

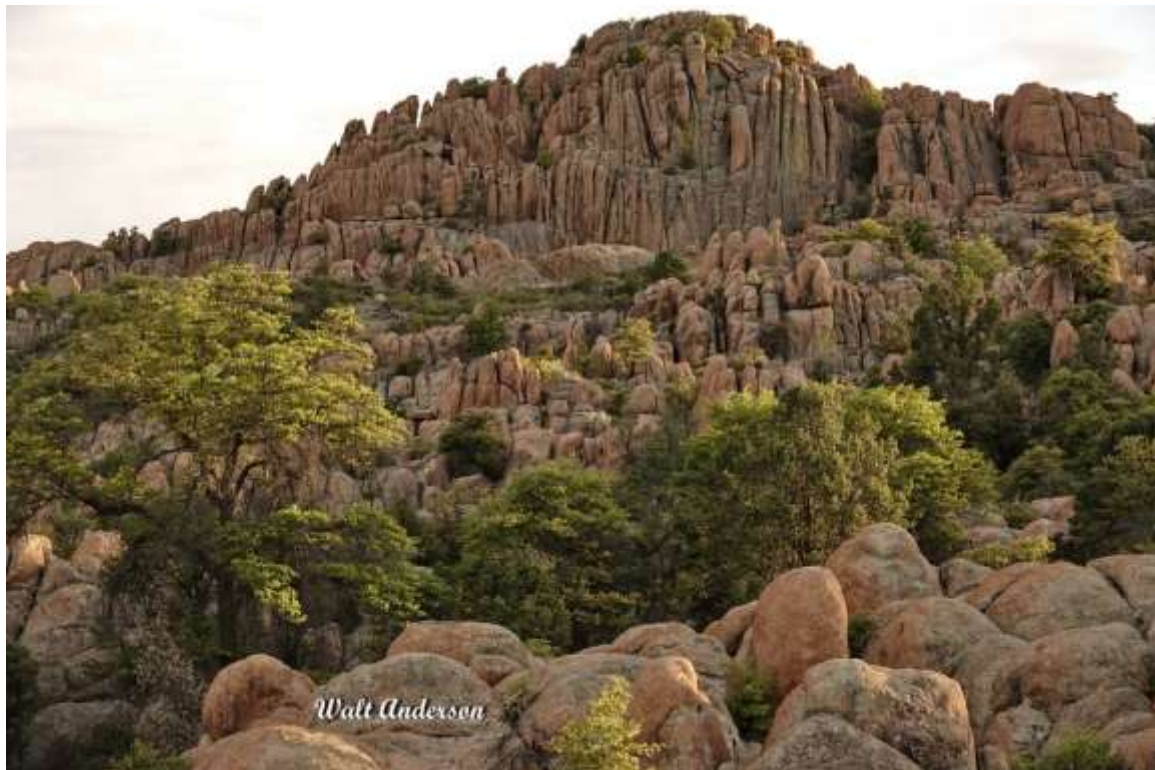
Wild Wednesday. 27 October 2021. Art & the Dells by Walt Anderson

Two local celebrations took place on the afternoon of 24 October 2021. One concerned the victory achieved by Save the Dells and its supporters in the Arizona Eco Development annexation into the City of Prescott that resulted in 474 acres of key land in the Granite Dells saved from development. Yea!

The other was the 2nd Annual Prescott Plein Air Art Festival organized by the Highlands Center for Natural History. I was one of 15 artists in the latter event, but my heart also was with my friends in Save the Dells, as some of us had devoted tons of energy and time over five years to get the result we wanted.

For three days prior to the art show, we were out in nature creating paintings. I personally spent all three days in the Dells (paintings included here), and many of the other artists chose the Dells for their interpretations too. Apart from the pieces that sold at the October 24 event, our event artwork plus more will be available on display at the Phippen Museum from October 30 – November 28, and I invite you to come see what we did!

The afternoon after the event, I returned to the Constellation Trails area, where I had done one of my paintings. The late-day light was incredible, so I will share a few of my photos from that brief outing too. The Granite Dells is such an inspirational landscape for artists and for anyone with functioning senses! We have made great progress, but there is still more to do to achieve the creation of a greater Granite Dells Regional Park & Preserve. I hope you will join us in working toward that important goal!



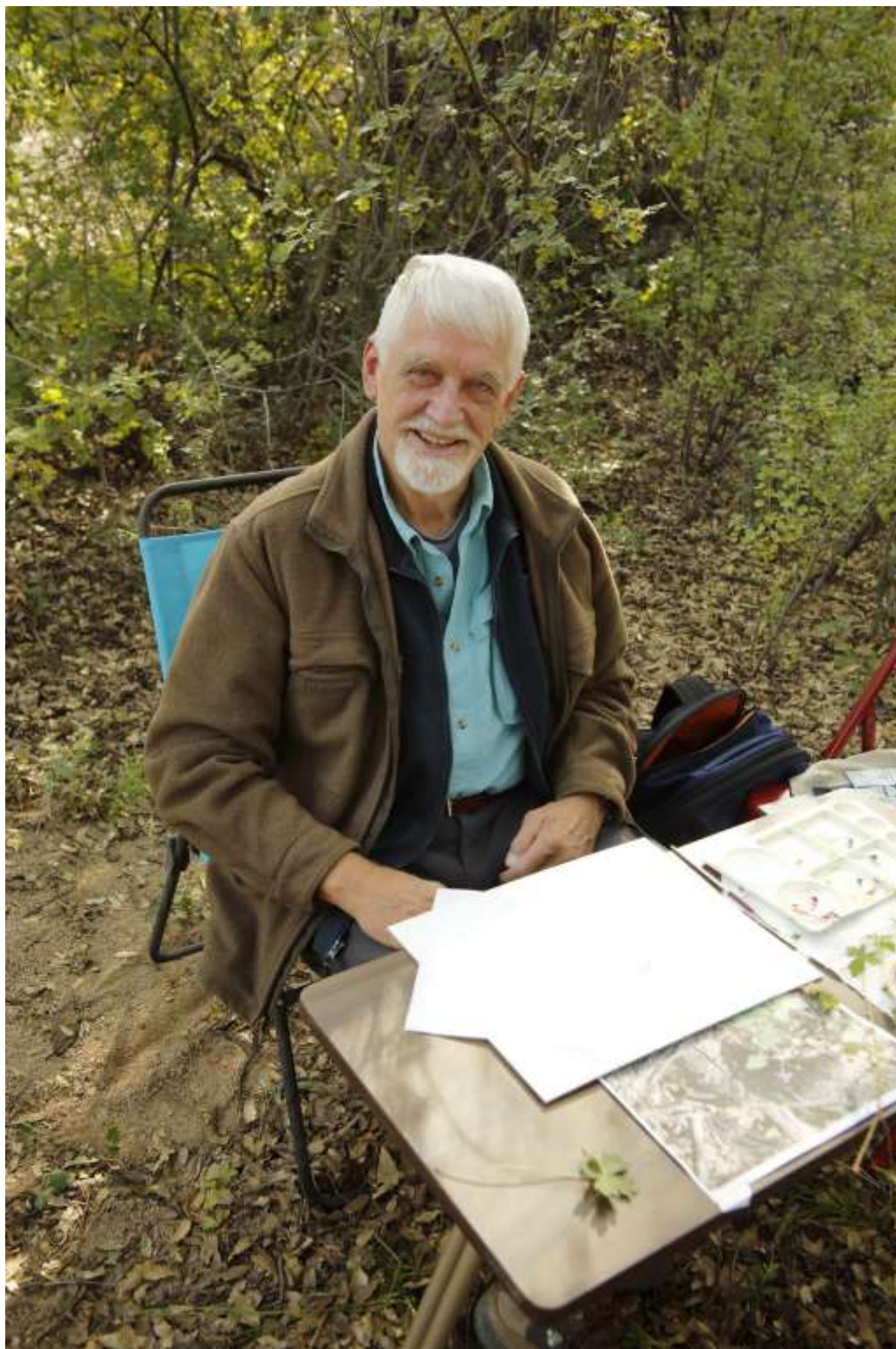
The spectacular rock formations in the Constellation Trails section of the Granite Dells. This is right across Highway 89 from the Phippen Museum.



The Dells Fest on October 24 was at the High Ramada at Watson Lake Park. This shot was taken on 18 October at 4:28 PM.



The same scene just 45 minutes later. Photography is really painting with light, and light can be an important element of plein air painting, which involves being out in nature while trying to capture something with pigments.



Constrained to painting in the shade by being on antibiotics, I chose to do an intimate landscape in an oak woodland at the Constellation Trails. (Photo by Dale O'Dell).



My subject was "The Last Geranium," the only remaining example of this flower I could find in the woods. I chose to contrast the delicate flower with the rough bark of a fallen oak. This is all in transparent watercolor, which certainly creates some technical challenges for the artist, but I love watercolor for the detail I am able to capture. 8 x 10"



I have been drawn to this scene often as I drove through the Dells on Highway 89 and decided to select a portion of it for my next painting.



I chose to use acrylic on cradle board to portray the character of a row of rocks standing shoulder to shoulder atop a horizontal crack. I call this 11 x 14" piece "Patience: Granite Dells." It attracted a good deal of attention at the plein air reception and was purchased, so it won't be at the Phippen show in November. However, I will have two other paintings of Dells rocks (one acrylic, one watercolor) in that show, as well as some wildlife pieces (nuthatches, chipmunk), so check them out!



My third plein air painting was this 8 x 10" watercolor of a banana yucca. I am fascinated by succulents like yuccas and agaves, and we are blessed with many in arid Arizona. It is astonishing how they can root and grow in the tiniest of cracks in a rock. The biggest challenge for me while doing this painting was staying warm enough to have feeling in my hands, as a cold wind picked up in the afternoon.



Two of my paintings displayed at the Highlands Center 2nd Annual Prescott Plein Air Art Festival.



The 15 artists in this plein air event. What a joy it was to share experiences with these fine people, all of whom use their creative talents to interpret nature. We hope you can make it to the Phippen show of our work that will be on display (unless pieces are sold) in November. Members of the Highlands Center and the Phippen are invited to an opening reception at 5:30 PM this coming Friday; I suggest calling the Phippen to let them know you're coming. (Photo by Dale O'Dell)



And now a few photos of the Constellation Trails area in the Dells at that magic moment just before the sun retires behind the peaks.



Skunkbush (*Rhus trilobata*) in its autumn glory at last light.



Gorgeous patterns of backlit grasses and sprawling manzanita branches.



This needs no words. Just another example of the beauty you can find in the Granite Dells if you get out there!