



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE JUNE 3, 2010***

Contact: Diane Brossart  
Valley Forward Association  
(602) 240-2408  
Katarina Kovacevic  
Olson Communications  
(480) 368-7999

### **VALLEY RESIDENTS HAVE CAUSE TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL TRAILS DAY THIS WEEKEND**

PHOENIX (June 3, 2010) – There is ample reason for Valley residents to celebrate National Trails Day on Saturday, June 5. Significant progress has been made in adding and improving trails in the region since the Maricopa Trail was adopted by Maricopa County and *The Valley's Pedestrian Freeway* unveiled by Valley Forward in 2004.

Approximately 48 miles of new trails have been added to the Maricopa Trail, which circles the Valley and connects the county's regional park system. Improvements have been made to an additional 77 miles of the Maricopa Trail, enhancing a total of approximately 125 miles of this signature landmark since its adoption six years ago.

Valley Forward's *Pedestrian Freeway*, which goes beyond the work performed by Maricopa County and connects landmark destinations throughout the Valley, has added about 75 miles of new or improved trails over the last six years.

"Together, these projects have added more than 120 miles of new trails to the region's system since they were introduced in 2004," said Diane Brossart, president of Valley Forward. "That's amazing progress considering that two of the last six years marked one of the worst recessions in our nation's history."

Perhaps even more remarkable is that a total of 49 miles previously identified by the non-profit environmental public interest organization as gaps in the trails network have since been re-designated as planned or constructed trails by Valley municipalities.

Virtually every Valley mayor and the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors signed a proclamation in 2004 supporting Valley Forward's vision for *The Valley's Pedestrian Freeway – A Priceless Necklace of Trails and Gems*. It was designed to link communities and landmark destinations in a non-motorized system promoting health and wellness, connectivity and economic development.

While Maricopa County has primarily led regional efforts to create a trails system for the Valley, most local communities have supported the concept and made strides of their own.

## Add 1/National Trails Day

The five-mile Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Project in Phoenix has resulted in new trail segments and also transformed 13 miles previously designated as gaps in the system to planned trails. In addition, the Va Shly'ay Akimel Environmental Restoration Project in the city of Mesa and through the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community extends the Phoenix and Tempe Rio Salado projects with 13 more miles of river restoration. This trail segment also moved from a gap in the system to a planned trail.

The city of Goodyear closed gaps by adding 6 miles of planned trails in the Bullard Wash and constructing one of those miles in partnership with the Flood Control District of Maricopa County. An 11-mile gap became a planned trail along the proposed Northern Avenue alignment west of the Agua Fria River.

Michael Park of EPG and chair of Valley Forward's Trails Task Force commended Valley communities for making trails and open space a priority. "Surveys consistently show that Arizona residents highly value the natural desert landscape that makes our state unique and special," he said. "This was reinforced again in the Gallop Polls recently commissioned by the Center for the Future of Arizona to produce *The Arizona We Want* report now circulating around the state."

Some of the new trails added in the Valley since 2004 include:

- Nearly 17 miles along the Maricopa Trail in the McMicken Corridor through the Northwest Valley in the cities of Surprise, Sun City and Peoria;
- Approximately 15 miles on the Maricopa Trail from Lake Pleasant to I-17 and north of the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve to east of Anthem
- Almost 13 miles along the Maricopa Trail in the vicinity of Cave Creek Regional Park and Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area;
- 7.5 miles of the Maricopa Trail from South Mountain Park to the Salt River
- 4.5 miles in the White Tank Mountain Regional Park;
- About 12 miles along the New River Trail in Glendale and Peoria;
- 3 miles along the Skunk Creek Trail in Glendale;
- 7.4 miles in Queen Creek;
- 5.6 miles along the Laveen Area Conveyance Channel in southwest Phoenix in partnership with the Flood Control District of Maricopa County and Salt River Project;

## Add 2/National Trails Day

- 12.5 miles of the Maricopa Trail along the Western Canal through a partnership with the cities of Tempe, Chandler and Gilbert, along with SRP;
- 4 miles along the Powerline Trail in Gilbert in partnership with SRP;
- 2.5 miles in Tempe along the Town Lake;
- 4 miles along the Crosscut Canal in Tempe and Scottsdale in partnership with SRP;
- 5.5 miles along the Paseo Trail in Chandler in partnership with SRP.

Valley Forward's *Pedestrian Freeway* is posted on the organization's web site at [www.valleyforward.org](http://www.valleyforward.org) and features interactive Google Earth technology that allows users to visually see each trail via satellite and obtain useful information about recreational amenities.

A *Pedestrian Freeway* Passport created by Valley Forward identifies regional destinations, referred to as "gems," such as Camelback Mountain, Indian Bend Wash, the White Tank Mountains and Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch. The organization aims to facilitate physical connections among the Valley's trails and gems throughout the Valley.

For 41 years, Valley Forward has brought business and civic leaders together to convene thoughtful public dialogue on regional issues and to promote cooperative efforts to improve the environment and livability of Valley communities.