Fossil Creek Fish Renovation
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the reason for the renovation of Fossil Creek?
Fossil Creek is nationally recognized for its native fish and is unique in the Southwest. The purpose for the renovation (treatment) of Fossil Creek is to eradicate smallmouth bass, a non-native fish species that can decrease or eliminate native fish species in Fossil Creek. Non-native bass moved upstream of a constructed fish barrier in 2011 after a large flood damaged and affected the function of the barrier. The fish barrier was designed to keep non-native fish out of upper Fossil Creek. The fish barrier was originally built in 2004 when Fossil Creek was renovated and non-native fish were removed. Fossil Creek upstream of the barrier remained free of non-native fish from 2004-2011.

Why remove the non-native fish species?
Smallmouth bass are incredibly effective at eating and competing with native fish species. We removed smallmouth bass and green sunfish in 2004 because of their negative effects on native fish.

Who is renovating Fossil Creek?
The Fossil Creek renovation (treatment) is a cooperative effort between the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Reclamation. These organizations have done many successful chemical renovations throughout the state. The action has support from numerous sportsman groups and environmental groups throughout the state.

Will Fossil Creek be closed to fishing?
Under current regulations, Fossil Creek is only open to fishing from the 1st Saturday in October to April 30th annually from High Falls downstream to confluence with Sally May Wash. Special catch and release regulations are posted throughout the fishing section of river during the open fishing season. The portion of Fossil Creek that is being treated is closed to fishing year round. The section of Fossil Creek open to fishing will be open in 2012.

What is being used to renovate Fossil Creek?
We are using a chemical called "rotenone" to remove non-native fish from Fossil Creek. Rotenone is a naturally occurring substance derived from the roots of tropical plants in the bean family that are found primarily in Malaysia, South America, and East Africa. It is derived from ground-up plant roots. People have utilized rotenone for centuries to capture fish for food in areas where these plants are naturally found, and it has been used in fisheries management as a piscicide (pesticide that kills fish) in North America since the 1930s. Rotenone affects gill breathing organisms by inhibiting respiration. Although rotenone is highly toxic to gill breathing organisms, it is not toxic to other animas at the low concentration that we use to remove fish. Rotenone has also been used as an insecticide in residential products for control of fleas, ticks, and mites on pets and livestock; and for control of aphids on garden plants. Rotenone was used widely in North America for agricultural use as a botanical insecticide for use in fruit and vegetable crops.

Will Fossil Creek be closed to the public during the treatment?
Access to Fossil Creek, except the Fossil Springs Area, will be closed to the public during the treatment.

Area Description:
Starting at the junction of the Verde River and the northwest boundary of Township 11 North, Range 6 East, Section 11 (Gila and Salt River Meridian) near Childs, AZ, following the east bank of the Verde River south to the southern tip of the Forest boundary in the northeast corner of T11N, R6E, S25, then following the Coconino Forest boundary (middle of Fossil Creek) northeast to the intersection with the eastern boundary of T12N, R7E, S15. Thereafter the closure boundary follows this section boundary north until it meets the Fossil Springs Wilderness boundary. Then following the Fossil Springs Wilderness Boundary southwest to T12N, R7E, S16 southern edge, departing from Wilderness boundary to the west until it meets FS 9D (powerline road) at the southeast corner of T12N, R6 ½ E, S17; following FS 9D southwest to its junction with FS 708 in T12N, R6 ½ E, S30. The closure boundary then follows FS 708 west to the junction with FS 502, where it then follows and includes FS 502 southwest to the junction of the Verde River at the northwest boundary of T11N, R6E, S11.

Dates of closure:
The Closure Order will be in effect Tuesday September 11, 2012 at 8:00 A.M. The closure will be in effect Tuesday 8:00 A.M. through Friday 1:00 P.M. each week thereafter until rescinded, likely on September 28, 2012.