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**FORT MCDOWELL YAVAPAI NATION COMMEMORATES TRAIL OF TEARS WITH  
HISTORIC THREE-DAY RELAY**

*180-mile march recognizes this challenging time in the sovereign nation's history and their rich legacy of strength, courage, solidarity and perseverance*

**FORT MCDOWELL , Ariz. – March 14, 2019** – To remember the 1875 Trail of Tears when their ancestors were forced to trek approximately 180 miles from San Carlos to Fort McDowell, nearly 30 [Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation](#) tribal council and community members retraced this arduous and poignant journey in a three-day relay from March 12-14.

The commemorative walk acknowledged a significant time in the tribe's history. In the winter of 1875, four years after the 900-square-mile Rio Verde Reservation was established in the Verde Valley of Central Arizona, approximately 1,500 Yavapai and Tonto Apache were forcibly marched to the San Carlos Reservation on what is now known as the "Trail of Tears."

Only about half survived the grueling journey, with many succumbing to hunger, exhaustion, drowning and weather-related illnesses along the way. It wasn't until 1900, 25 years later, that those remaining were released from the San Carlos Reservation and permitted to return to their homelands in present-day Fort McDowell, Verde Valley and Prescott.

"The Yavapai people come from a proud tradition and culture, and we appreciate and remember the history that our ancestors endured," explained Bernadine Burnette, President of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation Tribal Council, the governing body of the Nation. "That's why it was important to us not only to recognize and proclaim the Trail of Tears on March 12-14, but also to encourage as many of our community members, friend and supporters to participate in this commemorative event."

The three-day Trail of Tears run/walk started on March 12 from San Carlos through Roosevelt Lake on State Route 188, proceeding southwest on Highway 87. The relay will culminate today with a community dinner at the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation's Parks & Recreation Center.

**About the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation**

The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is a 900-member Native American tribe that calls Central Arizona's upper Sonoran Desert home. Located to the northeast of Phoenix within Maricopa County, Arizona, the 40-square mile reservation is a small part of the ancestral territory of the once nomadic Yavapai people, who hunted and gathered food in a vast area of Arizona's desert lowlands and mountainous Mogollon Rim country.

The tribe currently operates a variety of successful enterprises including the We-Ko-Pa Resort & Conference Center, We-Ko-Pa Golf Club, Poco Diablo Resort, Fort McDowell Adventures, Eagle View RV Resort and Fort McDowell Casino, that will be unveiling a new, state-of-the-art gaming facility in 2020.

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