

### III. Community Character

#### A. Existing Conditions

##### 1. Setting

Williamson Valley Road begins within the City of Prescott at Iron Springs Road in the northwest corner of the city. Designated Yavapai County Route 5, Williamson Valley Road extends north and west from its point of origin approximately 66 miles to the community of Seligman on Interstate 40 in northern Yavapai County. For the first 22 miles the road is a paved, two-lane thoroughfare. For the remaining 44 miles to the outskirts of Seligman, it is unpaved.

The Williamson Valley Community, for the purposes of this Plan (the exact boundaries are indicated on the map in Section I), includes the areas on both sides of Williamson Valley Road from approximately the Prescott city limits to the northern boundary of the Crossroads Ranch development. The entire Community abuts the paved portion of the road.

The majority of terrain in the Williamson Valley Community consists of rolling hills, ridges, mesas, level grasslands, and washes with various mountain peaks providing visual focal points. Granite Mountain (elev. 7626') lies within the Prescott National Forest and rises over 2200' from the valley floor, dominating the view from most of the Corridor area. Table Mountain (at the northeast intersection of Outer Loop and Williamson Valley Roads) rises to an elevation of 5571'. On the horizon further to the northeast of Williamson Valley Road are Simmons Peak (5757') and Saddle Butte (5690'). To the far northwest along the Williamson Valley Road horizon is Picacho Butte, a 7168' volcanic cone. On the western sunset horizon lie the Santa Maria and Juniper Mountains, and the Juniper Mesa within the Prescott National Forest. Red Mountain (6831') and Denny Mountain (6595') are the taller peaks.

The plant community includes ponderosa pines that cover Granite Mountain's peak and flourish in the southern extremes of the Community on the higher elevations closer to the City of Prescott. In the northern part of the Community, pinyon pines, oaks, and junipers predominate. Gambel oak trees, scrub oak, manzanita, and short-grass prairie grasslands abound throughout most areas. An assortment of spring and summer wildflowers offers color and variety within the Community. Two growing seasons occur: a longer spring season and a short 1-2 week late summer season.

Area wildlife includes peregrine falcons, pronghorn antelope, coyote, red-tailed hawks, javelina, mule deer, turkey vultures, black bear, Gambel's quail, elk, bobcat, fox, and mountain lions. One of the County's largest herds of antelope ranges within the Deep Well Ranch, State Trust lands on the east side of Williamson Valley Road. Although no systematic biological survey has been conducted within the Community, U.S. Fish and Wildlife has identified one Federally Endangered Species as found in the Community; i.e., the Gila Chub (*Gila intermedia*)—a small dark-colored minnow adapted to low-flowing streams subject to seasonal droughts. Critical Habitat identifies geographic areas that contain features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management considerations or protection. A section of Williamson Valley Wash has been declared Critical Habitat<sup>1</sup> for this species. It is defined as *Williamson Valley Wash: 7.2 km [4.4 mi] of creek extending from the gauging station in T17N, R3W, sec 7 SE¼ upstream to the crossing of the Williamson Valley Road in T17, R4W, sec. 36 NE¼. Land ownership: private.*<sup>1</sup> The threats to this species in this habitat segment are listed as *Nonnative species, residential development, water use.*<sup>1</sup> The status classification is listed as *endangered.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 211, Wednesday, November 2, 2005, Rules and Regulations.

## 2. History

There has been human habitation in the area of the Williamson Valley Community and Williamson Valley proper since at least 900 A.D. The first settlers were the Native Americans who migrated into the area to hunt deer, pronghorn, and smaller game. The Community also served as a passageway for these early settlers to and from the pine forests of the south. Archaeological studies have shown these early Native American tribes used the area for seasonal encampments, storage, and in some cases, permanent habitation. Petroglyphs along washes are at least 1000 years old. The discovery of gold in the 1850s brought a new migration of Euro-American miners and settlers into the area. The Yavapai and Hualapai tribes, already established in the area, considered this as an invasion of their territory and hunting grounds. In the 1860s this led to hostilities resulting in deaths on both sides. When the Civil War began, the Federal government established Arizona as a territory. Troops were stationed in the area to protect the gold mines and the growing number of settlers from both the Confederates and the hostile Indian tribes. In turn, the presence of the army and the growing civilian population created a demand for beef and hay. These events laid the foundation for agribusiness in the area. The lush grass in the Williamson Valley provided a natural basis for raising both hay and cattle. In 1864, a cattleman named Stevens brought livestock into Williamson Valley and began the long and prosperous connection between the valley and the new markets in Prescott and beyond.

Williamson Valley was named after Lt. Robert Stockton Williamson who served as a government surveyor in Arizona in 1854 with Lt. Joseph Ives. Since the valley was a natural passage to the Prescott area, Thomas Simmons, a civilian, established a stage station in the 1860s. Simmons, originally from Arkansas, provided meals, an exchange of horses, and also manned a post office. As postmaster in 1871, Simmons designated the station "Wilson," after the late Commissioner of the General Land Office. In 1873, the name was changed to "Williamson Valley." But in 1881 the name changed once again, this time to "Simmons", until the station closed in the 1930s. What is now Williamson Valley Road was known for many years as Simmons Highway. In fact, county publications continue to designate the name Simmons Highway on official maps.

Further south of the valley, the Community developed a similar economic structure based on ranching. In addition to the cattle industry, the Community diversified into small farms that provided fresh vegetables and fruit for residents in Prescott.

The following images provide an overview of life in the Williamson Valley Community in past years:

- Horses were the preferred mode of transportation around ranches and on back roads. Residents also used automobiles, primarily the Model T and Model A Fords, for traveling between ranches and for trips into town. Overland transportation was by stagecoach. A stage stop was located on the west side of Williamson Valley Road across from the Crossroads Ranch. In general, roads were poor and traveling was difficult and slow.
- Almost all Community residents had gardens and canned what they grew in order to survive the winter. Beef, pork, and chicken from domestic animals supplemented fruits and vegetables from the garden, as did meat from wild game. Meat was smoked, salted, hung in cellars, and sometimes canned.
- For Community residents the primary sources of income were from the sale of cattle, hay, and horses—both ranch horses and bucking horses for rodeos. Meat cutting, carpentry, blacksmithing and the sale of dairy products often supplemented income.

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- Social life revolved around neighbors helping neighbors with cattle roundups and putting up hay. The distance between ranches, frequently three or more miles, deterred frequent visits. Dancing was popular, and traveling bands visited Skull Valley, Kirkland, Williamson Valley, and Chino Valley. Rodeos were the biggest social events with Prescott's rodeo as the crown jewel. Residents held smaller, informal rodeos on individual ranches for fun and to practice for the major events. A visit to the town of Prescott was a major event in itself.
- Next to rodeo, the most popular recreation for men and boys was hunting. In fact, a rite of passage for boys was the exchange of the BB gun for a .22 rifle. Deer, antelope, and rabbits were commonly hunted for their meat. Cougars were plentiful and unpopular with the ranchers, because they killed cattle and deer. As a result, men hunted them for their bounty.
- By today's standards, the crime rate was low. Cattle rustling was considered one of the most serious offenses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Sharlot Hall Museum oral history archives.

Williamson Valley<sup>1</sup> and the Williamson Valley Community have had a long and positive impact on the growth and prosperity of Prescott and Yavapai County. The history of the County and of the City of Prescott would have been very different if the ranching and farming industry of Williamson Valley and the Community had not developed.

<sup>1</sup> As an historical footnote, for many years the entire plan area has been referred to as Williamson Valley by the residents, area residents, County Board of Supervisors, County Planning Commission, and County Staff alike. Technically, though, only the northern portion of the plan area is "Williamson Valley." The southern portion was long ago called Mint Valley.

### 3. Sense of Community

Today's residents love the rural atmosphere and natural beauty of the area. The majestic mountains that form the backdrop for the valley still inspire and provide the opportunity to commune with nature. State Trust and National Forest lands, including the Granite Mountain Wilderness Area, offer hiking trails that provide a chance to observe plant and animal life as well as to study and enjoy the geological formations in the area. The many riding trails and residents' opportunity to buy larger parcels of land have made horses an essential part of the Community. Whether getting from here to there by horse, bicycle, or on foot, the love of nature is a bond for all residents. Gardens and a variety of domestic animals are not uncommon. Here, waking up in the morning to the sound of a rooster crowing replaces waking up to the sound of commuting traffic.

The open beauty of the Community area inspires and unites most of the residents to protect this beauty. An obligation exists to preserve the Williamson Valley area with a thoughtful community plan.

### 4. Community Focal Point

The Williamson Valley Planning Area encompasses a variety of neighborhoods. Williamson Valley Road is the centerpiece of the community, for it sets its distinctive rural character. Several places within the Community can accommodate community meetings. Central Yavapai Fire District Station #57 is the location of WVCO monthly meetings and occasionally serves as a location for other civic meetings. Granite Oaks residents sometimes use Reserve Fire Station #50 for meetings. The Westside Christian Church, Abia Judd

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Elementary School, and the Williamson Valley fire department station firehouse at the Crossroads Ranch intersection are also used for community meetings and serve as polling places during elections.

### 5. Neighborhoods and Lifestyle

The Williamson Valley Community has many distinct subcommunities containing ranches, farms, luxury homes, horse properties, manufactured homes, seasonal retreats, and pockets of small affordable housing. Most of these areas are clustered together but each has a unique feel. Some areas are quite isolated, while others are located within planned subdivisions.

Examples of specific neighborhoods within the Community include areas comprised of modest, older homes, including manufactured dwellings. Other subdivisions consist of homes on lots smaller than two acres. Some neighborhoods are modern Planned Area Developments containing an average of two acres per dwelling and at least 25% of the total site dedicated as open space. Still other areas located on some of the more recently subdivided ranches, consist of individual residences on parcels of up to 36 acres or more. One element common to most, if not all, of the Community's neighborhoods is the noticeably large number of horse corrals and horses at residences.

The overriding character of these neighborhoods is the demographic diversity found throughout the Community. For example, there are areas populated primarily by retirees; yet other neighborhoods, located closer to the City of Prescott, are populated primarily by people who work in the surrounding communities. This diversity is also characterized by the fact that these neighborhoods overlap and create a rich mixture of people living in the Community. Residents choose to live here for the rural flavor provided by the surrounding mountains and long views. Privacy, wide-open spaces, recreation areas, and dark night skies untainted by commercial lighting also draw many people to the area. Other attractions include wildlife, first class single track mountain biking, quiet road biking, hiking and equestrian trails.

Despite this rural atmosphere, another attraction is the Community's proximity to shopping, health care, employment, schools, and entertainment in Prescott, Prescott Valley, and Chino Valley.<sup>1</sup> Post offices and public libraries are also located in these nearby municipalities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2005 Resident's Opinion Survey Results: Land Use #19 (Appendix E).

<sup>2</sup> The County sometimes refers to these unincorporated areas as "Municipal Influence Areas" as they depend upon nearby municipalities for amenities. Source: Yavapai County General Plan, adopted April, 2003, Land Use Element, p. 20.

### 6. Demographics, Employment, and Income

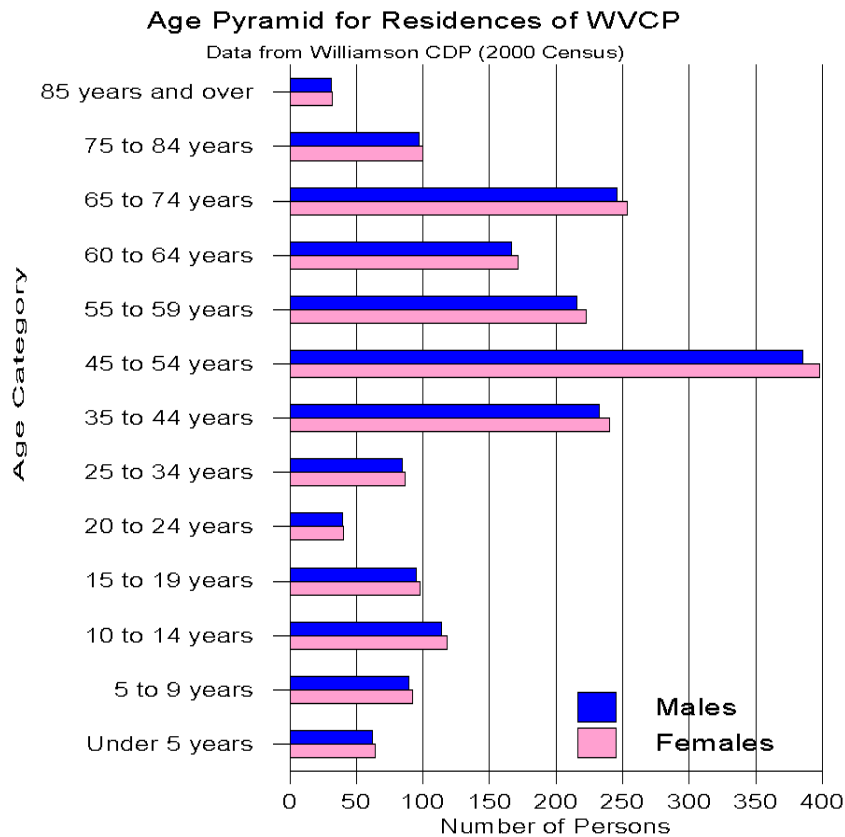
Extrapolating from the 2000 Williamson CDP, the following table estimates employment and demographics within the Williamson Valley Community:

<b>Subject</b>	2000 <sup>1</sup>	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>OCCUPATION</b>					
Management, professional, and related	1200	1303	1408	1506	1628
Service	348	379	409	437	473
Sales and office	519	564	609	651	704
Farming, fishing, and forestry	8	9	9	10	11

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Construction, extraction, and maintenance	382	416	449	480	519
Production, transportation, and material moving	162	176	191	204	220
<b>INDUSTRY</b>					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	34	37	40	43	46
Construction	398	433	467	500	540
Manufacturing	141	154	166	178	192
Wholesale trade	79	85	92	99	107
Retail trade	194	211	227	243	263
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	107	117	126	135	146
Information	24	26	28	30	32
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	173	188	203	217	235
Professional, scientific, administration, management, and waste management services	267	290	314	335	363
Educational, health and social services	744	808	873	934	1010
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	199	216	234	250	270

**Figure III-1: Age Pyramid (Extrapolated from WCDP, 2000 Census datum)**



Age pyramids (typically females are graphed to one side of the vertical axis and males the other, hence, the name pyramid) are often characterized as being of 1) young, 2) mature or 3) old age populations. "Young" populations have a large number of pre-reproductive age (triangular with a broad base), individuals. "Mature" have a large number of individuals in the early to mid post-reproductive age and "Old age" populations have the majority of individuals in the late post-reproductive age group. Young populations are expected to have a large growth rate (barring emigration) while conversely old-age populations are expected to have a slow growth rate (barring immigration).

## 7. Area Services

**Fire Protection**

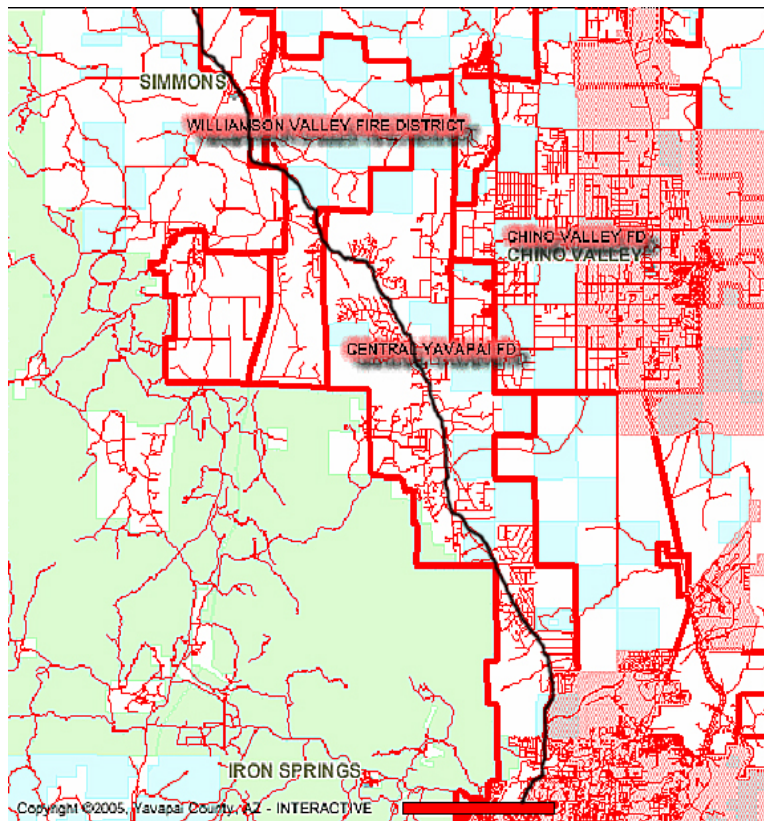
Two fire districts serve the Williamson Valley Community: The Central Yavapai Fire District and the Williamson Valley Fire District (WVFD).

**Central Yavapai Fire District (CYFD).** Located in central Yavapai County, CYFD provides fire protection for 150 square miles and includes the areas surrounding the City of Prescott including: Williamson Valley, Ponderosa Park, Highland Pines, Diamond Valley, Old Black Canyon area, town of Prescott Valley, Coyote Springs area, and the town of Dewey-Humboldt. District headquarters is in Station #53 on Yavapai Road in Prescott Valley. Those stations serving Williamson Valley are Station #57 on Outer Loop Road at Williamson Valley Road (manned 24 hours a day) and Station #50 on Williamson Valley Road across from the Granite Oaks subdivision (equipment only.)

Partnerships with CYFD include the fire departments of Prescott, Chino Valley, Mayer, Groom Creek, the United States Forest Service, Arizona State Land, and the Prescott Area Urban Wildland Interface Commission. Several of these agencies have “automatic aid” agreements that allow any department to respond to another department’s area, depending on what station is closest to the call. Other alliances include mutual aid agreements with all the fire departments in Yavapai County.

**Williamson Valley Fire District (WVFD).** WVFD serves the northern part of the Williamson Valley Community. The station is located on the corner of Crossroads Ranch and Williamson Valley Roads and covers a mostly rural area of over 300 square miles. The WVFD provides other services, including Advanced Life Support and classes in CPR and First Aid.

**Map III-1: Fire District Areas of Coverage.**



**Medical Transport**

LifeLine Ambulance Service serves Williamson Valley and other areas in Yavapai County for ground transport. For air transport, several companies serve the area when the medical need is critical and cannot be managed by the YRMC. These include: Native American Air Ambulance, Guardian Air Medicine (Flagstaff), and Lifenet Arizona (Tucson). The air transport company called depends on which service is nearest the incident and most immediately available. The Yavapai Central Dispatch Office makes all decisions regarding medical transport.

**Medical**

Between Prescott and Prescott Valley, medical services abound. The largest and most complete centers are Yavapai Regional Medical Center (YRMC), with 135 beds, and the Northern Arizona Veterans Administration Health Care System.

In 2006 YRMC opened a new regional hospital (YRMC East) on 37 acres in Prescott Valley. It includes a 24-hour emergency care, an intensive care unit, surgical suites, 250 hospital beds, labor and delivery rooms, a helicopter pad, and much more. The YRMC Del E. Webb Outpatient Center houses Pulmonary and Cardiac Rehabilitation, X-ray, Hospice, and Home Health Care Services.

Specialty private medical offices and clinics are also quite numerous in the tri-city area. The Northern Arizona Veterans Affairs Health Care System facility in Prescott provides health services for qualified veterans in need.

Catholic Social Services, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America are some of the many charitable organizations in the community. Many dedicated volunteer caregivers work with these local charities. Hospice volunteers care for residents in need. Red Cross “Reserve-a-Ride” provides transportation for the elderly and disabled. “Meals-on-Wheels” provides a valuable service delivering nutritious meals to the housebound elderly. Many assisted-living and long-term care facilities are located in the area as well.

**Law Enforcement**

The Yavapai County Sheriff’s Office provides law enforcement for the Williamson Valley Community. A Sheriff’s substation is located at Outer Loop and Williamson Valley Roads. The following table indicates a summary of the number and nature of incident reports for the Williamson Valley Community Planning Area, 2000-2005.

<b>Table III-2 Law Enforcement Incidents</b>	
<b>Nature Of Incident</b>	<b>Total Incidents</b>
Traffic Offense	519
Traffic Accident	143
Animal Problems	128
Civil Action	114
Traffic Hazard	81
Lost & Found	75
Burglary, Theft	54

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Alarm	49
Vandalism, Property Damage	46
Alcohol Offense	42
Security	33
Fights, Assaults, Disputes	28
Littering	22
Noise Disturbance	21
Weapon Offense	14
Harassment, Threatening	13
Missing Person	12
Juvenile Problems	12
Other	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>1443</b>

### Schools

The Prescott Unified School District and the Chino Valley Unified School District serve the Williamson Valley Community. Both districts have a full range of instruction consisting of elementary, middle school, and high school. In addition to public education, there are numerous private schools ranging from early childhood development centers to K-12 institutions. Public schools and some private institutions also provide Special Education services for the area. Yavapai Community College, Prescott College, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University serve the Community as well.

Abia Judd Elementary School and Granite Mountain Middle School are the closest public schools and are located immediately south of the Community. All students within the Williamson Valley Community attending these schools use either school buses or private transportation. At this time there are no plans to build schools or other educational facilities in the Williamson Valley Planning Area.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Yavapai County School Populations Estimates, Yavapai County School Superintendent's Offices.

### Solid Waste Disposal and Pollution

City and County codes regulate water, air, land, and light pollution and reflect community values. Laws and codes concerning highway and property litter are in effect throughout the Community. County codes regulate ambient light pollution by limiting the number of lumens for outdoor lighting. These codes require downcast lighting in residential and most commercial applications.<sup>1</sup> Environmental cleanup is maintained at the volunteer, commercial, and governmental levels. Litter lifters clubs, as well as other groups and individuals, keep road shoulders and easements free of litter thrown from vehicles. Paper collection centers are located in shopping centers; for example, the Lions Club center at the Safeway stores in Prescott.

<sup>1</sup>The Light Pollution Control "Dark Skies" Ordinance requires downcast lighting in residential and most commercial applications. It also asks residents to limit the number of lumens for outdoor lighting. Rather than enforcement by the "light bulb police," this ordinance depends solely upon voluntary compliance. Each person is to respect his neighbors so as not to spoil another's view of the spectacular nighttime sky. Source: Yavapai County Planning and Zoning Ordinance, Section 603.

Williamson Valley residents pay private commercial haulers to dispose of general household trash. For an additional fee these companies will also pick up paper, plastic, aluminum cans, and glass for recycling. The City of Prescott has a transfer station for general solid waste disposal and the County has landfills for solid waste. Additionally, the City sponsors spring and fall cleanups where chemical waste such as paint can be disposed of properly.

County rights-of-way are regularly mowed to keep weeds and grasses down in order to preserve the beauty

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of our country setting and reduce the risk of wildfires.

### Utilities

**Electric Power.** Arizona Public Service (APS) provides electricity to the Williamson Valley Community. Additionally, a number of homes in the Corridor use solar and/or wind power and are “off the grid” (i.e., no electricity is used from public-service utility lines).

**Internet Service.** Dial-up Internet access is available to those Community residents with local landline telephone service. Some residents avail themselves of high-speed wireless broadband connections via CommSPEED or Bulleri Networks. DSL is available to some residential neighborhoods closer to the City of Prescott. Two-way satellite Internet service can be obtained from StarBand, Hughes or Wildblue.

**Propane.** Suppliers of propane gas to homes in the Williamson Valley Community include AmeriGas, Barrett Propane, Ferrellgas, Flame Propane, Santa Fe Propane, Superior Propane, and Yavapai Bottle Gas.

**Telephone Service.** Most Williamson Valley Community homes utilize Qwest Communications for local telephone service. Table Top Telephone Company and Midvale Telephone offer service to some neighborhoods that Qwest does not reach. These include Inscription Canyon Ranch, Talking Rock Ranch, Crossroads Ranch, and Long Meadow Ranch. Wireless telephone service is available through Qwest, Sprint, Verizon, AllTel, Cingular, and AT&T. Wireless service can be problematic in some areas as not all providers' signals are available in all areas of Williamson Valley. In some areas located in the northern part of the Corridor, wireless telephone is the only available telephone service.

Some residents with broadband Internet connections utilize Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), which permits voice telephone communications via the Internet.

**Television.** Some Community residents (generally those who live close to the City of Prescott) have cable TV (CableOne) available to them. Others subscribe to satellite television services, either DirecTV or Dish Network. Over-the-air programming is available via KAZ-TV, Channel 7.

**Water Companies.** While the majority of Community residences obtain their water from private wells, some subdivisions and PADs (Planned Area Developments) have formed water companies which operate centralized wells and distribute water to their residents. These companies include Granite Mountain Water Co., Granite Oaks Water Users Association, American Ranch, and Inscription Canyon Users Group.

## B. Goals and Implementation Strategies

**Goal 1.** Promote a strong Williamson Valley Community Organization (WVCO).

**Implementation Strategy.** WVCO shall:

- a. Maintain open lines of communication with county officials as well as surrounding municipalities to keep abreast of future developments that may affect the Williamson Valley Community.
- b. Promote an organization dedicated to the community's vision indicated by the 1995, 1998, and 2005 surveys, recent public forums, and this document.

**Goal 2.** Maintain, promote, and preserve the rural, residential character and equestrian heritage of the Williamson Valley Community.

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### **Implementation Strategy.** WVCO shall:

- a. Closely monitor all proposed developments, both residential and potential commercial, and act to protect the rural atmosphere and best interests of the Community's residents.
- b. Educate and encourage residents to comply with the Light Pollution Control ("Dark Skies") Ordinance in effect in Yavapai County.
- c. Identify and promote an acceptable design theme for whatever commercial development may be ultimately approved, while acknowledging that the majority of area residents remain opposed to commercial/retail development. An excellent example is the professional standards established by the Old Stage Stop country store and adjacent firehouse.
- d. Work with the Yavapai County Trails Committee and appropriate private organizations to seek expansion of the existing system of equestrian, hiking, and biking trails.
- e. Work to maintain the existing density of residential zoning throughout the Williamson Valley Community Planning Area.
- f. Work with County and State officials and appropriate private organizations to establish "Scenic Corridor" status for Williamson Valley Road to preserve the rural atmosphere of the Community.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Realizing that Yavapai County currently has no special provisions for designating Scenic Corridors, as ADOT has for appropriate state highways, we offer this plan with a hope. That hope is that the County will recognize the uniqueness of this corridor, the opportunities it presents, and the potential benefits to be derived from developing it in a manner that will serve to enhance, rather than destroy, this uniqueness.

**Goal 3.** Recognize the residents' desire that the Williamson Valley Community's future development be guided by this Community Plan.

### **Implementation Strategy.** WVCO shall:

- a. Resist attempts by Prescott or Chino Valley to annex any part of the Williamson Valley Community.
- b. Ensure that only Community property owners and/or residents serve on the WVCO Board of Directors.
- c. Keep residents informed and involved in the Williamson Valley Community developments through the existing WVCO website ([www.williamsonvalley.org](http://www.williamsonvalley.org)), phone tree, flyers, and newsletters.
- d. Survey Williamson Valley residents periodically to determine their needs and desired direction of future growth.
- e. Not amend the Williamson Valley Community Plan for at least three years after adoption in order to establish the Plan. After this time, amend the Williamson Valley Community Plan as necessary in accordance with state statutes and the Yavapai County General Plan. During the initial three years of the plan's existence recognize that any landowner has the right to submit a Zoning Map Change or Use Permit application for County review and consideration.

**Goal 4.** Promote a strong Williamson Valley Community identity.

**Implementation Strategy.** WVCO shall:

- a. Consider establishing an annual community event for the Williamson Valley Community.
- b. Support the annual Prescott Downtown Arts and Crafts show at the Courthouse Plaza sponsored by the Williamson Valley Fire Department.
- c. Work with the County to obtain and install thematic signage at entrances to the Williamson Valley Community.
- d. Establish community bulletin kiosks in at least two locations for disseminating information regarding Williamson Valley Community news and events.