

# Bringing a Desert River Back To Life: Fossil Creek Restoration & Wild and Scenic Designation



## A River Restored

Fossil Creek was once a gem of the Arizona desert. Its mineral laden waters created geologic formations along the 14 mile course of the creek including deep iridescent blue pools and waterfalls. For roughly the past 100 years, though, this treasure has been virtually dry due to an upstream dam that diverted most of the creek's waters.

In 1999, American Rivers and our conservation partners reached an historic agreement with Arizona Public Service Company to restore the water that once nourished the flora and fauna of Fossil Creek to its natural course. Restoration of Fossil Creek is one of the best actions to ensure the survival of five rare native Arizona fishes. Restoration of the form and function of Fossil Creek also will help to restore many of the the Yavapai-Apache's hunting, gathering, and spiritual sites.

## Recreation Potential

Return of natural flows to Fossil Creek will also create more than 14 contiguous miles of year-round water in an area where such resources are virtually non-existent, creating opportunities for camping, birding, hiking, horseback riding, and other recreational activities. This offers potentially significant benefits to local communities.

## Wild and Scenic Designation Efforts

One of the best ways to meet anticipated visitor and ecological needs is to include Fossil Creek in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system. By designating the river as wild or scenic, the remarkable resources being restored will be better protected from future development of dams or similar structures.

Additional federal resources will help ensure the proper management of the creek.. Finally, local communities and citizens interested in protecting the remarkable values of Fossil Creek can work together on the creation of a river management plan that facilitates tourism and visitation while it protects the stream from over-use.



Senator McCain has demonstrated extraordinary leadership by introducing legislation to designate Fossil Creek a National Wild and Scenic River. Take Action: write to your local officials and Congressmen to encourage them to support designation of Fossil Creek as Wild and Scenic!