



RIO

REIMAGINED

08.30.22

WATER RESOURCES
RESEARCH CENTER
Brown Bag Webinar



RIO REIMAGINED INITIATIVE | OVERVIEW

Melissa A. McCann, ASLA - Director, University City Exchange, Arizona State University

R I O R E I M A G I N E D



PROJECT AREA

55+ mi. revitalization



The Rio Salado project has the potential to transform the Salt River bottom and realize an untapped Valley treasure.

- U.S. Senator John McCain

SCALE & STAKEHOLDERS



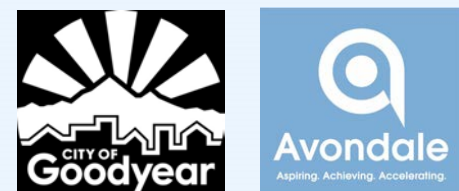
- 6 cities, 2 tribal nations, Maricopa County, SRP, MAG, Non-profits
- Initiative study area: 55+ miles, 1.5 - 2 miles N/S of river banks (Granite Reef Diversion Dam to SR 85)
- Variability in elected official interest & staff engagement (multiple departments engaged)
- Priority projects differ by stakeholder – existing and designed, with key federal partners (EPA, DOI, USDA)
- Diversity in study area: health, hydrology, infrastructure, public access, planning structure, cultural history
- Opportunity to elevate regional strategy | approach for leveraged resources + projects over long-term
- Multi-sector leadership & commitment required: public / private / non-profit / academic / community

RIO PARTNERSHIP EXPANDS

RIO SIGNATORIES



City of Phoenix



FEDERAL



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION



FEMA



US Army Corps of Engineers



STATE



NGO'S PARTIAL



PROJECT ASPIRATIONS

▪ RECONNECT THE COMMUNITY TO THE RIVER

- Acknowledge industrial and agricultural legacy of river industries (ARPA) (GRIC & SRP-MIC)
- Offer culturally aware points of engagement
- Re-establish public access for recreation, etc.
- Reinforce environmental/ecosystem value of open space

▪ ESTABLISH A METROPOLITAN VISION

- Signal an exemplary regional collaboration for a metro region
- Increase access to education, training, housing, employment & health services

▪ CATALYZE ECONOMIC GROWTH & INCLUSION

- Recognize and empower the next generation of leaders
- Acknowledge/address threats of gentrification
- Create test bed for innovative financing and technology

▪ DEMONSTRATE SUSTAINABLE PLANNING

- Prioritize sustainable conservation and use of water
- Identify opportunities for water storage, reuse, harvesting
- Develop community-led solutions for climate change challenges



RIO REIMAGINED BENCHMARKS

2017

- Senator McCain Outreach to Mayors and ASU/Crow
- Project Working Group Formed (City-designated staff)

2018

- RIO PUBLIC LAUNCH Event with Statement of Intent
- Federal Delegation + Federal Agencies Engage
- AZ + US River Precedent Speakers: Los Angeles River, Verde River, etc.

2019

- Unanimous Federal Delegation Letter of Support for Urban Waters Program
 - *NOTE: 7 of 9 federal districts are included in the Rio project work area*
- First RIO Brownfields Multi-City Coalition Grant by US EPA - \$1.7M

2020

- Urban Waters Program DESIGNATION CEREMONY + WORKSHOP – 20th Project Location
- Grant Funds: US Forest Service, US Geological Survey, Environmental Protection Agency, FEMA, etc.
- Local Leadership: City of Phoenix RIO Advisory Council, Private Sector RIO Task Force by GPL

2021 - 2022

- RIO Ambassador to Federal Urban Waters – Co-share Funding for Full-time Professional
- US FWS - RIO Urban Wildlife Conservation Partnership
- Over \$2M to Corridor Partners: urban tree canopy / water quality / brownfields assessment / opportunity zones / restoration - invasive species removal / environmental justice / local foods



FEDERAL RECOGNITION & SUPPORT

URBANWATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP

Environmental Protection Agency | EPA Region 9

20th Location - FEDERAL DESIGNATION

Funding
Network Resources
Agency Access
Ambassador



US Army Corps
of Engineers



FEMA



15 FEDERAL AGENCIES
28 NATIONAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS
20 LOCATIONS - PEER to PEER NETWORK

REGIONAL RIVER CORRIDOR RESTORATION



CONNECTED ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION

- **CITY OF MESA + SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY**
 - 14 Total Miles of Ecological Restoration – USACE Design Project Va Shly’ay Akimel
 - City of Mesa – 3 Miles of Habitat Restoration
 - SRP-MIC – 3 to Miles of Master Planning from Habitat Restoration to Economic Development
- **CITY OF TEMPE**
 - Tempe Town Lake Master Plan – Recreational Improvements
 - Town Lake Bridge - Multi-Use Path with Water Infrastructure
- **CITY OF PHOENIX**
 - 13 Miles of Ecological Restoration – USACE Design Project Rio Salado Oeste
 - Tres Rios Phases 1C + D – USACE Project On Hold [Recreation and Cultural Center Enhancements]
- **GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY**
 - Pee Posh + Gila River Wetlands
 - Gila River Habitat Restoration
- **CITY OF AVONDALE, CITY OF GOODYEAR and CITY OF BUCKEYE**
 - 14 Miles of Ecological Restoration along the Lower Gila River [Tres Rios to Gillespie Dam]
- **MARICOPA COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT**
 - El Rio Confluence Lake
 - Vegetation Management + Invasive Species Removal

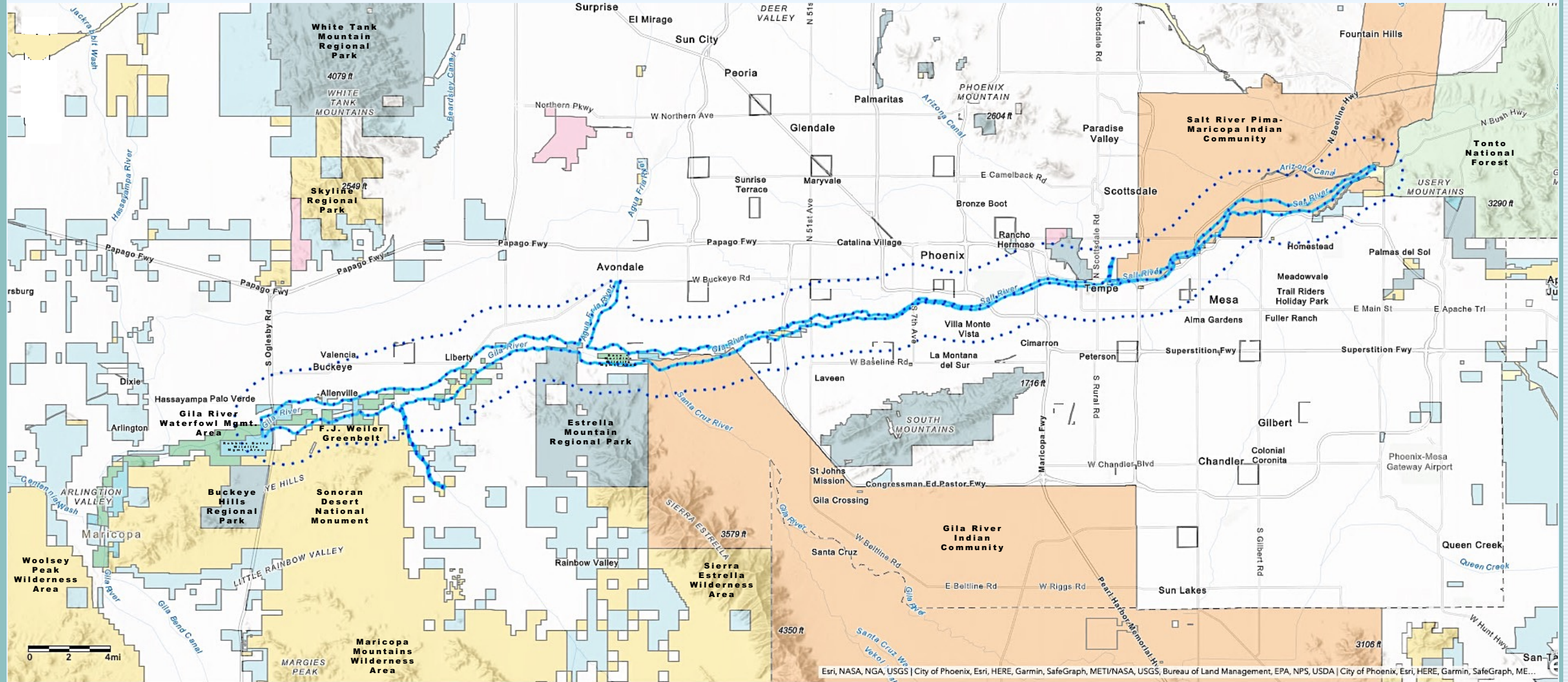
COMPLETED

- A **TEMPE TOWN LAKE**
- B **RIO SALADO HABITAT RESTORATION**
- C **TRES RIOS WETLANDS + HABITAT RESTORATION – PHASES 1, 2, 3A + B**

PROPOSED

- 1 **VA SHLY’AY AKIMEL HABITAT RESTORATION – USACE PROJECT HOLD**
- 2 **TEMPE TOWN LAKE MASTER PLAN IMPROVEMENTS**
- 3 **RIO OESTE HABITAT RESTORATION – USACE PROJECT HOLD**
- 4 **PEE POSH + GILA RIVER WETLANDS**
- 5 **TRES RIOS PHASES 3C, 4 +5 – USACE PROJECT HOLD**
- 6 **GILA RIVER HABITAT RESTORATION**
- 7 **EL RIO CONFLUENCE LAKE**
- 8 **LOWER GILA RIVER RESTORATION**

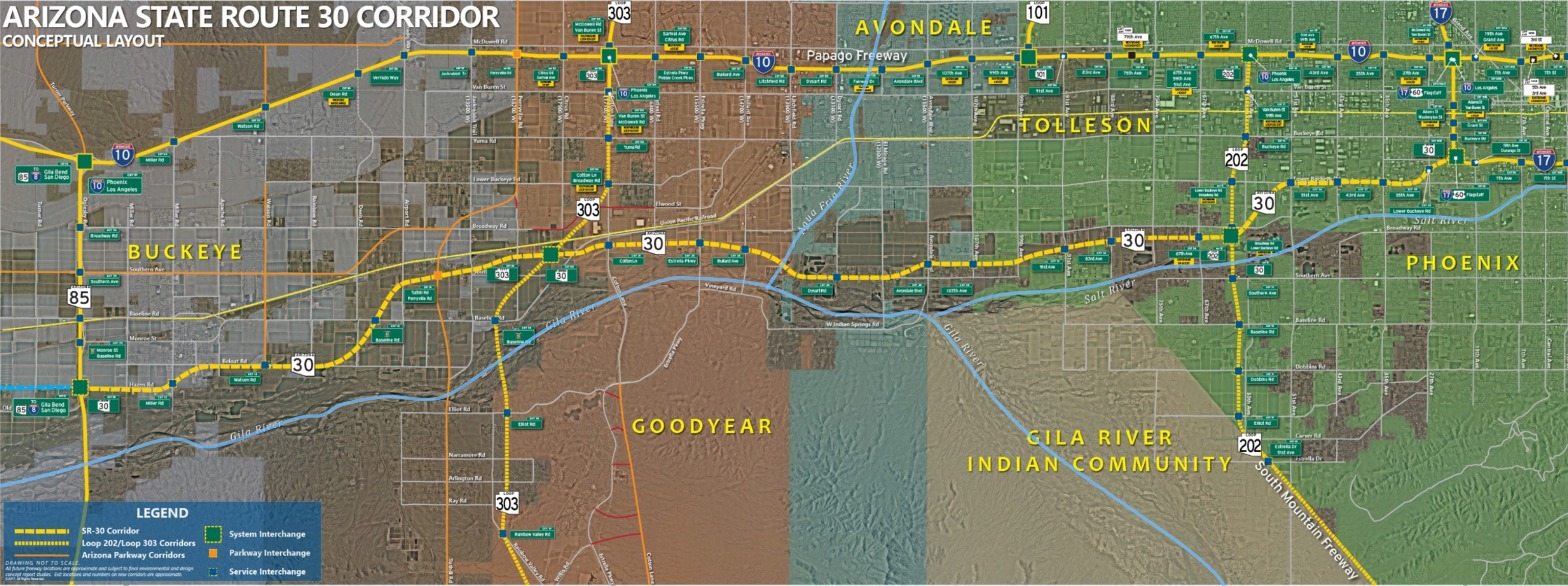
FEDERAL | STATE | COUNTY PUBLIC LANDS



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR		USDA U.S. FOREST SERVICE		PRIVATE
 Bureau of Land Management		STATE LAND		OTHER
 Bureau of Reclamation		STATE WILDERNESS AREA		RIO REIMAGINED AREA
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service		LOCAL OR COUNTY PARKS		SALT - GILA FLOODWAY
 INDIAN LANDS		MILITARY		

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

ARIZONA STATE ROUTE 30 CORRIDOR CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT



All SR-30 and Loop 303 (south of Van Buren St) route locations depicted, including potential interchanges and their locations, are illustrative and may change after appropriate environmental studies are cleared.
Map Date 10/13/2017

Maricopa Association of Governments

- ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- OPEN SPACE | RECREATION
- HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

- ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS - GREENWAY
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT
- WATERSHED PLANNING

ON - GOING GRANTS + ASSISTANCE

- **USDA FOREST SERVICE | AZ DEPT. OF FORESTRY AND FIRE MANAGEMENT**
West Mesa River Community Heat Action Grant Spring 2020 – 2022
- **US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**
Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant - Cities of Phoenix, Tempe + Avondale Spring 2020 - 2023
- **US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**
Revolving Loan Fund – City of Phoenix + LISC Spring 2020 - 2023
- **US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY | AZ WATER SCIENCE CENTER**
Water Quality Cooperative Matching Funds – Flood Control District of MC Summer 2020 – 2023
- **US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**
Environmental Justice Grant - RAIL CDC Urban Spring 2022 – 2023
- **USDA FOREST SERVICE | AZ DEPT. OF FORESTRY AND FIRE MANAGEMENT**
Healthy Urban River Ecosystems Grant - Wildlife Habitat Council Spring 2022 – 2024
- **US DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION | CITY OF PHOENIX**
RAISE Grant - 3rd Street Corridor Pedestrian + Bike Bridge Spring 2022 – 2026

MOVING FORWARD

- **FORMATION - RIO REIMAGINED SOCIAL IMPACT ORGANIZATION | 501 C3**
- **URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP AMBASSADOR**
- **GREENWAY PLANNING INITIATIVE**
- **WATERSHED PLANNING**
- **EQUITY AND INCLUSION COALITION**
- **ON-GOING GRANTS AND OUTREACH**



MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS + RECREATION | VISION 2030 OVERVIEW

RJ Cardin - Director of Maricopa County Parks and Recreation

R I O R E I M A G I N E D



Rio Reimagined
WRRC Brown Bag
August 2022

PARKS VISION 2030

Continuing the Legacy

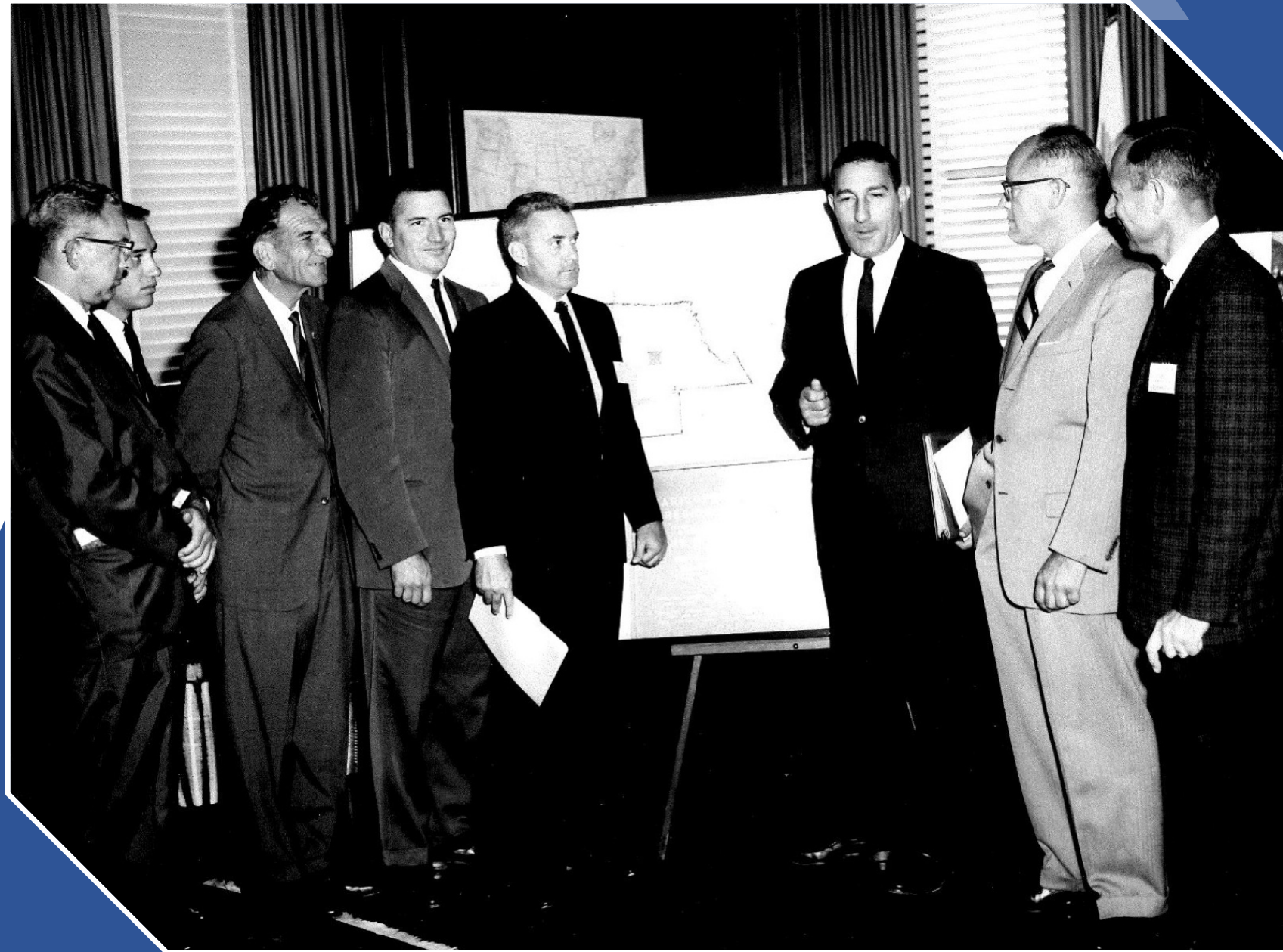


Maricopa County

A Legacy of Planning for the Future

1965 Maricopa County Regional Parks System Plan

- First regional park system plan adopted
- Explosive growth was a big concern
- Focus on large, unspoiled preserves removed from the urban area
- Offer a retreat from urban areas
- Activities are passive in nature



Secretary Stewart Udall discusses regional plan



Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation

WHAT WE KNOW

- **2020 ASU Morrison Institute of Public Policy report on Attitudes and Opinions About Environmental Issues in Arizona conducted for the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust found that:**
 - **98% of Arizona's residents say "parks, preserves, forests and open spaces" are important to them.**
 - **Protecting air, water, land and wildlife was among Arizonan's **top three priorities** for future action.**

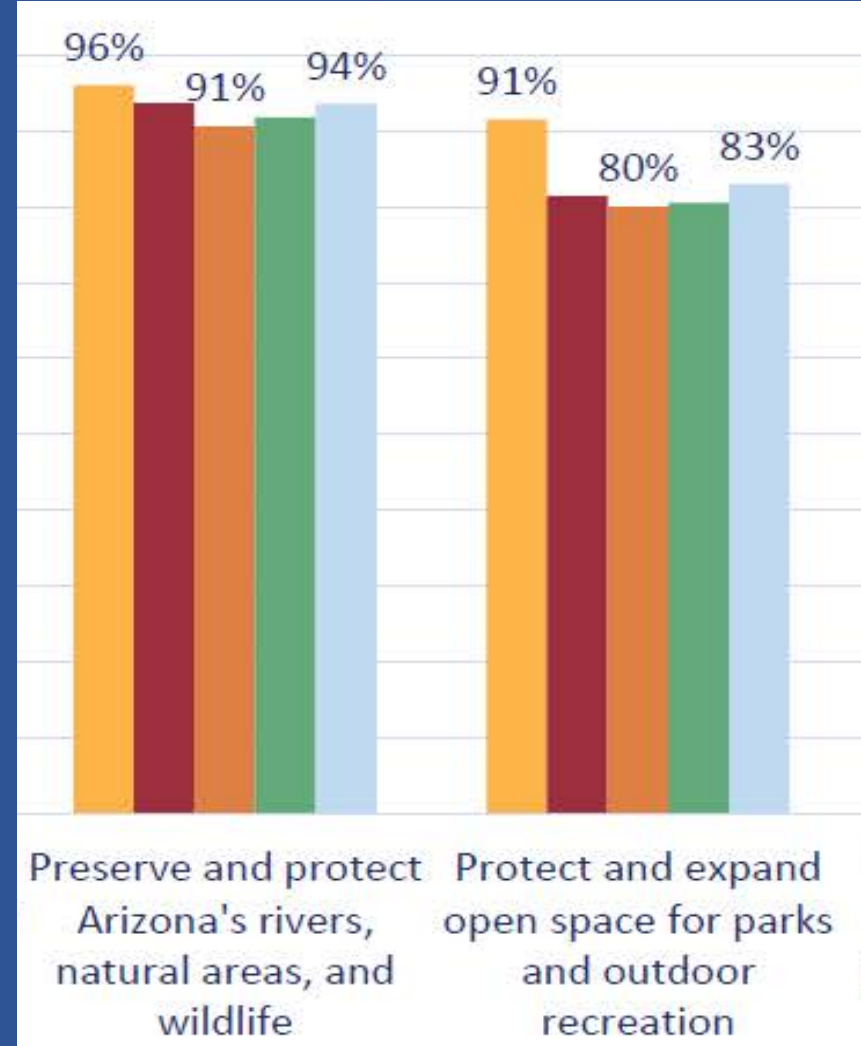


NINA MASON PULLIAM
CHARITABLE TRUST

The Arizona We Want: The Decade Ahead – Insights from the 2020 Gallup Arizona Survey

- **92% of AZ residents said preserving and protecting Arizona’s rivers, natural areas and wildlife was important to them**

How important is it that Arizona make the following changes over the next 10 years?

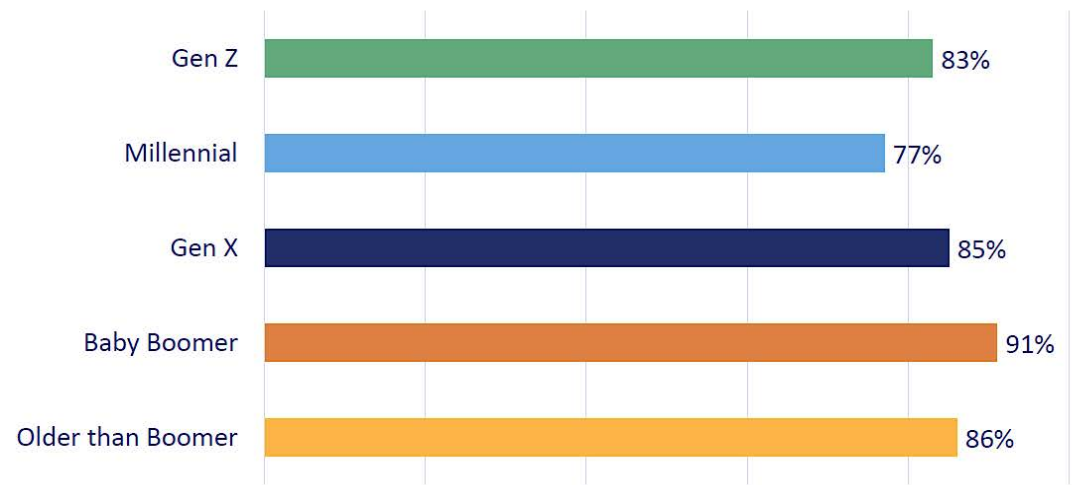


Gen Z Millennial Gen X Baby Boomer Older than Boomers

Public Amenities



Typically, how would you rate “outdoor parks, playgrounds and trails” in Arizona? (MC Residents)
Percent “excellent” or “good”



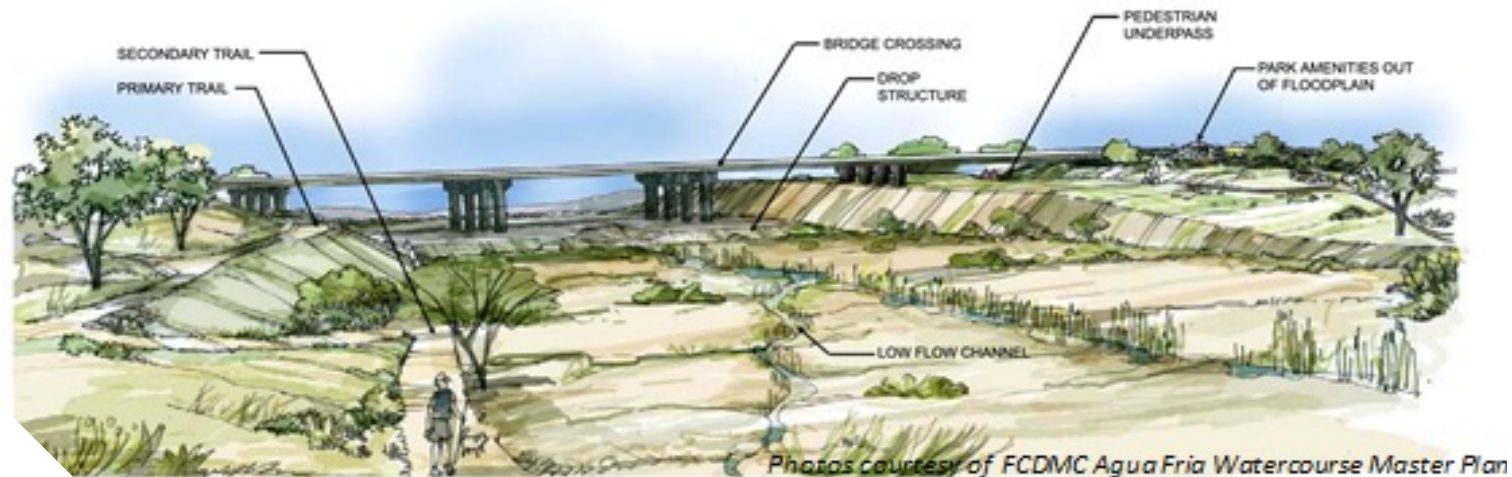
How would you allocate \$100 to support the Maricopa County Parks?



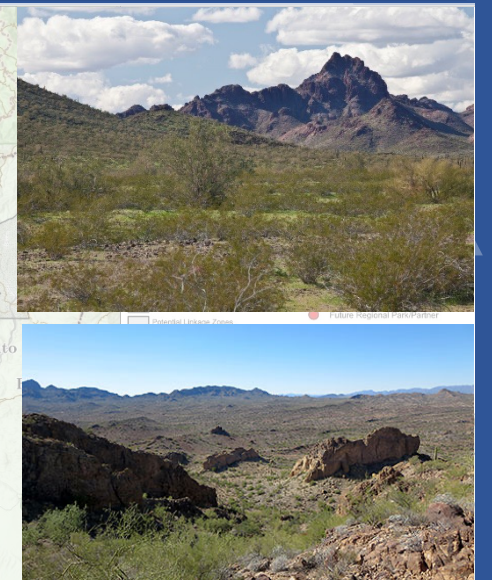
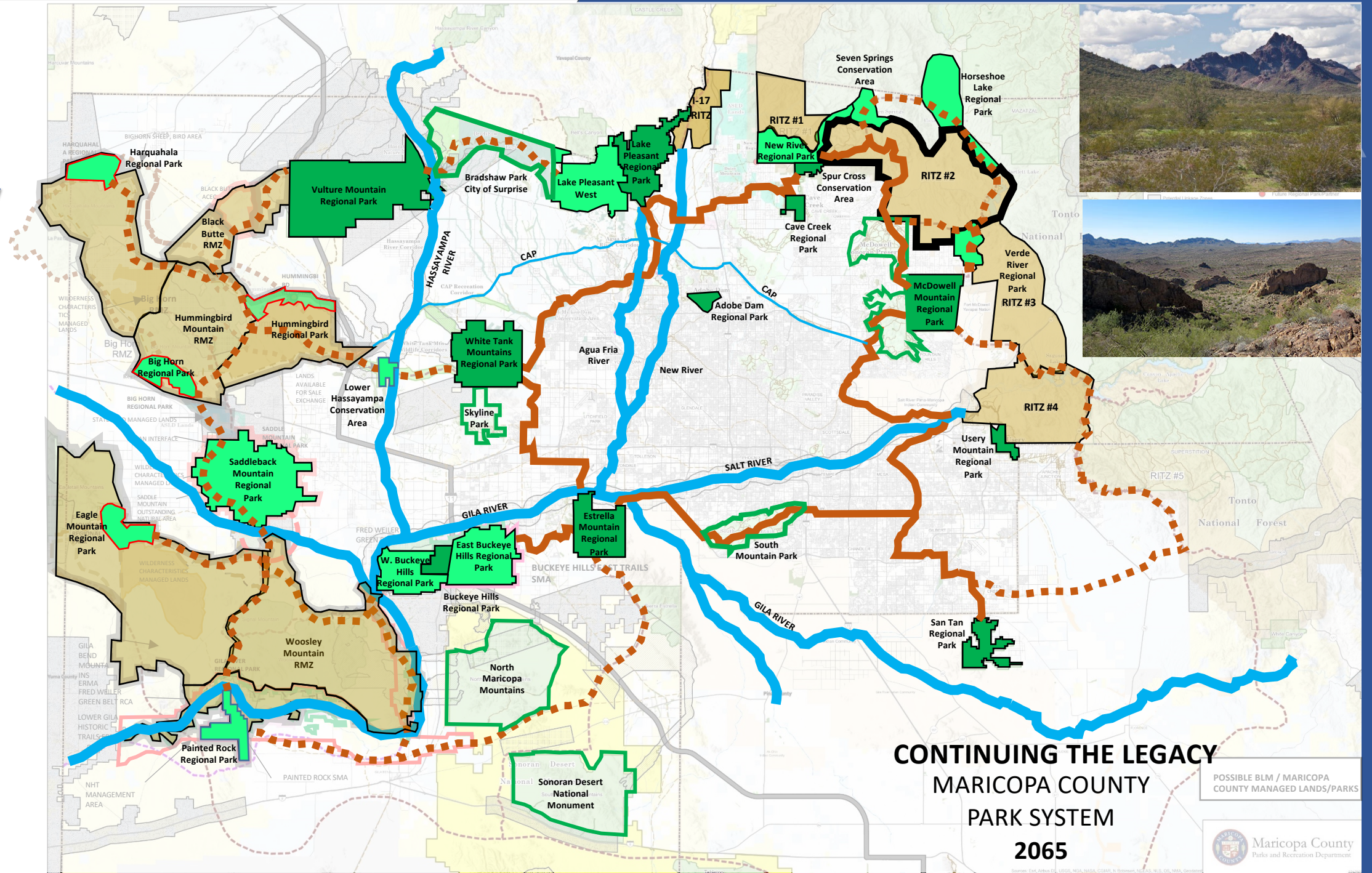
Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**
- **PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL VISITOR EXPERIENCES**
- **LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION & PRESERVATION**
- **REINVEST, PROTECT & CONTINUE TO IMPROVE OUR EXISTING REGIONAL PARK**
- **ACQUIRE AND MANAGE NEW REGIONAL PARKS, RIVER CORRIDORS AND OPEN SPACES**
- **DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE & DIVERSIFIED FUNDING PORTFOLIO**



**Connected
Landscapes:
Our
Heritage
Our
Future!**



**CONTINUING THE LEGACY
MARICOPA COUNTY
PARK SYSTEM
2065**

POSSIBLE BLM / MARICOPA COUNTY MANAGED LANDS/PARKS



**Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation**

REGIONAL CONCEPT



U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE | URBAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Nichole Engelmann - Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

R I O R E I M A G I N E D



Beyond the Regulatory

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Urban Conservation Program

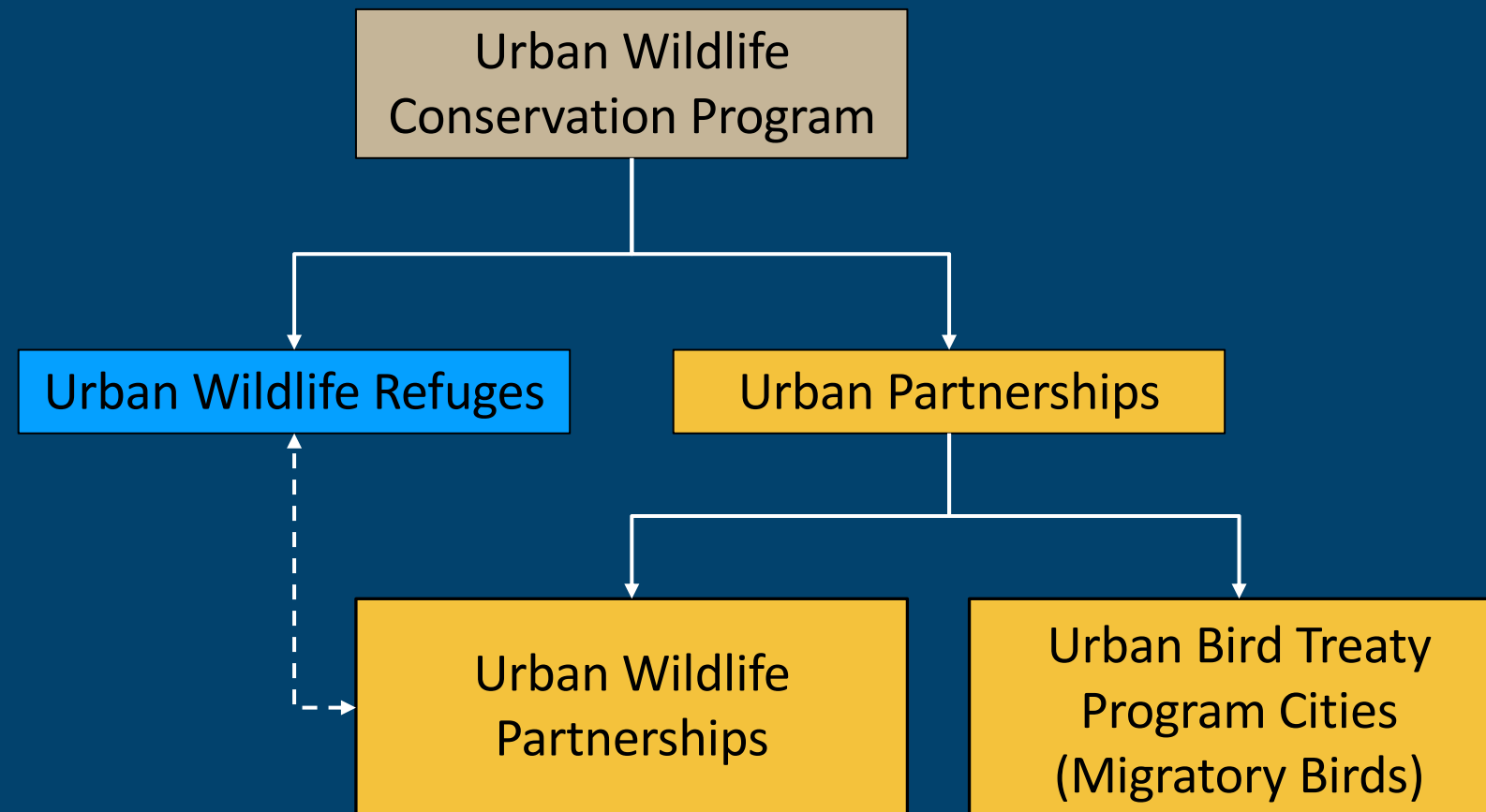


Urban Conservation Program

“Working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”



Urban Conservation Program



Critical Elements

1. Community Focused:

Prioritize community needs with long-term commitments.

2. Intentional

Develop community engagement methods that are deliberate, authentic, and measurable.

3. Inclusive

Implement equitable solutions to involve systematically excluded communities in solving conservation challenges.

4. Collaborative

Form long-term, transformational relationships with community partners and across Service programs with the goal of increasing the collective impacts of conservation efforts.



Houston Urban Program

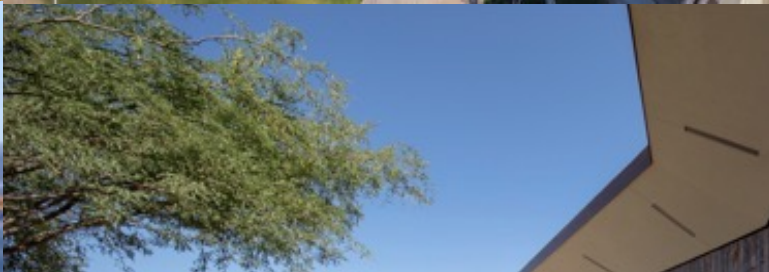
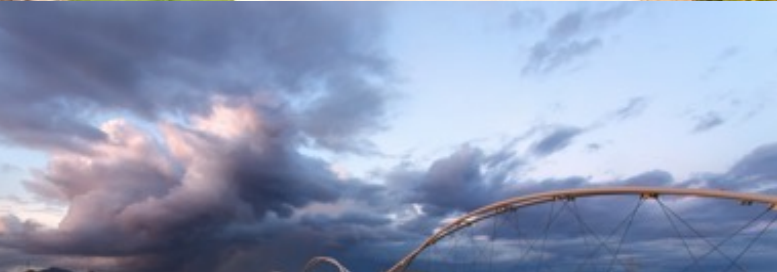


Valle de Oro Urban Program



Rio Reimagined Urban Program





LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE | OVERVIEW

Tice Supplee - Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Southwest

R I O R E I M A G I N E D



LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE

Supporting El Rio Watercourse and Rio Reimagined



LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE

The Lower Gila River Collaborative (LGRC) envisions a **healthy** Lower Gila River system with sufficient water resources to support **functioning habitat**, engaged and **resilient** communities, vibrant local economies and **quality of life** for present and future generations.

The **mission** of the LGRC is to serve as an ongoing forum for collaboration, coordination and outreach that benefits natural and cultural resources of the Lower Gila River corridor. The Collaborative supports natural resource restoration and enhancement, stewardship, nature-based recreation, and compatible economic development.



LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP



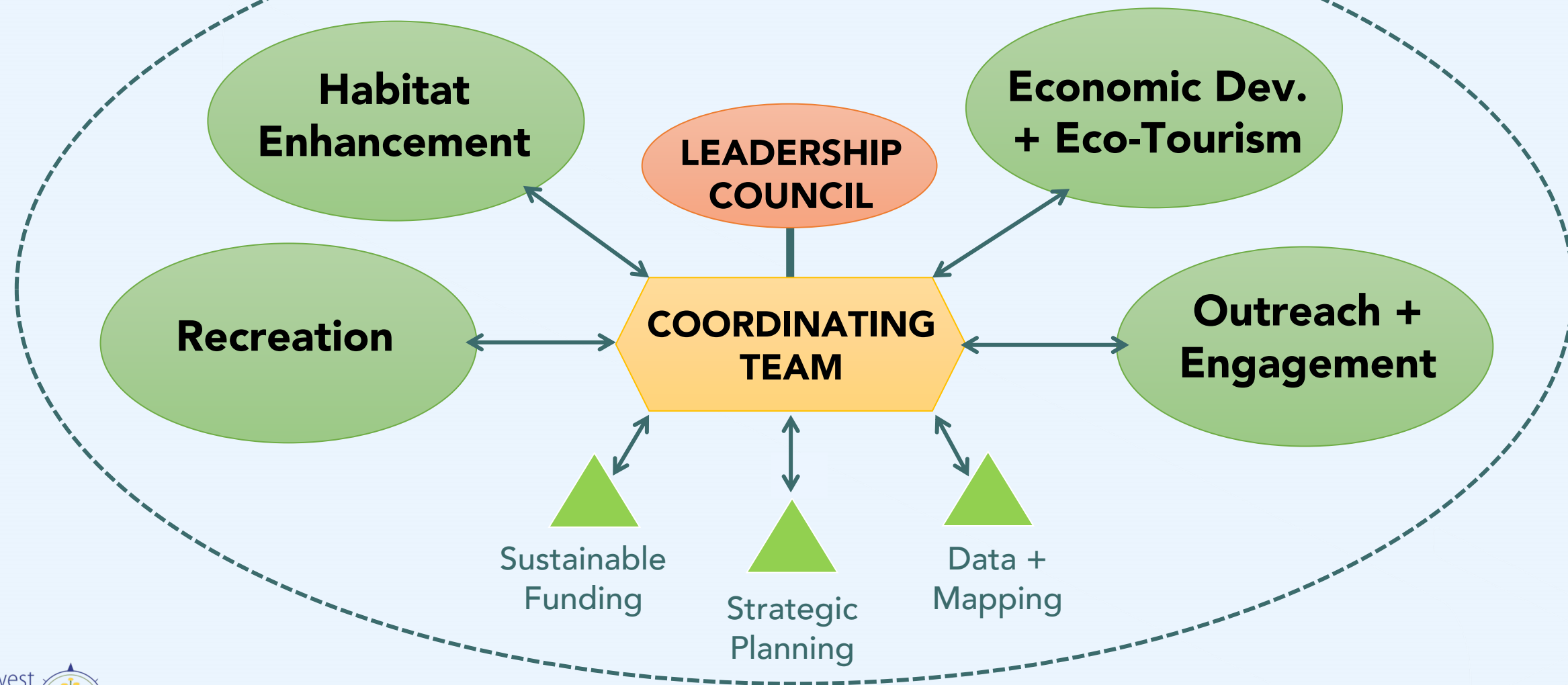
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RECLAMATION



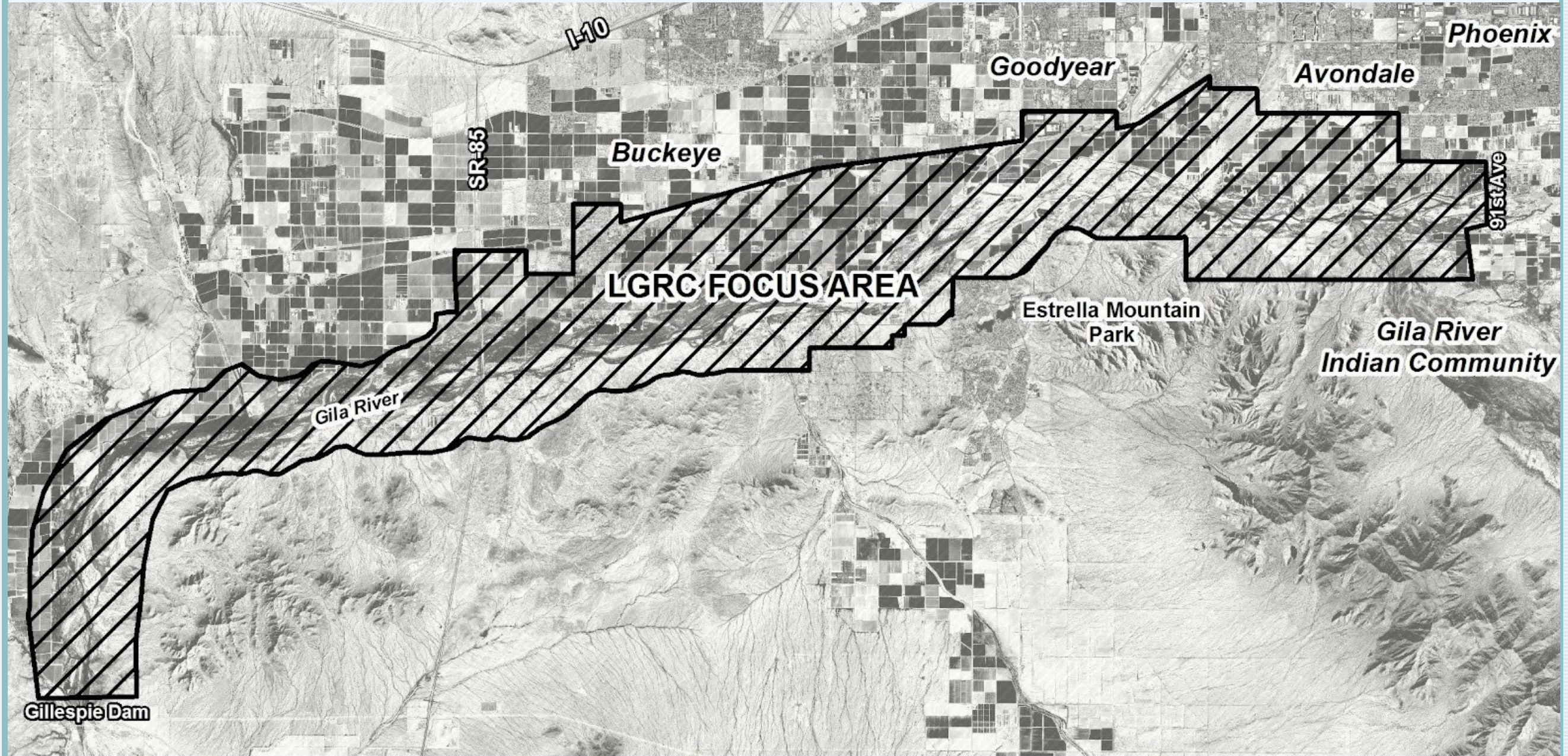
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Parks and Recreation



LGRC STRUCTURE + WORK GROUPS



LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE FOCUS AREA MAP



LGRC PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES



- Wildland Fuel Reduction + Management
 - Invasive Species Removal
 - Native Plant Restoration + Nursery
 - Water Quality Study
-
- El Rio Confluence Lake
 - Flood Control Levee
 - City of Phoenix Tres Rios Phase 3
-
- River Clean-ups
 - Sustainable Tourism
-
- Regional Greenway / Trail Connectivity
 - Park / Recreation Amenities + Connectivity



EL RIO CONFLUENCE LAKE



NORTH LAKE

Arboretum
Eco-Resort
Urban Farming
Education Center
Camping

SOUTH LAKE

Marina
Boat Rentals
Fishing
Concessions
Event Pavilion

BWCDD

Marina
Fishing
Boating
Resort
Campground
Boat Launch

- ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION
- OPEN SPACE | RECREATION
- ECONOMIC TOURISM
- WATER CONSERVATION + MANAGEMENT

Confluence of the Gila River and the Agua Fria River
200 Acre Feet - Similar size as Tempe Town Lake





LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC ACTION PLANNING PROCESS



- Describe Current Conditions and Trends
- Identify Information Gaps and Uncertainties
- Engage Partners and Communities
- Define Desired Conditions

LGRC 2022 WORKSHOP SERIES



- Please join us and inform the LGRC Strategic Action Planning Initiative

WHEN	TOPIC	WHERE
Tuesday 8/16 3 to 4pm	Orientation to LGRC Strategic Planning Process	Virtual
Wednesday 8/17 9am to 12pm	Lower Gila River Water	Virtual
Thursday 9/1 1 to 4pm	West Phoenix to Buckeye Reaches 1 to 3	In person Buckeye
Thursday 9/15 1 to 4pm	Buckeye to Gillespie Dam Reaches 4 to 5	In person Phoenix
November TBD	Concluding Workshop Summary + Next Steps	Virtual

These workshops are a forum for **LGRC partners** to share information and define the **"TURQUOISE BEADS"** along the lower Gila River that provide for wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, and community connections to the river. The collaborative will identify multi-benefit opportunities and strategies to further its vision, and we will begin detailed implementation plans for each priority area.

LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE MOVING FORWARD

- **STATE GRANT FUNDING (\$10M available)**
 - Fuel Reduction + Invasive Species Removal
- **FEDERAL GRANT FUNDING**
 - Multi-modal Trail / Open Space Connectivity
 - City of Phoenix Tres Rios Phase 3 – US Army Corps of Engineers
 - USGS Water Quality Study – Habitat Restoration & Recreation
- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**
 - State Route 30 – LGRC Integration
 - Arizona Rock Products Association / Wildlife Habitat Council
 - 2022 WORKSHOP SERIES August to November





COMMENTS + DISCUSSION

R I O R E I M A G I N E D



*The Rio Salado project has the potential
to transform the Salt River bottom and
realize an untapped Valley treasure.*

- U.S. Senator John McCain

THANK YOU