



# PRESCOTT CREEKS

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29 August 2024

Prescott City Council  
201 N Montezuma Street,  
Prescott, AZ 86301

RE: West Granite Creek Park – Parking Lot Proposal

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Prescott Creeks Board of Directors to share information about West Granite Creek Park in context to the City's proposed paved parking lot at the south end of the park. The Park features a long and rich history in the community. It has served the community as a reservoir, a railroad yard, a problematic public common, and more recently as a natural area and hub for the City's Greenway Trail System. Notable natural features of the area include Miller Creek and Granite Creek, their confluence, and native riparian vegetation that the creeks support such as cottonwood, willow, ash, boxelder, and walnut.

In 2000, the City of Prescott made a long-term investment in the area with approval of the *Master Plan for West Granite Creek Park* which states the following objectives:

- "To return the confluence of Miller and Granite Creek (West Granite Creek Park) to an ideal riparian setting with limited park improvements."
- "To establish educational and limited recreational (i.e. trail-related) passive use opportunities, with connections to neighborhoods, businesses, parks, schools, and other Prescott greenways."

Benefits of West Granite Creek Park as listed in the plan include:

- The area will be ecologically restored
- Reduced resource degradation (cleaner creeks and thriving wildlife and vegetation)
- Opportunity for escape and solitude
- Environmental benefits, visual benefits, and educational and passive recreation benefits are listed

A paved parking lot does not conform with the July 2000 Master Plan for West Granite Creek Park. The plan was the result of a 6-month effort involving almost 30 people from the community representing citizens, students, NGOs, businesses, and staff members from multiple City of Prescott departments.

Immediately after the Master Plan for West Granite Creek Park was finalized, the Arizona Public Service Company (APS) funded a substantial ecological restoration effort in the park. The proposed parking lot falls within that restoration area. During the APS-funded restoration project nearly 100 community

members planted native riparian vegetation, installed temporary supplemental drip irrigation systems (to help establish vegetation), and many participated in project maintenance and monitoring for two years, before the project was returned to the City of Prescott for ongoing management.

Unfortunately, today only a few of the cottonwoods and willows from that project remain in the area due to degradation from other uses and activities which were not consistent with the Master Plan for West Granite Creek Park (sewage lift stations, stockpiling of plowed snow from downtown, community gardens, hotels, splash pad parks).

While parking is a material challenge in downtown Prescott, Prescott Creeks advocates that a parking lot as proposed conflicts with existing plans for West Granite Creek Park, and therefore is inappropriate.

Prescott Creeks respectfully encourages the City of Prescott to consider other locations for a parking lot that are outside of West Granite Creek Park (and outside of sensitive riparian areas). Further, Prescott Creeks encourages the City to redirect funds allocated for the parking lot to a renewed ecological restoration effort that also provides for long-term protection and management of the park.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Michael Byrd  
Executive Director