



# News Release

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## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release  
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### **Agencies propose removing smallmouth bass from Fossil Creek Public meeting set to discuss creek renovation**

FLAGSTAFF – The Arizona Game and Fish Department, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are hosting a public meeting at the Verde Ranger District office at 300 East Highway 260 starting 5 p.m. Aug. 29 to discuss removing unwanted smallmouth bass from a unique native fish haven in Fossil Creek using rotenone, a naturally occurring piscicide.

Rotenone affects gill-breathing species such as fish, has a short life span, and quickly biodegrades into harmless substances. Fossil Creek was originally treated to remove unwanted non-native fish in 2004 to create this unique sanctuary for native aquatic species, including chub.

“The whole point of the meeting is to advise the public of the proposed treatment of a portion of Fossil Creek,” says Scott Rogers, fish program manager for Game and Fish. “We will have representatives there providing information about the proposed treatment, length of time it will take, and answer questions the public may have.”

The proposed treatment, scheduled for September, will be in an area of Fossil Creek between a temporary fish barrier located at the confluence of Sally May Wash and Fossil Creek, and the original fish barrier located in the Mazatzal Wilderness approximately 2.6 miles downstream.

Fossil Creek is part of the Verde River drainage and lies on the border between the Tonto and Coconino National Forests. The proposed treatment area lies within the Mazatzal Wilderness.

During 2004, a large multi-agency effort involving many stakeholders successfully removed all nonnative fish from this unique travertine stream. Prior to the original renovation, nonnative predatory and competitive fishes such as smallmouth bass were one of the primary causes for the decline of native fish in Fossil Creek. Their presence now threatens all of the native aquatic species in the creek, including the unique native sport fishery for chub.

It also took a major effort to restore the historical flows to Fossil Creek – a significant portion of those flows had been diverted for hydro-electric generating purposes for almost a hundred years to help Arizona grow and flourish.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, close captioning, or other accommodation needs to Jeff Humphrey, 602-242-0210, [jeff\\_humphrey@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_humphrey@fws.gov), TTY 800-877-8339 with your request by close of business Aug. 24.