

West Valley VIEW



The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ

Friday, October 13, 2006

Walkin' through a river wonderland

Public invited to walk 1st stretch of West Valley Rec. Corridor

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CATHY ABBOT OF PHOENIX collects litter in the Agua Fria River bottom as she and other volunteers with the Friends of the West Valley Recreation Corridor work to create a 1.6-mile long trail for the upcoming Walk the Vision event to be held Oct. 29.

Friends of the West Valley Recreation Corridor paved the way last weekend for a 1.6-mile walkway at the bottom of the Agua Fria River in Avondale.

It's the first leg of a 40-plus-mile path that, in due time, will meander north and south through the Agua Fria and New rivers, creating a recreational corridor for the entire West Valley.

"We're really excited about this as one of the first steps for building the corridor," said Jen Pokorski, associate project manager with the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, which initiated the project.

The West Valley Recreation Corridor is "really the central open space for the West Valley. Just like Phoenix has the mountain preserves, the West Valley has some major river corridors," said Jay Hicks, president of the nonprofit group Friends of the West Valley Recreation Corridor.

When complete, the corridor will incorporate 32 miles of the Agua Fria River, and another 10-plus miles of the New River. It will run through seven jurisdictions, and include, among other things, habitat enhancement, trails, flood control features, recharge facilities and recreational amenities.

"You look at the big picture. Quality of life is very important. If you have a park that's 32 miles long, and you want to come out to do some recreational activities, here's your opportunity," said Herman Orcutt, a representative

from Westmarc, which sponsors Friends of the WVRC.

About 65 volunteers showed up last weekend to help make the path presentable for Oct. 29, when the public is invited to "Walk the Vision," an event designed to promote the West Valley Recreation Corridor.

"I hope it will be used by West Valley residents, and owned by West Valley residents to keep it nice," said Ken Porter, a volunteer representing Leadership West.

Outdoor recreation "is important to everyone in Arizona," said Johnnie Grgurich with Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona, adding that projects such as the West Valley Recreation Corridor allow people the opportunity to enjoy the natural desert vegetation and wildlife.

"We want the community to not turn their back on the river, but rather make the river part of the community," Pokorski said.

Registration for Walk the Vision begins at 7:30 a.m. Oct. 29 at Friendship Park, 12325 W. McDowell Road in Avondale.

The walk/run event is free and gets under way at 8:30 a.m., and will include breakfast and exhibitor booths. For information, call 602-277-0911, or visit www.friendsofwwrc.org/walkthevision.

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