



Katie Hobbs
Governor

ARIZONA STATE PARKS & TRAILS

Bob Broscheid
Executive Director



June 7, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to offer my support for the Wild and Scenic River designation for the Upper Verde River. As the strongest form of federal river protection in the United States, this designation would provide enhanced protections for one of the few remaining perennial-flowing rivers in Arizona. It would also provide a structured framework for management of this unique watercourse by federal and state agencies, tribes, municipalities, private landowners and non-for-profit organizations.

As the State Historic Preservation Officer, I am charged by both the state and federal government to work in partnership with these entities to plan for the identification, designation, and consideration of historic properties in land use and development. Some of the Arizona's most fragile heritage resources are located along the course of the Upper Verde, including at least 55 identified archaeological sites and natural and cultural features known to be of significance to many of Arizona's tribes. The Yavapai Apache people, in particular, hold the health of the Upper Verde ecosystem as essential to the persistence of their traditional cultural landscape.

The Upper Verde is also a major destination for naturalists and recreationists who hike and enjoy the scenery, plants and wildlife within its beautiful canyons and, in turn, provide the foundations for a thriving heritage tourism industry in the historic downtowns of Clarkdale, Cottonwood, Camp Verde and Sedona. A Wild and Scenic River designation would provide critical recognition of the role the river has played in the historical development and continued economic vibrancy of these communities. Most importantly, designation would clearly articulate a shared commitment to conserving this special resource for the future benefit of all Arizonans. If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at 602-542-4009 or by email at KLeonard@azstateparks.gov.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Leonard
State Historic Preservation Officer
Arizona State Parks and Trails