

Verde Village pond may become a park

By [Joseph K Giddens](#) December 15, 2025

<https://journalaz.com/2025/12/15/verde-village-pond-may-become-a-park/>



The 4.22-acre Verde Village Pond in Cottonwood is under consideration for conversion into a Yavapai County park following a unanimous vote by the Board of Supervisors. The current pond will lose its water supply by 2028. Photos by Daulton Venglar/Larson Newspapers

The Verde Village Pond, located at 3901 E. Del Rio Drive in Verde Village Unit 4, could one day be drained and converted into a county park following the Yavapai County Board of Supervisors' unanimous decision to allow staff to investigate the process of accepting the 4.22-acre parcel on Wednesday, Nov. 19.

"The intent [is] for it to be a county park similar to Windmill Park in Cornville," Yavapai County Supervisor Nikki Check [D-District 3] said, also stating that it would create District 3's first county park and would be available to all.

The pond, also known as the Verde Village Duck Pond, is owned and maintained by the Verde Village Property Owners' Association, which operates as Verde Village Community Connection, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit, volunteer-run organization.

VVOPA wants to divest the land because it will lose its water supply from the Cottonwood Ditch Association on Saturday, Jan. 1, 2028, due to a policy change restricting non-agricultural use that the ditch association approved in January 2023

The 10-foot deep pond was originally constructed during the construction of the Unit 4 subdivision and, "was originally established for both fire suppression and as a community attraction," VVPOA President Aislinn Maldonado wrote to the board. "Features include a tree-shaded walking path, a covered picnic bench and an unpaved parking area that can hold over a dozen vehicles. Fish were introduced into the pond years ago to provide a source of food and recreation."



The 4.22-acre Verde Village Pond in Cottonwood is under consideration for conversion into a park owned by Yavapai County.

“The Cottonwood Ditch Association got a mandate a few years ago stating that their irrigation water is to stop supplying ornamental lakes and ponds,” Maldonado later said. “The legislature came down to the Cottonwood Ditch Association communicating that they could not support [the pond], otherwise they would be jeopardizing their operations.”

The Ditch Association announced March 15, 2023, in a letter to its shareholders that: New ponds cannot use ditch water starting June 2022; existing irrigation ponds must be documented and actively used for irrigation to continue receiving water; and decorative ponds have three years from February 2023 to phase out ditch water usage.

“Recently, the use of surface water in Arizona has become a major issue for deliberation by government agencies and the legal system,” the letter reads. “As water becomes scarce, ditch associations such as the Cottonwood Ditch that have surface water rights are coming under increased scrutiny for the methods and use of water used for irrigation. Therefore, the Cottonwood ditch board has promulgated policies that focus on the use of water solely for irrigation purposes that foster and protect water users’ water rights.”

Digging a well to supply water for the pond by VVPOA would be expensive — costing up to \$100,000 — and legally complex.

“The VVPOA Board has thoroughly explored many options — e.g., securing a new water source, drilling a well, structural repairs, transitioning to a wildlife refuge, agriculture, or a public park — and has

determined that the scale of financial, legal, and operational challenges far exceeds the financial and skills capacity of this organization,” Maldonado wrote.

Yavapai County Flood Control District Director Lynn Whitman said she has “concerns with the structural integrity” of the pond, and would also prefer to see the pond be drained, filled in and converted into a dry public park.

“We don’t know if there’s a liner in the pond, and we don’t know the extent of the damage on the backside along the wash,” Maldonado later said. “You can see signs of erosion and pest damage, so the exterior is clearly compromised. When you walk that back area and stomp your foot, you can feel the erosion on the far side, too. A layperson can’t properly assess that [so] we need engineers with the expertise to determine what the wall needs and what it can withstand. Even from a basic construction standpoint, the fact that we’ve been filling it nonstop for 50 years has had an impact, but we don’t know how to quantify it.”

“But there’s a couple of matters that warrant investigation first and [we] need a little bit more research before we can earnestly move in that direction,” Check said. “Part of that includes analyzing the environmental concerns around the pond.

“It’s not considered like a wildlife preserve, or anything like that. But draining the pond could be one of the hurdles to get over and how would the county go about doing that?”

There is currently not timeline or costs for the acceptance and conversion of the pond, and Check stated that it could make an excellent application for federal support through an application for the administered by the

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program, "because it involves a blight and involves [a] low-income community."

"Verde Villages has ... 12,610 [people] living in an unincorporated area adjacent to Cottonwood, and they're in desperate need of a community park," Check said. "So the prospect that this pond would be out of commission and creating a community blight is really a difficulty."

"Without intervention, the pond will go dry, killing all wildlife that has become dependent upon it, releasing years' worth of accumulated feces and debris, and creating an eyesore and source of contamination sure to impact the many dozens of homeowners who live nearby," Maldonado wrote.

Yavapai County Manager Phil Bourdon said accepting the pond would be more involved than a routine land donation. "This is a little different than a normal donation," he said. "It's very complex and would become a multi-year project."

Yavapai County Development Services has also been working with VVPOA to secure a brownfields grant.

VVPOA's process for donating the land to the county is still somewhat undefined but would require a vote by their board of directors rather than by all area residents and or all of its members.

"We are very excited about the prospect of what this future project could bring but we're cautiously optimistic," Maldonado later said. "It's one step at a time from here on out."



Joseph K Giddens

Joseph K. Giddens grew up in southern Arizona and studied natural resources at the University of Arizona. He later joined the National Park Service in many different roles focusing on geoscience throughout the West. Drawn to deep time and ancient landscapes he's worked at: Dinosaur National Monument, Petrified Forest National Park, Badlands National Park and Saguaro National Park among several other public land sites. Prior to joining Sedona Red Rock News, he worked for several Tucson outlets as well as the Williams-Grand Canyon News and the Navajo-Hopi Observer. He frequently is reading historic issues of the Tombstone Epitaph newspaper and daydreaming about rockhounding. Contact him at jgiddens@larsonnewspapers.com or (928) 282-7795 ext. 122.