



PROCLAMATION

DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 19TH THROUGH DECEMBER 26TH, 2021 AS
'VERDE RIVER WEEK'

WHEREAS ten years ago, on December 27, 2011, Friends of Verde River Greenway was formed with the stated purpose to preserve, enhance, and promote the scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources of the Verde River Greenway corridor by working with stakeholders and increasing public awareness as to the variety of recreational, natural, and historic resources within the Verde River Greenway, a unit of Arizona State Parks.

WHEREAS the initial Board of Directors were Delbert "Chip" Norton, Tony Gioia, Marsha Foutz, Peggy Chaikin, Bob Rothrock, Jane Moore, Diane Joens, and Steven "Max" Castillo, with the officers being Chip Norton, President; Tony Gioia, Vice-President; Diane Joens, Treasurer; and Co-Secretaries Marsha Foutz and Peggy Chaikin.

WHEREAS in 2011 the Cooperative Invasive Plant Management Plan was completed with a vision that "the Verde River and its tributaries comprise a diverse, self-sustaining and resilient riparian ecosystem in which invasive plant species are controlled through cooperative stakeholder participation" through the cooperative participation of over 20 stakeholders including federal and state land managers, wildlife management agencies, businesses, university, nonprofit organizations, and others; and that out of this process arose the Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition.

WHEREAS in 2016 Friends of the Verde River, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, Walton Family Foundation, Environmental Defense Fund, and Bonneville Environmental Foundation teamed up to form the Verde River Exchange, a program that connects businesses willing to temporarily reduce their water usage with groundwater users seeking to reduce the impacts of the water usage; the first buyers of water offset credits were Page Springs Vineyards and Merkin Vineyards.

WHEREAS in 2017 Friends of the Verde River was born out of the merger of three organizations: Friends of Verde River Greenway, Verde River Valley Nature Organization, and Verde River Basin Partnership; and the Board of Directors at that time were Delbert "Chip" Norton, President; Tony Gioia, Vice-President; Harry Sweet, Treasurer; Peggy Chaikin, Secretary; and Brent Bitz, S. Max Castillo, Susan Culp, Jeni O'Callaghan, Marsha Foutz, and Siera Russell.

WHEREAS in 2021 the mission and vision of Friends of the Verde River is to work collaboratively for a healthy, flowing Verde River system that supports our natural environment, vibrant communities, and quality of life for future generations; focusing on restoring habitat,

sustaining river flows, and building supportive communities through working proactively in a combination of “boots-on-the-ground” projects and policy solutions guided by sound conservation principles to meet human and environmental needs in an outcomes-oriented manner.

WHEREAS to date the Friends of the Verde River has employed 200 Conservation Corps youth and military veterans to restore 10,357 acres of riverside forest to native vegetation; has kept 19 million gallons of water in the Verde River since 2016 through the Verde River Exchange; issued the first Verde Watershed Report Card in 2020; has mobilized countless volunteers working to restore habitat and promote the Verde River to the public; brings over 450 people annually to Cottonwood and the Verde Valley for the Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival along with other events; and annually contributes significantly to the local economy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the week of December 19th through December 26th, 2021, will be designated as Verde River Week in honor of this history of Friends of the Verde River and its contributions community.

Passed and approved by a majority vote of the Common Council at the Regular Session of December 15, 2021.

Dee Jenkins

Dee Jenkins, Mayor

12-15-2021

Date

Attest:

Virginia Jones for Cindy Pemberton

Cindy Pemberton, Town Clerk

