30 a.m. on November 12th.

### Skatepark Rules

This is a non-supervised facility for skateboards, in-line skates, and bikes.

- No motorized vehicles, no unicycles or tricycles.
- Protective equipment should be used at all times. Ride at your own risk.
- Users of this facility assume the risk of serious injury. Speed right of way.
- No drugs, alcohol, or tobacco. You may be ejected from the park for fighting or unsportsmanlike conduct.
- The skatepark may be closed due to weather - rain, snow, or lightning. The decision is up to the Recreation Services Department.
- After-hours use or use when closed will result in a citation for trespassing and possible seizure of equipment.
- Intentional damage, including graffiti, is prohibited and may result in criminal prosecution.
- Report damage or unsafe conditions to Parks Maintenance at (928) 777-1582.
- No additional obstacles (such as benches, tables, barrels) may be taken into or used within the skatepark.
- Spectators, pets, food, and drink must stay outside the fenced area. Any scheduled event, competition, or demonstration must be approved in advance by the City of Prescott. Call (928) 777-1122

In the event these rules are not being followed, the City may elect to temporarily or permanently close the facility.  
**(THE SUCCESS OF THIS PARK DEPENDS ON YOU)**

**Mike Fann Community Skate Park**  
Corner of E. Willis St. and S. Arizona Ave.

(Inside Ken Lindley Park)

#### Summer Hours

(Memorial Day through Labor Day)

7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.

#### Winter Hours

7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Free Parking

Visit us online through the city website at:  
[www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks](http://www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks)

The parks design includes kidney and clover bowls, as well as many street and transitional obstacles, offering a great skateboarding experience for all skill levels. After more than a decade, Mike Fann Community Skate Park continues to be a very busy favorite among Prescott's youth.



(Contributors: Nancy Nesbit with Kelly Tolbert)

(Bottom photo) Kids look on as the Prescott Fire Department pours water over the park in October 2007 during a cleaning session. The park was temporarily closed down from April 22-April 26, 2013 for concrete cleaning, repair, and sealing as part of ongoing preventative maintenance to help lengthen the facility's life.

(Middle left photo) The skatepark was constructed in 2005. The Grand Opening was held on Saturday, November 12, 2005.

(Middle right photo) An overview of the 20,000 square foot facility.

(Photo left) Open over ten years, the park remains very popular among Prescott's youth, providing recreational opportunities for all skill levels.

(File photos)



## Sports Page

### Transitioning From a Busy Summer Season

As the City of Prescott's 2016 summer sports season winds down, we thought we would give residents a look at our activities to see what we are up to. The Recreation Services Programming Division not only serves our quad city residents with adult softball and basketball leagues during the summer months, but also hosted 26 tournaments this year, attracting participants from all over the country.

The season began the first two weekends in April with the Yavapai Soccer Cup. There were 159 boys teams and 90 girls teams competing over the two weekends, bringing tremendous economic impact to the City. Along with these two events, we hosted 26 tournaments from April 2-October 15 which included approximately 800 teams with 10,000 participants throughout the summer. The economic impact to our community in 2015 eclipsed \$2.367 million in estimated direct spending. It is anticipated that numbers will be similar or better for 2016. Along with youth soccer events, the City is always searching for additional youth tournaments to increase visitation with these athletes bringing family and friends to our community. Included in the 2016 calendar were two youth baseball tournaments, five girls youth softball tournaments, a youth football jamboree, and a variety of youth sports camps. The City also hosted many adult tournaments including senior baseball, volleyball, golf, and many softball tournaments.

Not to be outdone by the many visitors who come to Prescott to enjoy the tournaments offered, local residents participate in the biggest sports leagues per capita in the State of Arizona during the summer. The annual summer softball program consists of 140 adult teams that play from early May through August. There are a variety of softball leagues offered including men's, women's, coed, senior, and men's fast-pitch. Also offered is a summer basketball program with 30 men's teams who competed this season. All together, there were 170 teams with over 2,000 participants coming from Prescott, Prescott Valley, Chino Valley, Dewey, and Paulden enjoying summer evenings.



Senior Women's Softball.

Along with the adult leagues, Prescott Little League and the Prescott Girls Softball Association enjoy time on the fields playing baseball and softball during the summer months, paving the way for fall youth soccer and football programs who take over in September.

As summer comes to a close, the Recreation Services Department's focus in fall is on youth soccer, football, and adult indoor volleyball leagues. The Grace Sparkes Activity Center becomes busier as athletes come to participate in open gym basketball and volleyball during hours of operation, as well as rentals from charter schools looking for a volleyball court to practice on.

The department remains busy with sports year round. As summer comes to a close and the tournament calendar winds down, the fall and winter months still buzz with many sports opportunities available to our youth and adult athletes.

*(Contributor: Rick Hormann)*

#### Contact Information

To enter City teams or leagues  
telephone (928) 777-1557 or  
email: [rick.hormann@prescott-az.gov](mailto:rick.hormann@prescott-az.gov)

Our calendar of sporting events is available  
at our Parks and Recreation Department  
office located at the  
Grace Sparkes Memorial Activity Center  
824 E. Gurley St.  
Prescott, AZ 86301  
Telephone: (928) 777-1122

Visit us on the City website at:  
[www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks/](http://www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks/)  
There are links to both adult  
and youth sports.

Alliance Youth Football Jamboree



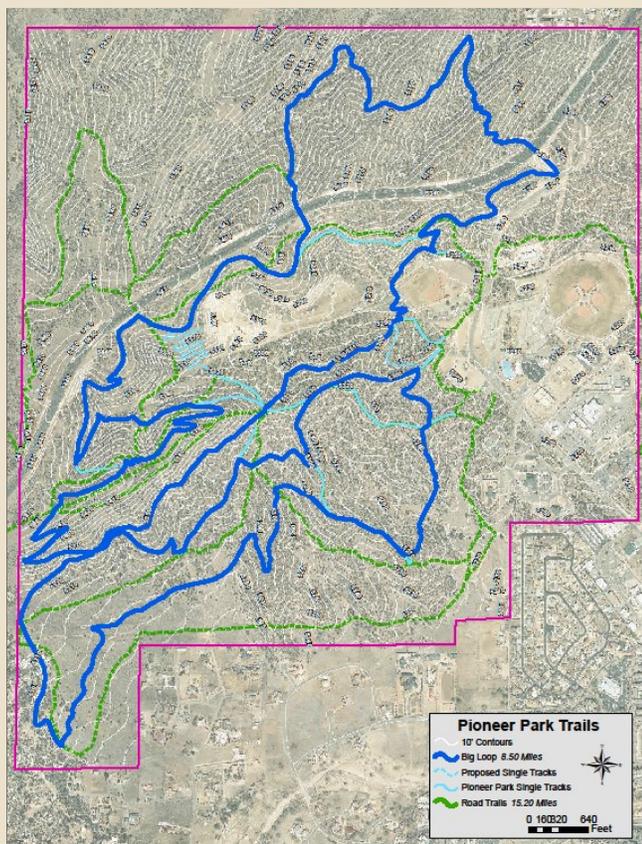
## The Trails & Natural Parklands Work on the Pioneer Park Trails Continues

The trails at Pioneer Park have included both City and County trails which incorporate a combination of trails and old dirt roads, with only a few connections between them. In 2015 the City of Prescott Recreation Services Department took over management of all the trails in the 800 acre parkland. Close to residential areas, Pioneer Park sports facilities, and the Prescott Circle Trail, trail usage is varied: families, kids, runners, dog walkers, bicyclists, hikers, and equestrians.

Chris Hosking, Recreation Services Department's Trails and Natural Parklands Coordinator, has taken on the task of improving and expanding the trail system. With many miles of trail in Prescott already dedicated to intermediate and advanced users, Pioneer Park trails will remain geared to beginners and intermediate users, but will also be a good training ground for advanced runners and mountain bikers. Another goal is to provide a venue for running and mountain biking (high school and 12 hour) events.

Existing trails and roads are being improved. To make the system more interesting and varied, new contoured single track trails are being added along the sides of hills. There will also be an expansion of milder bike trails. Big loops are being incorporated into the system, expanding them from 8.5 to 14 miles, with access to other smaller trails. This will provide all users with a wide variety of trail options. The work is ongoing and it is anticipated that completion is about a year away.

Free parking areas are located at Brownlow Trail, the Pioneer Park sports complex, and the overlook off Pioneer Parkway. With 80,000 visits per year, compared to Acker Park trails of 70,000 annual visits (at only 80 acres, 10% the size), the newly revamped and expanded Pioneer Park trail systems should see a significant increase in use. Recent comments from bicyclists to Prescott's Volunteer Park Rangers have been very positive. *(Contributors: Nancy Nesbit with Chris Hosking)*



The map above is a preliminary map showing existing trails, road trails, and single track trails, as well as proposed single track trails at Pioneer Park. Once the work is completed and new maps finalized, they will be made available for download online.

Existing maps for Pioneer Park trails prior to the new construction and other City trail maps are downloadable at:  
[www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks/trails](http://www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks/trails) or  
[www.prescotttrails.com](http://www.prescotttrails.com)

The newly integrated trail system at Pioneer Park (*below*) consists of wide big loop trails, single track trails, and old dirt road trails. Eventually the cumulative total in the natural parkland area will be approximately 26 miles of trail.

*(Photo Courtesy of Chris Hosking)*



## Trails Update; Greenways - Miller Creek Trail

Begun in 2003, the Greenways Trail System in downtown Prescott has a transportation emphasis for pedestrian and bike travel, connecting local neighborhoods, downtown businesses, and parks. After eighteen months, the fourth and final phase of the original plan was completed along Miller Creek Trail, reaching the Rodeo Grounds at Fair Street. In early August 2016, the Over the Hill Gang capped it all off by installing a new bridge at Madison Ave. (east of Miller Valley Rd.) over Miller Creek, giving safe and easy access to Dexter neighborhood residents (bottom photo).

The trail system has easy access from Granite Creek Park west under LaGuardia Bridge. Both trails have many access points from the streets nearby. Miller Creek Trail has additional access from the Fair Grounds, Lincoln and Madison Avenues, as well as behind the fast food restaurants on the east side of Miller Valley Road. The trail along Granite Creek runs parallel to Montezuma St. on the west, down on the banks along Granite Creek. There are access points at Willis, Gurley, Goodwin, Carleton, and Aubrey streets. The entrance at Tom Pettit Community Park takes visitors across Granite Creek and past the Community Gardens, Sam Hills, and a resting point at the old "trestle".

Although the first phase is complete, future plans include a trail travelling east to Prescott Peavine National Recreation Trail.

(Contributors: Nancy Nesbit with Chris Hosking)



In early August 2016, Over the Hill Gang (right) installed a new bridge (below) over Miller Creek, giving access to the Miller Creek Trail at Madison Ave. , in the Dexter neighborhood. The bridge brings pedestrian traffic from the neighborhood to the Rodeo Grounds, Granite Creek Portion of the Greenways Trail, associated restaurants and retail business, as well as Prescott College. Laurel Freeman commented, "We are so thrilled with the new bridge over Miller Creek and it is getting loads of use. Such a breeze to get across now."

The \$4,000.00 cost of the bridge was paid for by a private anonymous donor with matching funds from the City of Prescott Recreation Services Department's match account.

(Photos Courtesy of Over the Hill Gang)



## Volunteers Over the Hill Gang



*(Photo Courtesy of Over the Hill Gang)*

**In 2016, Over the Hill Gang worked on several new and reconstructed trails, including the Glassford Hill, Summit Trail.**

*(Contributors: Nancy Nesbit with George Sheats, Volunteer Coordinator - OHG)*

In the 1990s, volunteers interested in trail building, including many who were also associated with Yavapai Trails Association (YTA), started working with the Prescott National Forest helping out with the trail system. The Prescott Recreation Services Department started work on the Peavine Trail and Mile-high Trail system in early 1999. As many as 30 volunteers would show up on workdays, with many of the same National Forest volunteers participating.

Never an official club or organization, the group of mainly retirees dubbed themselves the Over the Hill Gang during a local press interview around 2003. Over the years this unofficial group became officially organized and now works in three hour sessions, two mornings a week (Monday and Friday). Not only do they work on National Forest and Prescott City trails, they now also work all over the greater Prescott area.

Another busy year for the group, 2016 included work on:

- Glassford Hill, Summit Trail  
*This trail will eventually connect to the Prescott Circle Trail on the Prescott side at Peavine Trail about a mile north of the South parking lot.*
- Fain Park, Canyon Trail  
*As well as other trails within the park.*
- Granite Dells Estates Trail (2 miles)
- Pioneer Park

*Approaching 4 miles of new and reconstructed trails.*

The Over The Hill Gang completes two to three-tenths of a mile of trail during each three hour session. Working two mornings a week they complete approximately six to 10 miles of trail per year. All ages are welcome. The size and scope of our trail system is in large part due to the hard work of volunteers who contribute to our city and the Prescott area in general.

To volunteer for Over the Hill Gang visit the Prescott Trails website at:  
[www.prescotttrails.com](http://www.prescotttrails.com) (click on the link at Help Build Prescott's Trails System.)

### It's Not All Work

More than one person speaking with OHG volunteers has been told, "This is the most fun I've ever had". Not only does this group work hard, they enthusiastically have a lot of fun. Each year they get together for various functions including Prescott's annual 4th of July parade. Walking directly behind the Prescott City Council, they also invited the Prescott Recreation Services Department Volunteer Rangers to join them (since several members are involved in both groups).

Their activities also include the annual Volunteer Appreciation BBQ hosted by the City of Prescott Recreation Department, at Goldwater Lake each year in July, as well as a Christmas Potluck every December. A few breakfasts also seem to pop up each year. One thing is certain, they know how to have fun both on and off the trails.



*(Photo Courtesy of Over the Hill Gang)*

**OHG has participated in Prescott's 4th of July parade since 2012.**

## Partnerships - Greater Prescott Outdoors Fund

Through the years, Prescott Recreation Services Department has benefitted from grants and volunteers to provide many of the amenities in the parks. Some of those groups have recently joined forces to combine fundraising efforts for larger projects that are beyond the ability of any one organization to accomplish. This effort has resulted in the formation of the Greater Prescott Outdoors Fund through the Arizona Community Foundation/Yavapai County (ACF/YC), (see box below for more detailed information). The Fund organizations still rely on member dues and direct donations for individual smaller projects.

Major Fund categories include Open Space, Natural Parklands, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Trails, and Education. Underlying costs for improvements include many things such as land purchases, easements, rights-of-way, legal expenses, surveys, and consultant studies. Drainage and site modifications, dredging, and lakes and watershed improvements are other expenses many are unaware of. More obvious expenses include anything from tools and materials, to parking lots, restrooms, bridges, walls, specialized tracks and facilities, signage, kiosks, tables, bike racks, maintenance, and so much more.

Providing great outdoor experiences is an expensive endeavor. With limited city budgets, these groups help provide the funds and volunteers that help make Prescott's parks and natural parklands a destination enjoyed by residents and the many outdoor enthusiasts who visit our City.

More information is available online at:  
[www.azfoundation.org/yavapai](http://www.azfoundation.org/yavapai)  
[www.PrescottTrails.com](http://www.PrescottTrails.com)

(Contributors: Nancy Nesbit with George Sheats)

### GPOF Founding Organizations:



Yavapai Trails Association



Prescott Alternative Transportation



Prescott Mountain Bike Alliance



Open Space Alliance of Central Yavapai County



(Photo Courtesy of George Sheats)

GPOF organizations have individually and cooperatively provided funds for outdoor projects throughout the Prescott area. The City benefitted with the "Ramp Bridge" from Miller Valley Road to extend the Greenways Butte Creek Trail through the culverts to Lincoln Ave., connecting to the Rodeo Grounds Trail along Miller Creek to Granite Creek Park and the Greenways downtown. The materials were funded by the Arizona Community Fund/Yavapai County grant rewarded to Yavapai Trails Association in 2015. The grant also funded two other bridges and other construction materials along Prescott College and Butte Creek.



Jan Alfano at the May 2015 celebration of the Prescott Circle Trail completion.

A visionary and early advocate for trails in Prescott, Jan Alfano passed away on March 8, 2016 at the age of 88. She was the first President of Yavapai Trails Association (YTA), devising strategies, policies, and writing grants for trails. During her tenure, YTA worked with the State Legislature to pass the Recreational Immunity statute protecting landowners against liability, when allowing public trails through their property. Over 25 years ago she held the first meeting of citizens at her home, bringing together hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians, to begin work on a dream, the Prescott Circle Trail. The GPOF expands on her work and vision for trails in Prescott by bringing together various groups to accomplish their goals.

### How You Can Help Greater Prescott Outdoors Fund (GPOF)

#### Who contributes?

People who are committed to helping everyone enjoy the outdoors can help in many ways. Direct contributions to the founding organizations that are the core of GPOF are indispensable for those organizations' operating budgets.

Donors looking to address broader problems in the outdoors domain that transcend current individual organization missions, capabilities, timelines, or boundaries can make bequests to GPOF and be rest assured that their contributions will be allocated in accordance with their vision. GPOF has the expertise and mission to identify and task the best available current and future organizations and resources to meet your goals as outlined in your donation.

#### Are contributions tax deductible?

Yes! The Arizona Community Foundation (ACF) is a 501(c)3 non-profit that makes grants to other non-profits, so your contribution is deductible subject to the usual IRS rules.

#### Can I trust the Arizona Community Foundation?

Yes! The AFC is a statewide organization formed in 1963. It has five regional affiliates: the Yavapai affiliate (YC) has been doing great work locally since 1993. The YC affiliate accounts for \$35M of the \$850M in funds that ACF manages as of 2015. "The Arizona Community Foundation of Yavapai County unites the generosity and will of our community to make our area stronger."

#### How do I contribute?

You can mail a donation payable to Arizona Community Foundation of Yavapai County with "Greater Prescott Outdoors Fund" and any allocations on the memo line of your check to:

**ACF of Yavapai County**  
300 E. Willis St., #B  
Prescott, AZ 86301

You can give cash, appreciated stocks, real estate, retirement assets, business interests, or life insurance and/or life income gifts. Please contact Carol Chamberlain, Regional Director, at (928) 708-9632 about this.

#### What happens to contributions to the Greater Prescott Outdoors Fund?

GPOF is an AFC/YC collaborative fund advised by a representative GPOF Committee that arranges fundraising and manages grant activities. Grantees provide an End of Year report.

# Special Events

## Kayla's Hands Playground Grand Opening Held

Early in the morning of Saturday, August 27th, the Kiwanis Club of Prescott posted on social media, "As tears of joy fall from the sky this morning we are still planning the grand opening event at Kayla's Hands playground in Pioneer Park at 10 a.m." After almost an inch of rain, it subsided around 9:30 a.m. With skies progressively clearing, the sun was shining by the end of the celebration program at 11:00.

**Speakers included:**

- Gary Ballard, *Kiwanis Club of Prescott President*
- John McCain, *U.S. Senator*
- Jack Smith, *Chairman Yavapai County Board of Supervisors*
- Harry Oberg, *Prescott Mayor*
- Derrick Hall, *Arizona Diamondbacks President & CEO*
- Don Brandt, *APS Chairman*

**Unnamed song for Kayla:**

Ken Bennett, *former Arizona Secretary of State*

**Message sent from:**

Paul Gosar, *U.S. Congressman*

Kayla Jean Mueller was a 26 year old humanitarian aid worker who was taken captive by ISIS in August 2013, and died in February 2016. Kayla's parents, Carl and Marsha Mueller, and the Kiwanis Club of Prescott raised funds to build a playground to honor her life's work. Working with the City, a site was located at Pioneer Park. Yavapai County donated the site to the City of Prescott who will provide perpetual maintenance.

A video of Kayla playing hand games with children was the inspiration for the playground's name, Kayla's Hands. The Mueller's stated, "The family has no body, no grave, no marker." During the program her father remarked, "We can feel her here."  
*(Contributor: Nancy Nesbit)*



*(photo left) Carl Mueller, flanked by his wife Marsha (right), son Eric and family (left), addressed the audience at the close of the program.*



*(photo right) The Mueller family (center) cut the ribbon held by Prescott Mayor Harry Oberg (left) and Gary Ballard, Kiwanis Club of Prescott President (right). Prior to the ribbon cutting, a Daisy Group from Abia Judd Elementary School (foreground) sang "Do You Want To Build A Playground" to a "Frozen" tune, then released balloons.*

*(Bottom photo) Many children were among the several hundred in attendance. They had much fun playing on the equipment consisting of slides, spinning saucers, and zip line.*

*(Photos left and right courtesy of Prescott Kiwanis, bottom photo courtesy of Nancy Nesbit)*



**Recreation Services Department**  
Grace Sparkes Memorial Activity Center  
*(Old Armory Building)*  
824 E. Gurley St., Prescott, AZ 86301  
Telephone (928) 777-1122  
Visit us on the City website at:  
[www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks](http://www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks)



This newsletter is a collaborative effort between City of Prescott employees and volunteers. Compilation and graphics provided by Nancy K. Nesbit, Volunteer Park Ranger. This newsletter is available on line at: [www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks](http://www.prescott-az.gov/services/parks) You can also pick up a copy at our office at the Grace Sparkes Memorial Activity Center.