



Save Our Park!

Woodland Lake Park Acquisition Update

August 13, 2008

Why do we need to “Save Woodland Lake Park?”

- ***The Town of Pinetop-Lakeside does not own Woodland Lake Park, Walnut Creek, or Big Springs Environmental Study Area (ESA).*** The 583 acres we call the Woodland Lake Park Tract is owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

- ***The U.S. Forest Service does not anticipate holding onto***

these lands. The tract is separated from the rest of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and is difficult to manage; the Forest Service’s objective is to dispose of the tract.

- ***In order for the Town to ensure this special place remains secure as a natural and recreational resource for our community, the Town needs to obtain the land.*** Financing this purchase is very challenging, as the Town has limited resources. It’s up to our community to support the Town’s efforts to seek ways to Save Our Park!

What’s happened so far?

- ***The Town leads a task force to research all opportunities and options*** that may help us acquire the Woodland Lake Park tract; the task force has been meeting for the past year. What have we done, and what have we found out?

- ***The Town has budgeted money*** to obtain an appraisal of the land; it is very important to understand the financial cost associated with purchasing the entire property; this should be done by the end of 2008.
- ***Some of the alternatives did not work out.*** The Town now knows what is feasible and what isn’t.
 - Arizona State Parks can not acquire the land to establish and manage it as a State Park.
 - The tract does not meet U.S. Forest Service criteria to become a designated recreation area.
- ***The Town and Blue Ridge School District are working to obtain Congressional help to acquire the Big Springs ESA under the Education Land Grant Act.*** Under this act, Big Springs appears eligible for purchase for \$10/acre as an outdoor classroom, complementing the future White Mountain Nature Center.
- ***Most of our alternatives point to the need for the Town to acquire the land through a purchase.*** The task force prioritized parts of the tract; the Town’s developed park is the highest priority for acquisition.
- ***The Town has engaged the Trust for Public Land to address funding options to acquire the priority parts of the parcel; they will interact with YOU to find out how you feel about raising funds for acquisition.*** A Town General Election ballot question in May 2009 may be developed based on your willingness to pay to secure Woodland Lake Park, Walnut Creek, and Big Springs.

What can you do?

- ***The Town needs your help!*** We want to know how you think the Town could raise money. There are MANY ways to get involved in helping to secure Woodland Lake Park:

- ***Attend the Woodland Lake Park Task Force meetings,*** held the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at the Town Council Chambers. The public is welcomed to attend.
- ***Join the Save Our Park! Committee,*** dedicated to raising awareness and donations to be used for acquisition. Contact the Town (368-8696) or the Save Our Park! Webpage (<http://savewoodlandlakepark.org>) for more information.
- ***Participate in the citizen involvement process with the Trust for Public Lands*** as they engage the public this fall to develop financing strategies to acquire the tract.
- ***Check the Town’s Webpage*** (www.ci.pinetop-lakeside.az.us) where all task force agendas, minutes and products are posted.

