Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/12/2022 3:55:51 AM
First name: Patricia
Last name: Ellsworth
Organization:
Title:
Comments: I have an interest in this suitability study because I conducted biomonitoring of macroinvertebrates in the Upper Verde River in the summers of 1992-1994. The structure of the macroinvertebrate community in the Upper Verde River was of particular interest because that part of the river was home to the Spikedace, a native fish species in Arizona. The project was funded under a cooperative agreement between Northern Arizona University and the Prescott National Forest, Chino Valley Ranger District. Reports and data from the biomonitoring were submitted to the Chino Valley Ranger District.

I support considering the Upper Verde River as suitable for Wild and Scenic designation. I believe there are ORVs to support such designation.

I also support fish barriers to exclude non-native fish from the Upper Verde River in order to re-introduce and protect native aquatic species there. I understand that the proposed fish barriers will interrupt the free flow of the river for a short distance upstream of each barrier, especially during low water seasons.

I suggest that river Segments 1 and 2 be considered suitable for Scenic (Segment 1) and Wild (Segment 2) designations as far downstream as the interruption caused by the fish barrier at Site 1 (Hell Point). From that point to the fish barrier at Site 2 (at 1.1 miles upstream of Sycamore Creek) the river can be considered suitable for Scenic designation. Each fish barrier will create a small impoundment upstream from the concrete barrier. However, that impoundment will exist for less than one mile upstream from the barrier. Therefore, it seems to me that the remaining river miles above the impoundment will be free-flowing.

In summary, as a retired freshwater biologist, I place a very high priority on re-introduction and protection of native fish in the Upper Verde River. I hope that can be accomplished while also considering segments of the Upper Verde suitable for Wild and Scenic designation.

Thank you for your work on this suitability study.
Sincerely,
Patricia M. Ellsworth, Ph.D.