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Organization seeks volunteers to walk, map Agua Fria River

By Bruce Colbert
Reporter

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

Citizen scientists, government officials and volunteers train on Feb. 5 for a one-day river walk June 21 to map the wet and dry areas of the Agua Fria River.

"This is a wet/dry mapping project to record where the Agua Fria River is flowing and where it is not," Lanie Levick, of the Arizona Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials project, said.

Arizona NEMO is partnered with the [University of Arizona](#) and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality for the water study. The wet/dry mapping procedure for the Agua Fria River is modeled on the San Pedro Riparian Conservation Area project that NEMO completed in 2007.

"We are not collecting scientific data per se, we just want to get an idea of where the river is flowing during its driest time of the year," Levick said. Mapping starts near Mayer and continues downstream into the Agua Fria National Monument.

Levick and Rem Hawes, the AFNM manager, recently met and located access points to the river for vehicles and horses. On mapping day, volunteers are driven to an access point and walk a section of the river entering GPS coordinates at wet and dry areas. Vehicles collect the mappers at the end of their river section and return them to the staging area.

The half-day training includes how to use a GPS, measuring distance by pacing and entering information on data forms. Organizations already committed to helping with the training and mapping include the Upper Agua Fria Watershed Partnership, Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument, [Arcosanti](#), [Prescott College](#) and the Bureau of Land Management.

Levick said equestrian groups and individuals with horses are invited to help map the river on horseback June 21, but do not need their horses for the training day.

"The more volunteers we have, the more of the river we can map. Horses can cover a lot more ground than people on foot," Levick said. At least one equestrian group from Maricopa County is already committed to the mapping day.

"The purpose of NEMO is to provide information to help communities protect their water sources and to educate land-use decision makers about the impacts of non-point water pollution," Levick said. Non-point pollution is pollution from a separate location that gets into to a water source.

Wet/dry mapping for volunteers is taught at Chauncey Ranch YMCA, located near Mayer. Training starts at 1 p.m.

To volunteer or learn more information, e-mail Levick at llevick@email.arizona.edu, or call 520-670-6380 ext. 176. Information about NEMO is found at www.ArizonaNEMO.org.

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