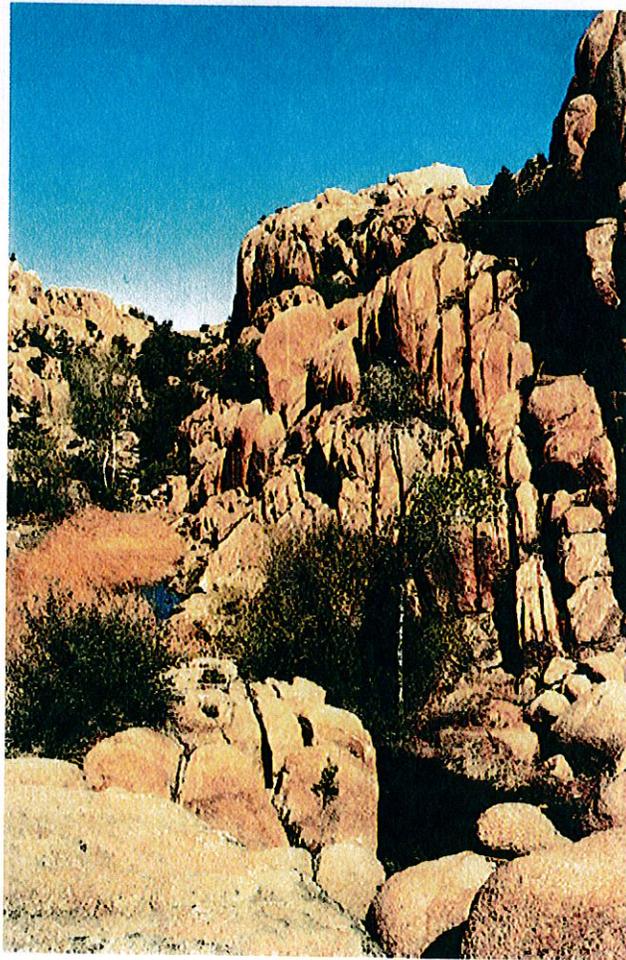




OPEN SPACE PLAN



SEPTEMBER 1999



Cover Photo: Granite Dells region
All photos by Eric Smith

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RESOLUTION NO. 3203

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PRESCOTT, YAVAPAI COUNTY, ARIZONA, ADOPTING A COUNCIL POLICY REGARDING OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS, AND ADOPTING THE "OPEN SPACE PLAN" FOR THE CITY OF PRESCOTT.

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Prescott wishes to adopt a policy regarding open space within the City limits.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PRESCOTT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. THAT, the City Council hereby accepts and adopts the Open Space Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit "A".

SECTION 2. THAT, it is the intent of the City Council that in making decisions regarding the future uses and development within the City limits, the City Council shall take into consideration the recommendations contained in the attached Plan.

SECTION 3. THAT, this Resolution shall become a part of the Council Policy Booklet.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Mayor and Council of the City of Prescott, Arizona, this 28th day of SEPTEMBER, 1999.



PAUL S. DALY, Mayor

ATTEST:



MARIE L. WATSON, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



JOHN R. MOFFITT, City Attorney

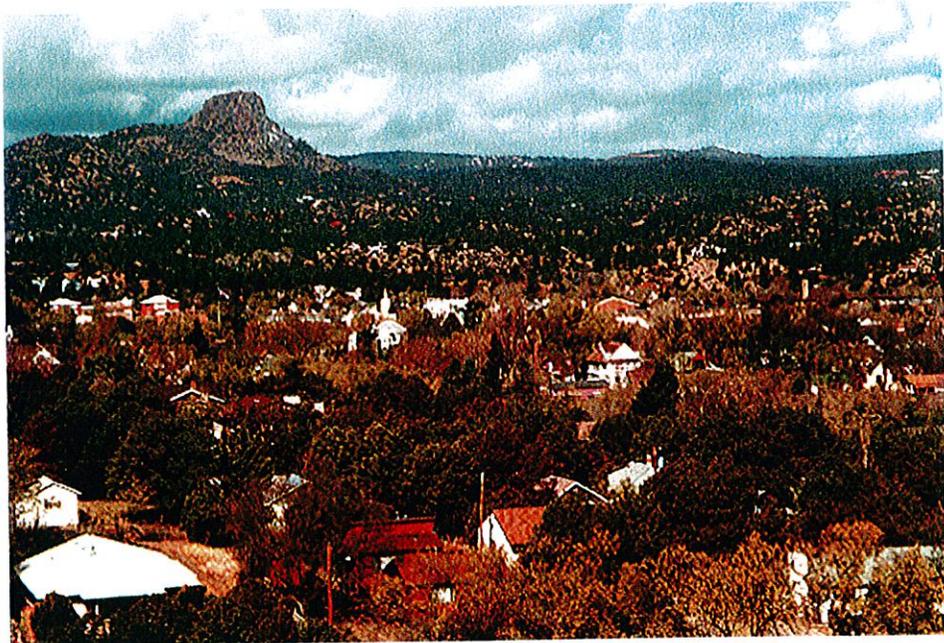


INTRODUCTION

Prescott's traditional character is constituted of rural and older urban features (alleys, grid streets, mature street trees, and territorial architecture), as well as long vistas, unique topography and a lack of perceived crowding. Open space plays a vital part in retaining that character. Along with open space, trails that connect open spaces become more important, particularly with the increased interest of residents in walking in their neighborhoods. Retention of Prescott's small town character has been recognized as a key issue to maintaining a high quality of life for those living in or visiting our community.

As early as 1990, the citizens of Prescott showed concern over the protection and preservation of open space as reflected in the General Plan adopted that year. In 1994, the adoption of the Strategic Plan, which focused on growth management underscored the importance of open space and its contribution in management of residential development. The 1997 General Plan identified ten community goals in the Community Quality Element of the Plan with the first of those being "protect and preserve open space and natural areas".

The Open Space Plan for the City of Prescott is intended to provide direction and guidance in protecting and preserving open space in and around the City. The goals, objectives, and actions of the Plan are derived from various community sources and existing City policies. The Plan is meant to acknowledge both past successes and future challenges in open space protection. It covers areas beyond the City limits and supports the adopted City Trails Plan. The master open space map (Figure A) provides a basic representation of geographical locations of the areas discussed within the plan. In keeping with present City policy, there is a focus on partnerships, resource sharing, problem solving and fiscal responsibility as the community works toward the achievement of goals in the Plan.



View of Prescott looking northwest



CHAPTER 1: PRESCOTT AND OPEN SPACE

HISTORY OF THE OPEN SPACE PLAN

In 1994 development pressures, growth management concerns, and increasing public involvement led City staff to explore the importance of open space to City residents and look at what support there might be for protection and preservation of open space and the potential for public/private partnerships. The City had already taken some steps in that direction by placing the Watson Woods area up for proposals for management by the private sector. There was also a Council decision to continue to support parks and recreation through a percentage of the bed tax. The next step was to provide staff support in organizing a one-day workshop that would look at the open space and trail situation in the area.

This Saturday workshop attended by about 80 people, covered many issues, however, five were judged most important:

1. **Implement and develop ordinances**
It was generally agreed that existing regulations and plans, along with few new ones, would accomplish protection of open space and provide incentives for trails.
2. **Develop a coalition in the community to achieve goals**
Those at the workshop agreed with the Council that the City should not be expected to take the entire responsibility for open space conservation and trail development, but that all of the many community groups interested in such activity should get together and assist in the effort.
3. **Create a funding source to purchase and maintain open space**
Residents at the meeting were well aware that the rights of the private landholder to use land were paramount and that purchasing land for the purpose of conserving open space may be necessary in some instances.
4. **Preserve and enhance trail system**
Area residents, in general, support the creation and preservation of trails and a trail system. With walking becoming a good exercise alternative as the population ages, this trend was expected to increase.
5. **Educate people to the value of open space**
Most of those attending the workshop were surprised to find how little open space would actually remain open as the area develops. It was felt if more people were aware of this, there would be increased community support for conservation and purchase of open space.



EMERGENCE OF A COALITION

In recognition of these facts a coalition of groups concerned with open space preservation was formed. The official name of the group is the Open Space Alliance of Central Yavapai County. Members of the alliance are representatives from Yavapai Trails Association, Prescott Creeks Preservation Association, Central Arizona Land Trust, Community Rails-to-Trail Coalition, Sierra Club, the Wildland Urban Interface Commission, Prescott National Forest Friends, and the Prescott Audubon Society, as well as, other similar organizations.

EARLY OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION AND ACQUISITION GOALS

The Open Space Alliance of Central Yavapai County then went on to identify priorities for open space acquisition and conservation that included some State Lands in the newly formed Arizona Preserve Initiative program. Separately the Yavapai Trails Association (a member of the Alliance) identified opportunities for trail systems. The priorities identified by the Open Space Alliance were:

1. **Acquisition of Thumb Butte area private property**

This was rated the most important because it was viewed as an area in danger of immediate loss. All that would be needed would be to pull building permits in several instances and Thumb Butte would be significantly altered. It was also felt that this was a do-able, fundable project. The Central Arizona Land Trust later took on the fund raising responsibility for this project, declaring 1996 "The Year of the Butte". By 1998, in a 50% funding partnership with the City, all of the targeted lots were purchased and protected.

2. **Protection of scenic vistas and ridgelines**

With the continuing development occurring in the City, concern was expressed about construction on ridgelines and hillsides. The issue was viewed as an administrative priority and not a capital fund item, unless a specific view corridor was identified that could not be protected through regulation. In 1995, City staff drafted revisions to the Planned Area Development and The Hillside Development and Grading Standards in the Zoning Code. In 1998, in a further effort to manage development on hillsides, a revision to single family height regulations better defined how height was measured and offered an incentive for 'step down' house designs on hillsides.

3. **Acquisition and/or protection of Willow and Watson Lakes, land in the railroad right-of-way, and land in the Granite Dells area**

This was the most ambitious and costly of the targeted goals. It was recommended that a plan for both preservation and acquisition should be undertaken, including estimates of acquisition costs and improvements. These items were considered as elements of concern in a single area.



An Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) grant had already been approved for a rails-to-trails conversion project on the east side of Watson Lake. By utilizing funds from the sale proceeds or trade of other city property, combined with park development fees, over 120 acres of property adjacent to Heritage Park and Willow Lake was acquired for preservation purposes in 1996 and 1998.

In 1998, after considerable negotiation with the owner of the land under the lakes and the water rights to fill them, the Chino Valley Irrigation District agreed to sell. In a bond election that year organized and funded by Prescott citizens, Prescott voters approved a \$15 million bond for the purchase of the lakes, 850 acres of land, and associated water rights.



View of Watson Lake from the Prescott Peavine Trail (Rails-to-Trails)

4. **Acquisition and development of vista parks**

As a goal, this was viewed as fairly inexpensive to implement and easy to do since the City already controlled most of the land that would be ideal for vista parks at its tank sites. These sites have since been mapped and two recent subdivision applications added additional sites available for development.

5. **Protection of creeks and riparian areas**

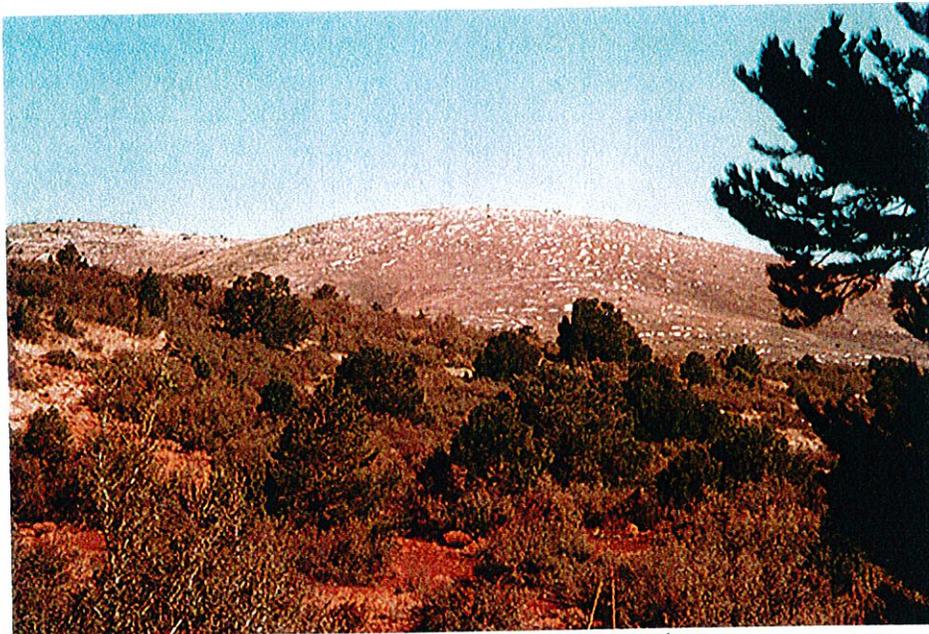
The group acknowledged the difficulty in implementation and cost of this recommendation. Members felt that more may be gained by organizing creek clean-up efforts by citizens groups, and educating citizens than by spending City capital fund money on this item. Granite Creek in particular was identified as an important asset that should include protection of its length through the City. In 1997 City staff began negotiation with Arizona Public Service Company to trade riparian property in Granite Creek.



In a related effort the next year, a City sponsored a Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21 - formerly ISTEA) grant for proposed development of a multi-use path through the Granite Creek area that would ultimately connect to a planned City bike route and contribute to Prescott's Mile-High Trail System.

6. **Aggressive annexation of State Trust Lands**

This item received a high priority because it was felt the City would have more control over how these lands were developed. Since they comprise a significant amount of open land around Prescott, the City would be better able to regulate any open space preservation. With the development of the Arizona Preserve Initiative, the City entered into a partnership with the Town of Prescott Valley for the preservation of 1800 acres on Glassford Hill. This included an annexation application that divided the area between the two communities.



View of Glassford Hill looking north

7. **Development of a Trails Plan and Bike System**

Due to the increasing use of existing open space for walking and the creation of "social trails", a need for the development of a trails plan was recognized. The group recommended that the City work with Yavapai Trails Association to develop a comprehensive plan that connected to trails planned outside the City.

In 1995 the City Council approved the formation of a Trails Plan Committee, and in 1996 a Trails Plan was adopted. Since that time over 15 miles of planned new trails have been dedicated to the City and several access points to U.S. Forest Service lands have been preserved. The trail system is experiencing continual refinements, and is known as Prescott's Mile-High Trail System.



2020 FORUM - GROWING SMARTER REGIONAL OPEN SPACE WORKSHOP

In May 1999, a regional open space workshop coordinated by the tri-city area’s 2020 Forum attracted 107 participants. This ambitious workshop was designed to focus primarily on the conservation of State Trust Lands in the tri-city area. Participants learned about efforts underway at the State level relative to the Arizona Preserve Initiative and Land Conservation Grants (part of the Growing Smarter Act) with information from the Governor’s Office, Growing Smarter Commission, Arizona State Land Department, and Arizona State Parks. Part two of the workshop involved breakout sessions where participants prioritized for the tri-city area the qualities of State Trust Land and open space important to them, appropriate funding techniques, and specific areas in need of protection (e.g., State Trust Land parcels and other areas of significance).

While the 107 participants at the workshop were a small representation of the entire region, their participation demonstrated that protecting significant open space is important to them in order to maintain the quality of life that attracted them to the tri-city region.

PRESCOTT OPEN SPACE SUCCESSES

The review of the history leading to the creation of a formal Open Space Plan is replete with successes. Over the last five years the city has engaged many other agencies, institutions and private sector partners to protect and enrich open space and create trails and recreational opportunities. As a city with a population less than 35,000 persons, and 23,029 acres within the city limits, Prescott has achieved much success in preserving environmental quality for its residents. This has included preserving more than 3,200 acres of open space, riparian areas, lakes and trails, not including 910.8 acres of dedicated parklands.



Prescott Peavine Trail (Rails-to-Trails) and Watson Woods Riparian Preserve



CITY OF PRESCOTT – OPEN SPACE PLAN



Despite the success, more remains to be done. As in many complex efforts, the “easy” parts have been achieved. The challenges ahead do not have simple answers. The public discussion, prioritization, and partnership support of the Open Space Plan for the City of Prescott will be a crucial step forward in the protection and preservation of open space for our community.





CHAPTER 2: THE PLAN AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

PURPOSE FOR THE PLAN

The plan covers the City of Prescott and a three-mile radius from the city limits. This area is the planning area allowed a municipality as defined by statute. This draft plan is being circulated to various stakeholder groups with an interest in open space and trails, both public, private, and non-profit. Public hearings will be held and comments will be incorporated in the final plan.

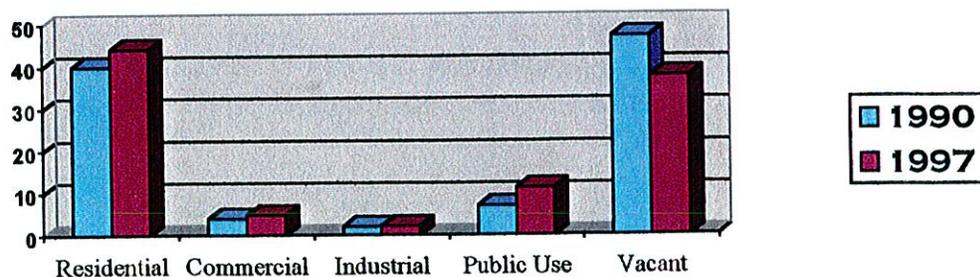
EXISTING LAND USE CONDITIONS

Prescott is located on the northwest slopes of the Bradshaw Mountains at an elevation of 5,347 feet. The city's signature landmark is Thumb Butte rising to 6,522 feet. In addition, Glassford Hill rises to 6,177 feet, and Granite Mountain rises to 7,626 feet. Average precipitation for Prescott is 18.8 inches per year.

Prescott is bordered on the west and south by U.S. Forest Service lands (i.e., Prescott National Forest - Bradshaw Ranger District) that are multiple-use public lands. The Bradshaw Ranger District totals 437,700 acres, and the entire Prescott National Forest totals 1,238,200 acres. These multiple-use public lands are a significant amenity to Prescott-area residents, provide vast open space, and a variety of recreational opportunities.

To the southeast and east of the city boundaries, Prescott (along with affiliated interests) is supporting two Arizona Preserve Initiative applications to declare over 3,600 acres as State Trust Lands for conservation purposes. Opportunities for significant urban expansion lie in State Trust Lands and private ranch lands to the east and north. The city has acquired land and water rights to Willow (615 acres) and Watson (240 acres) Lakes, which added another 855 acres to open space lands for preservation.

Residential development comprises over 44% of developed property, with the majority of the vacant land (about 37%) planned for residential development. In 1990, the city's landmass was 32 square miles, compared to 35.58 square miles in 1997. The following graph depicts changes in land use over a seven-year period. It demonstrates that increases in land use involve direct decreases in vacant land.





EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION CONDITIONS

Park space owned and managed by the City of Prescott is primarily divided into three categories; large developed parks (609.6 acres), small developed parks (8.3 acres), and undeveloped areas/parks (292.9 acres) totaling 910.8 acres. The above total does not include the 560.5 acres of Pioneer Park that Yavapai County currently leases from the Bureau of Land Management.

Large developed parks include Pioneer, Ken Lindley, Heritage, Roughrider, and Willow Creek parks. Some large developed parks, such as Goldwater, Watson, and Granite Creek Parks, contain significant natural features.

A large percentage of the large developed parks (approximately 100 acres) are designated and maintained for active recreation (e.g., baseball and softball diamonds, soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts, etc.). These athletic areas support a variety of organized recreation activities to include 250 softball teams, 45 little league baseball teams, 100 basketball teams, 130 soccer teams, 130 volleyball teams, 12 youth football teams, numerous large-scale special events, and numerous recreation programs and events for senior, youth, and special populations.

Small parks include Flinn and Stricklin Parks. Stricklin Park (4.4 acres) is adjacent to the existing trail system and Butte Creek within the Hassayampa development thereby providing access to a larger greenway setting. Undeveloped park sites, such as Acker Park (82.5 acres) and Watson Woods (97.5 acres), primarily provide for a variety of passive recreation activities to include trail uses (e.g., walking, hiking, equestrian use, bicycling, wildlife viewing, etc.), as well as, natural undisturbed areas. The City envisions a number of vista park sites, each about two acres, to be located in newly developed areas such as Prescott Lakes/Willow Lake South Area. These small pocket parks will provide a buffer between development, and opportunities for passive recreation.

In January 1999, the City submitted a Recreation and Public Purposes Application to the Bureau of Land Management to lease/purchase 24 acres of open space immediately east of Walker Road and south of the commercial area on Highway 69. This area, tentatively being called *Bradshaw Mountain Vista Park*, borders the Prescott National Forest and contains potential for picnicking, trail opportunities (i.e., connections to the National Forest trail system, surrounding neighborhoods, and the new mall), education (such as interpretive signs), and group gatherings.

The City of Prescott is undertaking a trail system that will eventually feature trails in a number of settings for a variety of user types and abilities. Some trails will be urban trails that parallel major roadways, while others, such as the Aspen Creek and Butte Creek Trails, are primarily in a natural setting. Most notable of all the city trail projects is the rails-to-trails conversion (mentioned previously) which involved converting the former Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad (opened for rail use in 1893) to a recreation trail. This multiple-use, non-motorized trail traverses the highly scenic Granite Dells and Watson Lake area, and will eventually connect to the Peavine Trail in Chino Valley, as well as having a connector trail east to Prescott Valley.



CHAPTER 3: BENEFITS OF OPEN SPACE AND IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING OPEN SPACE

Open space plays an important role in the quality of life in Prescott, as well as, throughout the country. Many benefits can be attained by preserving open space within a community to include the following:

- **Environmental**

Open space provides many environmental benefits. These include preservation of wildlife habitat, and maintaining a diversity of vegetative and wildlife species. By preventing continuous development within an area, many vegetative and wildlife species can thrive. Larger tracts of open space can provide adequate habitat for larger mammals and more sensitive species.

In addition, an absence of vehicles and development within the tract of open space leads to improved air and water quality, less congestion and noise, thus maintaining a more “primitive” setting.

- **Visual**

Of all the benefits of open space, the visual benefits can be the most noticeable. Often, we take the sweeping views of mountains or undeveloped land for granted, not always knowing how vulnerable to development some of these lands may be. While we enjoy vast tracts of open space and visual benefits within our Federal Public Lands, visual benefits around urban areas are much more vulnerable to development. The visual benefits are directly related to the aesthetics that maintain or increase tourism, and attract new residents, thus providing economic benefits.

- **Economic**

Many national studies demonstrate that parks, greenways, trails, and open space increase nearby property values. In turn, increased property values can increase local tax revenues and help offset open space acquisition costs. Spending by local residents on open space-related activities helps support recreation-related businesses and employment (where recreation is permitted within the open space). Open space can often be a tourist attraction thereby generating expenditures on lodging, food, and recreation-oriented services. Open space improves the overall appeal of a community to prospective tourists and residents, as well as, augmenting valuable remaining watersheds in public ownership.



• **Recreational/Social**

Open space can provide a variety of recreational opportunities depending on what is determined appropriate (through a detailed planning process) for a specific tract of open space.

Recreational opportunities within open space can include a trail system (to accommodate walking, hiking, jogging, equestrian use, mountain bicycling, and possibly in some areas, motorcycles and ATVs), nature study, bird watching, photography, viewing archaeological sites, and escaping the pressures of everyday life. If a body of water is found within the tract of open space, fishing and various forms of water-based recreation (e.g., canoeing, kayaking) may be appropriate. These recreational benefits have links to improved health and fitness.

As the population of the Prescott area increases, more individuals will be seeking the above-mentioned recreational opportunities.

• **Educational**

Open space presents unlimited educational opportunities, especially if significant biological and cultural resources are found within it. These educational opportunities can be for persons of all ages and abilities, and will ultimately generate more stewards and appreciation for the resource. As increased urbanization is inevitable, tracts of open space educate youth about the importance of balancing development with open space.

• **Historic/Cultural**

Open space presents an opportunity to “go back in time” to visit sites that may have been used by prehistoric cultures, or early Euro-American pioneers. In addition, preservation of open space can protect significant archaeological sites from development.

• **Greenways/Greenbelts**

These linear corridors of open space typically parallel drainages such as streams and rivers. High densities of diverse plant, animal, and aquatic life can be found within these corridors. Greenways can serve as a travelway for some wildlife species to access larger tracts of open space and necessary habitat. Greenways also provide recreational opportunities such as walking, hiking, jogging, nature study, bird watching, photography, and escaping from the pressures of everyday life.

If a trail system is developed as a part of the greenway, the trails can provide non-motorized transportation routes connecting important features within the community.

• **Trails**

Trail corridors can often be characterized as linear corridors of open space. Easements for trails can protect a corridor of a predetermined width from development. Since trails attract recreationists that typically have an appreciation for open space, trail advocates can become open space advocates, especially if it protects their ability to recreate. In a 1998 survey contracted by Arizona State Parks as a part of the Trails 2000 Plan development (which involved randomly surveying almost 10,000 individuals statewide), 98% of the respondents ranked “Observing the Scenic Beauty” as their top ranked motivation for using trails.



Trail networks can be planned and designed so that they minimally impact a resource. This requires consultation with biologists, archaeologists, trail planners, trail users, affected land owners, landscape architects, and other knowledgeable individuals.

• **Community Benefit and Character Preservation**

It can often take many years to see the full range of benefits of preserving open space. When the Phoenix Mountains Preserves (approximately 22,000 acres) were established in the early 1970s, urban encroachment was not yet a major issue, but advocates knew that encroachment was inevitable. At the time, the Land and Water Conservation Fund was a thriving source of funds for such large scale preservation efforts. Today, the Preserves are almost entirely surrounded by a metropolitan area of over 2.5 million people, yet still support a variety of wildlife species, and are a valuable asset to the city. The Preserves (especially Camelback and South Mountains, and Squaw Peak) are now part of Phoenix’s “character” and used as a tourism tool to attract many new visitors and residents. Tucson Mountain Park and Saguaro National Park play a similar role in the Tucson Basin. These tracts of open space provide a separation between communities, thereby creating a buffer where one community ends and another begins. For the Prescott area specifically, the 1998 survey on open space (implemented through monthly utility bills) generated over 500 responses with many citing community benefit as an underlying benefit.

All of the mentioned benefits to open space are linked to neighborhood quality of life. Adjacent landowners and area residents can benefit in one or many ways from nearby open space.

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

The following mechanisms represent a sampling of techniques that can be used for the preservation of open space.

• **Securing Title**

- Fee Simple Acquisition

Fee simple acquisition for open space preservation provides the new owner (i.e. public agency or non-profit organization) the most control over how the land will be preserved, but can be cost prohibitive.

Acquisition of large (and expensive) tracts of open space can include a pre-acquisition process where the land is purchased by a large conservation organization. These include The Nature Conservancy or Trust for Public Land who can move quickly on negotiations and a purchase, and later sell the property to the public agency or non-profit organization. The Nature Conservancy assisted Arizona State Parks with the purchases of Kartchner Caverns and Tonto Natural Bridge using this mechanism.

Central Arizona Land Trust has been instrumental in fundraising and successfully purchasing parcels in the Thumb Butte area.



- Donations/Gifts

A landowner can donate all or part of their property for open space preservation. In some cases, the owner may be eligible for tax credits and income tax deductions if the donation is for conservation or preservation, as well as, a property tax adjustment on the value of the contribution.

- Purchase and Lease Back

A public agency or non-profit organization can purchase a parcel of land and then lease it back to the seller for a specified period of time, and the lease would contain restrictions regarding the use and development of the property.

- Bargain Sale

In this situation, the landowner agrees to sell the land at less than appraised value, and treat the difference as a charitable income tax deduction.

- Option, or Right of First Refusal

An option, or right of first refusal is an agreement reached with a property owner by a public agency or non-profit organization to have the first chance to purchase a piece of property.

- Purchase of Development Rights

In this case, the private property owner retains all ownership rights under current use but exchanges rights to future development for an up-front cash payment.

- Condemnation

This mechanism is for acquiring properties mainly when complications with the deed make acquisition from a willing seller difficult. This mechanism is typically used only when other options have been exhausted. A "friendly" condemnation action can have tax advantages to the seller.

• **Easements**

Easements define specific boundaries, uses, and management obligations for the subject property, and is a popular strategy for preserving open space because it offers flexibility to both landowner and easement holder.

- Conservation Easement

A conservation easement is the legal tool (a recorded binding agreement) that allows a landowner to limit certain uses on their property, such as restricting the right to subdivide or develop. A landowner can donate a conservation easement to a public agency or non-profit organization, conversely, a public agency or non-profit organization can purchase a conservation easement.

- Joint Use Easement

This type of easement defines the legal rights of the grantor and grantees for multiple use of a single parcel of land. Since it accommodates multiple-uses, ensuring compatibility is important.



- Scenic Easement

This tool provides for the protection of a viewshed, but typically does not allow for public access.

• **Funding Tools for Open Space Protection**

It is difficult to discuss protecting open space without mention of how to finance such endeavors. Communities throughout the country, many with similar demographics and characteristics to Prescott, are successfully protecting significant open space. Boulder Colorado, for example, began an open space program in 1967 with a sales tax of .40% for open space acquisitions. In 1989, an additional .33% sales tax was added. The result has been over \$100 million generated to protect over 25,000 acres of open space.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national non-profit organization that conserves land for people to improve the quality of life for communities, and protect the natural and historical resources for future generations. TPL monitors land conservation throughout the country, and how the financing of the conservation is successfully occurring. TPL's publication "Increasing Public Investment in Parks and Open Space – Local Parks, Local Financing – Volume I", includes excellent information and examples of various funding techniques being used to include the following: Property taxes; special assessment districts; sales and use taxes; real estate transfer taxes; development impact fees; bond – general obligation; bond – revenue; income tax; mitigation; user fees; and tax increment financing.

At the May 1999, 2020 Forum - Growing Smarter Conference, 107 participants from the tri-city area were asked to complete a short questionnaire requesting their preferences on funding tools (using the examples above) for open space. Of those that completed the questionnaire, a sales tax was most desired funding source followed by development impact fees. Over 95% said they would be willing to personally pay to protect significant open space areas in the Prescott region.

• **Grants**

Grant sources are available to offset acquisition costs of protecting open space, however, many still require the governmental entity to provide a match. The following are a few of the grant sources available:

- Arizona Heritage Fund – Arizona Game and Fish Department

This competitive grants program has a public access component that allows applicants to secure easements/access to public lands where recreation is permitted. This is a valuable tool where a linear corridor is needed to access a larger tract of open space/public land. For more information, contact the Public Access Program Coordinator, Arizona Game and Fish Department, at (602) 789-3624.

- Land Conservation Grants Program (Arizona Preserve Initiative & Growing Smarter Act)

This new grants program is being developed by Arizona State Parks in cooperation with the Governor appointed Conservation Acquisition Board. The program will make available \$20 million per year for the lease or acquisition of State Trust Lands that have been classified as suitable for conservation purposes under the Arizona Preserve Initiative Program.



A 50% match will be required from the applicant, and the first grants will become available in 2000. City staff are closely monitoring the development of this grants program and its potential benefits to the Prescott area.

- American Greenways DuPont Awards

These small grants are available to stimulate the planning and design of greenways. Grants may be used for mapping, ecological assessments, surveying, design activities, developing brochures, interpretive displays, audio-visual productions and visitor-opinion surveys, hiring consultants, incorporating land trusts, etc.

For more information, contact American Greenways, The Conservation Fund, 1800 North Kent Street, Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22209, (703) 525-6300.

• **Stewardship**

Governmental entities often have limited ability (e.g., lack of staff, funding, etc.) to provide oversight of specific tracts of open space. Non-profit organizations can assist greatly in stewardship efforts to include patrols, boundary monitoring, flora and fauna inventories, air and water quality monitoring, fundraising, providing visitor contact and services, and assisting with planning and management of the resource.

The stewardship of Watson Woods by the Prescott Creeks Preservation Association is a fine example of a stewardship agreement.

• **Education and Information**

Education and information efforts provide needed exposure for the preservation of open space, especially if fundraising efforts are being undertaken and facts about the land are being compiled. Since misinformation can be detrimental to an effort to preserve open space, education and information from the beginning is critical. Any education and information needs to include the overall benefits of preserving open space.

• **Zoning**

- Overlay Zone

An overlay zone is superimposed over existing zones to add specific regulations to an area. These zones create a new set of requirements that must be met before parcels can be developed.

- Transfer of Development Rights

This mechanism allows developing the land at a certain density specified by a zoning category, to be transferred to a specially designated parcel where high-density development is more appropriate.

- Open Space Zoning Districts

The establishment of an Open Space Zoning District allows a municipality to insure that open space provided by the developer during the plat review/approval process remains open space.



• **Regulatory Functions**

- Subdivision Regulations

These are a set of community-wide standards that control the manner in which large parcels of land are divided into smaller units. The regulations can control impact on the landscape, such as, protecting steep slopes and sensitive wildlife and vegetation.

- Planned Area Development

Separate from the zoning process, the Planned Area Development – subdivision design process within a municipality allows flexibility between the developer and the municipality. For example, with a developer complying with a required-minimum 20 percent of open space, the municipality can allow the developer smaller size lots than normally allowed through zoning.

- Flood Plain Restrictions

For new development within appropriately designated sections of a floodplain, new structures must be a least one-foot above flood elevation. The developer must demonstrate through engineering that the structure is above flood elevation. This process allows some protection/preservation of creeks. Lesser drainageways, when kept open, along with stormwater detention areas, can also contribute to a greenway system.

- Circulation Plans

A city-adopted circulation plan, specifically one that addresses establishing/protecting trail and alternate mode transportation corridors, is an effective tool in protecting linear corridors of open space.

- Open Space Plans

A city-adopted open space plan provides an effective mechanism for a municipality to negotiate with developers to maintain significant open space. An open space plan provides vision and direction to a community for balancing growth with preserving open space.

- Returning Committed Water Allocations

This scenario can generate additional open space where a developer acquires a water allocation from an adjacent landowner of vacant land. The landowner of vacant land receives payment for the water allocation and in return maintains the land as open space.



CHAPTER 4: ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES FOR PRESCOTT

THE QUESTION OF PRIORITIES AND HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH

Open space serves many functions. Communities are delineated by the vacant land between developed areas. Important viewsheds and unique geographical features are protected by open space that remains undeveloped.

The City of Prescott - General Plan specifically states that the major value of open space is its contribution to the small town, rural character of Prescott. Therefore, in our community, open space that functions to arrest sprawl, and contributes to providing undeveloped area is meaningful.

The following goals and objectives provide a foundation in which to base priorities for the preservation of open space. The goals and objectives are followed by categories and specific actions.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- **Goal:**

Protect remaining open space of significance in the Prescott area.

- Objective: Identify open space parcels of significance.
- Objective: Continue to evaluate existing parcels of open space to determine most appropriate mechanism for preservation.
- Objective: Initiate a collaborative venture between the private, public, and non-profit sectors.

- **Goal:**

Achieve a community and/or region-wide balance between development and open space preservation.

- Objective: Continue long-range comprehensive planning efforts that include open space as a vital component.
- Objective: Explore and continue long-range regional cooperation.



• **Goal:**

Maintain the biological, cultural, visual, and recreational integrity of protected and unprotected tracts of open space.

- Objective: Using the expertise within city staff and amongst all organizations and entities within the Open Space Alliance, continue to steward all components of protected and unprotected tracts of open space.
- Objective: Maintain preservation of habitats and ecosystems within existing open space.

CATEGORIES FOR ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

The following general categories of open space priorities provide a framework in which to establish priorities for open space preservation in the Prescott area. These categories capture what many residents have expressed as important. Some actions within the action plan (following this section) satisfy multiple categories.

NOTE: Open space preservation efforts should focus on areas that satisfy multiple categories. Those areas that encompass multiple categories are to be rated higher than those that do not. A formal rating system may be developed to assist in determining priorities.

• Riparian Corridors

Prescott is fortunate to have many creek corridors that serve as linear tracts of open space. These quite possibly are the most biologically diverse tracts of open space in the Prescott area. They support an abundance of plant and animal life, and enhance the quality of life of adjacent landowners. The riparian vegetation along these corridors slows runoff, thereby assisting with recharging the groundwater supply. Open space that contains riparian corridors should be considered a high priority for preservation.

• Hillsides and Ridgelines

The elevation of surrounding mountains and respective steepness of slopes are large factors in open space preservation and watershed protection in the Prescott area. Each tract of open space needs to be evaluated on how hillsides and ridgelines will be protected.

• Viewsheds

The major viewsheds for Prescott residents are Thumb Butte, Glassford Hill, Southview, Willow and Watson Lakes, Granite Dells, and Granite Mountain. Most of these have been protected; however, future protection of viewsheds should include other areas of significance.

• Areas of Geological, Biological, and/or Cultural Significance

These include areas where wildlife species (some sensitive) are found, vegetative species, areas of unusual or spectacular rock formations/outcroppings, and areas used and/or inhabited by historic and pre-historic cultures.



• **Potential for Recreational Opportunities**

Areas of open space should be evaluated for recreation potential; to include the passive recreational opportunities mentioned previously. While the newly acquired lakes and rail-trail will fill some recreational needs, Prescott-area residents will seek new recreational areas as population increases.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

The following actions represent specific areas that Prescott residents and city staff have identified as priorities for preservation efforts. The actions will be jointly accomplished through collaborative efforts amongst private, non-profit, and public entities.

Geographical Area: Badger "P" Mountain

Action: Await notification from Arizona State Land Department that parcel is reclassified as "suitable for conservation purposes"; Monitor Growing Smarter – Land Conservation Grants program development at Arizona State Parks and determine feasibility of future grants for lease/purchase/conservation easements; Create funding source that will provide required 50% match for a Land Conservation Grant

Timeline: On-going



View of Badger "P" Mountain looking northeast

Geographical Area: Watson Lake Basin (private lands)

Action: Protect viewshed from Highway 89, and integrity of Watson Lake and Prescott Peavine Trail (Rails-to-Trails) by determining appropriate mechanism of conserving private parcels significant to the resource; At the request of some Storm Ranch family members, research feasibility of purchasing conservation easements thereby protecting open space

Timeline: Immediate



Geographical Area: Watson Lake Basin (State Trust Lands)

Action: At the request of the Storm Ranch, research feasibility of petitioning for reclassification of selected State Land parcels near Watson Lake and Prescott Peavine Trail (Rails-to-Trails)

Timeline: On-going



Watson Lake Basin (State & private) lands

Geographical Area: Glassford Hill – State Trust Land

Action: Work with Town of Prescott Valley in developing a coordination (master) plan as required by the Arizona Preserve Initiative; Monitor Growing Smarter – Land Conservation Grants program development at Arizona State Parks and determine feasibility of future grants for lease/purchase/conservation easements; Create funding source that will provide required 50% match for a Land Conservation Grant

Timeline: On-going

Geographical Area: Prescott Buttes

Action: Await success of fundraising efforts, and purchase portion of mountain (as agreed upon) if private fundraising achieves required results

Timeline: By 12/31/99



Geographical Area: Granite Dells and associated rock formations west of HWY 89

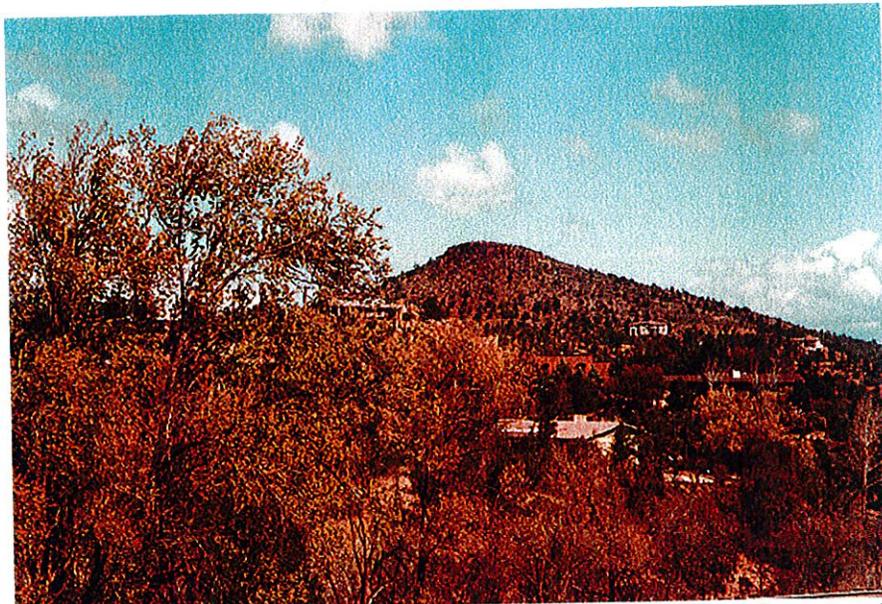
Action: Significantly curtail future development to protect integrity of the Granite Dells area; At the request of the Prescott Planning and Zoning Commission, explore potential preservation of 200 acres on Lower Willow Creek **OR** Negotiate preservation with owner/developer as part of alternative water allocation and development agreement

Timeline: Immediate

Geographical Area: Indian Hill (Crest of Southview) – State Trust Land

Action: Negotiate preservation with owner/developer as part of alternative water allocation and development agreement

Timeline: On-going



View of Indian Hill (Southview) looking northwest from Willow Creek Road

Geographical Area: Dalke Property

Action: Negotiate protection of petroglyphs and trails; Negotiation can include alternative water allocation and development agreement

Timeline: On-going

Geographical Area: Wildlife corridor between Glassford Hill and Watson Lake

Action: Work closely with Storm Ranch and Arizona State Land Department to protect corridor as identified within the Prescott East Area Plan (PEAP), while consulting with Arizona Game and Fish Department

Timeline: On-going



Geographical Area: Citywide (planning area)

Action: Using identified trail corridors from the City of Prescott - Trails Plan, protect trail corridors as linear corridors of open space

Timeline: Immediate and On-going

Geographical Area: Granite Creek – Sixth Street Bridge to Reservation Boundary

Action: Negotiate preservation with owners to provide public access and protect riparian habitat

Timeline: On-going

Geographical Area: Granite Creek – City Owned Property West of Montezuma Street

Action: Continue community planning effort to enhance creek corridor (e.g., remove non-native vegetation, import native riparian vegetation, design multiple-use trail, create educational opportunities, increase lighting, increase police presence, etc.)

Timeline: On-going

Geographical Area: Granite Creek – Watson Woods Riparian Preserve

Action: Continue to support the efforts of the Prescott Creeks Preservation Association in providing stewardship for Watson Woods Riparian Preserve

Timeline: On-going

Geographical Area: All Creek Corridors: Aspen, Bannon, Butte, Granite, Manzanita, Miller, and Willow Creeks

Action: Compile all research/studies that have been completed on creek corridors thus far; Develop a community-wide vision for Prescott's creeks; Work towards further protection, enhancement, promotion of Prescott's Creeks; Encourage significant participation from adjacent land owners; Attain legal access and formalize existing social trails along creeks where feasible

Timeline: On-going

Geographical Area: West Side of Palmer Hill

Action: Negotiation with developer as part of alternative water allocation

Timeline: By 2002

Geographical Area: Vacant Properties north of Miller Creek and Granite Creek Park (near Short Street)

Action: Work with Arizona Public Service Company towards a potential land exchange

Timeline: On-going



Geographical Area: All U.S. Forest Service lands adjacent to the City

Action: Work closely with Prescott National Forest to maintain the "no exchange" policy; Maintain compatibility of lands along urban interface
Timeline: On-going

Geographical Area: Church Camps area

Action: Work with owners to rezone as Recreation Community District since existing zoning (RC) allows 32 units per acre.
Timeline: Ongoing

Geographical Area: Bureau of Land Management parcel east of Walker Road

Action: Monitor application for lease and eventual purchase through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act; Conduct additional site planning for area to include open space and passive recreation; Conduct necessary biological, cultural and hazardous materials evaluations as required by BLM (pending notification); Apply for an Arizona Heritage Fund grant for improvements
Timeline: 1999-2002

Geographical Area: Area along White Spar east of Granite Creek: Between Manzanita Creek and Prescott Animal Hospital and on the west side of SR 89 below entrance to Cathedral Pines

Action: Review for zoning change and research potential for scenic/conservation easements or purchase
Timeline: As opportunity presents itself

Geographical Area: Property north of Ponderosa Plaza Ridge

Action: Negotiate preservation as part of alternative water allocation and development agreement
Timeline: Ongoing

Geographical Area: City-wide (Planning Area)

Action: Protect ridgelines and steep slopes through a sensitive lands ordinance as a part of the revision to the zoning code
Timeline: Ongoing

Geographical Area: Prescott Peavine Trail (Rails-to-Trails)

Action: Protect and enhance the abandoned AT&SF railroad corridor from Prescott to Chino Valley as a non-motorized trail and linear tract of open space
Timeline: Ongoing



AGREEMENTS NEEDED FOR A REGIONAL APPROACH

In the spirit of partnership, formal agreements can allow agencies and organizations to work together to achieve common goals. The following conceptual agreements could provide a mechanism to further work towards common goals, and increase communication.

AGREEMENT #1

Prescott National Forest / City of Prescott / Open Space Alliance Partnership

Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that compliments existing ecosystem management planning, trail planning and management, and the "no exchange" policy.

AGREEMENT #2

State Land Lessees / Arizona State Land Department / Arizona Game and Fish Department / City of Prescott / Prescott National Forest / Open Space Alliance

Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that all affected parties become "stewards" of remaining open spaces, and work together in protecting viewsheds, wildlife habitat, cultural resources, public access, etc.

CONCLUSION

Much remains to be done to protect additional open space in and around Prescott. This plan will ideally provide the direction needed to protect the remaining open space that is determined as a high priority for preservation. The protection of additional open space will ultimately benefit all residents as the population of the region increases. These tracts of open space - whether large, small, or linear - will prove to be a valuable asset to the community, and will serve many generations to come.

DEFINITIONS

Conservation - Planned Management of a Natural Resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) - Created in 1991, ISTEA established funding authorizations totaling \$155.3 billion for highway, transit, and other surface transportation programs from 1992 to 1997. These monies were used throughout the nation and benefited bicycle and pedestrian facilities; acquisition of scenic easements; landscaping and scenic beautification; preservation/enhancement of abandoned railway corridors; archaeological research and planning; and rehabilitation of historic transportation buildings.

Land and Water Conservation Fund - The Land and Water Conservation Fund of 1965 was established to provide monies for the acquisition, development, and enhancement of outdoor recreation opportunities. Originally, much of the monies were distributed to the state, but in recent years, stateside allocations are non-existent. The monies are derived from offshore oil leases.

Open Space - A term used to define all undeveloped land.

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) - Signed into law in 1998, TEA-21 replaces ISTEA. TEA-21 increases funding by 40% and extends to 2003.

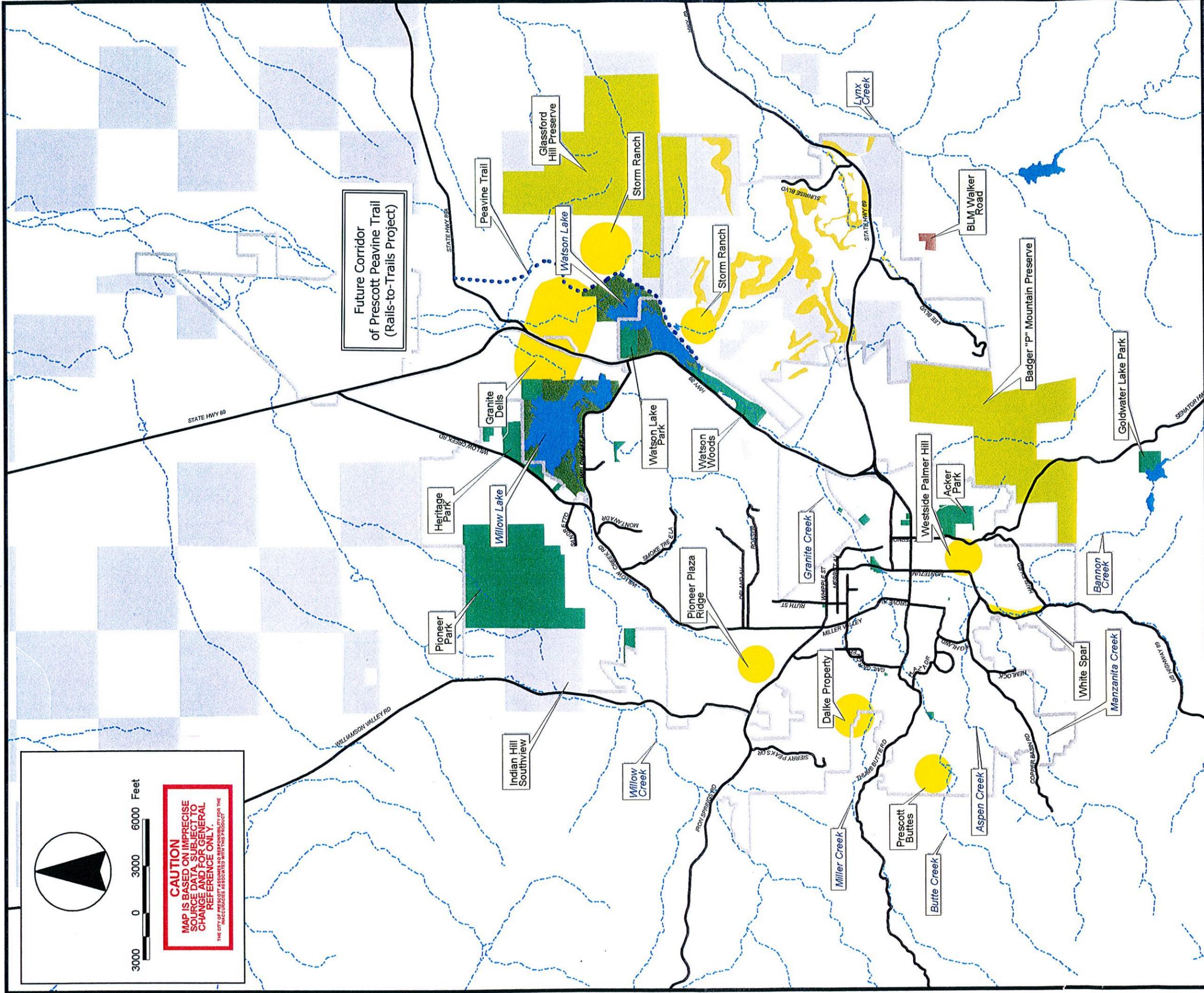
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Open Space Plan City of Prescott 1999

Figure A



CAUTION
MAP IS BASED ON IMPRECISE SOURCE DATA, SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND FOR GENERAL REFERENCE ONLY.
THE CITY OF PRESCOTT ASSUMES NO LIABILITY FOR ANY ERRORS OR OMISSIONS.

3000 0 3000 6000 Feet

- Peavine Trail
- Major Streets
- Prescott Limits
- Creeks
- PEAP Plan Open Space
- Existing Prescott Parks
- State Trust Lands - AFI Conservation Status (reclassified or pending)
- 1998 Lakes Acquisition Properties
- Selected Areas of Significance
- Selected State Trust Lands (Status to be determined)
- STATE OF ARIZONA LAND
- BLM Walker Rd Site

Reference GIS0816.apr. Open Space Layout 9-16-1999

