

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Community Services Director Janet Perry
Janet.Perry@clarkdale.az.gov

Phone: (928) 639-2412
Fax: (928) 639-2409

Local Businesses Fund Clarkdale's Verde River Ambassador Program

October 28, 2015 (Clarkdale, AZ) Participating businesses in *ONE for the VERDE* are awarding \$5,000 in grant funding to support the Verde River @ Clarkdale's Ambassador Program. The purpose of the Ambassador program is to provide public education and to protect resources while encouraging responsible recreation. Currently, the Ambassador Program provides part-time paid staffing at Clarkdale's river access points, and has a goal of increasing that on-site presence to full time.

Key to the Ambassador's role is establishing and facilitating positive relationships with the public and ensuring safety, preservation, stewardship and proper use of these recreational areas. Ambassadors help to keep river access points clean and safe, and promote a positive image of the Verde River and the community of Clarkdale.

Since the program's June 2014 inception, Ambassador presence has resulted in a visible decrease in the amount of litter, increased compliance with posted rules, and an increase in general stewardship and proper use of these areas. Allowing proper public access to river recreation on the Clarkdale stretch of the Verde River has also improved the economy in Clarkdale. In FY2015, river recreation activities resulted in \$39,221 in revenue (fees and donations) to directly support the Verde River @ Clarkdale project. And for the first time in Clarkdale's history, local sales tax collections (approximately 1.5%) was directly attributed to river recreation. By fiscal year 2018, the Town of Clarkdale projects the ability to fund full-time (40 hours per week) on-site Ambassador presence by using outfitter and day-use donation revenue.



Verde River Ambassador Elayne Zimmer at the Lower TAPCO River Access Point on the Verde River @ Clarkdale.

ONE for the VERDE is a rapidly growing partnership of community-minded, local businesses in the Verde Valley that are dedicated to preserving our streams, which support a healthy economy. The partnership funds projects in education, recreation, restoration, and water conservation throughout the Verde Valley.

ONE for the VERDE (OFTV) program coordinator, Carrie King, states, “Funding for the Clarkdale Ambassador Program was generated solely from local businesses participating in *ONE for the VERDE*. Local businesses are investing in the Verde River and Oak Creek because it is the same watershed that is returning a steady revenue that directly supports their businesses in return. The relationship is symbiotic; a healthy river = a healthy economy. You can’t have one without the other. This watershed, made up of our rivers and streams, are the engines of economic growth in the Verde Valley.”



Participation in *ONE for the VERDE* is voluntary and tax deductible. To learn more about *ONE for the VERDE* or to become a participating member, please contact Carrie King at 928.925.1406 or visit onefortheverde.org.

The presentation of the grant award at the Tuzigoot River Access Point on the Verde River @ Clarkdale.

From Left to Right: Carrie King (One for the Verde), Verde River Ambassador Marcia Messier, and Clarkdale Town Manager Gayle Mabery