

## OPEN SPACE PROGRAM POLICY STATEMENT:

Prescott's Open Space Program seeks to promote quality of life for the citizens of Prescott by preserving and protecting the natural environment that has given this City much of its character. Its natural areas include magnificent vistas and panoramas, beautiful terrain, and native flora and fauna. Hills, sloping sites, and dominant rock outcroppings afford spectacular views of this natural environment. Seasonal streams and man-made lakes with their plant and animal life complement these scenic vistas. Prescott's unique natural areas must be preserved and protected for the enjoyment of current and future generations through the judicious use of Open Space Funds.

As Prescott continues to grow, open spaces will be woven into the fabric of the City. They will create harmony between physical development and the natural environment for the benefit of all Prescott citizens. Responsible custodianship of open space throughout Prescott will improve our City's quality of life. It will foster appreciation of the natural environment by providing increased opportunities for both passive and active recreation. Preservation of open space reinforces pride in our past and contributes to a vision for our future.

**USAGE OF OPEN SPACE FUNDS:** Funds derived from the one percent sales tax for Open Space Acquisition shall be expended only for acquisition of lands or interests in lands including necessary surveys, appraisals and due diligence. "Natural" improvements such as plantings, wetland enhancement and natural surfaced trails may NOT be paid for with Open Space Acquisition Funds. Other Open Space income, such as donations and lease payments, shall be kept in a separate account of funds designated for Open Space maintenance and improvements.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF LAND PRESERVATION:** Lands acquired with open space funds shall be preserved and managed in a manner consistent with low impact public use. Such lands can include scenic vistas, floodplains, trail corridors, historically recognized wildlife corridors, farmlands, highly visible natural areas along arterial streets, and open space buffers at the City's perimeter. Open spaces generally will be open for passive public use and enjoyment, and trails will be developed where possible to provide access. Examples of compatible passive recreation include hiking, nature study, picnicking, environmental education, and photography.

Development within the preserved open space will be limited to features that enhance and encourage ecotourism. Such features may include roads, trails, trailheads and picnic areas. Comfort facilities and a limited number of parking spaces will accompany trailheads and picnic areas.

Certain open space properties may be leased by the City to individuals or groups for cultural uses or continued agricultural uses such as farming or grazing. This approach can provide a glimpse of Prescott's past, protect the land from development, and continue compatible land use practices while shifting some maintenance costs to the lessee. Generally, the leased properties will continue to afford limited public access for passive

enjoyment. Lease proceeds will be assigned to the Open Space maintenance and improvements account.

In certain cases, it may be necessary to purchase a total property in order to preserve a portion of the property as open space. In such cases, the City may opt to dispose of the remainder, and the Open Space acquisition account shall be reimbursed the value of the disposed land at the time of its sale.

**CRITERIA:** Six major criteria shall guide the selection of specific open space sites for possible acquisition and preservation:

1. **AESTHETICS:** Unique or dramatic visual impact; protects scenic view corridor; visually enhances primary transportation corridor; unique view from site; natural features that enhance quality of life (e.g., rock formation, body of water, trees).
2. **PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION:** Protection of environmentally sensitive features (e.g., wetlands, native vegetation, wildlife, floodplain encroachment).
3. **USE POTENTIAL:** Ability of the land to be used for passive recreational purposes including trail linkages, outdoor recreation, ecotourism, rock climbing, etc. Potential secondary benefits to the community would include watershed protection, drainage or regional retention areas, noise buffer, and continued agricultural production.
4. **LOCATION:** Enhances spatial definition of urban area; protects remaining undeveloped land within large developed area of City; expands the distribution of open space across the City; provides key link or extension/addition to existing park/open space area; provides added open space in proximity to existing or proposed urban development; improves overall access to open space.
5. **NEED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION:** Development pressure; development status; potential to remain as open space; attitude of property owner.
6. **ACQUISITION CONSIDERATION:** Availability of land; ease of acquisition; price of land; significance of economic loss to City; potential for increase in price in the near future; potential for acquiring other sources of funds

**RESTRICTIONS ON OPEN SPACE PROPERTY:** It may be necessary to temporarily close an open space property in order to protect a natural resource, or to make the property safe for public enjoyment. Fencing and/or signage may be installed to delineate and protect certain properties.

**MAINTENANCE OF OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES:** The Department of Parks, Recreation and Library shall be responsible for the regular maintenance and operation of the Open Space properties, subject to funds made available in the general operating budget and from the Open Space maintenance and improvements account.

**DONATIONS TO OPEN SPACE PROGRAM:** The City of Prescott encourages concerned persons or parties to donate certain lands or monies for use in the Open Space Program. City Council may by ordinance accept properties not acquired with Open Space Funds into the Open Space Program. Donated properties outside the established Open Space criteria may be sold by the City with proceeds to be used for Open Space maintenance and improvements.

**STATEMENT ON DEED:** Any deed conveying to the City Open Space property that was purchased using Open Space Sales Tax Funds shall contain the notation: “This land was purchased with Open Space Tax Funds authorized by the ballot proposition stated in Resolution No. 3227, which Resolution was adopted by the Prescott City Council on January 18, 2000, and which ballot proposition was adopted by the voters in a special election held May 16, 2000; and further subject to the Council policy stated in Resolution No. 3693, which was adopted by the Prescott City Council on August 23, 2005, and any subsequent amending Open Space policies or measures.”

**METHODS OF ACQUISITION:** The method of Open Space acquisition by the City of Prescott shall be by Fee Simple purchase or by donation, including when appropriate use of Conservation Easement with a third party assigned to oversight responsibility.

*Submitted by the City of Prescott Open Space Advisory Committee August 1, 2005.  
Adopted by the Prescott City Council as Resolution 3700 on August 23, 2005.*