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WORLD PREMIERE OF FOSSIL CREEK DOCUMENTARY TO BE HELD IN PHOENIX
APS and Environmental Advocates' Historical Agreement Sets National Trend



PHOENIX (December 14, 2006) – In an age of increasing energy needs, what would cause Arizona’s largest electric company to *voluntarily* remove one of its hydroelectric facilities? The answer is an intricate tapestry of many threads, whose story will be revealed at the **World Premiere of the documentary - *A River Reborn: The Restoration of Fossil Creek* on January 14th at the Orpheum Theater in Phoenix.** This documentary is produced for Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the Museum of Northern Arizona by 5-time Emmy Award-Winning producer, Paul Bockhorst and narrated by, *Cheers!* actor Ted Danson. It tells how Arizona Public Service (APS) and environmental advocates overcame the odds to restore this beautiful river to the people of Arizona.

After 100 years of water diversion, a host of partners from environmental advocacy groups, APS, the Yavapai-Apache Nation, resource agency biologists, and NAU scientists gathered to celebrate the return of full flow to Fossil Creek. The amazing part of this achievement? Despite tension and conflicting interests, APS and dam-removal advocates reached the agreement without court involvement, in what has become an unprecedented display of democracy in action.

In explaining his decision to support decommissioning of the Fossil Creek hydroelectric facility William Post, Chairman of APS, says, “As we looked at the opportunity to give the residents of the state of Arizona a perennial stream in the desert... there is no option to that. We can find other ways to generate electricity. We cannot find other perennial streams in the desert.”

The public will have the chance to speak to the people involved in this historic decision and view the film for the first time in its entirety at the **World Premiere on January 14th**. Screenings are at 4:00 and 7:00 pm with a social celebration from 6:00-7:00. Tickets are available through the Orpheum Box Office (602-262-7272) and Ticketmaster.com (480-784-4444) \$10 for general admission and free to partnering organizations including APS employees, NAU Alumni, and members of The Nature Conservancy in Arizona, The Center for Biological Diversity, American Rivers, the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club, Arizona Riparian Council, the Arizona Wilderness Coalition, the Northern Arizona Chapter of the Audubon Society, The Yavapai-Apache Nation, the Audubon Society of Arizona, Friends of Arizona Rivers, and members of KAET Channel Eight.

A Natural Treasure

Fossil Creek is among the brightest jewels of Arizona's Rim Country. It stands out as one of the last free-flowing, year-around streams in Arizona, a magnificent ribbon of life in the high desert. The restoration of this critical watershed has drawn wide attention, not only in Arizona but across the U.S., and is emblematic of a far-reaching change in the public attitude toward rivers and dams.

"Today, people in the Southwest and throughout the country are reassessing the use of precious water resources," said Dr. Stefan Sommer, Executive Producer of *A River Reborn*. "They are seeking to balance the fulfillment of human needs with protection of the natural systems that support human life. Fossil Creek is a focal point for this reassessment; it reveals both the challenges and opportunities associated with riparian restoration."

Paul Bockhorst says, "Vital lessons are being learned at Fossil Creek, lessons that can be applied to environmental restoration projects elsewhere. That makes Fossil Creek a case study of national and even international importance."

Narrator Ted Danson grew up in Flagstaff and has a deep interest in environmental issues in his native state. In the film, Danson says, "The Fossil Creek story provides a beacon of hope and an inspiring model for the restoration of degraded streams and waterways. Even now, as a work in progress, Fossil Creek stands out as one of the most important and promising environmental restoration projects in the history of the American Southwest."

An Epic Story

As described in the documentary, the restoration of Fossil Creek is emblematic of a far-reaching change in the public attitude toward rivers and dams. Today, people in the Southwest and throughout the country are reassessing the use of precious water resources. They are seeking to balance the fulfillment of human needs with protection of the natural systems that support human life. This includes safeguarding rare, threatened, and endangered species of plants and animals. Fossil Creek is a focal point for this reassessment, and it reveals both the challenges and opportunities associated with riparian restoration.

A River Reborn chronicles both the natural and human history of the scenic waterway. It introduces scientists who have studied Fossil Creek's outstanding biological and geological features, environmental advocates who have fought for its restoration, Federal and state resource managers who are working to establish it as a refuge for threatened native fish, and officials at APS, the utility that ran the hydroelectric facilities for a century.

In addition to reaching an agreement without litigation, the Fossil Creek story is noteworthy for the important role science played in the restoration process. Dr. Jane Marks, a stream ecologist at Northern Arizona University, tells viewers that, "When I came on board, there was already one report on the table that was conducted by an environmental consulting firm that suggested that full flows would actually hurt native fish. So I put together a team of scientists to evaluate what would be the effects of returning full flow on native fish, on the insects, on some of the threatened, endangered species."

Original research conducted by Marks and other scientists demonstrated the negative impact of the dam and water diversion on native fish populations and their plant and insect food. Their

research also predicted recovery of those populations after decommissioning and resumption of full flow. Ongoing research also plays an important role in the adaptive management model that state and federal agencies are using in the Fossil Creek watershed. Experience gained at Fossil Creek shows good science is an indispensable ingredient in wise management.

A Collaborative Project

A River Reborn is a joint project of Northern Arizona University, the Museum of Northern Arizona, and Paul Bockhorst Productions. The one-hour documentary was photographed by Emmy Award-winning videographer Douglas Crawford and edited by Rusty Colby. The original music was composed by Paul Morehouse. Support for the production was provided by the National Science Foundation, the USDI Bureau of Reclamation, and the Heritage Program of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, with additional funding from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, the Ecological Restoration Institute, and the Merriam-Powell Center for Environmental Research at Northern Arizona University.

***A River Reborn* will air on KAET Arizona Public Television at 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 17, 2007.** It will be distributed to public television stations across the country via satellite by the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) in February, 2007.

For further information about *A River Reborn* and related educational materials, please visit:

www.RiverReborn.org

or contact:

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