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The Arizona Trail Trek Celebrates the Arizona National Scenic Trail and Invites Hikers, Runners, Backpackers, Mountain Bikers and Equestrians to Join in the Adventure

Tucson, AZ – It took 30 years for the dream of the Arizona Trail to become a reality, and in 2011 the cross-state trail was completed, linking deserts, mountains, canyons, forests, communities and people. Designated as a National Scenic Trail, the Arizona Trail (AZT) includes such natural wonders as Saguaro National Park, the sky island mountains of southern Arizona, Mogollon Rim, Grand Canyon, and some of Arizona’s lesser known and seldom-visited natural areas. Open to all non-motorized forms of outdoor recreation, including hiking, running, backpacking, horseback riding and mountain biking, the AZT has become a major destination for outdoor adventurers from around the world. While most experience the AZT on day trips from a variety of trailheads throughout the state, some attempt the entire 800-mile challenge in a single push.

From March 14 to May 31, Sirena Dufault, age 40, will hike the entire AZT from the U.S./Mexico border to the Utah state line...and everyone is invited to participate. As a celebration of the Arizona National Scenic Trail and to support the Arizona Trail Association – the nonprofit organization responsible for building, maintaining, promoting, protecting and sustaining the Arizona Trail – Sirena has organized the AZT Trek. This interactive thru-hike allows the general public to join Sirena for select portions of the AZT (8 day hikes and 6 backpacking trips have been identified); gather with other trail enthusiasts at evening events (15 parties within communities located near the trail are planned, including Sierra Vista, Patagonia, Tucson, Oracle, Kearny, Superior, Scottsdale, Pine, Flagstaff, Tusayan, Jacob Lake and Page); and follow the progress of the AZT Trek through an online satellite tracking system and Sirena’s blog. She will be posting on-the-trail updates on the Arizona Trail Association’s Facebook page and on Twitter at @AZTRAIL #AZTtrek

“The AZT Trek will encourage people from throughout Arizona to experience the best passages of the Arizona Trail and experience the charming gateway communities along the way,” said Sirena. Each of the community events will include food, entertainment, and Arizona Trail Ale, brewed by That Brewery in Pine, Arizona. *Your Complete Guide to the Arizona National Scenic Trail*, the recently published official guidebook, will be for sale at the events, as well as AZT T-shirts, socks, hats and other merchandise that helps support the mission of the Arizona Trail Association (ATA). “It’s like a book tour...on foot,” Sirena said, “and no, I won’t be carrying all of the books in my backpack.”

Some of the highlights of the AZT Trek include the kickoff party and day hike from the border to Montezuma Pass on March 14; Tucson Trail Days at Colossal Cave Mountain Park on March 29-30; a 3-day backpack through the rugged and remote canyon country near the Gila River on April 12-14; Pine Trail Days at the Pine Trailhead on May 4; a llama packing trip through the Blue Ridge passage on May 8-9; a women’s only backpacking trip near Flagstaff on May 12-14; and the Grand Finale Fiesta in Page on May 31. Details on each event are available at www.aztrail.org/azttrek.

Special incentives have been developed for anyone donating dollars to help support the ATA through the AZT Trek’s Indiegogo campaign. Sirena and the ATA hope to raise \$20,000 to maintain, protect and promote the Arizona Trail through this effort. To learn more, please visit www.aztrail.org/azttrek.

High-resolution color photographs of all 43 passages of the Arizona National Scenic Trail are available upon request, as well as the Arizona National Scenic Trail logo, AZT Trek logo, and interviews with Sirena. Contact Sirena at (602) 571-6439, azttrek@aztrail.org or the Arizona Trail Association at (602) 252-4794, www.aztrail.org.