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### FedEx and Local Partners Restore Parks and Watersheds in Central Arizona

Phoenix, Arizona – The FedEx Corporation has joined with local, state and national partners to restore open space and natural habitats in Central Arizona. To culminate a restoration partnership with Arizona Wilderness Coalition, FedEx employees will team with volunteers to improve the National Trail in the City of Phoenix's South Mountain Park, on Saturday, January 21, 2017.

The South Mountain Park project will maintain more than a mile of trail leading up to the scenic San Juan Lookout. This joint effort exposes Phoenix-based FedEx employees to public lands stewardship experiences, while promoting conservation efforts in one of the largest municipal parks in the country. Acting Park Manager Dan Gronseth stressed the importance of preserving the wild spaces around Phoenix. "This area is considered to be as close to Wilderness as you can get in an urban park, and that designation is going to remain" in the Park's Trail Master Plan, currently being completed.

The collaboration to promote urban environmental health began some eight years ago between FedEx Corporation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). FedEx Communications Advisor, Rachel Kesselman explained, "[We are] committed to delivering a positive change around the world, including communities where our team members live and work. Through our relationship with NFWF, we are able to leverage more than 90 million dollars to support over 90 projects across the country. We're happy to support, through collaborative efforts, long lasting environmental and social impacts within the communities."

Two intensive river restoration projects in Central Arizona were launched with support from that collaboration, including planting of 364 native trees in the beautiful and remote Hassayampa River Canyon Wilderness northwest of Phoenix, and the difficult removal of invasive Tamarisk and Oleander from Arnett Creek east of Phoenix. Arizona Wilderness Coalition coordinated large numbers of volunteers, students, and other conservation partners to work with the Bureau of Land Management – Hassayampa Field Office and Tonto National Forest to improve riparian habitat for declining species through these projects. The projects' potential benefits to recreational users, Yellow-billed cuckoo, native

fish and amphibians garnered additional support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust and National Forest Foundation.

The South Mountain - National Trail project is planned for 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 21, and additional volunteers are welcome. Volunteers will need to be prepared to hike approximately 2.5 miles round trip over moderate terrain, performing light trail work. More information and registration is available at <https://www.meetup.com/Arizona-Wilderness-Stewards/events/235472456/>. For more information on Arizona Wilderness Coalition and future events and programs, see [www.azwild.org](http://www.azwild.org).

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Arizona Wilderness Coalition works to protect and restore wilderness and other wild lands and waters for the enjoyment of all citizens and to ensure that Arizona's native plants and animals have a lasting home in wild nature. AWC has an office at Prescott College in Prescott, Arizona and is headquartered in Tucson, Arizona. Learn more at [www.azwild.org](http://www.azwild.org).

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