



City of Phoenix
Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Project
Quick facts

About Phoenix Rio Salado

- 582-acre desert river habitat
- 5 miles of the Salt River
- 19th Avenue to 28th Street
- trails along terraced banks lined with trees & wetlands
- 200-foot wide, 15-foot deep low flow channel to carry storm releases of up to 12,200 cubic feet per second
- By 2005, estimated total costs of \$99 million (federal government paying 65%, funding authorized in 1997 by Congress)
- native vegetation found in the Salt River
- habitat for various species of desert birds and mammals
- operated and managed by Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department

Water Source

- 4 supply wells pump from a non-potable aquifer directly under the river
- 4 million gallons per day for irrigation

Habitat Features

- 88 acres of mesquite bosque habitat
- 14 acres of cottonwood/willow habitat
- 39 acres of wetland marsh
- 193 acres of lower Sonoran habitat (paloverde and mesquite association)
- 57 acres saltbush/quail bush/burro brush
- 31 acres of aquatic strand
- 160 acres of open space

Recreation & Education Features

- hiking
- bicycling
- jogging
- in-line skating
- horseback riding
- picnicking
- photography
- guided tours
- wildlife viewing
- interpretive trail system
- environmental education visitor center

Rio Salado Construction Timeline

- Low flow channel construction 2000-2002
- Habitat and recreation construction 2002-2004
- Rio Salado Project opens early 2005

History of the Salt River

Shortly after the turn of the century, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation placed dams along the Salt and Verde Rivers, providing a reliable supply of water year-round for the Salt River Valley. While the dams provided a reliable water supply for the valley, they created a dry, barren river filled with sand and cobbles. The land along the riverbed has become lined with landfills, sand and gravel pits, and industrial areas interspersed with a few older neighborhoods.

In 1993, the City of Phoenix was successful in a request for a restoration study of the Salt River. After review of the area by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, they determined that there was federal interest in the project to partner with the City of Phoenix on the \$85 million dollar Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Project. In August 1999 congress authorized the matching federal construction funding for the Rio Salado project by signing the Water Resources Development Act. With inflation and additional grant dollars, the project's total cost is \$99 million.

Benefits of Phoenix Rio Salado

- Maximize habitat value within the Salt River corridor
- Major urban landscape for blighted river corridor
- Improvements in flood management
- Environmental education opportunities
- New trails and links to existing trails
- Visitor destination near downtown
- Trigger new development oriented to the river

National Significance

- 90% of the Sonoran wetlands have been lost. *U.S. Forest Service
- Riparian areas are critical to the survival of fish and wildlife species in Arizona.

Partnerships

Phoenix Rio Salado is in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Flood Control District of Maricopa County and the Arizona Water Protection Fund.

For more information, call (602) 262-4717.

Website: www.phoenix.gov/riosalado

Rio Salado is Salt River in Spanish.