

Archives for: 2006, week 34

On the Verde, drought and Apache Lake

08/24/2006 01:52:25

A few items from the late-summer notebook:

*The [Center for Biological Diversity](#) has launched a website dedicated to the Verde River. If you log on to savetheverde.org, you'll find background on the threats facing the Verde and resources on what you can do if you want to get involved.

The Verde was listed as one of [American Rivers'](#) most endangered rivers this year, in large part because of plans to drill wells at the headwaters to supply new subdivisions in the Chino Valley, Prescott and Prescott Valley.

American Rivers, incidentally, is taking nominations for its 2007 endangered rivers list [here](#).

*Speaking of web resources, the [Arizona Department of Water Resources](#) is steadily expanding its drought program links. At [the site](#), you can find monthly drought reports, information about local groups and meeting notices for the state coordinating group.

The state agency has also added resources about water [conservation](#).

*Water levels at Apache Lake will drop about two feet between now and Labor Day and another 38 feet before year's end as Salt River Project prepares for maintenance work on Horse Mesa Dam.

SRP started what it calls a drawdown of the lake this week and will reduce water levels gradually by regulating how much water enters the lake from upstream and how much is released downstream.

The utility will pause in advance of the Labor Day weekend to accommodate recreational users, then resume the drawdown Sept. 11.

The low levels will expose parts of the dam usually under water, allowing crews to inspect the structure and equipment, including the hydroelectric generating station.

The gradual release schedule means SRP won't waste any water or give up needed power generating capacity. The lake will be refilled by Jan. 20.

Canyon Lake will undergo work next year.

You can watch the progress of the drawdown, or check the levels of any of SRP's reservoirs [here](#).

*Finally, if you want to see some interesting numbers, check out the U.S. Geological Survey's real time [stream gage data here](#). The recent monsoon rains have swollen the state's rivers, including a few – such as the Santa Cruz and the middle Gila – that usually flow with dust this time of year.