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Alto Pit OHV Area all spruced up thanks to volunteers, State Parks grant



Courtesy PNF/Jason Williams
Prescott Trail Riders volunteers show off their hard work to reopen and repair the Box Culvert Trail on the Prescott National Forest west of Prescott.

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PRESCOTT - Trails in and around the Alto Pit Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area near Prescott sport numerous new improvements thanks to volunteers and an Arizona State Parks grant.

A relatively new group called the Prescott Trail Riders was among the volunteers who helped rehabilitate the trail system after the Doce wildfire and subsequent monsoons washed out portions of the trail system.

"We just want to have a positive voice in the community and work with other trail users and share trails responsibly," Trail Riders President Mark Brown said. The group of mostly motorcycle enthusiasts already has 160 members after organizing only seven months ago, he said.

The single-track Box Culvert Trail #620 had to be closed last year after heavy monsoon rains when the culvert under Iron Springs Road filled with mud and debris. The Trail Riders volunteered 75 hours to haul large rocks down to the culvert and clear it out, [Prescott National Forest](#) Wilderness and Trails Manager Jason Williams related.

The Trail Riders and other volunteers including the American Conservation Experience helped continue improvements this spring by re-grading steep slopes, adding erosion control structures and cutting back brush on about 14 miles of trails in and around Alto Pit, Williams said. They also replaced some barbed wire gates with more user-friendly cattle guards and metal gates. Coconino Forest trails employees helped out as well.

"We tried to open up sight lines and make the experience more pleasant," Williams said.

Arizona State Parks awarded the Prescott Forest a \$60,000 grant from its Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Fund to make these improvements as well as improvements to six miles of OHV trails in the Cottonwood Loop in the Verde Valley. The fund money comes from the \$25 annual OHV stickers that all OHV vehicles are required to display in Arizona.

Without this grant program, Prescott Forest officials would be hard-pressed to maintain OHV trails because of budget cuts, Williams said. He is the forest's only full-time trails employee.

"Those grants are extremely important," he said.

The grants require matching money, which also can come in the form of volunteer hours, Williams explained.

"Having organizations step up to help is the other critical component because it helps us compete for funds," he said.

Coincidentally, it was Arizona State Parks OHV Program Coordinator Jeff Prince who originally inspired the creation of the Prescott Trail Riders, Brown said. Trail enthusiasts Dave and Monica Simons saw Prince sporting a Coconino Trail Riders t-shirt in a local parade and asked him about it.

The Prescott Trail Riders are members of the American Motorcyclist Association and Arizona Motorcycle Racing Association. Trail Riders members encourage people interested in their group to check out their website at prescotttrailriders.com. The website says the Trail Riders' mission is to provide leadership and advocacy for motorized trail use in Central Arizona. It also participates in charity events to give back to the community, the website notes.

People also can visit the Prescott Trail Riders' booth at the free Go Outdoors event from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. this Saturday and Sunday at the Frontier Village shopping center along Highway 69 on the Yavapai-Prescott Indian Reservation. The event features outdoor activities, demonstrations and exhibits.

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