

Hart Prairie, Arizona



Photo Credit: Mark Skalny

Ecological Restoration of Land and Water

DATES

September 19 – 24, 2022

PRICE

Double Occupancy: \$3,990

Single Occupancy: \$3,990

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Located at 8500' on the western slope of the sacred San Francisco Peaks near Flagstaff, Arizona, Hart Prairie is an oasis of beauty and grandeur distinguished by its history of rigorous land stewardship and restoration ecology. Hart Prairie Preserve was once known as Fern Mountain Ranch and is home to a globally rare community of Bebb Willows and over 250 species of native trees, flowers, and grasses. The preserve provides opportunities for visitors to watch aspens gracefully sway in the wind, climb Fern Mountain, study native plants, watch monsoon storms or sing along with over 120 species of birds. The 130-year-old homestead at Hart Prairie was the first stop on the Flagstaff to Grand Canyon stagecoach route and is on the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation.

With nature at your doorstep, you will spend your journey surrounded by breathtaking

landscapes while gaining exclusive insight into local programs and strategies. Your trip begins in Flagstaff, Arizona, where your guide will meet you at the airport. Transfer to Hart Prairie Preserve and get comfortable in your rustic and cozy cabin before dinner on-site. Over the next few days, take time to explore the preserve on foot, learning about forest restoration, wildlife, and native flora and fauna. Local TNC staff will accompany you on this journey, guiding you through the history of the lands.

Venture off-site for a trip to Arizona's only federally designated Wild and Scenic River; at 195 miles long the Verde River meanders from Pualden to Phoenix, Arizona. Vital to wildlife and recreation, the river is also essential to the health of the river's watershed. Joined by local staff, you will have the opportunity to kayak down the river, taking in the many species of plants and animals that call it home.



Photo Credit: Amy Zimmermann



Photo Credit: Deborah Gillham

HART PRAIRIE PRESERVE

Surrounded by thousands of acres of cool forest and meadows, the 245-acre preserve is home to uncommon wildflowers, old-growth ponderosa pine, a rare grove of Bebb willows, herds of elk and deer, porcupine, prairie dogs, more than 120 species of birds and over 250 plant species.

KAYAK ON THE VERDE RIVER

Enjoy an afternoon on the Verde River, learning from local experts about the landscape.

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

With its layered bands of red rocks revealing millions of years of geological history, the Grand Canyon is a sight to see. This world-famous landmark is home to spectacular views, challenging hikes, exhilarating whitewater rafting, and adventure for all ages.

Your trip supports the local communities you're traveling in and The Nature Conservancy's efforts locally and globally. This trip has been planned specifically by The Nature Conservancy's team of scientific experts and travel liaisons to immerse you in the work the Conservancy is doing on the ground that has global consequences.

TNC TRAVEL VALUES

ACCESS:

Travel with renowned Conservancy experts and local partners for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes experience. You won't just see amazing places, you'll see how you are helping save them.

IMPACT:

See how your commitment to our planet and your passion for conservation are making a difference. You will see the wild places and the communities you are impacting.

KNOWLEDGE:

Learn how we are applying the latest cutting-edge science to affect global change and drive conservation.

INSPIRATION:

Immerse yourself in local cultures and awe-inspiring landscapes to foster your own connection to our world.

GLOBALLY MINDED:

Elevate your understanding of our work by seeing first-hand how TNC and our partners act locally and how we turn local results in to global impact by scaling solutions that work.

Photo Credit: Amy Zimmermann



THE CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE

HART PRAIRIE

Hart Prairie Preserve, with its historic lodge and charming guest cabins, was donated to The Nature Conservancy in 1994 by a local family after they discovered their property held a globally rare community of Bebb willow trees. Much of the work at the preserve focuses on the Bebb willow community, the largest known in the world. Conservancy staff also work closely with partners at the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and various departments at Northern Arizona University on ecological restoration activities in the surrounding National Forest.

VERDE RIVER

The Verde River's preservation is vital to wildlife and recreation in Arizona, and essential to the health of the river's watershed, which feeds many Arizona communities downstream. Competing demands for water are putting pressure on the watershed. Looming development over the aquifer that supplies the Verde River could reduce the flow not only to downstream users, but to the plants and animals that depend on it. The Nature Conservancy has worked with local partners to develop the Verde River Exchange Water Offset Program, launch the Salt and Verde Alliance, and yield a study rich in data about the water flow needs of the river and its wildlife.

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

The creation of Grand Canyon National Park, the 15th site of its kind, was an early success of the conservation movement. Initial mining claims, the expansion of dams, and new lodging to host an increasing number of visitors, plagued the area until Congress passed a bill creating the National Park in 1919. Today, the Grand Canyon Conservancy is the official nonprofit partner of Grand Canyon National Park; through private funds, it preserves trails and historical buildings, offers educational programs to the public and works to protect wildlife and their natural habitat. Threats from every direction are still evident today; proposed developments with mega resorts, trams and retail shops threaten important cultural sites belonging to the Navajo Nation, while uranium mining risks contamination of precious water sources.

ITINERARY

DAY 1— Monday, September 19th | Arrive in Flagstaff, Arizona, by the afternoon. Upon arrival at the airport, you will be welcomed by your guide and transferred to your lodging at Hart Prairie Preserve. Settle into your rustic cabin before enjoying cocktail hour and dinner on-site.

OVERNIGHT AT HART PRAIRIE PRESERVE

DAY 2 — Tuesday, September 20th | As the sun comes up from behind the mountain, the preserve and all its inhabitants wake up. Enjoy a leisurely morning walk, taking in the fresh air and sounds of the wilderness while acclimating to the elevation. After breakfast you will get acquainted with the conservation work at Hart Prairie Preserve through a brief presentation and then a preserve tour. Enjoy lunch at the lodge before departing on a hike to visit forest restoration projects and see first-hand the work TNC is doing to improve forest health, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, and potentially yield more water to the Salt and Verde Rivers. Enjoy free time in the afternoon and freshen up for dinner at the preserve.

OVERNIGHT AT HART PRAIRIE PRESERVE

DAY 3 — Wednesday, September 21st | After enjoying breakfast on-site, local TNC staff will give a presentation on TNC's Future Forest Project and the connection between healthy forests and water. There will be plenty of time for discussion and questions, or simply wandering out onto the preserve. Depart mid-morning for Sedona. Surrounded by red-rock buttes and steep canyon walls, this vibrant arts community is the perfect spot to stop for lunch. Continue south to Camp Verde where you will meet with local TNC staff before kayaking the Verde River. Return to the preserve in the evening for dinner.

OVERNIGHT AT HART PRAIRIE PRESERVE

DAY 4 — Thursday, September 22nd | Today will be a full day of exploring the surrounding landscape. Visit Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument and explore the various volcanic features from its eruption nearly 1000 years ago. After a picnic lunch, journey to Walnut Canyon National Monument. The former site of the Sinagua people, look for remnants of cliff dwellings that date back to 1100. Return to the lodge for dinner and an evening discussion on Grand Canyon National Park, the Colorado River, and the next day's schedule.

OVERNIGHT AT HART PRAIRIE PRESERVE

LODGING



Hart Prairie Preserve

The 130-year-old homestead at Hart Prairie was the first stop on the Flagstaff to Grand Canyon stagecoach route. Historic and off-the-grid, your log cabins sit amidst aspen groves at the foot of the San Francisco Peaks. With Hart Prairie at your doorstep, soak in the idyllic atmosphere of this unique stay.

Please note that this lodge is small and rustic; room, bed types, and amenities are limited. Ensuite bathrooms cannot be guaranteed during your stay and compostable toilets are used on-site



ITINERARY, CONT.

DAY 5 — Friday, September 23rd | Rise early for breakfast before departing for Grand Canyon National Park. It is a one-hour drive north to the park. On arrival, meet with your private guide from the Grand Canyon Conservancy Field Institute; their expert staff of guides include professional geologists, biologists, archaeologists, and historians who have devoted their lives to the understanding of this amazing landscape. Enjoy a light hike down the South Kaibab Trail before having lunch at the historic El Tovar Lodge. Additional time to explore the Kolb Brother's studio, built in 1905, and take in the sights along the South Rim of the canyon will be available. Return to the preserve in the evening for your final group dinner. If the night is clear, watch the moon rise from behind the mountain and count the stars as they come out and illuminate the meadow.

OVERNIGHT AT HART PRAIRIE PRESERVE

DAY 6 — Saturday, September 24th | Say farewell over brunch this morning and prepare for departure from Flagstaff Pulliam Airport. Please book your return flights no earlier than 1:00 PM.

PLEASE NOTE: This itinerary is representative of your trip, and like all natural history excursions, activities are subject to modification based on weather and unforeseen events. We will do our best to keep you informed on any necessary changes.



(Above and Below) The Verde River provides opportunities for boating, kayaking, fishing, hunting, hiking, birding, picnicking, and photography.



(Below) From Hart Prairie Preserve, enjoy views of golden-leaved aspens and the San Francisco Peaks.



PRICE DETAIL

Double Occupancy \$3,990
Single Occupancy: \$3,990

Price **includes** all lodging, domestic transportation, activities, tips, meals, TNC expert staff and local guides. Price does **not include** your roundtrip flight to Flagstaff.