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## Friday Catchall: 'Big' changes afoot for Verde River, pipeline



# FRIDAY CATCHALL

By Tim Wiederaenders  
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Originally Published: March 7, 2024 5:25 p.m.

Post



## The Friday Catchall:

- **BIG CHINO** — I have to say I've seen something in the tea leaves.

First, there's the effort to designate the Verde River, and likely its headwaters in Paulden, as Wild and Scenic. This requires action by Congress, and has received a nod / support from — *for instance* — Gov. Katie Hobbs, the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors as well as Prescott, Prescott Valley, Cottonwood, and more entities.

Then this week, the Nature Conservancy in Arizona received an \$11.5 million federal grant, thanks to U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, D-Arizona, to “lead critical land and water conservation efforts in the Upper Verde River Watershed and Big Chino Grasslands in northcentral Arizona.”

It makes me think that moves are in play that could tie up the Big Chino (at least), preventing a some-day water pipeline from there to Prescott and Prescott Valley — a pipeline that Prescott officials have said they are “contractually obligated” to build.

While the 2004 project has had legislative approval for the acre-feet for many years, and it's been on the shelf for a long time and (because?) its cost has skyrocketed to as much as \$200 million, the day could be dawning that the project will never be done because of the designation and Nature Conservancy efforts.

That could be good, and it could be bad — depending on which perspective you take.

Just calling it like I see it.

- **RODEO TIX** — Prescott Frontier Days, the “World's Oldest Rodeo,” kicked off ticket sales for the 137th edition of the rodeo on Monday, March 4. The rodeo will be July 1-7, 2024.

Keep in mind, other than Courier Night tickets — for which The Daily Courier sells select seats at discount prices (watch for the announcement; we usually sell them beginning shortly after Memorial Day) — tickets to the rodeo should be bought only through the rodeo itself. Call 928-445-4320; for general information, call 928-445-3103.

Let's rodeo!

- **FLYING CARS** — A little note crossed my inbox this week, touting that a SpaceX flying car has received 2,850 pre-orders.

The \$300,000 flying car aims to hit the market in 2025. It is expected to be able to fly at 110 mph in the air and drive 35 mph on the streets, with a flying range of 100 miles and driving range of 200 miles.

They're still seeking federal approval.

I can only imagine the arguments for (relieving congestion on the roadways) and against (safety). Brings law enforcement and the regular motoring public significant new challenges, huh?!

- **ARPAIO** — The man, who became known as "America's Sheriff" — and some in Yavapai County even thought of him as *their* sheriff (not thinking we have our own) — is running for office again.

Former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio turned in his nominating petition signatures on Monday, March 4, qualifying him for the ballot in his campaign for mayor of Fountain Hills, Arizona.

Although only 297 signatures were required, Arpaio turned in 565 signatures.

I don't begrudge the 91-year-old the effort; however, this is the man who has cost Maricopa County upwards of \$215 million in settlements and court actions related to racial profiling and lawsuits.

Hmmm.

- **PARTING SHOT** — One of the marvelous things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we couldn't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and perhaps help them find self-confidence and inner healing.

It takes a community.

*Follow Tim Wiederaenders on Twitter @TWieds\_editor. Reach him at 928-445-3333, ext. 2032, or [twieds@prescottaz.com](mailto:twieds@prescottaz.com).*

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