

Experts to discuss Verde River issues

THE DAILY COURIER

A variety of experts on Verde River Basin issues will speak at a public forum in Prescott Friday.

Speakers will represent interests ranging from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is charged with protecting endangered fish and birds that depend on the Verde River; to the Center for Biological Diversity and Salt River Project, which have criticized Prescott-area efforts to pump Big Chino Sub-basin groundwater that is the major source of water for the first 24 miles of the river.

The plenary session is part of the annual meeting for the Arizona Riparian Council, which also has plans for numerous technical sessions Friday afternoon. For more details, visit www.azriparian.asu.edu.

The gathering takes place at the Hassayampa Inn at the corner of Gurley and Marina streets in downtown Prescott.

Knowing the plenary session is of public interest, the Riparian Council is offering a special \$10 rate for those who attend only the Friday morning session. No pre-registration is necessary, either.

The theme of the meeting is "The Verde River Ecosystem: Are Growth and Conservation Mutually Exclusive?"

The morning plenary session runs from 8:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and includes an opportunity for the public to ask questions.

The schedule is:

- 7:30 - 8:15 a.m. - Registration.
- 8:15 - 8:30 a.m. - Welcome - Tom Hildebrandt, Arizona Riparian Council president.
- 8:30 - 8:50 a.m. - Introduction to the Landscape and Issues - John Rasmussen, Yavapai County Water Advisory Committee coordinator.
- 8:50 - 9:30 a.m. - The Hydrology and Recent Science of the Verde Headwaters and the Middle Verde - Abe Springer, associate professor, Department of Geology, Northern Arizona University.
- 9:30 - 10 a.m. - The Biological and Resource Values of the Verde River System - Joanne Oellers, Center for Biological Diversity, and Brenda Smith, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 10 a.m. - Break.

- 10:20 - 10:50 a.m. - Salt River Project Water Management Issues on the Verde - Greg Kornrumph, Salt River Project.

- 10:50 - 11:30 a.m. - Perspectives from Verde River Communities - Diane Joens, mayor of Cottonwood, and John Munderloh, water resources manager for Prescott Valley.

- 11:30 - 11:50 a.m. - Summary, Synthesis, and Visioning - John Rasmussen and Abe Springer.