

Groom Creek Chronicle

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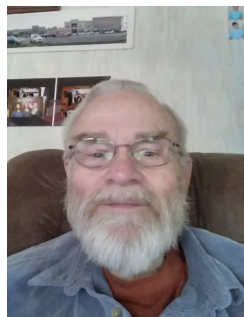
Groom Creek Fire District Joins in the 2017 Basin OPS Fire Drill

Our Groom Creek Fire District joins 250 other firefighters in the annual Wildland Fire Ops Drill at Goldwater Lake.

(Read Story on page 3)

A word from the GCFD Board

Face the Threat



One evening I watched television until about midnight. On my way to bed, I checked my pine needle burn pile. The pile had been extinguished earlier that day. My check found that two small areas had reignited. I had left my hose by the pile to be used again the following day. So, I decided to go out and extinguish the flames. While hosing the exposed flame, I noticed an animal walking the perimeter of the fire. It was dark enough that I couldn't identify what animal it was. I thought maybe a deer or one of the other animals that we share this area with. The animal turned and came down the driveway. I was still unable to identify the animal. I was facing the fire, this put my side facing

the animal. When the animal was about five feet from me, my instinct was to face the potential threat. When I faced the animal, it turned and was walking away from me. As the animal walked away I got my flashlight and turned it on. To my great surprise, I saw an adult Mountain Lion walking away from me. I also made my cautious exit. I believe the lion was stalking me, because I wasn't facing it. When I faced him he turned and walked away. I believe that if I hadn't faced the threat the lion would have had me for a midnight snack. You should not run away from the threat. Let the mountain lion know you see him by facing the threat. We all live with the wildlife residents of the area. That doesn't mean you should be a pork chop. Be aware of your surroundings and face the threat.

Bob Schulz
Vice Chairman



A Firefighters Story

Daniel Boutin-Firefighter



My name is Daniel Paul Boutin; I am a firefighter/EMT with GCFD and longtime resident of the area. I have lived in Prescott since 1992 and consider myself very fortunate to live in such a great community with my wife Erika and our 4 year old daughter Emma.

In my spare time I enjoy hiking, fishing, camping, running, weight lifting, and anything motorcycle related. I also own and run a small motorcycle shop in Prescott that opened 2009.

Although I thoroughly enjoy running my own business, my passion is in fire service. My step-father is a retired

Prescott firefighter whom regularly brought me to his station to see and operate some equipment and interact with the crew, which really fueled my interest from an early age. Thanks to the leadership and dedication of the crew at GCFD I was able to turn that early passion into a full time career.

I started at GCFD in September of 2015 as a volunteer, obtaining my wildland firefighter type II certification, EMT certification, haz-mat certification, and firefighter 1&2 certification in 2016, then securing a full time position at GCFD in February of 2017. In the next few years to come I would like to further my wildland fire education and paramedicine education as I feel those would be the most beneficial to myself and the community.

I am proud to serve the tight knit community of Groom Creek and enjoy giving my time, energy, and knowledge to the community members and seasonal visitors of the areas numerous summer camps.

Daniel Boutin

A FEW THOUGHTS

- ◇ The nice part of living in a small town is that when I don't know what I am doing, someone else does.
- ◇ Every time I think about exercise, I lie down till the thought goes away.
- ◇ The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat are really good friends.
- ◇ Sometimes I think I understand everything, then I regain consciousness.
- ◇ Seen it all, done it all, can't remember most of it.

Deer Quiz

True or False:

A white-tailed buck can jump higher than the average five story building.

2017 Basin Operations Fire Drill



On April 13th and 14th 2017, more than 250 participants, including our Groom Creek Fire Department, took part in the Annual Basin Operation Fire Drill. Planning began five months prior with Prescott National Forest (PNF) workers looking at the terrain and setting up the scenario.

This event was not open to the public. However, Cheyenne

Warner, United States Forest Service (USFS)-Lead Fire Prevention Officer, gave her approval for Dee, Jerry, and Margie to shadow the crews, if each person wore PPE (personal protective equipment) and would be escorted by Bradley Sorenson, USFS-Fire Prevention Patrol.



Margie, Bradley, Dee and Cheyenne

At the drill site, our hosts explained all the steps and procedures that are part of the logistics in fighting a wildland fire. With the Incident Commander in place, we witnessed the fire fighters as they were assigned different responsibilities, all in coordination to fight this simulated wildland fire. With chainsaws, Pulaski's/McLeod hoes, shovels, Travis Packs and setting their progressive hose lays, the firefighters practiced the drill with all the intensity and adrenaline of a real fire situation.



Ernesto and Nate at the 2017 Basin Ops Drill

The entire event was truly educational, and enlightening. All of us that live in the forest are very proud of our Groom Creek Fire District personnel and their on-going training that they perform, so we may enjoy this beautiful environment. We are so fortunate to have the network of all agencies working as a team.



The Saga of the Groom Creek Volunteer Fire Department

Conclusion

In December 1972, following the Vendella fire in which the home was totally destroyed, John Clatt, frustrated by what he felt was lack of interest in the program by personnel, submitted his resignation as Chief. He was a pioneer in the department and a strong force in its formation.

About this time, the state legislature established terms of two years for the Fire Chief and Secretary/Treasurer and all registered voters of the district could attend meetings and vote on issues. At the February 1973 meeting of the GCFD, Jack May was elected Chief and Rose Pond, Secretary/Treasurer.

Chief May had discovered a parcel of land at the intersection of Friendly Pines Road and Spur Lane which the county had set aside from private ownership for recreational purposes. May requested that the GCFD be given a special use permit for that land for the purpose of building a firehouse, and in April 1973, the County Board of Supervisors granted the request.

No time was lost. Lyle Dewey had drafted plans for a 45' x 30' structure and Clarence Phillips was appointed to head a building committee. An announcement was made at the May meeting that the site was being cleared. This began a period of great interest in the community as "building watchers" kept track of the progress of the best show in Groom Creek—the building of the fire station at Spur Lane.

This was not the only activity in town, however. Helen Funk's committee sold fire extinguishers as a fundraising project, and the Sirens held a potluck whose program was to teach people to use the fire extinguishers. Volunteers attended hands-on workshops at Yavapai College, and three classes for Emergency Medical Technicians were announced.

Work continued on the structure throughout the summer. Volunteer builders offered their talents and under the aggressive supervision of Clarence Phillips, many learned new skills. As a result, the November meeting was held in the completed firehouse. (The interior was left for a future date.) The men had met the goal of enclosing the building before snowfall. The structure cost \$6795. It was dedicated to Chief Jack May whose diligent efforts in procuring the land and developing the building program resulted in the only community structure in Groom Creek.



Thus in the period from June 1970, when a meeting was held to discuss fire protection for the district until October 1973, when the firehouse was enclosed, the people of Groom Creek had established an operational fire protective service. A truly remarkable performance!

Bob Pond (reprinted from February 1994 Groom Creek Chronicle)



Robert "Sully" Sullins

Little Known Fact

All roads lead either to or from Groom Creek,
so buckle your seat belts.

As I Remember Groom Creek

Ruthe Perkins (reprinted from 1991 Groom Creek Chronicle)

In the early 1900s, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, known as the Mormons, bought a big piece of property in Groom Creek where the store* is now. (1991)

We had to come to Groom Creek from the Valley by way of Wickenburg, Yarnell Hill and White Spar Highway. We would turn off on a road that went by Wolf Creek to Senator Highway and on to Groom Creek. Or, you



The Mormon Lodge
"Old Faithful"

could go the Old Black Canyon Highway that wasn't paved and was very winding and turned off to Crown King.

There was a big lodge where the store is, and it was fixed into a girls' summer camp for all LDS girls in Maricopa County. There was a huge recreation hall and front room, an elevated dining room, and a big kitchen with a huge old cook stove with a hot water storage container attached to it. Upstairs on both sides were two big dormitories the length of the building with beds all down both sides and bathrooms and showers at the end. You had to go upstairs on outside stairs. There was a big rock fireplace in the recreation hall.

My mother, Opal Cluff, was the camp activity director, and Esther Whatcott was the house mother. Mother planned the activities for the week. Each week during the summer a different age group, starting with age 12, would come up. I was only 11 the first year, but got to stay all summer because of mother.

Every week we'd take a hike to the top of Spruce Mountain and back by way of the old trail. Mrs. Whatcott would fix a sack lunch for each girl to carry. We would visit the old folks' home and the old territorial capitol building. There were ballgames on the playground across from the lodge. We would also hike to the old working mine where Mr. Presnik now lives. It was being worked, and the miners would bring ore out with mining carts that went back into the tunnel. The miners would take us back into the tunnel with their miners' lamps on, and there were crystal stalactites hanging from the roof in places. It was kind of scary.

We would also hike up to the Midnight Test Mine, up the Old Miner Road that followed Groom Creek all the way to Spruce Mountain Road, where the mining buildings were. I don't remember the year, but there was a bad forest fire one year, and it burned all the buildings down, leaving just the old rock and cement foundations.

On Sundays we held church services in the big recreation hall, and sometimes we held dances there and danced to an old Victrola. We would invite the church group from Prescott to come out. Mrs. Whatcott cooked homemade bread, biscuits, cinnamon rolls and delicious meals on the big wood stove.

I did the same things every week with mother, but it was fun, and I roamed these mountains from Spruce Mountain to Goldwater Lake with no "No Trespassing" signs to be found.

There was a little store by the lodge; a little cement place is still there that had a gas pump on it. Jim Shumway ran the store and used to let me help him. Mother would go in to Prescott for supplies in an old truck that didn't have too good brakes, by the way of the old curving dirt road. The road came out just before Prescott where Karen Drive is now.

They were still miners panning for gold in the creek and they would rent their donkeys to us for 50 cents a ride. The Silver King Mine was still being mined. It was down on Friendly Pines Road.

(* "the store" is located on the west side of Senator Highway across from Old Miner Road and is now a private residence.)

(continued on next page)

As I Remember Groom Creek

(Continued from previous page)

The Mormon church sold lots in the early 1930s in the old Groom Creek section for \$50 dollars a lot with a 99 year lease. My mother was one of the first ones to buy a lot. It was at the end of the Depression, so most of the cabins were built with galvanized tin and were built during that time and also in the early 1940s during the war. There were three old miners' houses in the area. Two have been torn down. We have since got deeds to our property, and most of them have been handed down to the next generation. We are on our fifth generation who come up and enjoy the cabin. The cabins are really comfortable and homey on the inside, and most have been added on to or rebuilt.

I spent my childhood here every summer. I can still find my name under the bridge, put there in the 30s. My four children spent their summers with their grandmother and grandfather, and now my grandchildren (24) and great-grandchildren (17) are enjoying it. There were 22 of us over 4 July.

I feel sad about going up the old Spruce Mountain trail in coming to gates with "No Trespassing" signs, but I feel like I've earned the right to go that way, and one owner agreed with me.

The lodge was discontinued to be used by the church and became rundown. A Mr. Smith of Prescott bought it and used it for storage for his plumbing business, and then one year it burned down. The present store was built on the site and was built around the old stone fireplace.

Before and during World War II when President Roosevelt was president, there was a CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camp in the forest by Friendly Pines Rd. Those boys who weren't in the service helped build some of the roads and bridges across the creek.

Groom Creek is still a place for fun and relaxation for both young and old. I will always have a soft spot in my heart for it. As I told my son when I wrote to him today, "This is heaven."

Ruthe Perkins (reprinted from 1991 Groom Creek Chronicle)

Household/Home Remedy Hints

by Margie Navarro



Mosquitoes detest the smell of cloves and all things citrusy. Cut two lemons into halves, press about 5 – 6 cloves into each. Place these on a plate in your room and say goodbye to mosquitoes.

Essential oils can also act as mosquito repellents. Lavender, geranium, citronella, lemongrass, lemon eucalyptus, rosemary and peppermint oils work best at keeping those pests away. Dilute the oil, pour some into an oil diffuser and let it work its magic.

What to do if a mosquito did manage to bite you. Immerse a metal spoon in hot water for about a minute and keep it pressed against the bite. This kills the proteins that mosquitoes inject into the skin and cures the itch.

(As a kid growing up in Midwest, we were told to make an X on the bite and the itch would go away, I think I would do the spoon)

Groom Creek Archeology on a Summer Day

About 7 years ago or so before the Groom Creek local forest was thinned and logged, the Prescott National Forest Archeologists (s) tagged archeological sites in the area by tying white plastic strips around tree trunks that are near respective archeological sites. The sites include/included Prescott Culture (AD 840 - AD 1350), Yavapai Native American (AD1350 - AD1863), and the mining period (1863-1930-s). This little bit of information lays the foundation for this fun adventure.

A husband and wife, dressed in hiking attire and each carrying "Notebooks", were walking along Spur Lane near Todd's and Ginger's house headed to the forest. I just happened to be walking in the same direction. The professors asked which dirt road/trail, in the nearby forest, should they take so they could soak in the local history, in a limited amount of time. They said they were visiting the area as tourists and as American History professors from Denmark. Bingo! Since I belong to the Arizona Archeological Society, I wasn't going to pass this opportunity up. Well, away we went taking the lower Groom Creek loop/ dirt road.

The first Groom Creek archeological site (in forest), which I introduced them to was/is a site near the lower loop road. After pointing out the "white-tagged trees", the professors were up that hill looking down in that old ore pit, before I could retie my boots. Yup! They told me the top layer of artifacts were probably from the 1950's and 1960's. There are old camping stoves, soda cans with pop tops from that time period; the next level of artifacts appeared to be 1890's cookware/dinnerware and bottles; and the surrounding meadow revealed surface pottery sherds (AD 840). The professors were taking photographs and taking notes all through this adventure.

The second archeological site: There are tin cans, silverware, can-opener, baking powder can, metal files, levers, and chains (1800's). Close to that area, we found broken "Prescott Bottling Works" bottle made in the late 1800's. The bottle had all turned a beautiful turquoise color from the sun. There is magnesium in the glass makeup.

Then the professors took the lead: circling up to the upper loop of the road, they took pics of the Native American pottery (it is referred to as Prescott Culture – 840 AD). Grey on grey, Red on grey. We came across picks and old shovels. Yup! Those two professors found the small open mine and peeked in. All quartz inside. They referred its shape to a "china man's mine". If you want to know why the mine is referred to as such: research it. Now we are near the very top of the Groom Creek upper loop.

There are two large Native American sites across from each other with springs close by. There are still some artifacts there. The professors pointed out: arrowheads made from obsidian, quartz, and chert; and painted pottery sherds possibly Yavapai. There are mauls or axe heads, manos, hearths, and matates carved into boulders.

I mentioned to the professors that the sites are recorded, but are unpublished, and the professors added that the sites are not renewable. As all great professors do, a lecture was forth-coming.: We are all stewards of these treasures. Leave all artifacts where they are.

Off the professors went with their notebooks full of information to return to their students in Denmark.

I really enjoyed that incredible encounter and fun adventure with these two cool professors from Denmark.

Thank you,
Joann Read

Thank You Joann for submitting your article!

FireWise Property Assessments are now available!

Taken from GCFD Website

May 30, 2017

The Groom Creek FireWise Committee is now available to conduct wildfire risk reduction property assessments. These assessments will be based on the checklist included in the PDF below, but not to be considered an all-inclusive list of the assessment criteria.

Just email the fire station at admin@groomcreek.org with your request name, Groom Creek address and your preferred contact information, and one of our FireWise Committee members will contact you in order to schedule an appointment to assess your property.

You do not have to be present for the assessment, but you are very welcome to be, so please include this information in your request.

FireWise Property Assessments Homeowners Checklist

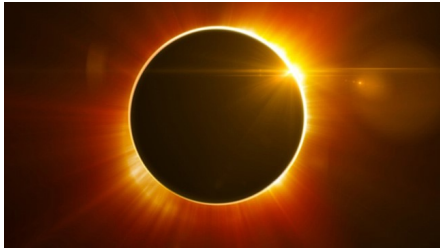
Wildfires don't have to destroy everything in their path. Science and research have proven that using Firewise principles in your landscaping can minimize damage and prevent losses. The work you do today can make a difference. Follow these simple action steps now and throughout the year to prepare and help reduce the risk of your home and property becoming fuel for a wildfire:

- Clear needles, leaves and other debris from the roof, gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This reduces the chances of embers igniting your home.
- To reduce ember penetration, replace or repair loose or missing roof shingles or tiles, and caulk any gaps or openings on roof edges.
- Cover exterior attic vents, and enclose under-eave and soffit vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent embers from entering the home.
- Remove items stored under decks or porches; replace vegetation in these areas with rock or gravel.
- Replace mulch with hardscaping, including rock, gravel or stone. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- Remove flammable items within 30 feet of all structures including firewood piles, portable propane tanks and dry and dead vegetation.
- Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire so keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, trim it to reduce fire intensity, and don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- Fire can spread to tree tops. If you have tall trees on your property, prune low hanging branches 6 to 10 feet from the ground and for smaller trees, prune low hanging branches no more than a third of the tree's height. Remove tall grasses, vines and shrubs from under trees.
- Talk to your neighbors and create a plan for how to address your wildfire safety challenges together. Learn more about how to keep your family safe and reduce your home's risk for wildfire damage at firewise.org.

If you would like to volunteer to help in the FireWise Property Assessments, please contact the fire department at admin@groomcreek.org or (928) 778-6519

2017's GREATEST SPECTACLE

THE FIRST TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE OVER THE U.S. MAINLAND IN 38 YEARS WILL BE TOTALLY
COOL---ESPECIALLY IN ITS SHADOW.



To the naked eye, the sky is an inverted bowl hosting thousands of glowing points and two disks. The points—stars and planets—exhibit no size because of their immense distance from Earth. The two disks are the Sun and Moon. By amazing coincidence, these disks appear exactly the same size. Why?

The Sun is 400 times larger than the Moon but also 400 times farther from Earth than the Moon. These facts allow the Moon to fit perfectly over the Sun's face to create a total eclipse. Yet, it is not so big that it blocks out the Sun's dramatic hot-pink corona or atmosphere and not so small that it leaves the Sun's blinding gas surface (photosphere) uncovered. This bizarre alignment does not hold for any other planet and will not last forever: The Moon is spiraling away from Earth like a skyrocket and gradually increasing its separation.

The perfect lineup of these two disks (Sun and Moon) to form a total solar eclipse does not happen often—**just once every 360 years**, on average, for any one point on Earth. (This is one reason why relatively few people have ever seen one.) The U.S. mainland is currently experiencing its longest totality drought in history. The last total solar eclipse occurred on February 26, 1979, over northwestern states and south central Canada.

This cycle finally ends on August 21, 2017.

For sheer visceral impact, a total solar eclipse is not even remotely comparable to a lunar eclipse of partial solar eclipse. Or even major aurora displays. A solar totality stands alone. If you are in the right place, it creates darkness in daytime along a 140 mile wide ribbon of Earth. The brightest stars come out midday but not as you might presume: During totality, they appear in seasonal reverse. In summer, the winter constellations emerge; during a winter solar totality, summer's stars appear.

This event will take place in the U.S., in an arc beginning in Oregon. The Moon's shadow then transverses southern portions of Idaho; passes directly over both Jackson and Casper Wyoming; and continues eastward over Nebraska in late morning. The path continues east and south, eventually passing over St. Joseph Missouri, before continuing on to southwestern Illinois, where it reaches its' maximum duration of totality and where the Sun will be highest in the sky.

If you are lucky enough to see this marvelous event (protect your eyes), please write or e-mail and tell us about your experience. We will publish your experience in the October Chronicle.

Dee Shultz

YET ANOTHER STUDY ON SLEEP

Did you ever try to understand what a particular dream or nightmare was all about? A recent study by dream experts at Hong Kong Shue Yan University (long title) suggested that dreams are, for better or worse, the result of how we lie in bed. Each position puts pressure on the body that sets the theme for a dream. So, if you sleep ... **ON YOUR SIDE:** You generally have more pleasant dreams; however, left-side sleepers may experience nightmares, and right-side sleepers, sensations of swallowing or burning. **ON YOUR BACK:** You tend to experience more nightmares and have greater difficulty in recalling your dreams. **ON YOUR STOMACH:** You may have more intense and erotic dreams; however, avoid sleeping face down on the pillow and don't try to force the effect. **IN MULTIPLE POSITIONS:** The position in which you wake up is the strongest influencer of your dreams.

Dee Shultz

“First in Time, First in Right” A History of Ground Water in and around Groom Creek

Recently, I was taking a walk through my neighborhood at the end of Stagecoach Road, when I noticed



Diversion Dam in Groom Creek

something unusual in the Creek. I saw what looked to be some type of diversion dam. Well, that peaked my interest. What was this, where did it go too, who put it there and when? I asked a neighbor living next to the structure, and was informed that it is owned by the City of Prescott and that this neighbor had talked to a city crew doing work on the structure. I was told that it was a diversion dam that flowed into Goldwater Lake. I had to find out what this was all about.

I contacted the City of Prescott and met with Leslie Grasser, the Water Resource Manager for the City. She was extremely courteous and helpful. Leslie used the expression, **“First in Time, First in Right”**. I had not heard of this term before. She informed me that it is a principle of law that the first person to use a certain source of water gets the right to use the water in the future over the right of later users. My visit with Ms. Grasser led me to the W.S. Gookin Report. A study in 1977 titled **“Comprehensive Water Study of the City of Prescott and Environs”**.

This report is extensive and thorough, providing information on all facets of water from geology, hydrology and the history of water in the city of Prescott and vicinity. [You can read this report on line.](#)

During my meeting with Leslie, she told me about a gentleman named Michael King, a retired Prescott National Forest Manager. He seems to have dedicated the majority of his time conducting research about the history of Prescott and its water rights. He authored an extensive and detailed paper on this topic. It is titled **“Pumps, Pipes and People: A History of Prescott’s Waterworks”**. The work and time that Mr. King has put into this research is commendable. Michael King has donated all of his effort and work from this topic to the Sharlott Hall Museum for all of us to enjoy.

The following is based on my discussion with Michael King as well as many excerpts from his own discoveries and writings.

(continued on next page)

“First in Time, First in Right”

I share here some of the interesting and historical paths that our community and vicinity has taken over the past 140 years as far as water rights are concerned. In 1873 the Prescott Village Common Council was formed. Then came the discussion on how to attain water, other than private wells. In 1895, there was talk about strengthening the recently installed, Mt. Vernon Reservoir.

On January 12 1895, Joseph Thorbecke filed a Homestead Certificate with the U.S. General Land Office. This location is in the Banning Creek watershed. In June of 1907 the city received a proposal from the Thorbecke Ranch to supply water to the Mt. Vernon Street Reservoir.

Shortly thereafter, a facility to store the water for this reservoir was established. This facility would become Goldwater Lake. They would take water from Groom, Banning and Wolf Creeks. Also, a pipeline could be built from the Hassayampa River to enhance flow into the storage facility.

Groom Creek is a tributary to the Hassayampa River flowing west and south but not Banning Creek, which flows into Granite Creek through Prescott. In 1923 the Prescott City Council notes, “City manager Robinson stated that water is now flowing through Groom Creek, and the Banning Creek pipeline into the Banning Creek watershed and that the City would be getting the water into the reservoir in Prescott within the next few hours.”

From 1948, the Goldwater Lakes system was still a main source of water for Prescott. The Hassayampa River pipeline from Wolf Creek northward was replaced in 1962 which furnished water to Upper Goldwater Lake. The original pipeline from the Hassayampa to Goldwater Lake was made out of Redwood.

There is a monument dedicating this event located on the forest road adjacent to the entrance to Prescott

Pines Camp. The Groom Creek and Wolf Creek systems were still operable as part of this system.

In 1977 a major study of potential water sources was completed.

This report entitled “Comprehensive Water Study of the City of Prescott and Environs” was contracted by the City of Prescott. Due to a decision by Judge W. Meyers on July 18, 1974 this report was completed by W.S. Gookin and Associates of Scottsdale.

In late 1988, Goldwater Lake was discontinued as a source for potable water for the City of Prescott. From that point on, the surface water collection and storage in the Goldwater Lakes system has focused on providing water for recreation, fisheries,

wildlife and wildland fire protection. Stand pipes were installed to provide water for water tenders and fire engine refilling. They also provide a source for helicopter “bambi bucket” operations. The diversion on Wolf Creek is no longer operational as the pipes are no longer in place. The Groom Creek diversion still diverts water to Upper Goldwater Lake by connecting to the Hassayampa River pipeline.

So, here is the re-cap of my story. I took a walk and saw a diversion dam in Groom Creek. It was placed there in 1923 by the City of Prescott following a chain of discussions as far back as 1873 and still today owned and maintained by the City of Prescott. During my research I found out that water was also being diverted from the Hassayampa River, Wolf Creek and Banning Creek. All diversions ending up in Goldwater Lake. Today, the Wolf Creek diversion is no longer in operation. The water in Goldwater Lake is no longer a source of potable water for Prescott, and redwood was used to make pipelines. **Who knew?**

Amazing what can happen when you just go out for a walk!

Jerry Shultz



Dedication Monument

Nature's Way

The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.

___ Henry Miller, novelist (1891-1980)

I first fell in love with hummingbirds when I lived in a two-story condominium in Phoenix where I spotted a hummingbird nesting in the top of an olive tree outside my bedroom window. What a treat it was to watch mama bird tending to her nestlings day after day.



Apparently hummingbirds liked nesting in the olive grove where I lived, because soon another one built a nest in a hanging plant on my patio. The dilemma: I wanted to water the plant. Mama bird cooperated, though, by flying to a tree branch allowing me to *very carefully* water my plant. I thrilled to see her eggs and later her tiny babies.

When I moved to Groom Creek in 1991, I didn't know if I would find hummingbirds in the cooler forest. After my good friend, the late Joe Protis, assured me they were abundant here, I put out a feeder with high hopes for success. Soon I had a familiar hummingbird which I named Spirit. Spirit filled me with delight and returned to the *same tree* and the *same branch* year after year for several years. (Their average lifespan is 10 to 12 years.) Picture this comical scene: once while sitting on my deck, I saw a hummingbird scratch its tiny head with its foot!

According to hummingbird photographer, Russell Ogg, these iridescent jewels weigh less than a dime. They consume half their weight in nectar every day, but they also eat insects for protein. Because of their tiny size, hummingbirds use more energy per unit than any other warm-blooded animal. They burn 155,000 calories a day compared to 3,500 for a 170 pound man. If a man used the same energy as a hummingbird, he would have to eat 285 pounds of hamburger a day!

An AZ Game and Fish brochure states that there are over 340 species of hummingbirds which live mostly in South and Central America. Arizona has the good fortune to have recorded 16 species, more than any other state. I'm not a bird expert, but I believe the most common hummingbird in our area is either the Ruby-Throated or Anna's Hummingbird which usually arrives in March. This year I had a hummingbird return while we still had snow on the ground. Around the time of the monsoons, the larger and more aggressive orange-colored Rufous Hummingbird appears, and fierce battles ensue.

It is said that a hummingbird is one of the more revered Kachinas among Hopi Indians. And, Ogg says, in bird mythology, hummingbirds are believed to be the symbols of good luck and miracles, especially the miracle of resurrection.

Ann Reynolds

As Always, Thank You Ann for all of your contributions and articles.

Ravens

This spring we were fortunate to observe a pair of Ravens setting up a household in one of our pine trees. Over several weeks, the pair flew in sticks for the nest. Not just any sticks, but ones they snapped off of the nearby and not so nearby pines. It took a few weeks, but the couple finally built their dream nest and got down to serious business. We were getting concerned when we did not see much activity around the nest. One of the pair would fly in very low and land in a pine tree about 50 feet away from the nest tree. Then, the Raven would slowly fly over to the nest tree, but would land about midway up the tree hoping from branch to branch using the branches like an elevator until it reached the nest. It seemed as though the pair were gone most of the day, but would return with loud Raven calls late in the afternoon. Not knowing anything about the nesting habits of Ravens, we finally consulted Google 😊 which gave us the info we were looking for.



Ravens don't mate until they are about three years of age. They must have their own territory before nesting. New couples form in the winter or spring and will stay together for life. When a male Raven is interested in a female, he will puff up his feathers and make a series of bowing motions, spreading his tail and his wings to display iridescent feathers. He may invite the female to take a flight where they perform spectacular acrobatics, soaring and gliding together. Their flight of dives and rolls is their way of getting to know each other. The nest is built high on cliffs, tree tops or tree cavities. It consists of sticks, moss and bark. The eggs are incubated by the female, but the chicks are fed by both adults after they hatch. The parents stay with the chicks for 6 months after they fledge. The adults are able to defend their chicks from predators because of their size and their brains. Ravens have been known to drop rocks on a would-be predator to deter it from their nest.

Good news, one evening, we observed both parents leave the nest within a few minutes of each other, and shortly thereafter, we heard little Raven noises coming from the nest. The babies grow very fast and within a week the chicks were flapping their wings and hanging on for dear life to the edges of the nest. One evening a week later, we heard quite a commotion coming from the nest tree. We observed one of the babies hanging on to a limb about 40 feet off the ground. The parents were watching from another tree and making lots of noise. All of a sudden the baby was hanging upside down from a limb. Well, you know where this is going. The baby turned loose of the limb and fell about 30 feet to the ground. Not knowing that this is what they do, I wanted to help but resisted. Very quickly, the baby jumps up, shakes it off and began walking and walking and walking. The last time we saw the baby he had walked across our property, up the hill and disappeared. Both parents were giving instructions and trying to show the little one how to fly. Long story short, the next morning, the baby was still walking but had returned to the nest tree. We did not see how he got back up into the tree, but obviously he finally learned to fly.

Dee Shultz

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

When operating properly, septic systems remove any pollutants and provide some measure of protection for human health and for the environment. However, even properly functioning septic systems have the potential to impact nearby surface waters and groundwater.

Good vegetative cover is important for drain field function and maintenance. To avoid damage from tree roots, plant only grass over and near the drain field (not so easy in the woods).

Divert surface water runoff from roofs, driveways, downspouts, etc. away from you drain field.

Do not drive or park vehicles on your drain field.

Inspect regularly. Inspect every 3 years to determine if your system is working properly or needs to be serviced.

Getting pumped every 3-5 years is recommended. Wastewater should enter into the system as evenly as possible throughout the day/week. Avoid antibacterial products that will harm the bacterial action in the tank. Avoid harsh cleaners, bleach, soaps, or detergents. Don't dispose of paint, medication, or chemicals through you septic system.

With some care and consideration for you septic tank, it should serve your household well for many years.



Happy
4th of July
to All
Be Safe!



Mission Statement:

To revive the Groom Creek Chronicle which ran from 1989-1999 and bring positive, helpful, past and current news to the Groom Creek community (within/ outside the Fire District). The newsletter is a separate entity, and prepared by volunteers. Therefore, the Fire Department will not incur any expense.

If you want to share your experiences about life in Groom Creek, please send articles to chroniclegroomcreek@gmail.com for consideration. Note: No Commercial or political articles will be printed.

The newsletter is located on the Groom Creek Fire District's website <http://www.groomcreek.org> under the "District News" menu and will be published quarterly beginning January 2017.

ANSWER TO DEER QUIZ

True. The average five story building can't jump.