

Blue Ribbon Fishery

Fossil Creek is a unique watershed nestled in the Mazatzal wilderness on the border of the Coconino and Tonto national forests. Consistent flows, 70 degree water, and an ever changing travertine streambed, combine to create an unique ecosystem ideal for some of Arizona's native fish. 2005 marked the year when Fossil Creek would turn from a hydrologic utility, to a recreational destination, by decommissioning a power plant and returning full flows to the creek. This transformed the small trickle into a clear, blue, fast flowing oasis which would eventually harbor one of the largest Roundtail Chub populations in existence. In the spring of 2009, congress designated Fossil Creek as one of the country's Wild and Scenic Rivers, ensuring that this newly restored ecosystem continues to thrive and act as a recreational resource to the public. With the success of the restoration efforts, the Arizona Game and Fish Department opened a 4 mile stretch of Fossil creek to seasonal catch and release fishing in the fall of 2009. Fossil Creek has become one of the first blue ribbon chub fisheries in the country.



Roundtail Chub

Native to Arizona, the Roundtail Chub is considered a sport fish because of its hardy fighting ability and willingness to take many of the same baits and lures used for trout. The body of the chub is thick and streamlined, dark olive-gray above with silver sides. Mouth extends to front of the eye. Dorsal fin and anal fin usually have 8 to 10 rays. Large forked tail fin. Breeding males develop red or orange coloration on lower half of cheek and bases of paired fins. Fossil Creek has a large population that is open for catch and release fishing during certain times of the year.

Where to Fish

What's open: The 4 mile stretch of fishable water starts from the Old Fossil Creek Dam 1 mile upstream from the Irving trailhead, down to a set of power lines that crosses the creek just below Sally May Wash. This section is open for catch and release fishing between the first Saturday in October all the way through April 30th.

What to use: Fly fishing is the best approach to catching chub in Fossil Creek. Size 10 dark wooly buggers with a bit of flash seem to yield the best results. Small spinners and even plastic jigs can prove to be successful when other methods aren't working.

Best parts of the creek: Fishing is best in early fall and late spring. Drifting flies through some of the deeper pools will yield the bigger fish. Sight fishing is fantastic in this creek, so be sure to walk along the shore line to pick and choose amongst thousands of fish for one you'd like to catch.



Why Fish Fossil Creek?

The current condition of Fossil Creek is the result of multiple agencies and groups coming together to reach a common goal; to restore to the creek to the majestic blue water oasis it once was. By fishing the creek you are supporting future management of the fish, habitat, and other wildlife that occur in the area. Restoration efforts like this one are done in the interest of the public, people like yourself, so go on, enjoy the fishing and have fun, experience a blue ribbon chub fishery first hand!





Fishing Fossil Creek

A Guide to Fishing for Native Roundtail Chub in the Tonto and Coconino National Forest.



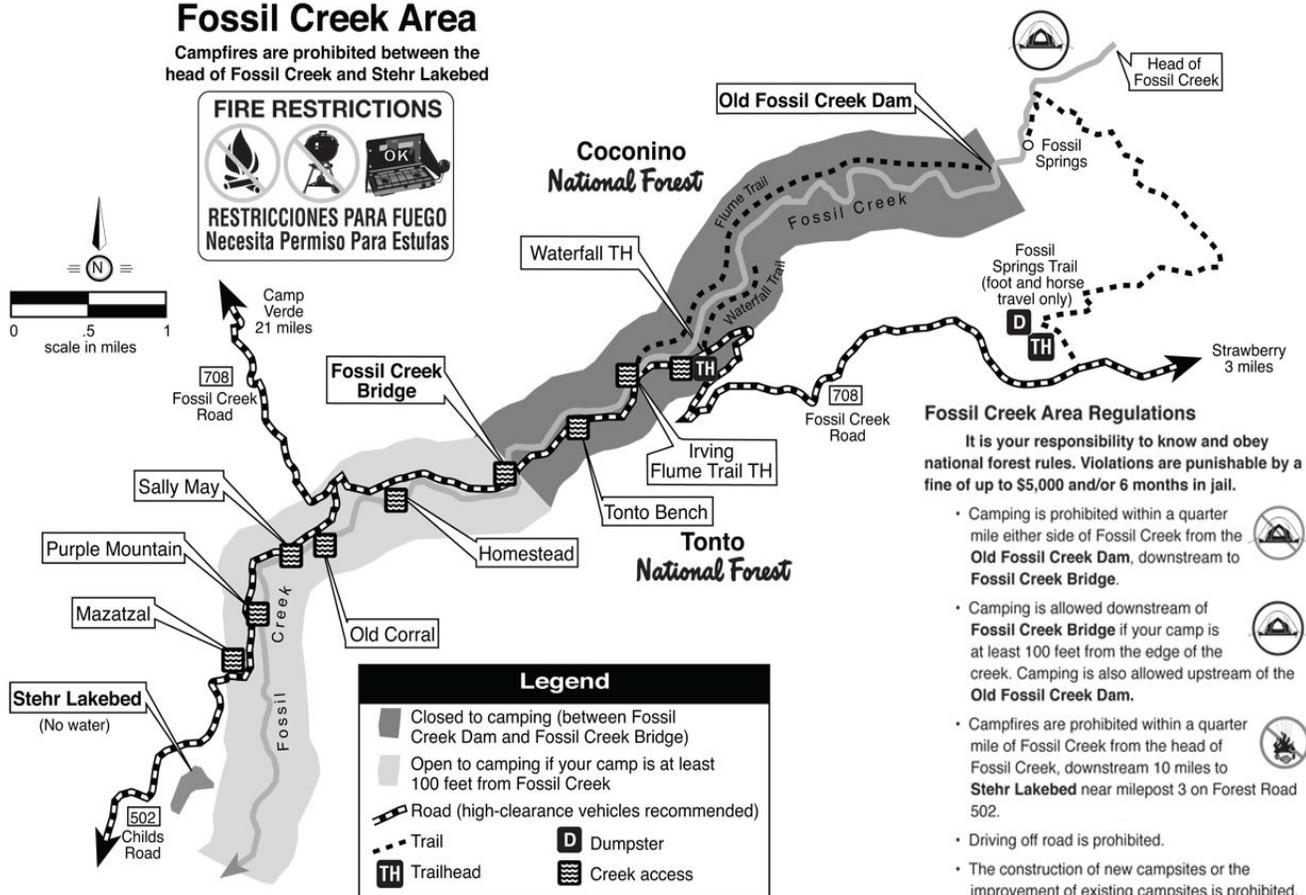
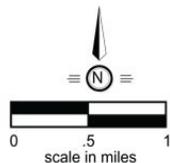
Fossil Creek Area

Campfires are prohibited between the head of Fossil Creek and Stehr Lakebed

FIRE RESTRICTIONS



RESTRICCIONES PARA FUEGO
Necesita Permiso Para Estufas



Fossil Creek Area Regulations

It is your responsibility to know and obey national forest rules. Violations are punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or 6 months in jail.

- Camping is prohibited within a quarter mile either side of Fossil Creek from the Old Fossil Creek Dam, downstream to Fossil Creek Bridge.
- Camping is allowed downstream of Fossil Creek Bridge if your camp is at least 100 feet from the edge of the creek. Camping is also allowed upstream of the Old Fossil Creek Dam.
- Campfires are prohibited within a quarter mile of Fossil Creek from the head of Fossil Creek, downstream 10 miles to Stehr Lakebed near milepost 3 on Forest Road 502.
- Driving off road is prohibited.
- The construction of new campsites or the improvement of existing campsites is prohibited.

Map provided by US Forest Service

How to Get There

There is currently only one way to access the fishable section of Fossil Creek due to road closures. From Phoenix, travel north on Interstate 17 to Camp Verde. Travel east from Camp Verde on Highway 260. Turn south on FS 708 (Fossil Creek Road). Travel approximately 12 miles along this dirt road until you reach the Fossil Creek Bridge, located in the center of the 4 mile catch and release fishing section.

Please observe all fishing regulations, bag limits, and license requirements. For more information visit www.azgfd.gov or any of the more than 300 license dealers located throughout the state.

Arizona Game and Fish Department

5000 W Carefree Highway

Phoenix, AZ 85086

(602) 942-3000

www.azgfd.gov

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