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

- U.S. Senator John McCain
- 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

FEDERAL

STATE

NGO’S PARTIAL

GREAT PHOENIX

GREATER PHOENIX

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

SOUTH WEST

ARIZONA PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

CORAZON LATINO

WILDLIFE HABITAT COUNCIL

CHICANOS PARA LA CAUSA

AUDUBON

IGCRC

WASHINGTON HABITAT COUNCIL

FGPL LEADERSHIP

ARIZONA SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE

ARIZONA PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

LSC PHOENIX

RIVER NETWORK

ULI URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL

Southwest Decision Resources

ASU

SRP

BUCKEYE, AZ

US Army Corps of Engineers

Tempe AZ ARIZONA

Mesa AZ ARIZONA

City of Phoenix

Goodyear

Avondale

USDA

FEMA
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
URBANWATERS
FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP
Environmental Protection Agency | EPA Region 9

FEDERAL RECOGNITION & SUPPORT

20th Location - FEDERAL DESIGNATION
Funding
Network Resources
Agency Access
Ambassador

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 6 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

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

COMPLETED

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

- 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
INTRODUCTION

MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS + RECREATION | VISION 2030 OVERVIEW

RJ Cardin – Director of Maricopa County Parks and Recreation

RIO REIMAGINED
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
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.
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 would you allocate $100 to support the Maricopa County Parks?

- **Maintain**
  - Maintain existing parks, open spaces and trails – $32

- **Protect**
  - Acquire and protect new open space - $22

- **Restore**
  - Restore/protect river and wildlife corridors - $21

- **Develop**
  - Develop new regional parks- $14

- **Connect**
  - Improve and expand outdoor programs and nature-based education - $11
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!

Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation
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.”
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
Supporting El Rio Watercourse and Rio Reimagined
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.
LGRC STRUCTURE + WORK GROUPS

- Habitat Enhancement
- Economic Dev. + Eco-Tourism
- Recreation
- Outreach + Engagement

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

COORDINATING TEAM

- Sustainable Funding
- Strategic Planning
- Data + Mapping
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
Please join us and inform the LGRC Strategic Action Planning Initiative

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