

Robin Silver

From: Robin Silver <rsilver@biologicaldiversity.org>
Sent: Monday, May 06, 2019 2:23 PM
To: LEONARD TAYLOR
Subject: RE: Bible Camp on Mt Graham
Attachments: NOI 20180413 COLUMBINE PERMITS FINAL 20180628 USFWS_USFS response AGREE THAT REINITIATION IS NECESSARY AT THIS TIME.pdf; NOI 20180413 COLUMBINE PERMITS FINAL.pdf

Thank you for your note Mr. Taylor.

Only about 75 Mount Graham Red Squirrels remain on Earth. The squirrels are so imperiled because of progressive, piecemeal loss of their canopied forest habitat.

The Arizona Church of Christ's Mount Graham camp has and continues contributing to this piecemeal loss of habitat. As a result, the Church has and continues contributing to the Mount Graham Red Squirrel's current extreme risk of extinction.

Currently, only a few canopied forested areas survive on Mount Graham capable of providing the squirrel with habitat critically suitable for short term recovery. These areas include the Grant Hill area, the Riggs Lake area, Turkey Flat, and the Columbine area. The Church's camp is located in the Columbine area.

As you undoubtedly already know, the camp's permit was to have been terminated in 1992 as mitigation for the University of Arizona telescopes' habitat destruction.^[1] Specifically, the July 14, 1988, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion required removal of the camp "to be incorporated into forest restoration plans for the area...[because]...[r]emoval of the Bible Camp and summer homes and subsequent reforestation represents the best opportunity to regain previously lost habitat...[when] [p]ermits for the 14 summer homes at Columbine and the Arizona Bible Camp will not be renewed in 1992."^[2]

The Columbine cabins' and camp's permits were never terminated, however, for purely political reasons. Documentation of these facts are included in our April 13, 2018, Notice. Our Notice, and the response from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service are attached for your convenience.

We have tried to initiate a dialogue with Arizona Church of Christ leadership for years without success. We have hoped to discuss inconsistencies between the Church's teachings and the Church's treatment of the Mount Graham Red Squirrel. Specifically, we have hoped to discuss the hypocrisy of the Church's continuing Mount Graham camp operations that deprive the Mount Graham Red Squirrel of habitat essential for its survival and recovery.

We have hoped to discuss the following:

"If Noah started altering the ark, then it would have been just like all the other boats. It would no longer be the ark that saved...God has clearly said that we are not at liberty to change His plans." (Church of Christ website)^[3]

“And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1:25)

“And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. (Genesis 6:19)

“Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "I now establish my covenant with you and your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you - the birds, the livestock, and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you - every living creature on the earth.” (Genesis 9:8 – 9)

“And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.” (Genesis 9: 12 – 13)

“The earth dries up and withers, the world languished and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt.” (Isaiah 24:4-6)

The Arizona Church of Christ's Mount Graham camp in the Ash Creek drainage of Columbine has enjoyed generations of use on Mount Graham owing to a Special Use Permit to rent and occupy U.S. Forest Service Coronado National Forest land. The camp's Special Use Permit may be terminated “at the discretion of the regional forester or the Chief, Forest Service.”^[4] With the Columbine area forest now being essential for short term habitat restoration and Mount Graham Red Squirrel survival, the Forest Service has no choice but (1) to terminate the camp's Special Use Permit, (2) to assure that the Church removes the structures consistent with the permit^[5] and (3) to emergently restore the area.

In addition, the Church's Special Use Permit “is not transferable.”^[6] Even if the Church finds buyer, the new owner cannot secure a new Special Use Permit without the Forest Service determining that the new permit “is in the public interest.”^[7] It is not. Issuance of a new permit is not in the public interest since continued occupation of the Columbine area by structures prevents restoration and recovery of habitat essential for Mount Graham Red Squirrel survival. No new permit will be issued to any new owner.

In summary, due to (1) the rarity of Mount Graham's surviving canopied forest habitat, (2) to the precarious status of the Mount Graham Red Squirrel, and (3) to the impending termination of the camp's permit, your camp has no commercial value. The Arizona Church of Christ should voluntarily close its Mount Graham camp to (1) try and help prevent extinction of the Mount Graham Red Squirrel, and (2) to behave more consistently with the Church's expressed ideals and teachings.

Sincerely, Robin Silver

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From: LEONARD TAYLOR [mailto:thunder21@cox.net]
Sent: Saturday, May 04, 2019 4:20 PM
To: rsilver@biologicaldiversity.org
Subject: Bible Camp on Mt Graham

Greetings,

I am vice-president of the board that operates the Arizona Church of Christ Bible Camp on Mt Graham. Due to increased pressures on people's time, it has become difficult to maintain the facility and use it as it was in the past.

Prior to the Frye Fire, we were looking to sell the facility, with an initial ask of \$250,000. The camp itself suffered no harm during the fire, but we have not been able to use it since then due to our spring water system being destroyed by floods. That narrow canyon was a high-intensity burn, changing from old-growth forest to bare ground and burnt logs, the stream bed cutting 10' deep and 20' wide. The spring is still flowing, it just needs a bit of work to access.

We are aware of the efforts to close the facility, and are willing to sell for a reduced price. This would eliminate headaches for both of us; yours in trying to close it, and ours in trying to repair it. Sale would be "as-is," so removal of structures would not be our responsibility.

Let me know your thoughts on this idea.

-Leonard Taylor

^[1] United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion on the Coronado National Forest Plan and the Mt. Graham Astrophysical Area Plan and the Mt. Graham red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus grahamensis*), Region 2, FEW/HC 2-21-86-F-75, July 14, 1988.

^[2] Ibid.

^[3] <http://lavistachurchofchrist.org/LVSermons/NoahYouHaveGotToBeKidding.htm>.

^[4] United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service SPECIAL USE PERMIT to Arizona Church of Christ Bible Camp, 651 South Kolb Road, Tucson, Arizona 85710, August 10, 1977.; Amendment No. 1 for Special Use Permit issued to the Arizona Church of Christ Bible Camp, October 26, 1982.; Amendment No. 2 for Special Use Permit, December 2, 2007.; and Amendment No. 3 for Special Use Permit issued to the Arizona Church of Christ Bible Camp, October 6, 1993.

^[5] United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service SPECIAL USE PERMIT to Arizona Church of Christ Bible Camp, 651 South Kolb Road, Tucson, Arizona 85710, August 10, 1977, paragraph 16.

^[6] Ibid., paragraph 13.

^[7] Ibid., paragraph 13.