

**DRAFT**  
**PARKS VISION**  
**APPENDIX**

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**PARTNERS**  
**REGIONAL PLANS**  
**PUBLIC OUTREACH**



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**Adobe Dam Regional Park** is the smallest Park in the county system at 1,454 acres. It is located in a primarily urban environment in Phoenix, northwest of the Loop 101 North and Interstate 17 (I-17) interchange.

Approximately 761 acres have been developed. Unlike the rest of the County's regional park system, Adobe Dam is known as a place where families can congregate to enjoy a multitude of concessionaire recreational activities such as:

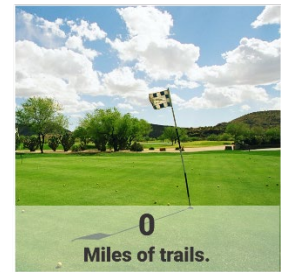
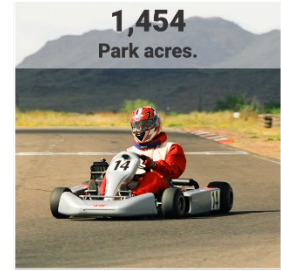
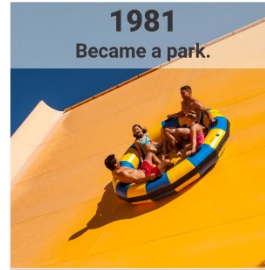
- Sport Fields
- Golf
- Kart racing
- Model airplanes
- Multi-scale train park
- Waterpark

While Adobe Dam Regional Park is focused on offering recreational activities to park visitors, the land is owned by the Maricopa County Flood Control District. The area's primary purpose is for flood control; a secondary purpose is for recreation and open space.

Construction of the Adobe Dam began in November 1980, and work was completed in December 1981. Adobe Dam is designed to hold water during times of floods, and the parks department works closely with the concessionaires housed within Adobe Dam Regional Park to ensure the safety of visitors during storm events and to make sure facilities are properly sited and are designed to minimize potential damage.

**Milestone Projects.**

- The water system has been upgraded (2019)



**ADOBE DAM REGIONAL PARK**

**AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Ballfields</b>	
- Lighted	6
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Host	1
<b>ET Beds</b>	
- Septic Tank	1
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	1
- Service (non-trail)	3
<b>Sports Amenities Managed by Concessionaires</b>	
- Golf Course	
- Model Airplanes	
- Multi-scale Train Park	
- Kart Racing	
- Waterpark	
- Sport Fields	
Water tanks	2



**Buckeye Hills Regional Park** is 4,453 acres near Buckeye in unincorporated Maricopa County. The area is predominantly rural. The Park is located five (5) miles southwest of the City of Buckeye, off State Route 85.

Vegetation is limited throughout the Park mainly due to the shallow decomposed granite soils. The location in far west Phoenix protects it from much of the city lights and provides excellent stargazing opportunities.

**Natural Resources**

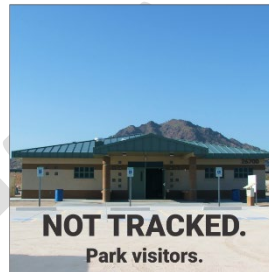
Buckeye Hills Regional Park has mountain peaks dominated by Palo Verde-Saguaro upland desert ecosystems and typical wash plant communities dominated by mesquite and creosote subshrubs. Not far from the Gila River, it is known to inhabit mule deer, mountain lions, coyotes, and bighorn sheep.

**Shooting Ranges**

Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association volunteers manage the General Joe Foss Shooting Complex. The complex is typically open to the public Friday through Sunday; operating hours are seasonal. The shooting complex offers:

- A 200-yard rifle and pistol range
- A 50-yard training range
- Trap and skeet field
- Retail store
- Vending machine

The Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office Shooting Range which is used for training purposes, is also housed in the Park.



**BUCKEYE HILLS REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Dump Stations and ET Beds</b>	
- Septic Tank	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	10
- Designated	395
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Ramadas	2
- Tables	50
- BBQ Grills	39
- Fire Rings	37
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Vault Toilets (park)	8
- Flush Toilets (shooting range)	6
- Drinking Fountains	
- w/o Bottle Refill	2
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	1
<b>Shooting Range</b>	2
<b>Signage</b>	
- Monument	1
- Kiosk	1



**Cave Creek Regional Park** is located near the town of Cave Creek, bordered by Cave Creek residential and state trust lands, and is 2,934 acres.

Ranging in elevation from 2,000 to 3,060 feet, this desert oasis provides any hiker and equestrian with majestic views. The most popular trail at the Park is the Go John Trail. It loops around a mountain to provide the illusion of being miles away from civilization.

In the 1870s, fever-stricken gold seekers staked their dreams on the jasper-studded hills. Guided trails to unique sites allow visitors to travel back in time.

**Campsites**

Tent or RV camping is allowed at the campground. The average site size is 40 square feet; however, pull-through sites may accommodate a 60-foot RV. Each site offers water and electrical hookups, a picnic table, and a barbecue fire ring.

**Horse staging**

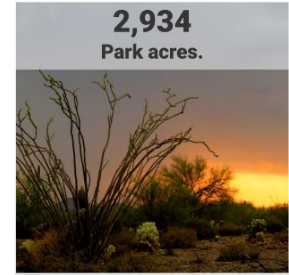
The Park offers a horse staging area south of the picnic loop. The area has a large gravel parking lot to accommodate horse trailers. Hitch rails and water are also available.

**Milestone Projects**

- Park host site upgrades (2019)
- Park boundary fencing has been replaced (2018)
- Ramada and Group campground upgrades (2015)
- Nature-themed playground installed (2014)

**Nature Center**

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) accredited nature center is designed to be fully functional, sustainable, and energy-efficient while minimizing the disturbance to the natural landscape and



**CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	
<b>Amphitheater</b>	
- Lighted	1
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Developed	55
- Fire Rings	55
- Host	9
- Semi-developed	6
- Tables	55
<b>Dump Stations/ET Beds</b>	
- Dump Station	1
- Septic Tanks	11
- ET Beds	2
<b>Habitats and Ponds</b>	
- Butterfly garden	1
- Captive habitat	1
- Pond	1
<b>Nature Themed Playground with shade</b>	1
<b>Amenities Managed by Concessions:</b>	
Equestrian Rides/Tours	



maximizing the design compatibility with the natural surroundings.

The Nature Center includes a gift store, animal exhibits, interpretive displays, educational materials, meeting rooms, and park offices. It is available to rent for events.

**Natural Resources**

Cave Creek Regional Park has mountain ranges of Palo Verde-Saguaro upland desert ecosystems with over 84 plant species and 69 wildlife species, including more common species such as coyotes, bobcats, and mule deer. The Park also inhabits less common and notable or protected species such as crucifixion thorn trees, mountain lions, desert tortoises, and squaw peak Southwestern talus snails. It is also home to the "Michelin" saguaro cacti!

**Nature-themed Playground**

To help encourage today's youth to connect with nature, the department installed nature-themed playgrounds throughout the regional park system. While on the playground, youth can climb on saguaros, explore the spiderweb rock wall, slide down a mountain lion's back, and much more.

**Trails**

Cave Creek Regional Park offers 16 miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. All trails are shared-use unless otherwise designated. The most popular trails in the Park are the Go John and Overton Trails.

**CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK**

**AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Nature Center	1
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	
- Designated	320
- Non-designated	62
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Tables	78
- BBQ Grills	61
- Fire Rings	3
<b>Ramadas</b>	
	6
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Camping toilets	16
- Drinking fountains	
- w/o Bottle Refill	7
- Day Use Toilets	17
- Showers	13
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	7
- Service Unpaved	1
- Service (non-trail)	1
<b>Signage</b>	
- Kiosks	4
- Monument	1
- Off-site	2
<b>Sports Amenities</b>	
- Basketball Court	1
- Horseshoe	1
- Rodeo Arena	1
- Volleyball	1
<b>Trails</b>	
- Benches	25
- Hike/Bike only	1
- Multi-Use	8
- Trailheads	1
<b>Watertanks</b>	
	1



**Estrella Mountain Regional Park** is located between Goodyear and Avondale. It is 19,837 acres and is predominately exurban. Located near the confluence of the Gila and Agua Fria Rivers in the southwest Valley, the Park includes a large wetland riparian area. The majority of the Park remains a pristine desert.

The Sierra Estrella mountain range, or "Star" Mountains, was once within the Mexican border and remained so until the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.

**Trails**

The Park offers roughly 43 miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and ranges in difficulty from easy to strenuous. The Baseline Trail is a popular 2.6-mile loop trail. The Gila Trail is a half-mile barrier-free trail just south of the Navy

Area of the Park. Barrier-free trails are built with gentle slopes, resting areas and are generally preferred by individuals using mobility devices and families with small children and strollers.

**Camping/Horse Staging**

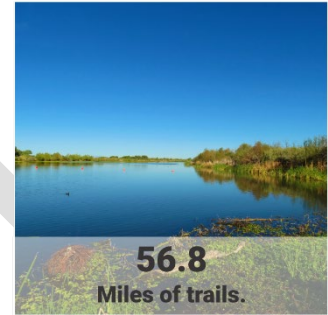
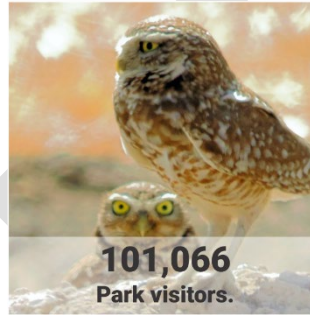
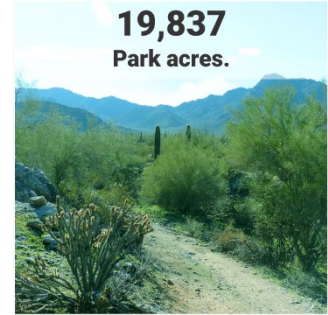
There are seven developed RV sites near the horse-staging area. Each has a large parking area to accommodate 45-foot RVs, with water, sewer, and electrical hookups, picnic tables, and barbecue fire rings.

**Competitive Track**

The competitive track is over 16 miles long and provides park visitors with challenging, strenuous, high-speed outdoor recreation for individuals, groups, and events. The tracks are shared-use, one-way only, and are designed for cross-country runners and joggers, fast bicyclists and racers, and trotting/galloping equestrians and endurance riders. No leisure travel is permitted on the track. The trail loops run between .08 to 9.5 miles in length.

**Events**

The Park is a popular venue for large-scale races and family reunions.



**ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Amphitheater</b>	1
<b>Ballfields</b>	
- Lighted	2
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Host	15
<b>Competitive Tracks</b>	1
<b>Habitats and Ponds</b>	
- Butterfly garden	1
- Captive habitat	1
<b>Nature Themed Playground with shade</b>	1
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
- Nature Center	1





**Golf Course**

Estrella Mountain Regional Park is home to the championship 18-hole Tres Rios Golf Course. Opened in 1966, Tres Rios is Goodyear's oldest golf course. The course is now home to the Junior National Golf Program.

**Milestone Projects**

- El Rio Confluence Lake Plan (2021)
- Renovated day-use picnic grounds including included replacement of the water system, parking lot and curb upgrades, upgrades to the electrical systems, new ramadas, BBQ grills, picnic tables, automatic gate entry, and vegetation (2018)
- Replaced and upgraded electrical system (2018)
- Park master plan updated (2016)
- Restroom upgrades (2015)
- Centennial Trail initiation, as a small piece from the parking lot to the back of the nature center was completed (2012)
- El Rio Watercourse Master Plan (2009)

**Natural Resources**

There are mountain ranges with peaks, valleys, and washes of Palo Verde-Saguaro upland desert ecosystems, mesquite bosques, riparian habitats, and many trails to enjoy viewing over 330 plant species. There are also over 122 wildlife species, including coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, desert tortoises. Because the Park runs along the Gila River, you may encounter some of the more notable species, such as bald eagles, western burrowing owls, chuckwallas, and Le Conte's thrashers.

**ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Parking Lots</b>	23
- Designated Spaces	975
- Non-designated Spaces	1,448
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Benches	24
- BBQ Grills	42
- Fire Rings	4
- Tables	166
<b>Ramadas</b>	27
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Drinking Fountains	
- w/o bottle refill	3
- w/ bottle refill	9
- Day Use Toilets	35
- Portable Toilets	4
- Showers	2
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	7
- Service Unpaved	2
<b>Septic Tanks/ET Beds</b>	
- Septic Tanks	15
- ET Beds	1
<b>Signage</b>	
- Interpretive	5
- Kiosks	5
- Monument	1
- Off-site	2
<b>Sports Amenities Managed by Concessionaires</b>	
- Golf Course	1
<b>Trails</b>	
- Barrier-free	1
- Hike Only	1
- Memorial Benches	10
- Multi-Use	14
- Trailhead	5
<b>Turf Range</b>	1
<b>Watertanks</b>	1



The **Hassayampa River Preserve** is a 776-acre desert oasis with lush vegetation, perennial water, and abundant wildlife. Several short trails travel through a riparian cottonwood-willow forest (among the last in Arizona), mesquite woodlands, old palms at spring-fed Palm Lake, and up to a stunning view at Lyke’s Lookout.

The Preserve protects important habitats for wildlife, including fox, javelina, bobcat, reptiles, amphibians, dragonflies, and over 300 bird species (including two federally listed threatened species). The Preserve’s historic buildings and interpretive exhibits give visitors a glimpse into the rich local and natural history.

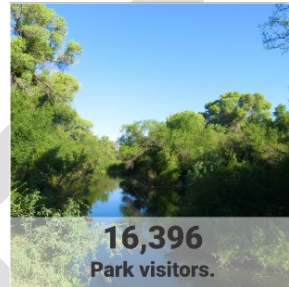


**Milestone Projects**

- Historic Brill Ranch house (Visitor Center) and historic Sanger building paint and roof replacement (2020)
- New ADA restrooms, pipe rail fencing, host sites, picnic site, electrical, and septic system upgrades (2018-2020)
- Land surveys and parking lot improvements (2017)
- Increased hours and staffing (2017)

**Natural Resources**

The Hassayampa River Preserve runs along the Hassayampa River floodplain corridor dominated by cottonwood and willow trees and with scattered mesquite bosques. The Park has



**HASSAYAMPA RIVER PRESERVE**

**AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Host	2
<b>Habitats and Ponds</b>	
- Butterfly garden	1
- Pond	1
<b>Operations/Maintenance Facilities</b>	
- Maintenance Compound	1
- Nature Center	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	1
- Designated spaces	33
- Non-designated Spaces	14
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Tables	11

over 350 plant species, including night-blooming Cereus cacti and Hohokam Agave plants. The riparian corridor and its surrounding desert ecosystem provide habitat to over 330 wildlife species, including coyotes, mountain



lions, and bobcats, but also some more notable species, such as desert tortoises, Arizona toads, northern saw-whet owls, white belted ringtails, and American badgers. The area also houses several endangered and threatened species like the southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, bonytail chub, desert pupfish, and Gila topminnows. It is also a hot spot and important habitat for bat activity, with over 17 bat species confirmed.



**Nature/Visitor Center**

The Visitor Center, housed in the 1860's Brill Ranch house, contains interactive displays on local history as well as desert and riparian ecology which provide guests with colorful and detailed stories about the special plants and animals found within the Preserve. The center also houses a variety of retail products such as apparel, educational resources on flora and fauna native to the area, and a small selection of snacks and beverages.

**Park Programs**

The Preserve offers a wide variety of interpretive programs, ranging from guided bird walks and dragonfly walks to night hikes and educational Discovery Stations. For those looking to explore the Preserve on their own, the Seasonal Nature Guide highlighting the plants and animals that are active in the Preserve during specific months, is available online and in the Visitor Center.

**HASSAYAMPA RIVER PRESERVE**

**AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Day-use Toilets	4
- Drinking Fountains	
- w/ bottle refill	1
<b>Roads</b>	
- Service Unpaved	2
- Service (non-trail)	2
<b>Septic Tanks</b>	
- ET Bed	3
	1
<b>Signage</b>	
- Interpretive	9
- Kiosks	3
- Monument	1
- Off-site	4
<b>Trails</b>	
- Barrier-free	1
- Benches (includes 15 memorial benches)	34
- Hike	7
- Trailheads	1

**Trails**

The Preserve is home to seven short trails that are primarily suited for most park visitors. In addition to being a beautiful walk, the Palm Lake Loop is also rated as a barrier-free trail. Barrier-free trails are built with gentle slopes, resting areas and are generally preferred by individuals using mobility devices and families with small children and strollers.





**Lake Pleasant Regional Park** is the crown jewel of the park system as one of Phoenix's largest water recreation areas. The Park is 23,662 acres, of which 10,000 acres are water. Recreational opportunities such as camping, boating, fishing, horseback riding, swimming, hiking, mountain biking, picnicking, scuba diving, and wildlife viewing are abundant.

**Boating**

Lake Pleasant Regional Park offers two boat launching ramps: a 4-Lane at the North Entrance and 10-Lane at the Main Entrance. Both ramps are functional to a water elevation of 1,600 feet. Motorized watercraft must be launched from the 10-Lane or 4-Lane boat ramps – no launching from the shoreline.

**Camping**

The lake offers a variety of camping opportunities. There are 138 developed and semi-developed at the lake for tent and/or RV camping.

- The Roadrunner Campground sits on a vista and offers scenic views of the lake.
- The Desert Tortoise Campground allows park visitors to camp closer to the water.
- Boat camping is permitted in designated areas.

**Trails**

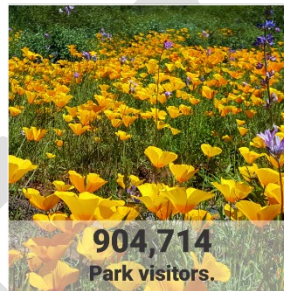
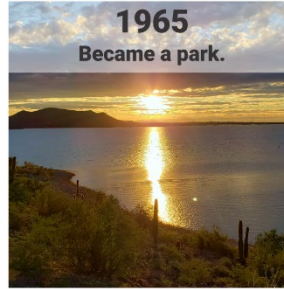
Lake Pleasant Regional Park offers 18.84 miles of trails for pedestrian use only. Park trails range in length from 0.3 miles up to 4.4 miles.

**Fishing**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department began to stock fish in the lake after building the main dam and completing the diversion dam. Lake Pleasant is home to 12 species of fish, including bass and catfish.

**Events**

The Park offers a variety of large-scale events such as the Prickly Pedal, Paddlefest, and the Dam Good Run, Walk Hike throughout the year.



**LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Developed	95
- Semi-Developed	43
- Fire Rings	151
- Group	3
- Host	11
- Primitive	25
- Tables	198
<b>Benches</b>	12
<b>Dump Stations and ET Beds</b>	
- Dump Station	1
- ET Beds	17
- Septic Tanks	18

**Marina with Restaurant**

For those seeking adventure, the marina offers boat, kayak, and water toy rentals. For those looking for a place to store their boats, the marina offers both wet and dry slip rentals.



### Scuba Diving

Lake Pleasant is known for having some of the best inland scuba diving in the western states. An abundance of rock walls, canyons, and underwater structures, like the old Waddell Dam.

### Milestone Projects

- Water system upgrades, ramada renovations, Government dock/boathouse constructed, and nature-themed playground installed (2019)
- Discovery Center opens and improvements to Group Campground (2017)
- Winches were replaced, grading improvements to Pallet Loop, restroom repairs and renovations, and a floating restroom were installed (2016)
- North Lake Pleasant Trails were constructed, and chlorination systems were upgraded (2015)
- North Lake Pleasant Trail Plan was adopted (2014)
- Agua Fria Conservation Area restoration (2009)

### Natural Resources

Lake Pleasant Regional Park is a unique area that incorporates the upland desert mountain parks with peaks and valleys surrounding a large lake. There are over 335 plant species, including Hohokam Agave. In addition, there are 230 wildlife species, including jackrabbits, coyotes, mountain lions, and bobcats.

Some more notable species include the desert tortoise, peregrine falcons, bald eagles, lowland leopard frog, Arizona toads, endangered and threatened southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, bonytail chub, desert pupfish, Gila longfin dace, and Gila topminnows. There have even been occasional sightings of ringtails and coatimundis at the Park.

*Note: Lake Pleasant is a man-made lake, so park visitors are reminded that the landscape fluctuates. While you may be standing in three feet of water at one point, you could be in 9 ft. of water just a few steps away.*

## LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK

### AMENITIES

Description	No.
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
- Nature Center	1
- Operations Center	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	
- Designated Spaces	26
- Non-designated Spaces	1,394
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Benches	88
- Tables	3
- BBQ Grills	198
- Fire Rings	22
<b>Ramadas</b>	
	22
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Camping Toilets	190
- Day Use Toilets	18
- Drinking Fountains	18
- Portable Toilets	13
- Showers	19
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	28
- Service Unpaved	19
- Service (non-trail)	5
<b>Signage</b>	
- Interpretive	5
- Monument	TBD
- Kiosks	TBD
- Off-site	5
<b>Trails</b>	
- Benches	TBD
- Barrier-free	13
- Equestrian	2
- Hike Only	1
- Hike/Bike Only	1
- Multi-Use	7
- Trailhead	6
<b>Watertanks</b>	
	5
	3



**The Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant**

**Pleasant Regional Park** is a world-class outdoor education facility that annually engages over 15,000 Valley youth in over 30 informative programs. The Center is within the boundary of Lake Pleasant Regional Park but operates independently.

Topics range from desert survival to venomous creatures and aquatic life to edible plants of the desert. Programs are designed to meet state educational standards while providing kids with a fun and memorable experience.

The spectacular views of the Sonoran desert also provide a private and beautiful backdrop for weddings, retreats, and other group functions. This is a reservation-only facility and is not open for public day-use recreation.

**Daytime Programs**

The Center offers a myriad of programs ranging from Desert Survival and Desert Mammals Weather or Not and Ancient People. Programs can be selected as a themed package or a-la-carte tailored to the student's needs. Programs are aligned with Arizona Academic Standards.

**Evening Programs**

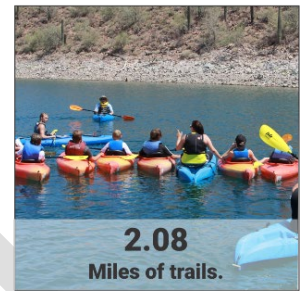
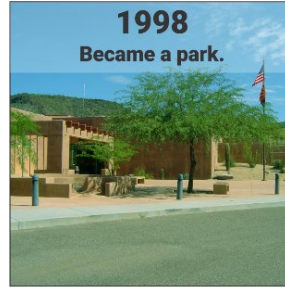
After a full day of classes, groups can enjoy an evening of programming led by a Ranger. Two evening programs can be selected, each lasting one hour in length. Groups may complete their evening roasting tasty marshmallows over an open fire pit in the Center's amphitheater.

**Amphitheater**

The facility's outdoor amphitheater can accommodate 200 guests comfortably for programming opportunities, weddings, and various other events.

**Classrooms**

The facility houses a science lab with microscopes and other resources students will need during their hands-on learning labs. In addition, there is a classroom that seats 35



**DESERT OUTDOOR CENTER**

**AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Amphitheater</b>	1
<b>Boat Dock</b>	1
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Host	3
<b>Dorms</b>	2
- Beds	100
- Rollaway Cots	50
<b>Education Center</b>	
- Archeology Pit	1
- Commercial Kitchen	1
- Ethnobotany Garden	1
- Observatory	1
- Paleontology Pit	1
- Shade Structure	1
<b>ET Beds</b>	1

students and a resource room that seats 40 students.



### Exhibit Hall

The exhibit hall is an excellent resource for students to view the various species of reptiles and aquatic animals they will learn about during their visit to the Desert Outdoor Center. If they're lucky, they may get to join a reptile or two for a meal as the ranger feeds them from behind the glass.

### Dorms

The Center houses two onsite dorms which hold up to 150 guests for single or multiple-night visits. Accommodations are communal with bunk beds and separate restrooms and showers. A small room with two beds and separate restroom facilities is located in the Center of the building for chaperones.

### Gift Shop

The gift shop contains many items ranging from books about the species native to the area, clothing, postcards and photos, and a variety of snacks.

### Milestone projects

- New ET bed installed with steel pipe rail fence (2021)
- Concrete barrier-free trail installed on Honeymoon Cove trail (2021)
- Chiller system was replaced (2020)
- Re-coated the roof on the entire building/complex (2017)
- Fire alarm system upgraded (2015)

### Multi-purpose Room/Kitchen

The multi-purpose room can accommodate up to 150 people comfortably. An adjacent patio seats 75 individuals outdoors, and a commercial kitchen.

### Trails

The Park offers 2.08 miles of trails. The 1.85-mile barrier-free, Honeymoon Cove Trail, contains gentle slopes, resting areas, and is suitable for wheelchairs or strollers.

## DESERT OUTDOOR CENTER PARK AMENITIES

Description	No.
<b>Gift shop</b>	1
<b>Habitats</b>	
- Captive Habitat	1
<b>Maintenance Facility</b>	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	
- Parking Lot	1
- Designated Spaces	25
- Non-designated Spaces	65
<b>Paved Roads</b>	2
<b>Picnic sites</b>	
- BBQ Grill	1
- Fire Rings	1
- Tables	5
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Camping toilets	16
- Day-use Toilets	9
- Drinking Fountain	
- w/ Bottle Refill	1
- w/o Bottle Refill	4
- Showers	16
- Urinals	4
<b>Signage</b>	
- Interpretive	5
- Kiosk	2
<b>Trails</b>	
- Barrier-free	1
- Benches	10
- Hike	1
- Trailheads	2
<b>Watertanks</b>	1



The **Maricopa Trail System** includes over 315 miles of existing trails that ring the County. The original trail system is the Sun Circle Trail which was established in 1965.

In 2000, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors (BOS) formed the Maricopa County Trails Commission (MCTC) and unveiled their desire to develop a regional trail system. The vision for the trail was to connect the majestic open spaces of Maricopa County's regional parks via a non-motorized trail system. By 2002, the MCTC had developed the trail concept for the Maricopa Trail System (MTS) and a comprehensive plan that the BOS adopted in August of 2004.

The foundation of the 2004 MCTC MTS Plan led to the completion of the Maricopa Trail (MT), Phase One, in 2018. The MT grew from 19 miles in 2009 to 315 miles by 2018. The goal is to connect surrounding municipal areas, towns, and major regional parks through partnerships and intergovernmental agreements with agencies and surrounding municipalities.

Efforts to plan and provide trails at a regional scale are increasingly crucial as trails continue to experience year-over-year increases in use. As trail networks continue to grow and interface with the increasingly cohesive MT, coordinated trail masterplans and maintenance strategies will be vital for sustainable and accessible open space programming and connectivity while preserving essential ecological systems and historical heritage.

The blueprint for the MT was designed to capitalize on existing rights-of-way, such as canals, parks, utility corridors, and flood control projects while ensuring that the trail would be designed and constructed according to national trail guidelines.

Throughout the project's construction, the department developed many private and public partnerships to bring the Maricopa Trail to fruition.



The MT accommodates walkers, hikers, runners, mountain bikers, equestrians, and inline skaters regardless of age and/or physical abilities, and serves as a primary recreation arterial for these trail users. The trail incorporates existing sections of the 1965 Sun Circle Trail and the National Trail at South Mountain Park.

As trail segments were completed and the project evolved, the department quickly realized the Maricopa Trail manager would need assistance maintaining the trail system. The department reached out to the Maricopa Trail and Parks Foundation (MT+PF), which has an extensive network of volunteers and the ability to secure grant funding for trail maintenance tools. While the original intent for the partnership was trail maintenance, the agencies have also:

- Hosted a celebration in recognition of the completion of Phase 1 of the Maricopa Trail in 2018. The event was attended by the public, partners, elected officials, and staff.
- Worked together to develop the MT+PF Prickly Pedal Mountain Bike Race which was held on the Maricopa Trail from 2016 to 2019.
- Worked together to coordinate efforts to bring tools to remote locations so





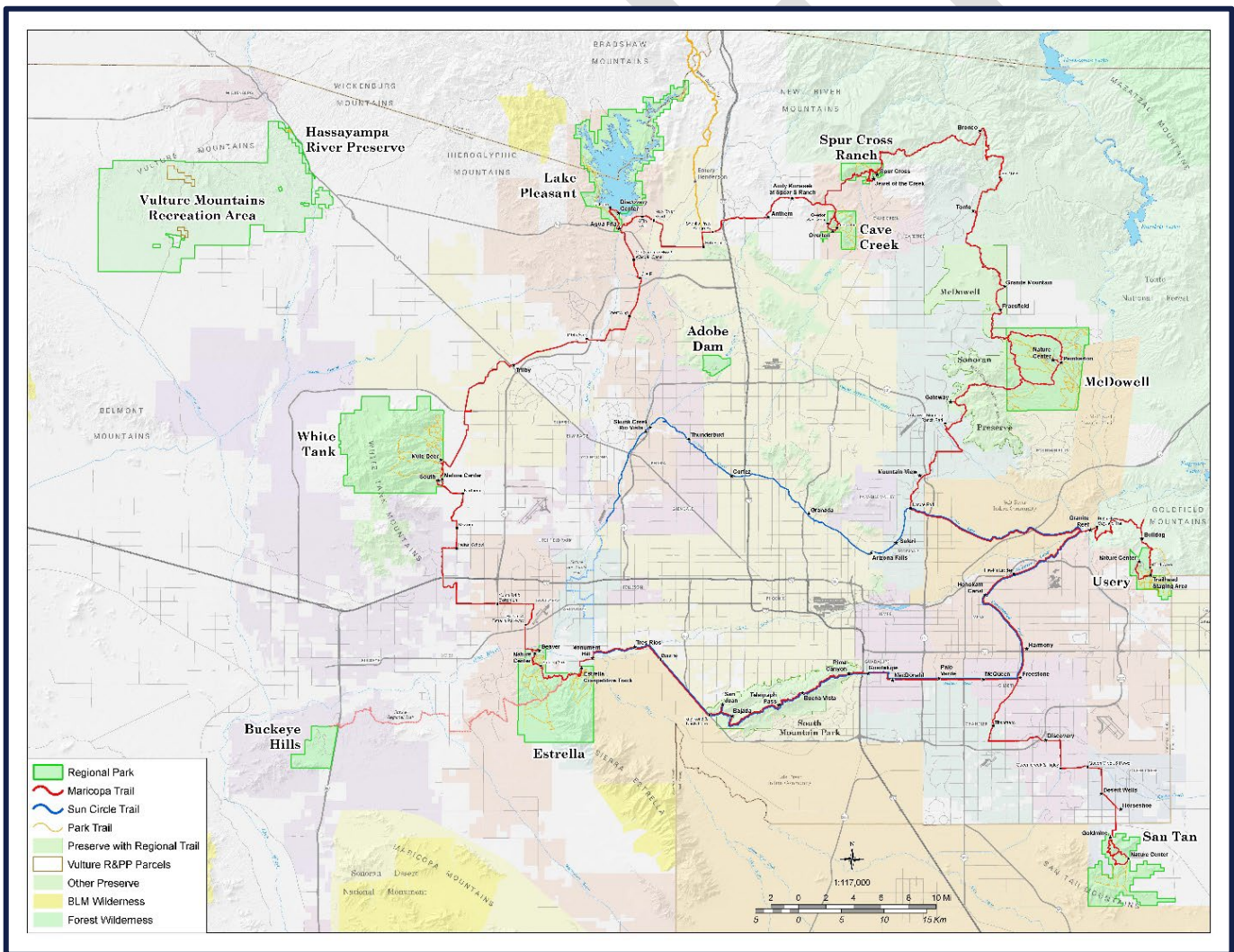
volunteers working on the trail segments don't have to carry heavy equipment with them to these locations.

The department and Maricopa Trail manager will be working closely with the cities, towns, and transportation planners to include connector trails to neighborhoods and points of interest.

**Phase 2**

- The department is currently focusing on bringing the Maricopa Trail to the following locations:
- Buckeye Hills Regional Park
- Vulture Mountains Recreation Area
- Hassayampa River Preserve

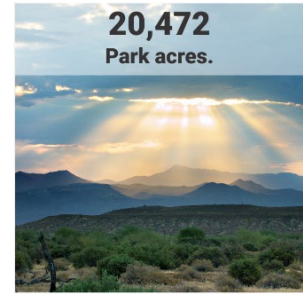
The main 315-mile loop Maricopa Trail around the Phoenix metropolitan area is complete, while routes to new parks and preserves continue to be added to this day.





**McDowell Mountain Regional Park,**

located in the eastern part of the County is 20,472-acres. Elevations in the Park rise to 3,000 feet along the western boundary at the base of the McDowell Mountains. Visitors enjoy a full program schedule, over 80-miles of trails, and spectacular views of the surrounding mountain ranges.



**Camping**

McDowell Mountain Regional Park is known for its majestic views and beautiful campsites.

- **E.I. Rowland Campground.** The area offers 79 designated campsites for RV and tent camping. Each site is a "Developed Site," with water and electrical hookups, a dump station, a picnic table, and a fire ring.
- **Group Campground.** This campground accommodates up to 12 RV units. There are no water or sewer hookups in this campground.
- **Ironwood Tent Sites.** The area offers 16 designated campsites for tent and small trailer camping. The area includes a restroom, nearby parking, picnic tables, a water bib, and several nearby trails.
- **Primitive (Minks).** – This area is used by small groups that are tent camping only.
- **Youth Group Area.** This area is used for day use and overnight camping.



**MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Developed	79
- Fire Rings	93
- Group	3
- Host	12
- Primitive	0
- Semi-developed	16
- Tables	95
- Youth	1
<b>Competitive Track</b>	1
<b>Dump Stations and ET Beds</b>	
- Dump Station	1
- ET Beds	1
- Septic Tanks	14
<b>Equestrian Facilities</b>	
- Staging Areas	2
<b>Habitats and Ponds</b>	
- Captive habitat	1
- Pond	3
<b>Nature Themed Playground with shade</b>	1
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
- Nature Center	1

**Competitive Track**

The McDowell Competitive Track consists of three loops with three connectors. The total trail length is 13.7 miles. There is a large parking area, water, and restrooms with showers. The track(s) are used for high speeds, challenging one's skills, and racing. Those seeking leisurely travel should opt for another trail. The track consists of:

- Long Loop – 7.9 miles.
- Sport Loop – 3 miles.
- Technical Loop – 2.7 miles. This loop requires the highest skill level as it is the most difficult.



**Milestone Projects**

- Park master plan updated (2019)
- Ramada & restroom upgrades (2015)
- Nature-themed playground (2014)
- Tortoise Trail was constructed, a Desert Tortoise habitat was installed, and Pump Track was built (2010)
- Wildlife Pond (2009)

**Natural Resources**

McDowell Mountain Regional Park has mountain ranges with peaks and valleys, washes, and many trails to enjoy viewing over 300 plant species within the Palo Verde-Saguaro upland desert ecosystems, Mesquite bosques, and riparian habitats.

In addition, there are over 85 wildlife species, including coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, and desert tortoises. Some more notable species include California leaf-nosed bat, cave myotis bat, pale Townsend's big-eared bat, lesser long-nosed bat, and desert tortoises.

**Pump Track**

The Pump Track consists of a series of low-key dirt berms, rollers, and banked turns that increase a cyclist's bike handling ability to circle the pump track without pedaling and utilizing one's momentum.

**Trails**

McDowell Mountain Regional Park offers over 82.71 miles of hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails. Park Trails range in length from 0.5 miles to 15.3 miles and range in difficulty from easy to strenuous. Those looking for an easy hike should try the North Trail at 3.1 miles. Those looking for a good workout for themselves or their horses should try the Pemberton at 15.3 miles.

**MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Nature Themed Playground with shade</b>	1
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
- Nature Center	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	30
- Designated Spaces	235
- Non-designated Spaces	750
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	280
- Tables	100
- BBQ Grills	3
- Fire Rings	3
<b>Ramadas</b>	4
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Camping Toilets	23
- Day Use Toilets	17
- Drinking Fountains	
- w/ Bottle Refill	1
- w/o Bottle Refill	14
- Portable Toilets	2
- Showers	26
- Urinals	8
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	8
- Service (non-trail)	4
<b>Signage</b>	
- Interpretive	7
- Monument	1
- Kiosks	11
<b>Trails</b>	
- Benches (32 are memorials)	38
- Barrier-free	1
- Equestrian	0
- Hike Only	5
- Hike/Bike Only	4
- Multi-Use	17
<b>Trailheads</b>	8



**San Tan Mountain Regional Park** is located in the eastern part of the County and is 10,119 acres. This southeast Valley park is a fine example of the lower Sonoran Desert. The Park ranges in elevation from about 1,400 feet to over 2,500 feet.

Goldmine Mountain is located in the Park's northern area, with spectacular views of the Malpais Hills awaiting you in the southern portion. The vegetation changes from "creosote flats" to dense saguaro forests. Various types of wildlife may be observed, including reptiles, birds, and mammals.

**Milestone Projects**

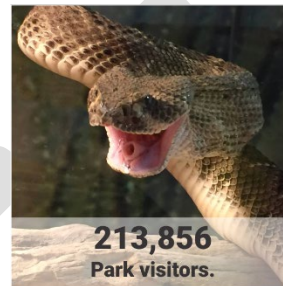
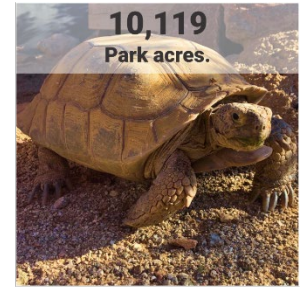
- Phase 1 of the Goldmine Trailhead Project.
  - o This included the addition of 80 parking spaces, grubbing, and grading of the area, drainage, fencing, and installation of a solar-powered gate at the site (2020)
- Shaded park host sites were installed (2016)
- Well drilled (2015)
- Expanded the main parking lot and added horse-trailer parking (2012)

**Nature Center**

The Nature Center includes the park office, animal exhibits, interpretive displays, educational materials, meeting rooms, and a retail area. It is available to rent for events.

**Natural Resources**

San Tan Mountain Regional Park has mountain ranges with peaks and washes and many trails to enjoy viewing just under 200 plant species within the Palo Verde-Saguaro upland desert ecosystems. The wildlife species are not well documented but include desert tortoises, jackrabbits, coyotes, mountain lions, and bobcats.



**SAN TAN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Camping</b>	
- Host sites	4
<b>Dump Stations and ET Beds</b>	
- ET Beds	1
- Septic Tanks	1
<b>Equestrian Facilities</b>	
- Staging Areas	1
<b>Habitats and Ponds</b>	
- Captive habitat	3
- Pond	1
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
- Nature Center	1



**Trails**

There are currently nine designated trails (20.38-miles) at the Park. The Park is open to non-motorized use, including hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding. Please note that tribal lands are adjacent to the Park and as in all parks, users are required to stay on trails to protect the fragile Sonoran Desert ecosystem.



Yoga in the Park.



Mountain biker cycling through the Sonoran desert.

**SAN TAN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Parking Lots</b>	3
- Designated Spaces	87
- Non-designated Spaces	250
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Benches	1
- Tables	7
- BBQ Grills	1
- Fire Rings	1
<b>Ramadas</b>	5
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Day Use Toilets	4
- Drinking Fountains	
- w/o Bottle Refill	2
- Portable Toilets	4
- Urinals	5
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	1
- Service Unpaved	1
- Service (non-trail)	2
<b>Signage</b>	
- Interpretive	0
- Monument	1
- Kiosks	3
- Off-site	2
<b>Trails</b>	
- Benches (19 are memorial)	30
- Multi-Use	9
- Trailhead	3
<b>Water Tanks</b>	1
Amenities Managed by Concessions: Equestrian Rides/Tours	



**Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area**

is located in the northeastern part of the County and is 2,174 acres. The area is predominately exurban.

The Conservation Area encompasses an area of diverse, rugged upper Sonoran Desert. The North Valley location contains fascinating archaeological sites and lush riparian areas along Cave Creek, which flows throughout the winter months.

Remnants of early mining and ranching, from which the Park gets its name, are still apparent. This area is a "must-see" for all wildflower lovers in the spring. The abundant vegetation in the conservation area provides a rich habitat for a diverse assemblage of wildlife.

**Milestone Projects**

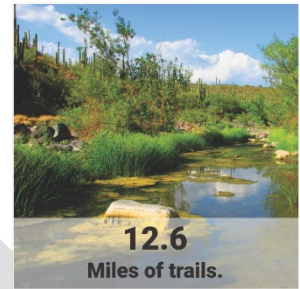
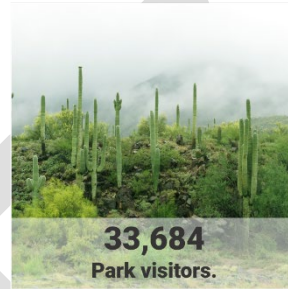
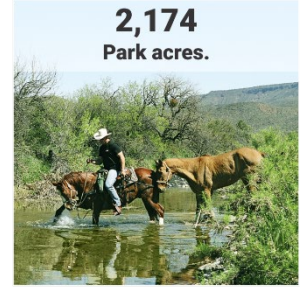
- Major parking lot improvement (2020-2021)

**Natural Resources**

The Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area is a unique oasis where the riparian habitat dominated by cottonwood and willow trees intersects with the upland desert ecosystem, dominated by Palo Verde-Saguaro's. The Park shares a boundary with the Desert Foothills Land Trust's Jewel of the Creek preserve combined these parks have over 400 plant species.

The riparian corridor and its surrounding desert ecosystem provide habitat to over 150 wildlife species, including jackrabbits, coyotes, mountain lions, and bobcats. Some more notable species, such as desert tortoise, peregrine falcon, lowland leopard frog, and endangered and threatened species: desert pupfish, Gila longfin dace, and Gila topminnow, can also be found in the riparian corridor.

Both locations are designated as an Important Bird Areas (IBA) by the [National Audubon Society](#).



**SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Habitats and Ponds</b>	
- Pond	1
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	
- Designated Spaces	200
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Tables	2
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Portable Toilets	2
<b>Roads</b>	
- Service Unpaved	1
- Service (non-trail)	1
<b>Signage</b>	
- Kiosks	1
- Off-site	2
<b>Trails</b>	
- Benches	15
- Hike/Equestrian	2
- Hike Only	3
- Multi-Use	3
- Trailhead	1



## Park Programs

The Conservation Area offers a variety of interpretive programs ranging from guided moonlight hikes to learning about the area's rich history and tours through the Jewel of the Creek Preserve to learning about the abandoned gold mines in the area.

## Trails

The Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area offers 12.33 miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Park trails range in length from 0.2 miles to 5.2 miles and range in difficulty from easy to difficult. Elephant Mountain is a scenic but difficult, trail. Designated for hikers, this trail leads visitors to the adjacent Tonto National Forest.

The trails within Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area are very popular due to the high elevation and lush vegetation.



*Full moon setting in behind Elephant Mountain in the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area.*



*Bobcat cooling off in the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area.*



**Usery Mountain Regional Park** is located in the eastern part of the County and is 3,529 acres. The area is predominately urban. This Park sits at the western end of the Goldfield Mountains, adjacent to the Tonto National Forest. Along with the most popular feature of the Park, the Wind Cave Trail, water seeps from the roof of the alcove to support the hanging gardens of Rock Daisy. The Wind Cave is formed at the boundary between Pass Mountain's volcanic tuff and granite. Breathtaking views are rewarded to visitors from this 2,840-foot elevation.

**Archery**

The Archery Range is Arizona's only "five-star" rated archery range. Amenities include restrooms and a shaded shooting area. The range consists of nearly 100 targets on six (6) separate courses.

**Camping**

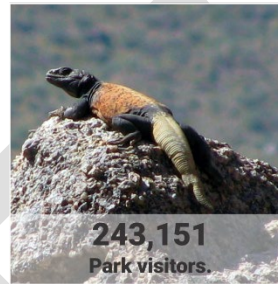
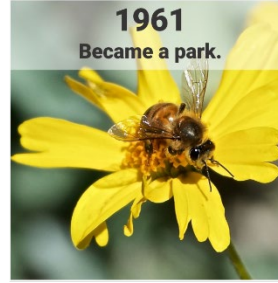
The Buckhorn Family Campground houses 75 individual campsites. Each site has a large parking area to accommodate up to a 45' RV and is a "Developed Site," with water and electrical hookups, a picnic table, a barbecue grill, and a fire ring. Usery Mountain Regional Park provides immaculate restrooms with flush toilets, hot water showers, and a dump station.

**Milestone Projects**

- RV dump station improvements (2018).
- Restroom repairs/renovations (2016).
- Outdoor fitness equipment (2015).
- Nature-themed playground (2014).
- New park host sites (2011).

**Natural Resources**

Usery Mountain Regional Park has mountain ranges with peaks and many trails to enjoy while viewing over 300 plant species within the Palo Verde -Saguaro upland desert ecosystems, including the gateway to Tonto's National Forests' Pass Mountain wind cave area.



**USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Amphitheater</b>	
- Lighted	1
<b>Archery Range</b>	1
- 178-acres	
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Benches	?
- Developed	75
- Fire Rings	75
- Group	1
- Host	11
- Tables	75
- Youth	1
<b>Dump Stations and ET Beds</b>	
- Dump Station	1
- ET Beds	2
- Septic Tanks	7
<b>Equestrian Facilities</b>	
- Horse Staging Area	1
<b>Habitats and Ponds</b>	
- Captive habitat	1
- Pond	1
<b>Nature Themed Playground with shade</b>	1





**Evidence of historical volcanic activity** left extrusive igneous rocks within the Park. Over 105 wildlife species inhabit the Park, including coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, and mule deer, and more notable species include desert tortoises, bald eagles, and chuckwalla.

**Trails**

Usery Mountain Regional Park offers over 32.42 miles of hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails. Park trails range in length from 0.2 miles to over 7 miles and range in difficulty from easy to difficult.

The one-mile Merkle Trail is barrier-free for those looking for an easy, relatively short hike. Individuals looking for a longer, more challenging hike should try the 7.1 mile Pass Mountain Trail. A visitor favorite is the Wind Cave Trail, which reaches high onto the mountainside and allows hikers onto the adjacent Tonto National Forest.

The trails within the Usery Mountain Regional Park are very popular because they have enough elevation to offer spectacular vistas of the surrounding plains.

Whether you are looking across the plain, flat land, south of the recreation area, or to the west or north great distances or surrounding mountains can be seen and enjoyed.

**USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
- Nature Center	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	
- Designated Spaces	420
- Non-designated Spaces	150
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Benches	11
- Tables	102
- BBQ Grills	67
- Fire Rings	9
<b>Ramadas</b>	
	26
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Camping Toilets	12
- Day Use Toilets	22
- Drinking Fountains	
- w/ Bottle Refill	1
- w/o Bottle Refill	8
- Portable Toilets	3
- Showers	12
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	1
- Service Unpaved	1
<b>Signage</b>	
- Monument	1
- Kiosks	4
- Off-site	2
<b>Sports Amenities</b>	
- Horseshoe Rings	2
<b>Sports Amenities Managed by Concessionaires</b>	
- Model Airplane	1
<b>Trails</b>	
- Barrier-free	1
- Hike/Bike	60
- Memorial Benches	30*
- Multi-Use	17
- Trailhead	7

*\*Format not consistent with other parks reporting structure.*

**Vulture Mountains Recreation Area.**

In the spring of 2019, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department entered into a Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) lease in the Vulture Mountains Recreation Area for the management of 1,046 acres for the development of Vulture Mountain Regional Park. The Park facilities are located within the larger 70,000+ acre BLM Vulture Mountain Recreation Management Zone.

The need for a new regional park near Wickenburg was recognized during the planning process and identified in the 2009 Strategic System Master Plan.

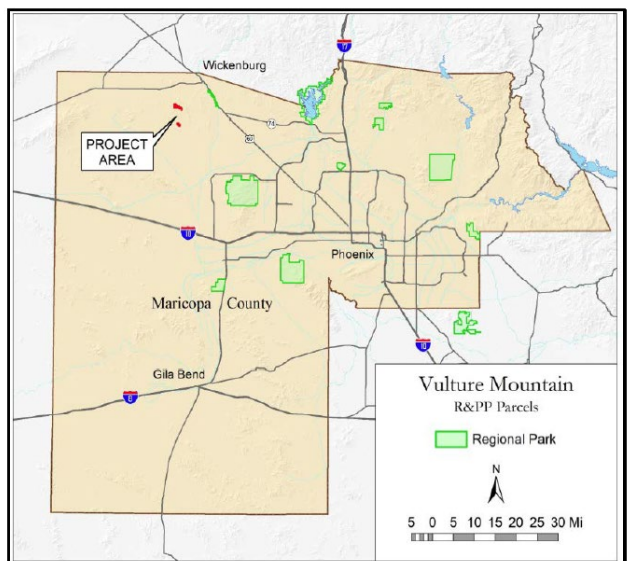
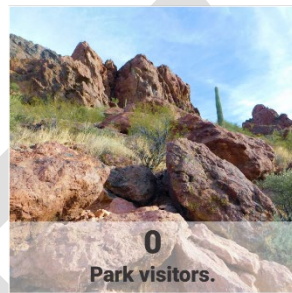
The lease allows for the construction and operation of recreation facilities, including an entry station, parking, picnic, and campground facilities, a nature-themed playground, restrooms, ramadas, trailheads and trails, an amphitheater, and an OHV staging area. Over the next several years, the department will be working to provide recreational amenities in the lease area and develop a cooperative management framework for the 71,000- acre recreation area.

**Milestone Projects**

- Vulture Mountains Recreation Area Master Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors (2012)
- Vulture Mountains Recreation Area R&PP Act Lease Approved by BLM (2019)

**Natural Resources**

There have been very few documented species in the area thus far, but common species of upland desert ecosystems have been confirmed



jackrabbits, mule deer, coyotes, mountain lions, and bobcats. And more notable species include desert tortoise and migrating bighorn sheep.



**White Tank Mountain Regional Park** is the largest Park in the County's regional park system at 29,557-acres. Most of the Park is made up of the rugged and beautiful White Tank Mountains on the Valley's west side. The range, deeply serrated with ridges and canyons, rises sharply from its base to peak at over 4,000 feet. Infrequent heavy rains cause flash floodwaters to plunge through the canyons and pour onto the plain. These torrential flows, pouring down chutes and dropping off ledges, have scoured out a series of depressions, or "tanks," in the white granite rock below, thus giving the mountains their name.

**Camping**

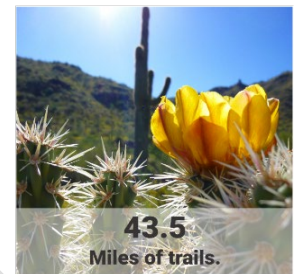
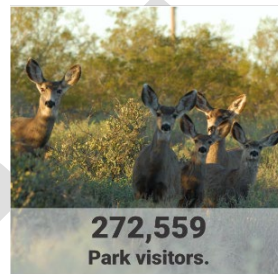
The Park offers 40 individual reservable sites for tent or RV camping. Most sites have a large parking area to accommodate up to a 45' RV and all are "Developed Sites," with water and electrical hookups, a picnic table, a barbecue grill, a fire ring, and a nearby dump station.

- **Group Campground Area** offers two (2) large ramadas with four (4) picnic tables each; two (2) large barbecue grills, one (1) large fire ring, restrooms with showers, lights/electrical outlets, and parking for approximately 50 RVs (no hookups).
- **The Tent Group Area** offers 12 sites that accommodate one (1) or two (2) tents per site, one (1) small grill at each site, a group fire ring with picnic tables.
- **Willow Campground** is for those seeking more primitive camping.
  - o Non-hookup campsites, 11 tent-only walk-in campsites, Nine (9) back-in sites for tents, vans, and small trailers. Maximum length 16 ft. Class B or lower.

**Competitive Track**

The White Tank Mountain Regional Park Competitive Track consists of two loops and a technical segment. The total trail length is 19.6-miles. Those seeking leisurely travel should opt for another trail. The track is for high speeds, challenging one's skill level, and racing. The track consists of:

- Sport Loop – A 2.6-mile loop for beginners.
- Long Loop – A 6.9-mile loop, for experienced riders.



**WHITE TANK MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Amphitheater</b>	
- Lighted	1
<b>Campsites</b>	
- Benches	15
- Developed	40
- Fire Rings	62
- Group	1
- Host	16
- Primitive	15
- Semi-developed	20
- Tables	60
- Youth	1
<b>Competitive Track Miles</b>	9.6
<b>Dump Stations and ET Beds</b>	
- Dump Station	1
- ET Beds	19
- Septic Tanks	20
<b>Equestrian Facilities</b>	
- Horse Staging Area	1
<b>Habitats and Ponds</b>	
- Butterfly Garden	1
- Captive Habitat	11
- Pond	1
<b>Nature Themed Playground with shade</b>	1



- Technical Loop – A 1.1-mile loop experts only.

**Milestone Projects**

- Wildlife viewing blinds near pond (2021)
- Willow Campground (2019)
- Waterfall Trail Improvements (2018)
- Restroom upgrades (2015)
- Nature-themed playground (2014)
- Nature Center/Library (2014)
- Park master plan updated (2014)
- Dump station & electricity campsites (2013)
- New host sites (2012)

**Natural Resources**

Over 400 plant species are within the Palo Verde-Saguaro upland desert ecosystems, mesquite bosques, and many natural water tanks, providing essential water for wildlife species. Some unique plant species include night-blooming cereus cacti and the Elephant tree, being the furthest north location of the Elephant tree and the only Park with this species.

The Park is also home to over 125 wildlife species, including jackrabbits, mule deer, coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, and more notable species such as desert tortoise, desert iguana, chuckwallas, Gila monster, and an occasional migrating bighorn sheep.

**Trails**

White Tank Mountain Regional Park offers approximately 43.28 miles of excellent shared-use trails, ranging in length from 0.9 miles to 7.9 miles, and difficulty from easy to strenuous. Overnight backpacking, with a permit, is allowed in established backcountry campsites. Day hikes can provide some breathtaking views of the mountains and panoramas of the Valley below. Although some trails may be extremely difficult, horseback and mountain bike riders are welcome.

In addition, there are 2.5 miles of pedestrian-only trails. These include two short trails that are hard-surfaced and barrier-free. Waterfall

Trail is barrier-free, approximately half a mile. The handicap-accessible portion now ends about 0.1 miles past Petroglyph Plaza. The short loop of Black Rock Trail, which is about 1/2-mile long, begins at Ramada 4.

**WHITE TANK MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK AMENITIES**

Description	No.
<b>Operating Facilities</b>	
- Entry Station	1
- Maintenance Compound	1
- Nature Center	1
<b>Parking Lots</b>	47
- Designated Spaces	681
- Non-designated Spaces	919
<b>Picnic Sites</b>	
- Benches	17
- Tables	219
- BBQ Grills	175
- Fire Rings	7
<b>Ramadas</b>	38
<b>Restrooms</b>	
- Camping Toilets	6
- Day Use Toilets	52
- Drinking Fountains	13
- Portable Toilets	3
- Showers	8
<b>Sports - Volleyball Courts</b>	3
<b>Roads</b>	
- Paved	
- Service (non-trail)	6
<b>Signage</b>	
- Interpretive	11
- Monument	1
- Kiosks	14
<b>Off-site</b>	5
<b>Trails</b>	
- Barrier-free	2
- Benches (127 memorial)	133
- Hike	2
- Hike/Bike	11
- Memorial Benches	30*
- Multi-Use	11
<b>Trailhead</b>	14
<b>Water Tanks</b>	1

**New River Community Park**

The New River Community Park, located in the northeast, was established to support the parks and recreation needs of the unincorporated community. It is approximately 80 acres and managed by a non-profit entity to benefit the community. The park has a:

- horse arena,
- playground, and
- senior center.



**Black Mountain**

Black Mountain is located in Carefree and Cave Creek and is approximately 375 acres. Although the mountain is accessible to the public, minimal parking is available.



**1965 Sun Circle Trail**

Maricopa County Planning and Zoning Department, with the assistance of Arizona State Horseman's Association and appointed Maricopa County Hiking and Riding Trails Committee members,



*Sun Circle Trail logo.*

With the assistance of the Arizona State Horseman's Association and appointed Maricopa County Hiking and Riding Trails Committee members, Maricopa County Planning and Zoning Department published "Hiking and Riding Trails in Maricopa County, Arizona." The report proposed the 110-mile Sun Circle Trail and 580 miles of secondary trails linking Valley urban areas and the M CPRD regional park system to the Sun Circle Trail.

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors (BOS) empowered Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department to acquire rights-of-way, leases, and possible federal funding for the Committee. In 1965 the BOS, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Salt River Project (SRP) provided a historical "First" by signing an agreement for the use of portions of the canal banks for hiking and riding trails. That 50-year agreement was renewed in 2015. On March 25, 1977, the Secretary of the Interior designated the Sun Circle Trail a National Recreation Trail.

\*Overviews were prepared in 2022.

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# MARICOPA COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT PARTNERSHIPS

MCPRD has extensive partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as non-profit organizations and private entities that provide recreation opportunities in Maricopa County parks.

MCPRD has entered into various forms of agreements, contracts, and partnerships with these agencies to strengthen regional efforts and enhance service and recreation opportunities in existing parks, trails, and adjacent communities. These agreements include, but are not limited to, those briefly described on the following pages.

**NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list of partners the department maintains as relationships and partnerships with internal and external agencies evolve and adjust to the park system goals, growth, services, projects, and natural resource needs.**

## FEDERAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. **U.S. FOREST SERVICE (USFS) – TONTO NATIONAL FOREST (TNF).** TNF, at 2.9 million acres, is the largest national forest in Arizona and the sixth largest in the country. It is in Maricopa, Gila, and Yavapai Counties and features Sonoran Desert cacti and flat lands to the pine trees and highlands of the Mogollon Rim.

Representatives from the USFS-TNF meet quarterly with MCPRD officials to discuss similar challenges and opportunities relating to parks and recreation in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

Discussions have occurred regarding how TNF and MCPRD could work together to provide enhanced recreation opportunities for Maricopa County residents and visitors. Other important topics of discussion have included protecting public access to the national forest, coordinating development projects to ensure a transition of uses, and protecting wilderness area characteristics.

2. **BUREAU OF RECLAMATION (BOR).** BOR is the landowner of Maricopa County's Lake Pleasant Regional Park. In addition, they provide oversight to MCPRD management, such as environmental expertise, master plan development, and program

development, for projects at Lake Pleasant. BOR also oversees the Phoenix region's canal system.

3. **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM).** Most of the County parkland originated from land leased or acquired from the BLM under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP). MCPRD is working closely with BLM on developing Vulture Mountain Regional Park near Wickenburg and future opportunities to provide parks, trails, and open space to meet the growing demand of the Phoenix region.

## STATE PARTNERSHIPS

1. **ARIZONA PARKS AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION (APRA).** APRA provides connections, education, and inspiration for park professionals around the state of Arizona.
2. **ARIZONA STATE PARKS AND TRAILS (ASPT).** ASPT has over thirty parks in Arizona, including state and historic parks, other natural areas, and recreation areas. ASPT administers funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and numerous other state parks and recreation grants. MCPRD and ASPT strive to enhance natural and recreational resources and

opportunities in and around Maricopa County and the State of Arizona.

3. **ARIZONA OFFICE OF TOURISM (AOT).** MCPRD works with the AOT on various initiatives, such as consistent safety messaging to visitors and sharing information about best practices and recreation opportunities.
4. **ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT (AZGFD).** AZGFD provides guidance and direction on all wildlife management. MCPRD works closely with AZGFD to protect wildlife corridors, with plant and animal species education, and in various work groups such as the LGRC.
5. **ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ADOT).** MCPRD works with ADOT on any projects that may impact the Maricopa or Sun Circle Trails and comments on various projects where improvements may relate to the park, such as requesting new or additional signage directing users to the park.
6. **ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF FOREST AND FIRE MANAGEMENT (DFFM).** The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management provides resources for preventing and suppressing wildland fires on State Trust Land and private property located outside incorporated communities. The agency provides services for fire prevention, urban and community forestry, forest stewardship, forest health, utilization, and marketing and has various grants. MCPRD has received grants and will continue to apply for fire fuel and invasive species mitigation funding.

**COUNTY PARTNERSHIPS**

1. **MARICOPA COUNTY AIR QUALITY DEPARTMENT (MCAQD).** Working to improve the air of Maricopa County so customers, residents, and visitors can live,

work, and play in a healthy environment.

2. **MARICOPA COUNTY BUDGET OFFICE (MCBO).** The Budget Office supports County Leadership by providing research and resource allocation recommendations for their consideration as they advance the County's goals of exceptional customer service and a lean and efficient government.
3. **MARICOPA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MCDEM).** MCDEM protects communities by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.
4. **MARICOPA COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT (MCFCD).** The Flood Control District works to reduce the risk of flooding so that property damage and loss of life are minimized, economic development is supported in a safe and responsible manner, and storm water is recognized as a resource for the long-term benefit of the community and environment.
5. **MARICOPA COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT (MCLD).** The Library District provides access and services so residents experience an improved quality of life. As the vibrant community front porch, the District aspires to meet the changing needs of its diverse and connected residents.
6. **MARICOPA COUNTY OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY (MCOET).** OET Provides enterprise infrastructure and application support that allows the County to operate effectively daily. OET also provides IT consulting as a trusted advisor to over 30 County departments.
7. **MARICOPA COUNTY PROCUREMENT SERVICES (MCPS).** The Office of



Procurement Service works to provide, innovative, cost-effective, and quality services to County Agencies through a strategic and systematic approach to procurement.

8. **MARICOPA COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (MCP&D).** Planning and Development's guides development by providing an exceptional customer experience through planning and permitting services delivered in a responsive, resourceful, and results-oriented manner.
9. **MARICOPA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MCDPH).** The Public Health Department is charged with increasing the quality of life for County residents by collaborating with the community to develop and implement strategies, programs, and services addressing the emerging and changing needs of public health.
10. **MARICOPA COUNTY REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT (MCRED).** Maricopa County's Real Estate Department provides County Management with the professional expertise necessary to administer its real estate and space needs.
11. **MARICOPA COUNTY RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT (MCRMD).** To provide a portfolio of risk management services to increase the benefit of opportunity and decrease the cost of risk across the County enterprise.
12. **MARICOPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (MCSO).** MCSO provides law enforcement needs for all of the County's regional parks. MCSO assistance includes park rule enforcement, backcountry and water/lake search and rescue, and initial EMT services in the parks. The agency also provides aerial assistance with drones and helicopters.

13. **MARICOPA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MCDOT).** MCDOT provides roadway planning, improvements, and maintenance in all the parks. MCDOT's core purpose of providing connections that improve people's lives aligns well with MCPRD's vision of connecting people to nature through parks and trails and creating life-long positive memories.

## REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. **ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS (ABOR).** ABOR is the governing body of Arizona's public university system which guides Arizona State University (ASU), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and the University of Arizona (UA). Part of ABOR's mission is committed to ensuring access for qualified residents of Arizona to undergraduate and graduate institutions and extending the benefits of university activities to Arizona's citizens.

Through this partnership, MCPRD can hire university professors and students to assist with various projects. In 2019, MCPRD coordinated with the School of Community Resources and Development in the Watts College of Public Service and Community Solutions at ASU on an Economic Impact Report of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation System. The following year, the same group prepared a Covid-19 Visitor Study that surveyed MCPRD annual pass holders. The study was conducted remotely due to the pandemic.

2. **CENTRAL ARIZONA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE (CAZCA).** CAZCA was founded in 2012 as an ongoing initiative of Desert Botanical Garden. MCPRD collaborated with CAZCA on developing the Greenprint Mapping Tool and the Regional Open Space Strategy (ROSS). The ROSS guides the preservation of open space in Maricopa County. MCPRD and CAZCA also teamed up on the Desert Defenders program, which is a collaborative community science program

to map and remove invasive plant species in Maricopa County. The main goals of CAZCA include actions developed by the ROSS process to help guide the initiatives of CAZCA and its partners.

3. **CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ARIZONA (CFA).** CFA is a non-profit and nonpartisan organization that seeks to unite Arizonans to create a brighter future for the state. The CFA shared vital information with MCPRD and stakeholders from the Parks Vision 2030 process by sharing key outcomes from the 2020 Gallup Survey on What Arizona Wants, where the number one consensus item was preserving and protecting Arizona rivers and natural areas and wildlife was important at 92 percent.
4. **DESERT FOOTHILLS LAND TRUST (DFLT).** The DFLT seeks to protect special places unique to central Arizona, including the Sonoran Desert Foothills. Many preserves are open to the public, providing recreation and exploration opportunities. The DFLT, along with the Town of Cave Creek, worked with MCPRD to acquire and preserve important areas in the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area.
5. **LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE (LGRC).** MCPRD is a partner in the LGRC, a voluntary partnership for collaboration, coordination, and outreach that benefits the Lower Gila River corridor. Partners agree to share regional priorities and to provide capacity and financial support for strategic coordination and professional facilitation services. The LGRC allows several organizations to work together on these efforts, including conservation efforts within the Estrella Mountain Regional Park and Buckeye Hills Regional Park along the Lower Gila River.
6. **ARIZONA MASTER NATURALIST-MARICOPA COUNTY CHAPTER (AZMNA).** AZMNA ([azmasternaturalist.org](http://azmasternaturalist.org)) was

founded in 2014 on the principles of education, stewardship, and community science. These three pillars inform our vision, direct our mission, and are integrated into all aspects of our day-to-day operations. We serve the needs of stakeholder organizations across the state by providing a trained and skilled corps of volunteers.

AZMNA trains volunteers to be leaders in the natural and cultural resource fields. The AZMNA strives to utilize a community engagement model for partnership, develops inclusive programs, and works to ensure volunteer naturalists have the skills necessary to assist Chapter Community Partners with not only volunteer jobs but also the development of new programs and provide leadership.

7. **MARICOPA TRAIL + PARK FOUNDATION (MT+PF).** MT+PF is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to protecting, promoting, developing, and maintaining the Maricopa County Park and Trail System.
8. **MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS (MAG).** MAG is the regional planning agency for the Phoenix metropolitan area that assists in facilitating regional planning topics such as transportation and air quality. The association provides numerous interactive mapping tools on its website, including a Park and Recreation Map Viewer Tool. This tool helps the public access park and recreation opportunities across the Phoenix metropolitan area.
9. **McDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY (MSC).** The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy preserves the Sonoran Desert and advances open space through science, education, and stewardship. MCPRD works closely with MCS on invasive species documentation and knowledge sharing to promote best practices for managing the

Sonoran Desert.

10. **NORTH VALLEY OUTDOOR NETWORK (NVON).** NVON is a regional partnership of local, state, and federal land managing agency representatives and other partners committed to developing and implementing sustainable nature-based recreation opportunities that meet the diverse and unique needs of communities and ecological systems in the North Valley.
11. **SUPERSTITION PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS GROUP.** The Superstition Public Land Managers group organizes land managing agency partners with others to support enhanced coordination on a variety of topics, including wildfire response, recreation opportunities, public safety, and law enforcement response. M CPRD regularly provides input as a neighboring county.
12. **SUN CORRIDOR TRAIL ALLIANCE (SCTA).** The SCTA is a statewide, multi-agency effort to link together the most scenic recreation opportunities and diverse communities by creating a 1,200-mile regional trail from Las Vegas, Nevada, to Douglas, Arizona. The Maricopa Trail is a 315-mile loop around the Phoenix Metropolitan area, referred to as the Sun Corridor Trail (SCT) segment in Maricopa County. The SCT allows residents and visitors to explore the Southwest’s diverse terrains, charming small towns, and lively urban centers.
13. **RIO REIMAGINED.** Rio Reimagined is an effort to revitalize the 58-mile Rio Salado River corridor within the Phoenix metropolitan region. The initiative seeks to create a collective effort to integrate priorities of public open space, environmental quality, housing, transportation, economic and workforce development, community sustainability, and resilience along the river corridors. M CPRD

participates in quarterly meetings to exchange information and knowledge about ecosystems, parks, and river corridors.

14. **WHITE TANK MOUNTAIN CONSERVANCY (WTMC).** The WTMC was formed to bring conservationists, developers, and cities together to balance environmental concerns with impending development. A diverse group of key stakeholders and partners, supported by a team of volunteers, work to protect the abundant wildlife around White Tank Mountain Regional Park and Skyline Regional Park.

### COMMUNITY AND PARK-SPECIFIC PARTNERSHIPS

M CPRD works closely with the cities and towns adjacent to each park. Many communities have entered into Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) with the department to enhance local opportunities and partner on events and connectivity. Defined as a cooperative effort between two or more governmental agencies, an IGA is for the joint use and administration of recreational resources, programming, and projects.

1. **BUCKEYE HILLS REGIONAL PARK**
  - **TOWN OF BUCKEYE.** Jointly develop mutually beneficial trails and work cooperatively to maintain, manage, and improve outdoor recreation opportunities.
2. **CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK**
  - **TOWN OF CAVE CREEK.** Jointly develop mutually beneficial trails and work cooperatively to maintain, manage, and improve outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. **DESERT OUTDOOR CENTER AT LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK**
  - [FRIENDS OF THE DESERT OUTDOOR CENTER](#). A non-profit 501(c)(3) comprised of individuals in the community who raise operation

purchasing funds to support the Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant.

**4. ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK**

- **CITY OF AVONDALE.** Promoting shared Recreational Opportunities, the City and County jointly plan, coordinate, implement, and market certain opportunities, events, and recreational programs and education programs that are mutually beneficial to the residents of Avondale.
- **CITY OF GOODYEAR.** Promoting a cooperative effort to jointly develop trails that are mutually beneficial to both entities. They work cooperatively to maintain, manage, and improve outdoor recreation opportunities.

**5. HASSAYAMPA RIVER PRESERVE**

- **FRIENDS OF HASSAYAMPA.** A non-profit 501(c)(3) supported by Wickenburg community members who help raise funds for daily operation needs, including maintaining the garden, supplies, and camps.

**6. LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK**

- **CITY OF PEORIA.** Jointly plan, coordinate, implement, and market-specific opportunities, events, recreational programs, and education programs that are mutually beneficial to the County and the City.
- **YAVAPAI COUNTY.** Maricopa County has exclusive rights to manage and control the lands and water within the Lake Pleasant Regional Park (LPRP) for law enforcement and recreational purposes.
- **MARICOPA WATER DISTRICT.** The agreement governs the applicable entry fees and recreational management responsibilities for Lake Pleasant Regional Park.
- **BUREAU OF RECLAMATION.** A management agreement for the recreational development, use,

management, and maintenance of Lake Pleasant Regional Park. Maricopa Trails

Jointly develop mutually beneficial trails and work cooperatively to maintain, manage, and improve outdoor recreation opportunities. Opportunities exist within Guadalupe, Anthem, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Queen Creek, and the Tonto National Forest.

**7. MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK**

- **TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS.** Jointly develop mutually beneficial trails and work cooperatively to maintain, manage, and improve outdoor recreation opportunities.
- **SOUTHWEST WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CENTER (SWCC).** A non-profit organization in Scottsdale, Arizona, that rescues native wild animals that have been found injured, orphaned, abandoned, or have been displaced due to development. A small staff and many dedicated volunteers operate the agency. MCDPRD will provide 100 acres in McDowell Mountain Regional Park for SWCC to construct a new visitor center for education relating to their conservation efforts and rehabilitation facilities for wildlife.

**8. SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA**

- **TOWN OF CAVE CREEK.** An Intergovernmental Agreement

**9. SAN TAN MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK**

- **PINAL COUNTY.** A cooperative agreement for the County to own, manage, maintain, and operate San Tan Mountain Regional Park.

**NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

1. **LEAVE NO TRACE.** Leave No Trace created the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace that provide an easily understood framework of minimum

impact practices for anyone visiting the outdoors. Leave No Trace offers training, printed materials, and guidance on outdoor principles to ensure a sustainable future for the outdoors and the planet. MCPRD formally became a Community Partner in 2019, and the County Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution in April 2021 that incorporates the goals, principles, and policies included in the program. As a result, MCPRD fully supports and advocates the Seven Principles of Leave No Trace.

2. **National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).** NRPA is a national non-profit organization dedicated to building strong, healthy, and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. MCPRD provides NRPA membership for many employees to support the learning and sharing knowledge about all things related to parks and recreation and enhancing quality of life.
3. **National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO).** NACPRO is a non-profit professional organization that promotes County and regional parks, recreation, and conservation issues. There are opportunities to network and exchange ideas about various topics, such as best practices and operational guidelines. NACPRO is an affiliate of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and NRPA.
4. **The Nature Conservancy (TNC).** The Nature Conservancy is a global environmental non-profit. Their mission is to conserve lands and waters and address biodiversity and climate crises over the next ten years to ensure people and nature can thrive. TNC has been active in Arizona for more than 50 years

and has partnered with numerous communities, businesses, and state leaders to achieve important conservation efforts to sustain Arizona's unique environment. MCPRD recently partnered with TNC by taking over management of the Hassayampa River Preserve through a conservation agreement. TNC will continue to assist with ongoing monitoring and research in the Hassayampa River Preserve.

5. **Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC).** WHC promotes and certifies habitat conservation and management on working lands through partnerships and education. They work with corporate partners to help create acts of conservation opportunities. Examples include inviting the corporation's employees to volunteer for a tree-planting event and lending equipment to the WHC. Since early 2021, WHC and MCPRD have been discussing what types of conservation activities are needed in the Phoenix metropolitan area, sharing resources and knowledge, and partnered on a tree planting project in Estrella Mountain Regional Park in 2022.

**PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS**

Concessionaires are an important aspect of providing amenities to improve the experience for park visitors. Effective public-private agreements (Use Management Agreements) have the potential for not only mobilizing additional resources for park and recreation capital improvements and programs but they provide facilities, services, activities, and programs over an extended period of time that the MCPRD is unable to offer. These organizations, as a whole, provide significant revenue to MCPRD. These partners include:

1. **THE 500 CLUB (ADOBE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK).** An 18-hole championship golf course that includes a

Futures Course, a nine-hole course ideal for beginners.

2. **ADOBE MOUNTAIN SPEEDWAY (ADOBE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK).** A motorsport dirt track racing facility featuring a one-fifth-mile, a one-tenth-mile track, as well as a remote-control off-road track.
3. **ARIZONA MODEL AVIATORS (USERY MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK).** A non-profit organization providing public recreation for model aircraft flying, including education and training.
4. **ARIZONA MODEL PILOTS ASSOCIATION (ADOBE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK) -** A non-profit organization providing public recreation for model aircraft flying, including education and training.
5. **CASEY AT THE BAT (PARADISE VALLEY PARK) -** Provides batting cages, miniature golf, and a soccer/multi-use field.
6. **CAVE CREEK TRAIL RIDES (CAVE CREEK REGIONAL PARK) -** Provides equestrian trail rides with an educational aspect of the mining history of Cave Creek, and unique flora and fauna featured in the park.
7. **JUNIOR NATIONAL FOUNDATION DBA TRES RIOS GOLF COURSE (ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK) -** An 18-hole links style championship golf course.
8. **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GOLF DBA PARADISE VALLEY GOLF COURSE (PARADISE VALLEY URBAN PARK) -** Is an 18-hole executive golf course.
9. **PHOENIX KART RACING ASSOCIATION (ADOBE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK) -** A non-profit organization providing public recreation for asphalt kart racing.
10. **SAHUARO CENTRAL RAILROAD PRESERVATION SOCIETY (ADOBE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK) -** A non-profit organization providing public rides on scaled railroad tracks, a railroad museum, and a miniature railroad facility.
11. **SCORPION BAY MARINA (LAKE PLEASANT REGIONAL PARK) -** A full-service marina on the west side of Lake Pleasant, offering a floating playground, slip rentals, watercraft

rentals, charter boats, floating cabins, and a full-service general store, restaurant, and bar.

12. **SIX FLAGS HURRICANE HARBOR – PHOENIX (ADOBE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK) -** Arizona's most diverse waterpark features more than 30 slides, rides, and attractions. Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center (McDowell Mountain Regional Park) - A non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to rescue, rehabilitate, and release Arizona mammals.
13. **VICTORY LANE SPORTS COMPLEX (ADOBE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK) -** A sports park providing baseball, softball, volleyball, and other sporting venues.

## OTHER PARTNERS

1. **REI.** MCPRD aligns with the core values of REI as they are "dedicated to encouraging the public to participate in outdoor recreation and outdoor activities as well as educating the public with recreational fundamentals of outdoor activities." The primary goal of the Joint Program and Marketing Agreement is for each Party to supplement the other's strengths by creating a beneficial relationship by which they may work together to accomplish education, cooperative marketing, and management of sustainable outdoor recreational opportunities.
2. **ARAVAIPA RUNNING.** Provides joint recreation programs utilizing County parks, such as the Dam Good Run and many of the series races within the park system. Aravaipa teaches participants how to recreate within the Parks responsibly while challenging them to learn new outdoor skills and experience the healthy and transformational lifestyle the outdoors provides, benefiting the public and the community in support of the Parks' mission and vision.

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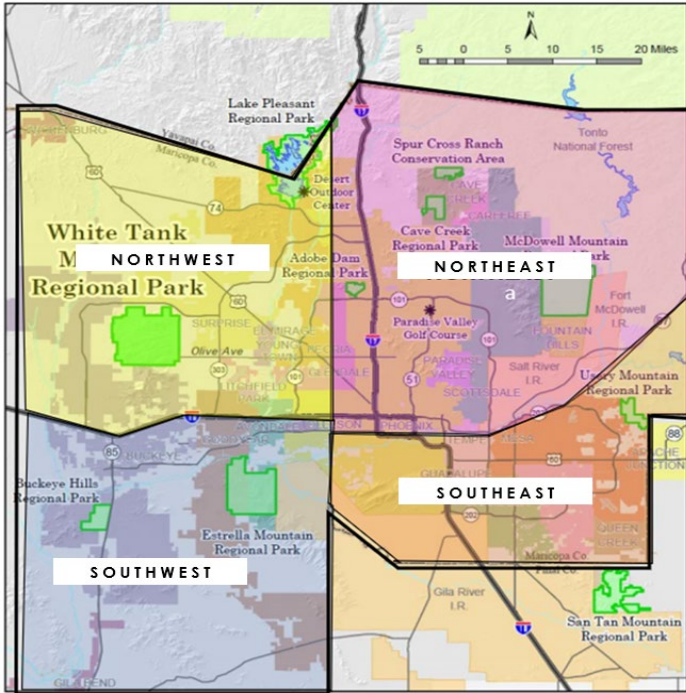


Figure 1 - Maricopa County Regions

### NORTHWEST REGION

- Wickenburg
- Surprise
- Glendale
- Peoria
- El Mirage
- Youngtown

### NORTHEAST REGION

- Anthem, Desert Hills & New River
- Carefree
- Cave Creek
- Fountain Hills
- Paradise Valley
- Phoenix
- Scottsdale

### SOUTHEAST REGION

- Apache Junction
- Mesa
- Queen Creek
- Gilbert
- Chandler
- Tempe
- Guadalupe

### SOUTHWEST REGION

- Buckeye
- Gila Bend
- Goodyear
- Avondale
- Litchfield Park
- Tolleson

## REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE OVERVIEW

Maricopa County covers an expansive 9,224 square miles with 4.4 million people as of 2020. Understanding the current and future Regional Parks System requires a focused assessment of regional-scale opportunities located throughout each of the local municipalities and Agencies within the County.

This section features a survey of jurisdictional current planning documents, goals, objectives, strategies, and opportunities related to the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan (SSMP).

This section has been divided into four geographic regions for ease of assessment (Figure 1). Cities that fall within more than one region are categorized with the region where most of the land is located.



# NORTHWEST REGION

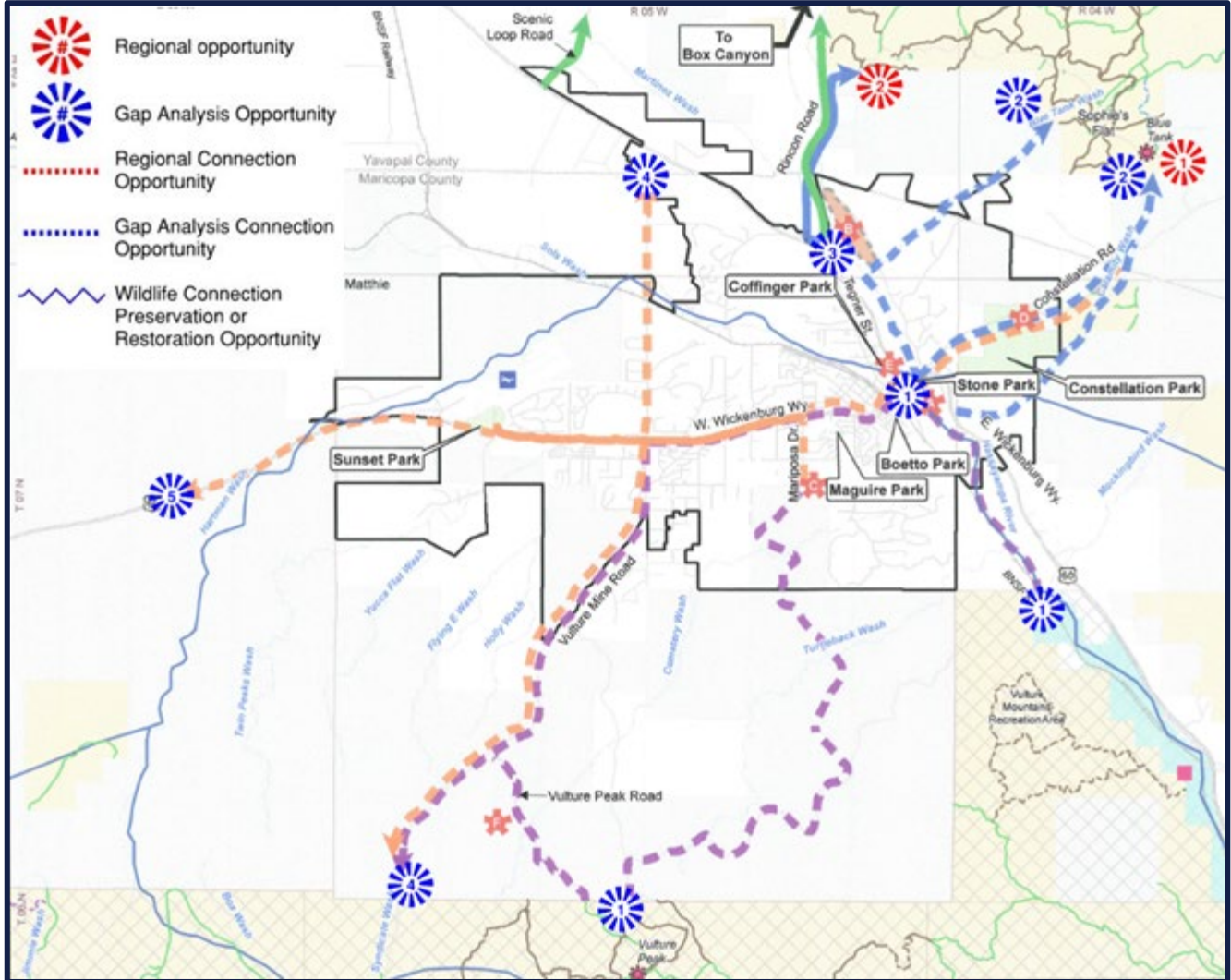


Figure 2 - Wickenburg Open Space and Trails Map

## WICKENBURG

The Town of Wickenburg (Figure 2) is approximately 10 miles northeast (a 14-minute drive) of the nearest access point to the Vulture Mountains Recreation Area. The Hassayampa River corridor is a prominent natural feature that borders the Town's western edge. The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway is situated just west of the Hassayampa River.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Acquire trail easements identified in the General Plan 2025 to connect wildlife and people between Vulture Mountains and Box Canyon.
- Acquire trail easements wide enough to accommodate both wildlife and human use.

- Develop partnerships between Wickenburg, Maricopa County, and ASLD to assist in acquiring trail easements to Vulture Mountains south of the Town's planning limit.

**Regional Service Opportunities**

- Provide regional trailhead at the proposed BLM Staging Area Near Sophie's Flat/Blue Tank.
- Provide a regional trailhead at Box Canyon from Rincon Road.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Acquire trail easements to extend Vulture Mountains Recreation Area (VMRA) connections.
- Acquire identified trail easements along Blue Tank Wash and Calamity Wash to connect Wickenburg to Box Canyon.
- Acquire easements to connect trails from Wickenburg Way to existing trails along Rincon Road.
- Assist with wayfinding and provide Vulture Mountains access point connections at Mariposa Drive and Stewart Trailhead.
- Acquire easements to extend multiuse paths west of existing paths on Wickenburg Way to connect to Highway 60.

**SURPRISE**

The City of Surprise (Figure 3) is rapidly growing in the northwest portion of the County. With development occurring quickly, preserving open space and establishing wildlife and recreation corridors is urgent. Surprise has set related goals, strategies, and priorities in the City's General Plan 2035 and Community and Recreation Services Master Plan.

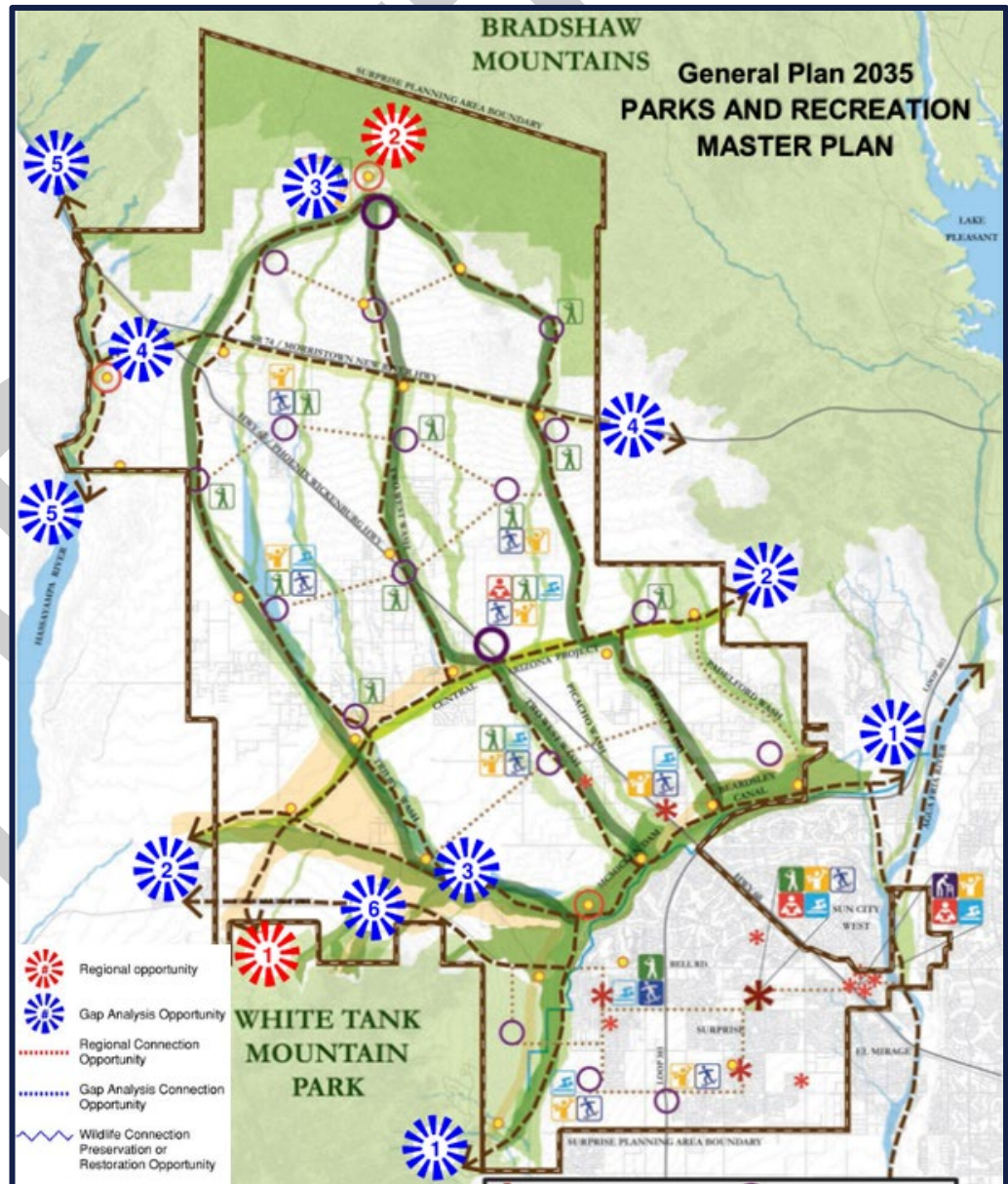


Figure 3 - Surprise 2035 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Work with Maricopa County to develop and connect to a new access point on the north side of WTMRP.
- Partner with the MCFCD to use the CAP canals, washes, and flood areas for recreation use and wildlife corridors.
- Continue to update the General Plan and Park and Recreation Master Plan simultaneously to ensure development complies with the Community and Recreation Services Master Plan.
- Work with neighboring cities to connect greenways and open spaces.

### Regional Service Opportunities

- Develop regional trailhead and access into WTMRP from the north (connecting from the CAP).
- Develop regional trailhead and access into Bradshaw Mountains from the south.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Develop multiuse paths along Beardsley Canal to connect to WTMRP and Peoria.
- Work with FCDMC to protect the floodway along the Beardsley Canal to accommodate wildlife movement between the Aqua Fria River and WTMRP.
- Develop multiuse paths along CAP, connecting LPRPark to WTMRP and the Hassayampa River corridor.
- Implement protections for the Trilby Wash corridor for wildlife movement.
- Provide a multiuse path along State Route 74.
- Develop a multiuse path and protect the existing wildlife corridor along the Hassayampa River.
- Acquire and protect ecologically significant land between Trilby Wash and WTMRP ("buffer zone").

## GLENDALE

Natural open spaces within Glendale (Figure 4) include Thunderbird Conservation Park, Skunk Creek, New River, and the Agua Fria River. One of the major challenges the city faces is balancing heavy recreational use and demand for open space with ecosystem and wildlife conservation goals.

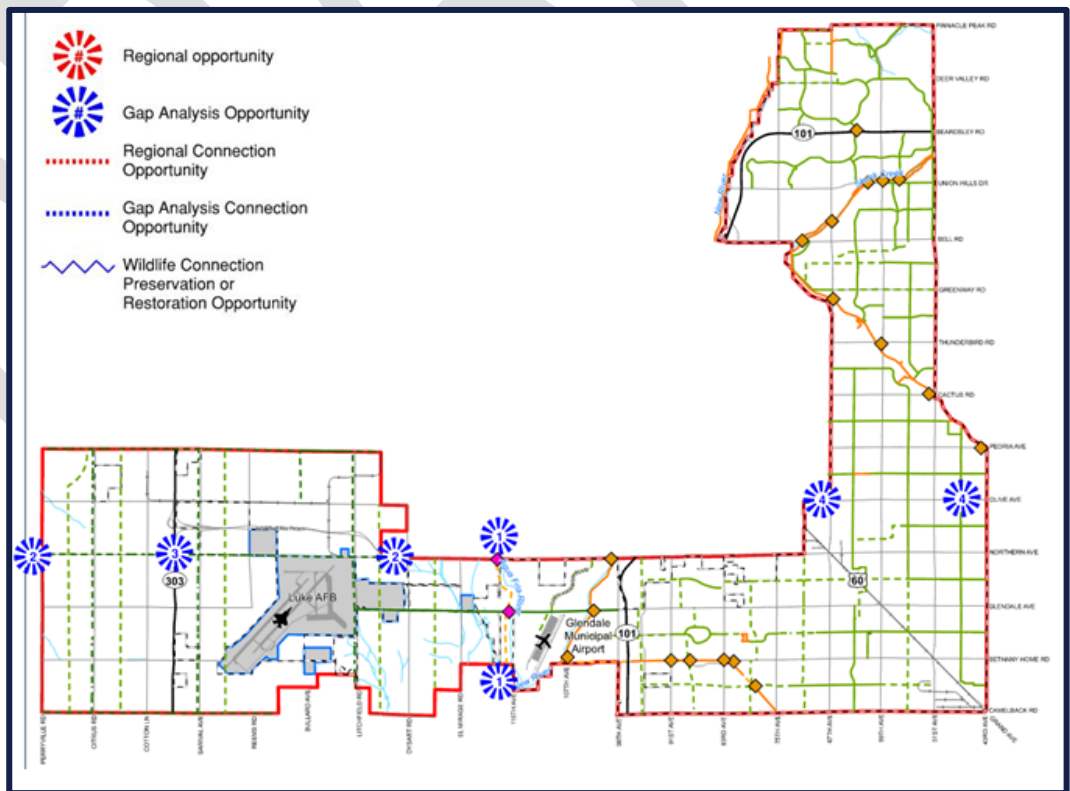


Figure 4 - Glendale Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Reclaim and restore open space for conservation and recreational uses.
- Preserve view corridors of White Tank Mountain.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Develop a proposed multiuse path along the Agua Fria River.
- Develop a multiuse path connection to connect Glendale to the White Tank Mountains.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossing at Loop 303.
- Repurpose the retired railroad corridor and linear retention spaces along Olive Avenue to create a recreation corridor with an unpaved trail.

## PEORIA

Peoria's General Plan recommends multiuse trails to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians, connecting several parks to the New River, Lake Pleasant Parkway, and Beardsley Road Trails. The plan also recommends connections east of Loop 101 to the New River Trail system and Lake Pleasant Parkway Trail to the Discovery Trail system (Figure 5).

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Develop a partnership between the City and County for developing and maintaining the 22 miles of Maricopa Trail within its planning boundary.
- Continue coordination and partnership with Maricopa County to plan recreational programming and trail connections at Lake Pleasant.
- Build regional connections in the northwest through a partnership with BLM.
- Develop a GIS tool to quickly reference parcels, helping planning staff to enforce better development restrictions, easements, and

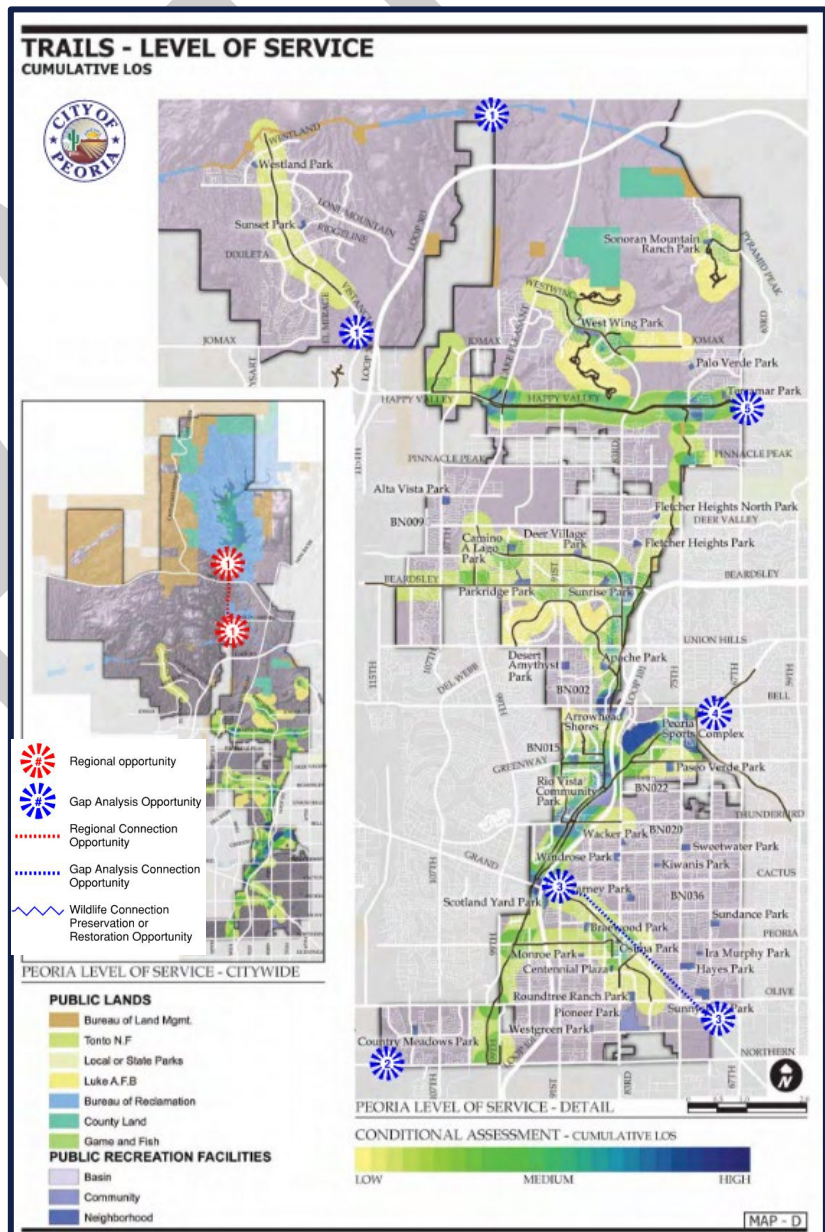


Figure 5 - Peoria Levels of Service

- conservation requirements on developing land.
- Develop a "Complete Streets" plan.
- Explore and secure funding through bonds and increased general fund.
- Partner with HOAs to provide wayfinding and regional connectivity along privatized greenbelts/trails in exchange for public access.
- Ensure sustainability by partnering with private development, regional partners, and government agencies to ensure the deployment of benchmark methods for connecting corridors and protecting natural resources and environmental systems.

**Regional Service Opportunities**

- Protect Agua Fria Corridor to ensure wildlife/ecological connectivity.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Develop multiuse paths for pedestrian connections between the Beardsley Canal, CAP, Vistancia, and Agua Fria River corridor.
- Partner with Glendale to develop trail connection and safe pedestrian passage along Agua Fria River/115<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Work with BNSF Railroad to establish trail easement along the Grand Avenue alignment.
- Connect New River Greenway east, into Glendale.
- Connect Happy Valley Road Greenway east, into Glendale.

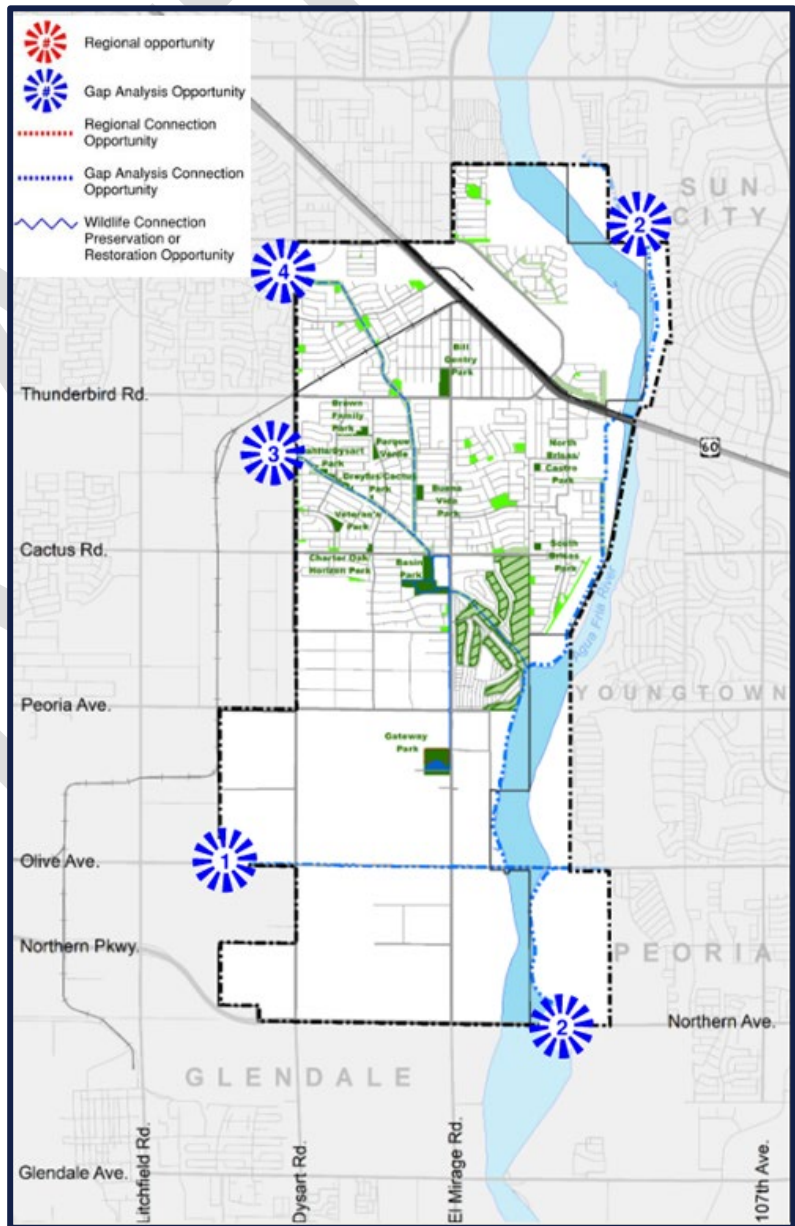


Figure 6 - El Mirage Open Space, Parks, Recreation and Trails Plan

# EL MIRAGE

El Mirage (Figure 6) is situated between Peoria and Surprise in the northwest Valley. With a population of 35,000, it is one of the smaller cities within the County but is ripe with opportunities for improving the regional recreation and open space system.

The Agua Fria River corridor is a defining feature within El Mirage. Currently, the corridor is used for passive recreation only with no official designation.

The 2001 Watercourse Master Plan (WCMP) and resulting channelization addendum was developed in partnership with the MCFCD and West Valley communities. The plan incorporates trails and park amenities, establishing regional riparian corridor protections.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- It is important for the community to develop partnerships with relevant public agencies develop partnerships with relevant public agencies to establish future parks, pedestrian greenways, and trail connections to regional parks and the MT, accommodating hiking, running, biking and equestrian access.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Continue Olive Avenue recreation corridor from Glendale to the Aqua Fria River.

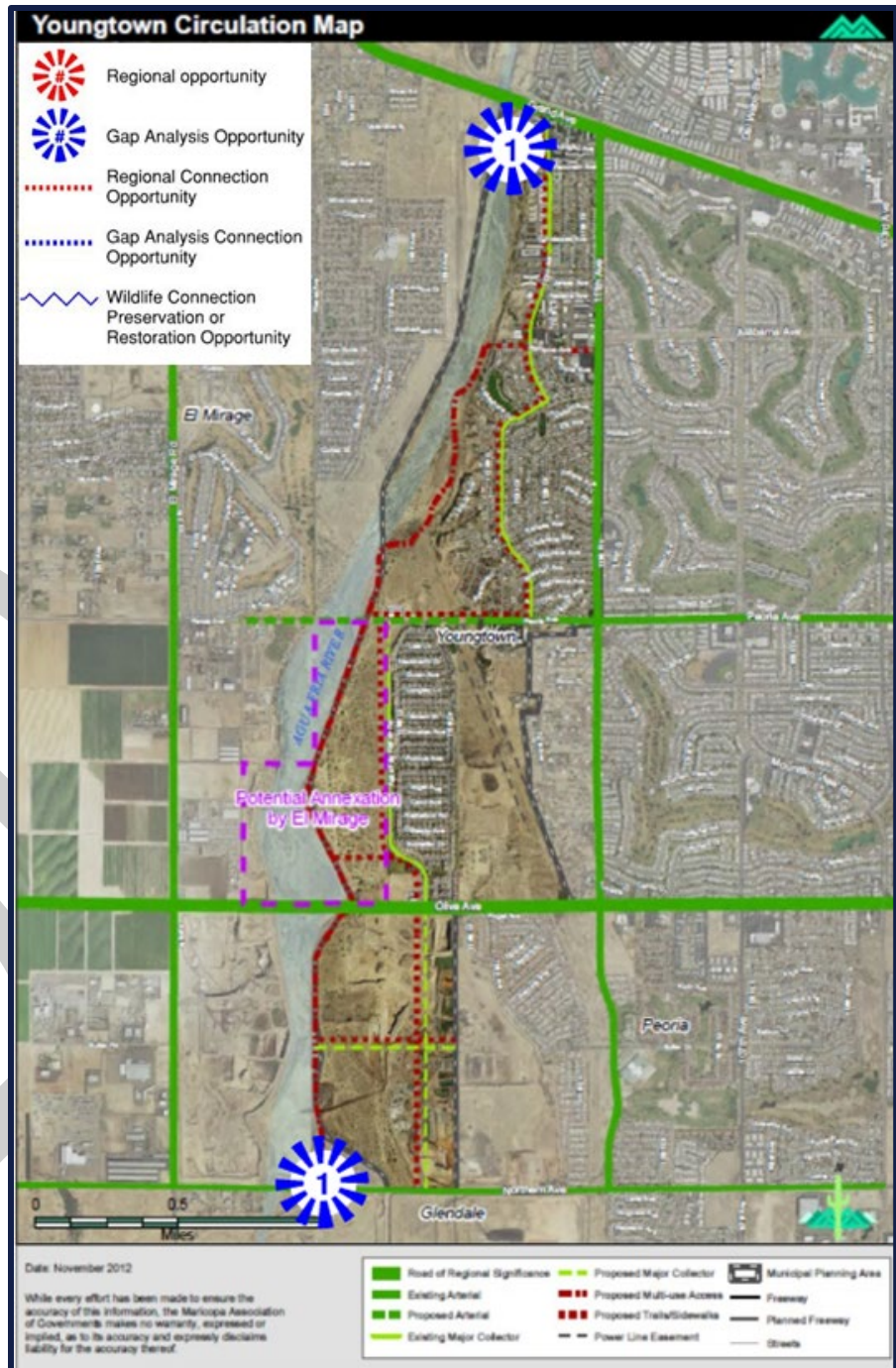


Figure 7 - Youngtown Circulation

- Develop proposed multiuse path(s) and wildlife corridor along the Agua Fria River.
- Provide proposed pedestrian paths along Lower El Mirage and Upper El Mirage Washes to connect community parks to Glendale and the Agua Fria River.

## YOUNGTOWN

The Youngtown General Plan (Figure 7) identifies the Open Space and Recreation element as intended to document current public open space and recreation facilities and identify open space and recreation opportunities that the Town may address in the future. This element also addresses how Youngtown's open spaces contribute to a regional system of open space.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Recommend collaboration with El Mirage, Peoria, and Maricopa County to annex unincorporated land south of Youngtown and east of the Agua Fria River floodway to establish regional park amenities and create stronger trail connections throughout the region.
- Coordinate with city and county partnerships regarding land use along community borders will be important.
- Explore compatible land uses, shared park spaces, and connectivity opportunities, including connections to the MT along the Agua Fria River.
- Develop proposed trails and sidewalks.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Work with El Mirage, Sun City and Peoria to connect multiuse paths along the Agua Fria.

# NORTHEAST REGION ANTHEM, DESERT HILLS & NEW RIVER

Anthem (Figure 9), Desert Hills, and New River (Figure 8) are unincorporated regions in the north central portion of the County. The Region is largely rural and exurban. Desert Hills and New River include vast tracts of open space and residences that feature large lots. The quiet, rural culture in the area is highly prized by residents of Desert Hills and New River. In Contrast, Anthem is a master planned community founded in 1999 that features community recreation and educational amenities, as well as commercial development.

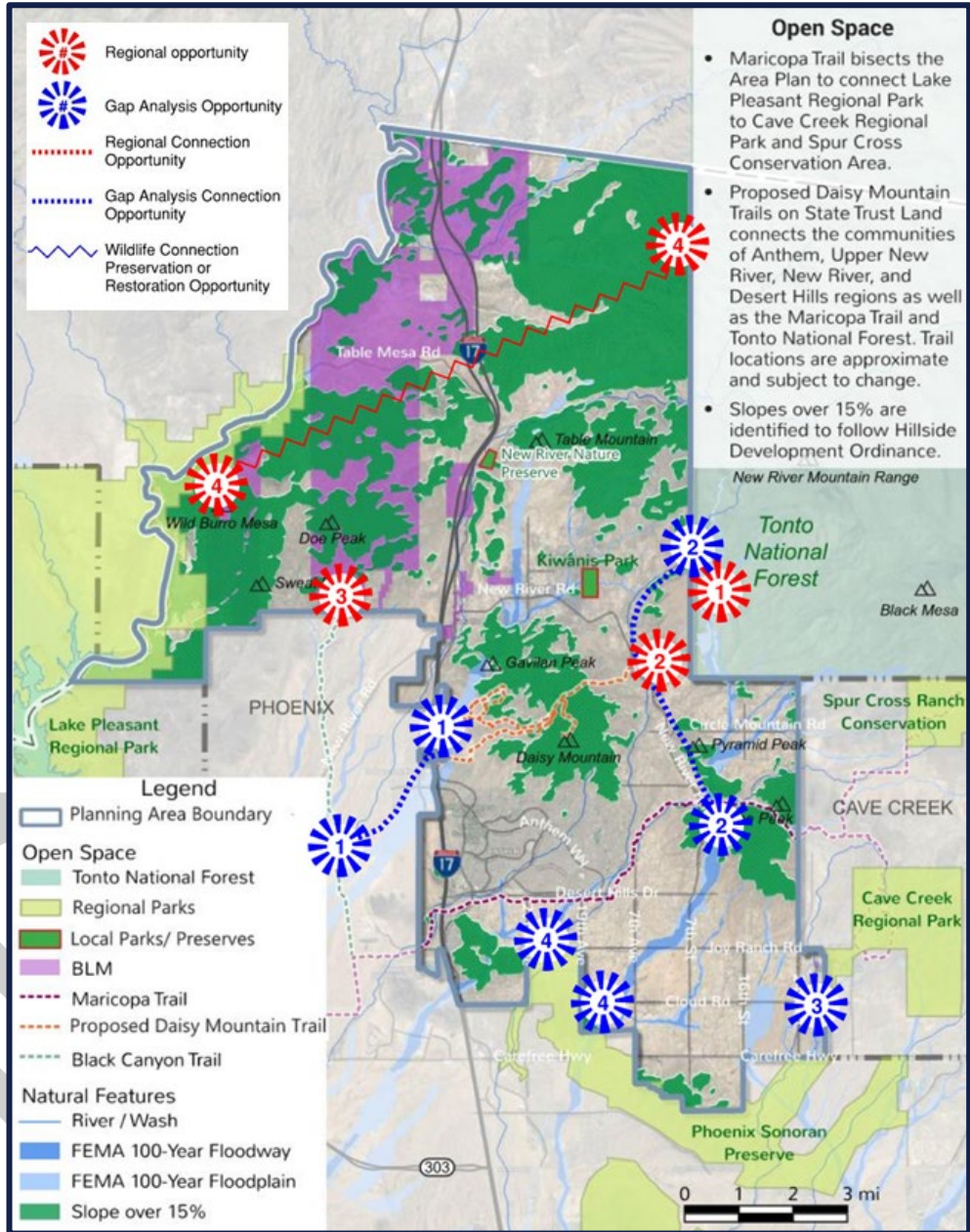


Figure 8 - New River Open Space



## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Work with area residents to identify connectivity gaps within the trails network and develop strategies to close the gaps. Possible strategies may include safe roadway crossings, private land easements, and individual recreation permits on State Trust Land.

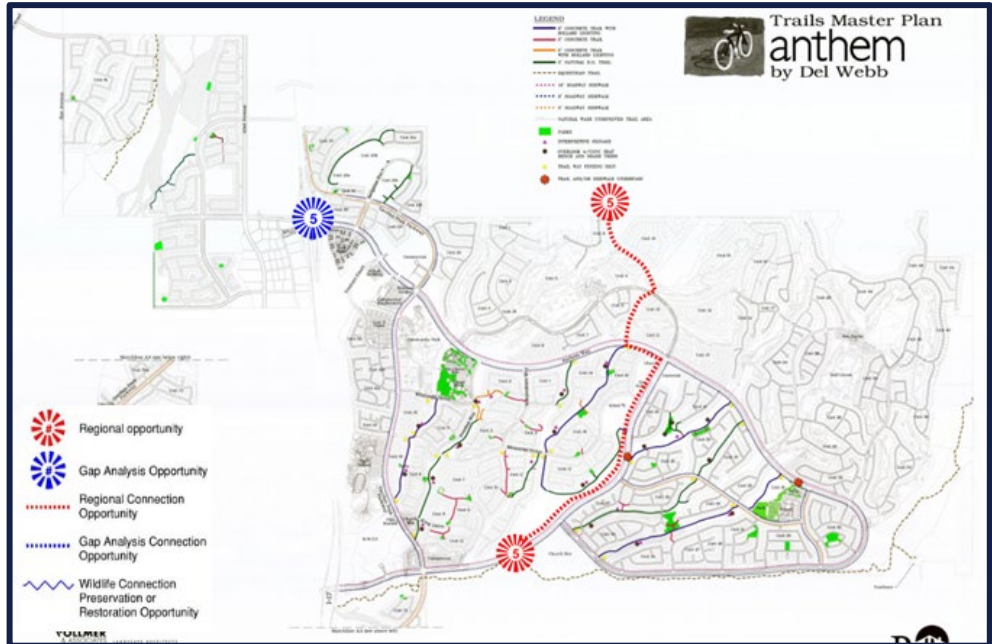


Figure 9 - Anthem Trails Master Plan

- Coordinate with MCDOT in the development of right-of-way equestrian paths where appropriate.
- Improve New River Kiwanis Park.
- Work with the Kiwanis Club of New River to identify needed updates or revisions to the Park Master Plan and coordinate with the BLM to ensure that any changes to the Master Plan meet the terms and conditions of the BLM's Public Purposes Patent.
- Support efforts by the Kiwanis Club of New River to obtain additional funding sources to increase the quantity and quality of their programs and amenities.
- Partner with ASLD, Friends of Daisy Mountain, and area residents to establish and maintain formalized trails on Daisy Mountain. This network of trails will support connectivity by linking Anthem to New River and the TNF.

### Regional Service Opportunities

- Create a regional trailhead into TNF from New River.
- Connect Daisy Mountain Trails to the Maricopa Trail.
- Create a regional trailhead into BLM Land west of I-17.
- Protect the corridor for wildlife habitat and movement.
- Provide a multiuse trail connection to Daisy Mountain through Anthem along Daisy Mountain Drive.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Connect Black Canyon Trail to Daisy Mountain Trail through Phoenix.
- Provide a multiuse trail/path along New River Road to connect the Maricopa Trail to TNF.
- Protect wildlife movement between the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve and CCRP.
- Protect wildlife movement between the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve and TNF.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossing across I-17 at Anthem Way.

## CAREFREE

The Town of Carefree (Figure 10) is a gateway community that leads to local parks and recreational facilities, Maricopa County's regional parks, and the TNF. Contributing greatly to the North Valley Recreational opportunities, the surrounding area is a popular place to "live, work, and play".

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Work with the MAG, Maricopa County, and surrounding communities to preserve natural land within regional parks and other potential open space assets. Also, work to establish regional pedestrian and bicycle trails and appropriate connections from Carefree/Cave Creek to the region.
- Explore opportunities with the Black Mountain Summit and TNF which are publicly owned, have exceptional open space value, and are classified for conservation. Regionally significant open space on the mountains north of the Cave Creek town limits in Maricopa County and east of the Carefree town limits in north Scottsdale are also privately-owned areas with high, open-space value.
- Study possible linkages to the Maricopa Trail along the Rowe Wash, Grapevine Wash, and Galloway Wash. The proposed trails would connect to the mountains north of Carefree, CCRP, and SCRCA. Work with partnerships to establish regional pedestrian and bicycle trails in Carefree.
- Preserve archeological features within the town limits.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Complete the bicycle route at Carefree Drive and Mule Train Road.
- Include pedestrian paths along planned and existing bicycle routes in Carefree.
- Provide open space or trailhead connection to Tonto National Forest.
- Consider multiuse

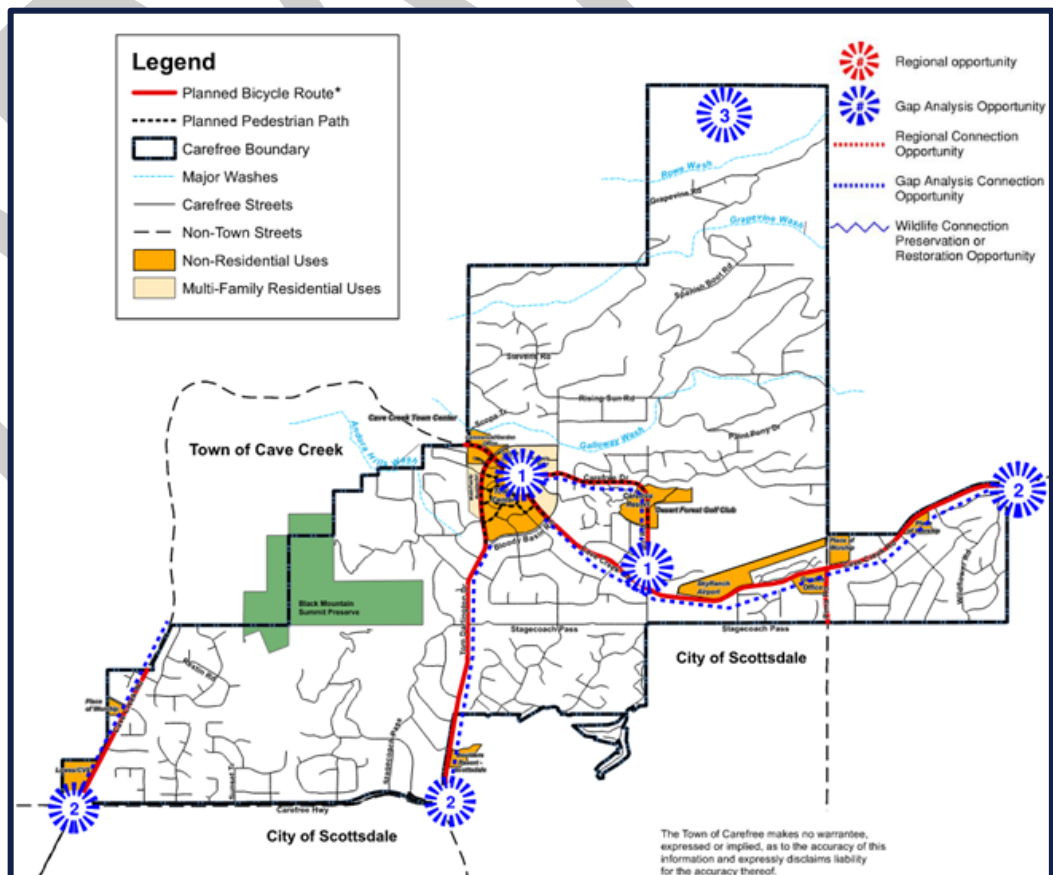


Figure 10 - Carefree Traffic, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Plan

- trails along Cave Creek Road, Tom Darling Drive, and Bloody Basin.
- Planned bicycle routes have already been constructed, except at Carefree Drive and Mule Train Road.

## CAVE CREEK

Like the neighboring Town of Carefree, Cave Creek provides a gateway to the great outdoors. With regional parkland, open space, trails, and access for both day-use and multi-day recreation adventures, this community provides visitor amenities, including wayfinding, guided trips, and assistance.

CCRP, SCRCA, Desert Awareness Park, and a network of trails are in Cave Creek (Figure 11). The Town implements zoning ordinances requiring developers to dedicate trails and open space. These ordinances could be used as a model for other regional municipalities.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Work with the Maricopa Association of Governments, Maricopa County, and surrounding communities to preserve natural land within regional parks and other potential open space assets. Also, work to establish regional pedestrian and bicycle trails and appropriate connections from Carefree/Cave Creek to the region.
- Explore opportunities with the Black Mountain Summit and Tonto National Forest which are publicly owned, have exceptional open space value, and are classified for conservation. Regionally significant open space on the mountains north of the Cave Creek town limits

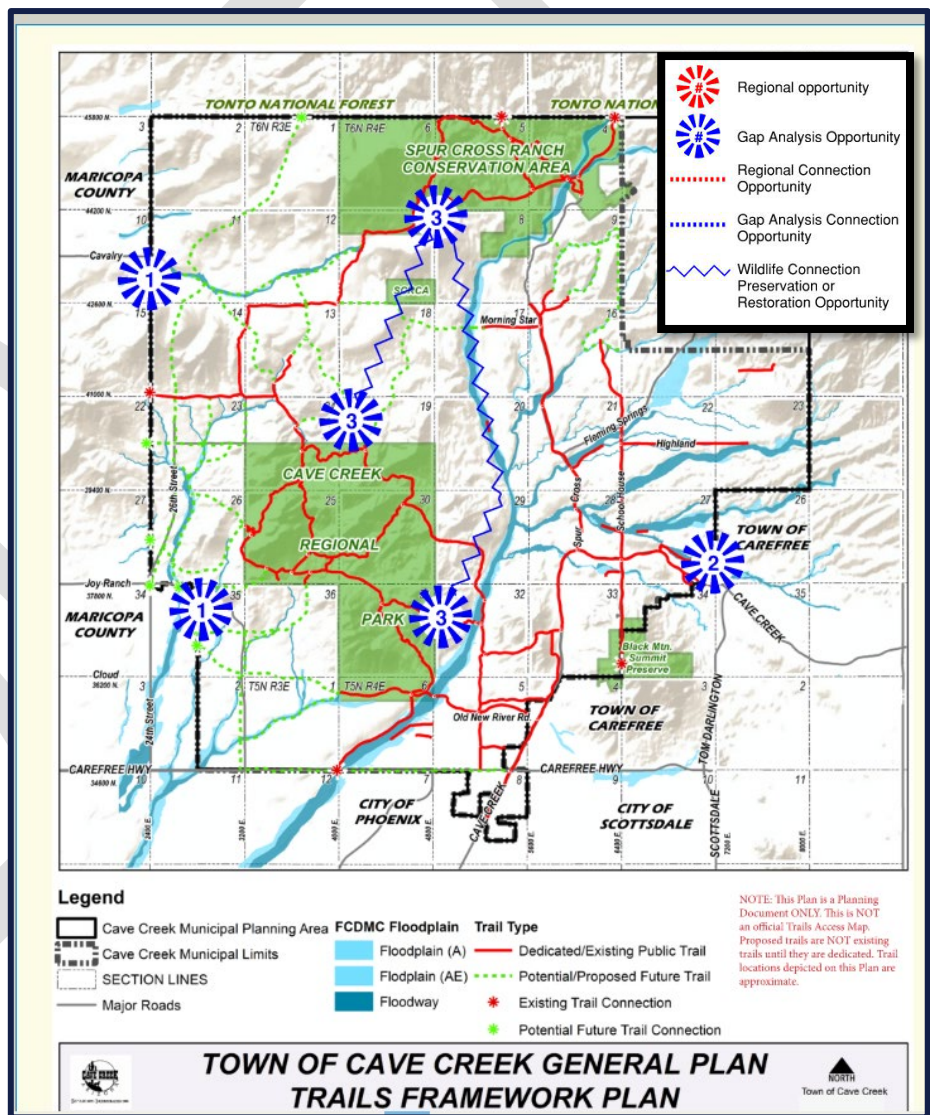


Figure 11 - Cave Creek Trails Framework

in Maricopa County and east of the Carefree town limits in north Scottsdale are privately-owned areas with high, open-space value.

- Preserve archaeological features within the Town.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Connect the trail system to New River.
- Connect the trail system into the Town of Carefree along Cave Creek Road.
- Protect open for wildlife connections between CCRP, SCRCA, and TNF.

**FOUNTAIN HILLS**

Situated in the County’s eastern region, Fountain Hills (Figure 12) is immediately adjacent to the Tonto National Forest. Located within the foothills of the McDowell Mountain Regional Park and Scottsdale McDowell Sonoran Preserve, recreation and open space are vital to the Town’s identity and economy. The Town takes great pride in the natural desert areas that define it and has introduced many policies to protect, enhance, and leverage the unique landscape.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**General Opportunities**

- Continue connecting open space and trail systems with the Maricopa Trail and Regional Parks system.
- Pursue funding opportunities for local parks, trails, and open space which have been identified by the Town for future consideration.

Use additional funding to:

- Establish Land trusts;
- Implement tax mechanisms that have community support;
- Factor in environmental costs, risks, and impacts of the development of existing open spaces when planning and budgeting;
- Consider the amenities and services as part of the Town’s economic development strategy;
- Implement visitor open space user fees in strategic locations;
- Consider working on grants independently and with regional partners.

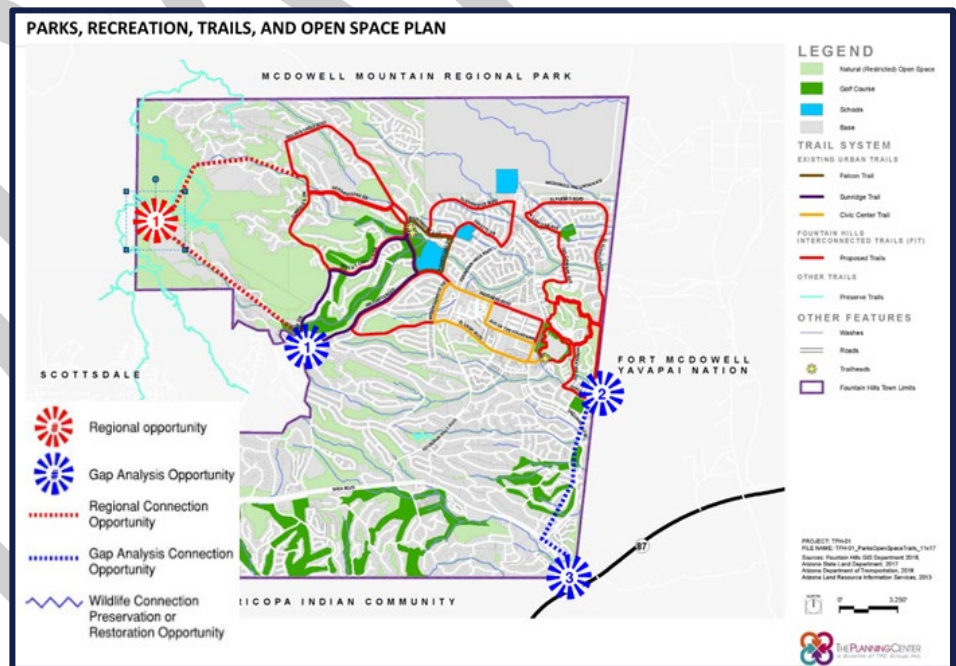


Figure 12 - Fountain Hills Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Plan

**Regional Service Opportunities**

- Develop a regional trailhead into the McDowell Mountain Preserve and connect to the Fountain Hills trail system.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Connect to Scottsdale's trail system.
- Provide trail connections to the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
- Provide trail connections into the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Provide safe pedestrian crossing across Hwy 87.

**PARADISE VALLEY  
PARADISE VALLEY,  
TOGETHER: 2022  
GENERAL PLAN**

The aesthetic beauty of the natural environment is important to the residents of Paradise Valley (Figure 13). The Open Space Element in the 2022 General Plan encourages private and public efforts to acquire, maintain, and preserve valuable open space, mountain views, washes, select recreational access, vegetation, and wildlife for their intrinsic value and contribution to creating positive resident and visitor experiences.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**General Opportunities**

- Share 'institutional knowledge' between Paradise Valley and other municipalities related to policies and implementation prioritizing open space, parks, recreation, and connectivity.
- Develop off-street pedestrian paths along major bike lane corridors.

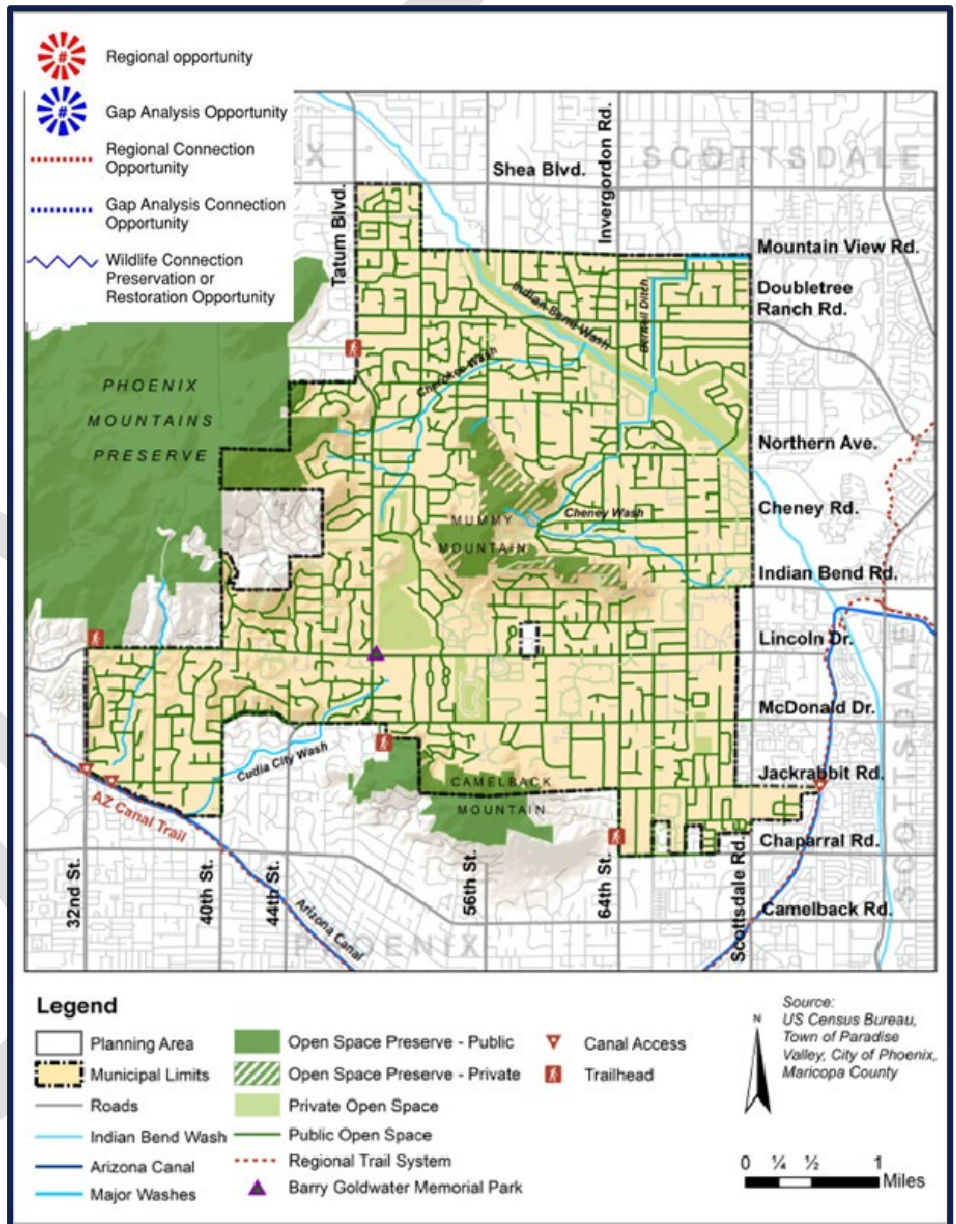


Figure 13 - Paradise Valley Bicycle Circulation Map

# PHOENIX

As the largest city in the County and strategically situated in the Valley, the City of Phoenix serves as a hub for trail and open space connectivity in the region. The City of Phoenix General Plan (Figure 14) describes the city as a connected oasis with a desire to be a more connected city. True to that, the City of Phoenix has a well-connected trail system weaving trails from and into the Mountain Preserve system, through neighborhoods and urban trails, and into other preserves and open space areas within the city.

Like the County Plan, the Phoenix General Plan and the connected oasis theme identified three main elements to enhance the quality of life. These include Prosperity, Health, and Environment. The Phoenix Preserve System is roughly divided into three

distinct areas, the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve in the North, the Phoenix Mountain Preserve in the mid-City area, and the South Mountain Park Preserve system in the South.

The connected oasis theme utilizes the preserve areas to connect to the Maricopa Trail, leading away to other agency parks and trail systems throughout the region. Through several existing Intergovernmental Agreements, the Maricopa Trail currently passes through South Mountain Park to access Tempe, Chandler, and Mesa, eventually providing access to UMRP in Mesa. Westward, the Maricopa Trail accesses Tres Rio Restoration Area, Peoria, Avondale, Goodyear, and Buckeye.

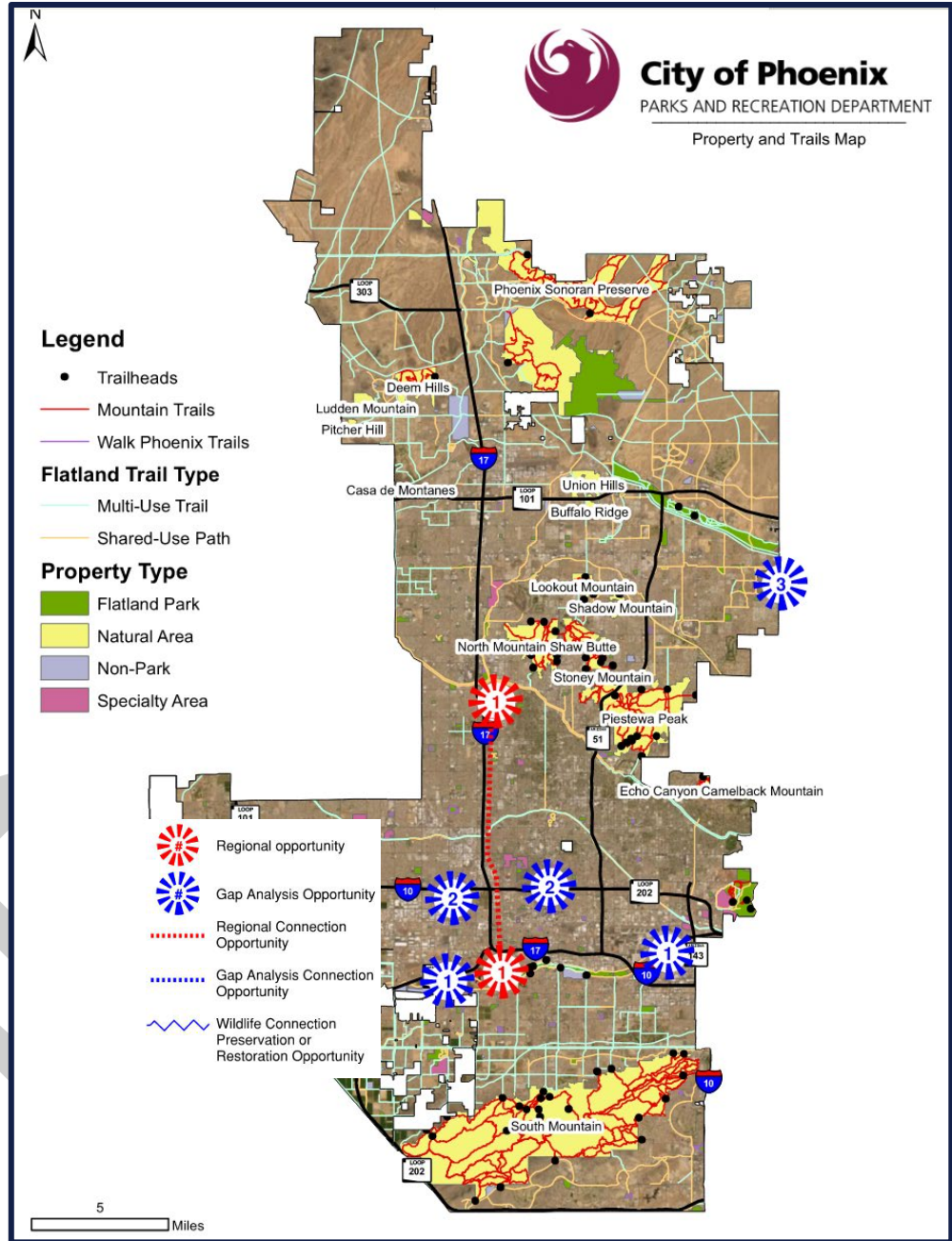


Figure 14 - City of Phoenix Trails

In the northern reaches of the city, the Maricopa Trail passes directly north of the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve system and is connected to existing trailheads via a County identified local trail to provide extended access to Maricopa County's regional park system, Tonto National Forest, and Scottsdale on the northern end of the valley. There is currently concern over development encroachment near the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve.

Phoenix and Scottsdale used sales tax programs to fund extensive preserve acquisition, aggregating over 30,000 acres in total preserve acreage. This open space and an integral regional trail system offer unparalleled connectivity over a large valley area.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Explore opportunities for Phoenix, Cave Creek, and TNF to coordinate and collaborate for the richness of habitat and potential wildfire refuge.
- Develop additional public access points to recreation outlets.
- Focus on main river corridors to expand the open space network within Metro Phoenix.
- Connect trail/multiuse paths along the river corridors spanning Metro Phoenix and connecting with local trails and regional parks.
- Explore opportunities for new developments to provide dedicated open space.
- Promote, as a model, the partnership between Phoenix and Scottsdale to help to preserve open space and develop parks with a local sales tax.
- Extend multiuse trails into neighborhoods across and north of the Salt River and Interstate 10.

### Regional Service Opportunities

- Enhance Regional connectivity by providing a north-south multiuse path between the Salt River corridor and the Arizona Canal Trail.
- Provide regional connection through North through Tolleson.

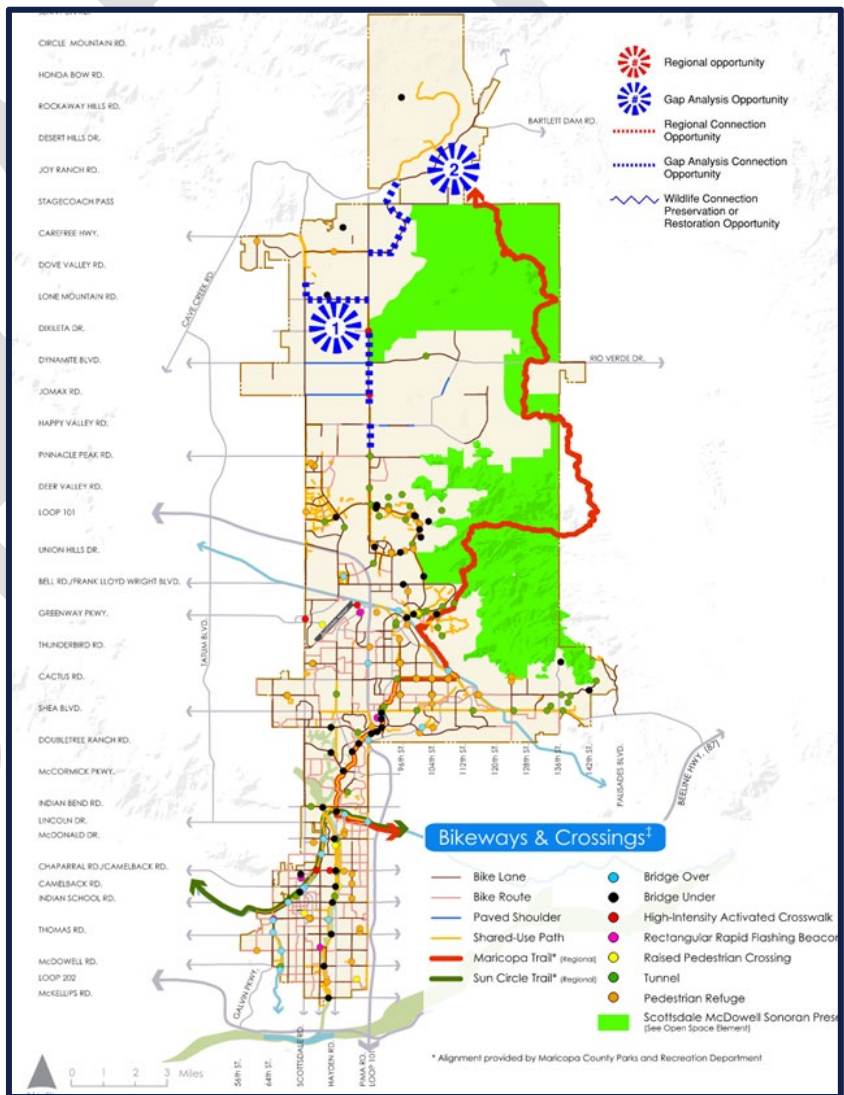


Figure 15 - Scottsdale trails - Opportunities

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Continue Salt River Corridor trails east and west.
- Extend multiuse trails into neighborhoods across and north of the Salt River and Interstate 10.
- Connect existing trails into Scottsdale.

## SCOTTSDALE

Scottsdale is in the northeast Valley and encompasses 118,041 acres and 250,600 people within its limits. The city has three primary planning documents that provide direction related to the SSMP: The General Plan, Desert Preservation Plan, and Trails System Master Plan (Figure 15).

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Secure additional access points to Open Space to accommodate growth.
- Provide Scottsdale and Phoenix's bond and taxation funding methods as a model to other agencies.
- Promote Scottsdale's policies as a model for other agencies to regulate new development and improvements on environmentally sensitive lands.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Fill in gaps of multi-path use trails to achieve a contiguous connection north of Loop 101 (along Pima Road).
- Connect the north side of McDowell Mountain Preserve to multiuse paths and the Tonto National Forest.

## SOUTHEAST REGION

### APACHE JUNCTION

Apache Junction (Figure 16) is seated at the foot of the roughly 160,000-acre Superstition Mountain Wilderness area. Exceptional environmental assets with the city's location include Utery Pass Regional Park, Tonto National Forest, Superstition Wilderness, State land, and BLM lands. The city's proximity to open space provides the city with unique opportunities to leverage existing and new connections to the larger open space system. It is poised as an important partner for the County to accomplish regional open space preservation and overall connectedness goals.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Develop trails along washes and powerline corridors.

### Regional Service Opportunities

- Connect Silly Mountain Trail to Eastern Canal with a formal trail.
- Connect Lost Dutchman State Park to Eastern Canal with a formal trail.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Execute city plans to connect CAP trail system South to continue through Apache Junction.
- Explore the opportunity to provide path along Royal Palm Road Wash southwest to connect to Eastern Canal Path.





Figure 16 - Apache Junction Connectivity Network

- Provide safe pedestrian and wildlife crossing access across US 60 to connect Sily Mountain Trail to Eastern Canal.

## MESA

The City of Mesa's draft 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan (Figure 17) seeks to build on prior efforts to manage and develop parks and recreation facilities and programs within the Mesa community based on current needs and opportunities.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Share successes and continue implementation of the 10-minute walk to a park and Safe Routes to parks campaigns.
- Prioritize establishing trailhead opportunities and route finding using the Mesa Park system and other major destinations as anchor points.
- Work with Mesa to identify gaps in service for recreation opportunities.
- Create connections across the Salt River to reconnect communities and offer circulation at multiple elevations along the river corridors.
- Explore connection opportunities between open space areas along the Salt River corridor and miles of canals in the city.

### General Opportunities

- Establish trailheads throughout the Mesa Park system to increase access for a diverse population.

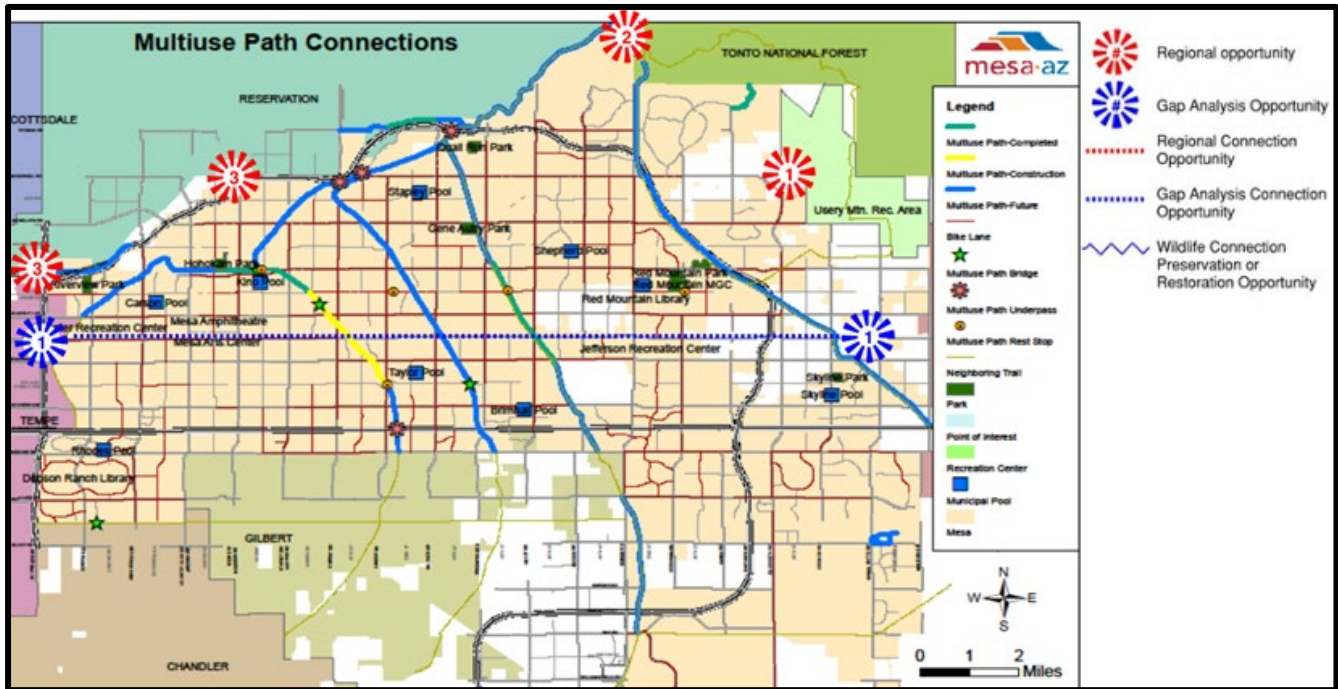


Figure 17 - Mesa Multi-use Path Connections

**Regional Service Opportunities**

- Provide a regional trailhead at Utery Mountain Recreation Area to connect to future multiuse path.
- Provide a regional trailhead at TNF from Mesa.
- Develop a protected/restored river corridor along the Salt River. Work with the Salt River Pima - Maricopa Indian Community and focus efforts on the South Canal path as the anchor for the corridor to accomplish this.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Provide an east-west multiuse path from Tempe across Mesa.

**QUEEN CREEK**

**General Plan**

- The Town General Plan (Figure 18) provides a range of land uses and opportunities consistent with the desired community character.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**General Opportunities**

- Protect connections between open space corridors, Queen Creek Wash, and other corridors.
- Improve the wash system.
- Ensure the partnership between Queen Creek and MCFCD addresses the debris maintenance challenge from flood management structures.
- Enact policies that require new development to preserve open space connections and areas of high ecological value.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Connect trails from Pinal County through Queen Creek using the CAP canal trail as a major corridor through Apache Junction, Florence, and along the Boundary of Queen Creek.
- Continue the multiuse path along the Union Pacific Railroad corridor.
- Support Gilbert in developing planned trails connecting to Queen Creek Road and Ocotillo Road.

**GILBERT**

Located in the southeast quadrant of Maricopa County, Gilbert (Figure 19) is one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States. The Town boasts many amenities and a thriving local economy. The Town opened the new Gilbert Regional Park in Tempe, which is part of their focus on connecting larger landscapes.

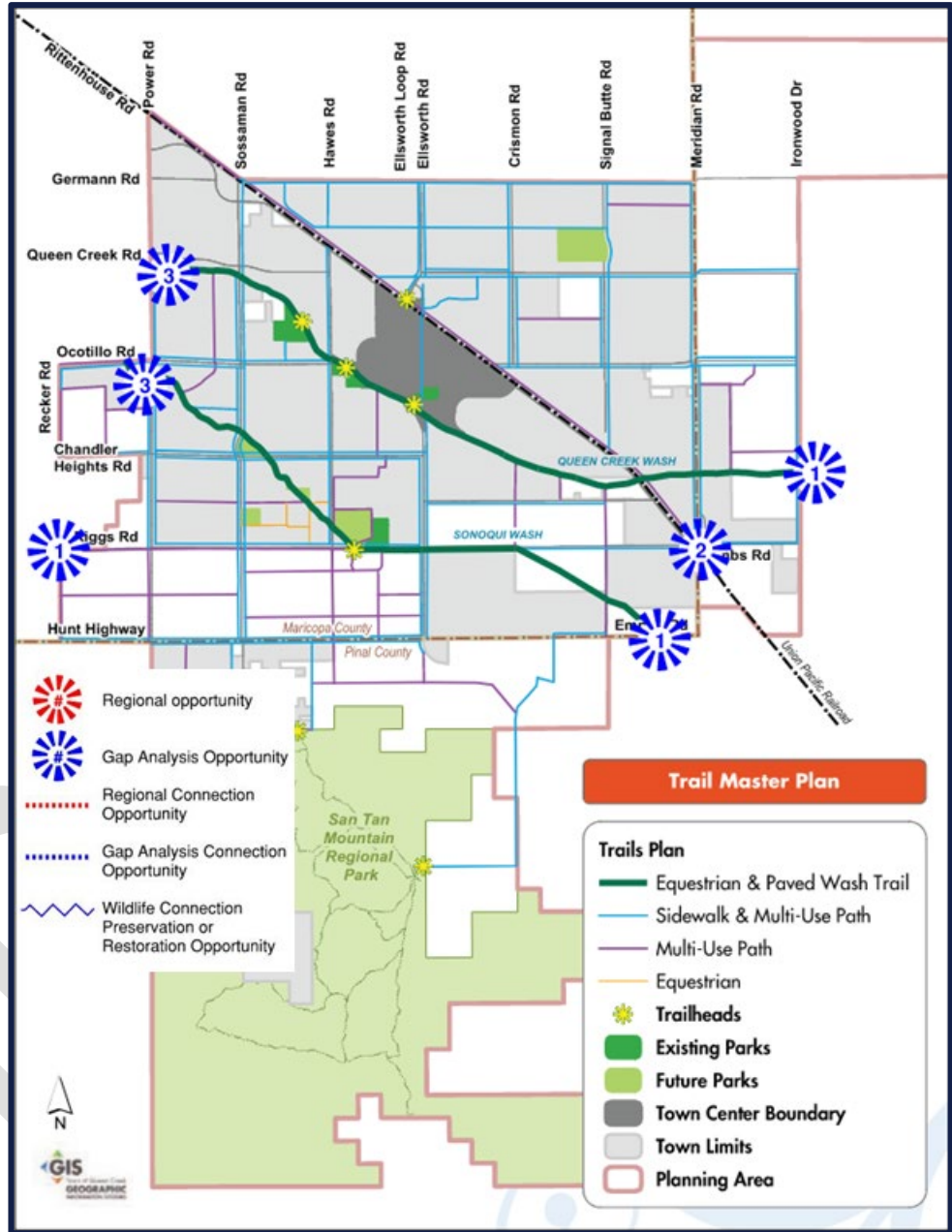


Figure 18 - Queen Creek Trail Master Plan

Approximately 8.5 miles of the Western Powerline/Sun Circle Trail runs east-west through Gilbert, connecting Chandler to the West and Mesa to the east. The segment intersects with a number of other trails within the Town's limits, and several parks border the corridor.

The Town's General Plan Vision conveys the desire to maintain Gilbert as a "...safe, healthy, clean, attractive, family-oriented community that embraces our Town's heritage yet recognizes the opportunities of the future without sacrificing the resources of today."

# PARKS & RECREATION AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The Town of Gilbert published the Parks and Recreation and Trails Master Plan in 2014. The Plan's vision statement demonstrates Gilbert's awareness of the inherent value of parks and connected open space:

*Exemplary parks, trails, open spaces, natural areas, arts and culture, leisure programs and facilities are safe and integral to Gilbert's unique identity, quality of life and economy.*

The plan identifies several strategies that are relevant to the County SSMP:

- Strive to Provide Town Residents with Access to all Types of Town-Owned Parks
- Examine Town-owned areas for opportunities to provide parks so all residents have access to them.
- If necessary, update the South Recharge Site Conceptual Plan with regard to the riparian areas. The updated plan could include an open space area, wildlife habitats, a visitor's center, an outdoor classroom/ observation area and viewing platforms at the riparian areas at the South Recharge Site.

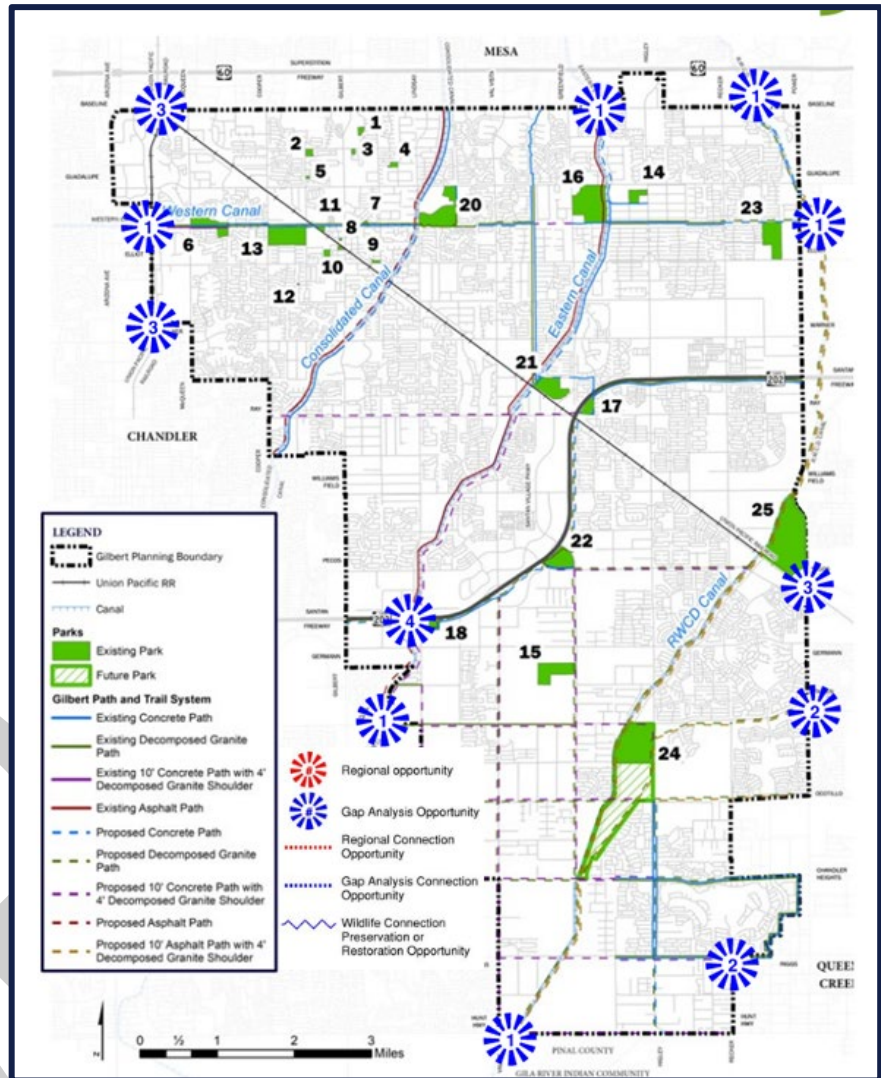


Figure 19 - Gilbert Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan

Note: The 2014 Parks & Recreation and Trails Master Plan document will be effectively replaced with the update to the "Trails" portion of the Transportation Master Plan when the document is adopted.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- The upcoming Transportation Master Plan is expected to be completed in June 2022; revision will include planning for an additional 30 miles of trails through and within the Town.

- Challenges related to trail development include the hurdles of working under a variety of jurisdictions, ownerships, and establishing easements.

### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Construct Proposed canal trails to connect Gilbert to Mesa, Queen Creek, and Chandler.
- Construct proposed connections to Queen Creek, STMRP, and the existing Queen Creek Wash Trail and Sonoqui Wash Trail in the Town of Queen Creek.
- Extend Union Pacific Railroad Trails from Queen Creek into Gilbert to provide northwest-to-southeast connectivity.
- Provide a safe pedestrian route across Loop 202.
- Provide a safe multiuse path corridor along Ocotillo Road connecting to the City of Chandler and the Sonoqui Wash Trail in the Town of Queen Creek.

## CHANDLER

A land-locked City, the majority of undeveloped land in Chandler (Figure 20) has been converted to agricultural uses from the natural desert. These agricultural areas will continue to be developed for residential and commercial use.

The Consolidated Canal and Eastern Canal provide strong north-south connections to trails and open space in Chandler.

## GENERAL PLAN

Chandler's General Plan prioritizes the enhancement and expansion of existing open space and the expansion of trails to increase connectivity to and between parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, and other activity centers.

The General Plan establishes the goal of "focused stewardship" of the natural environment by encouraging and facilitating the incorporation of open space areas that replicate the natural desert habitat.

## PARKS STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

The City of Chandler is currently working on an update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, last updated in 2000. The update will carry forward goals included in the previous master plan:

- Continue to design and develop a system of Neighborhood Parks (one per square mile).
- Continue to design and develop a system of Community Parks (25 acres per 2-mile radius).
- Continue to develop Tumbleweed Park and the Snedigar Sportsplex.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

Within city limits, regional-level opportunities exist that would enhance system-wide trail and habitat connectivity:

- An east-west connection through the city to the STMRP is needed to supplement the existing north-south canal connections.
- Open space requirements associated with agricultural land development may assist in trail and habitat connectivity.

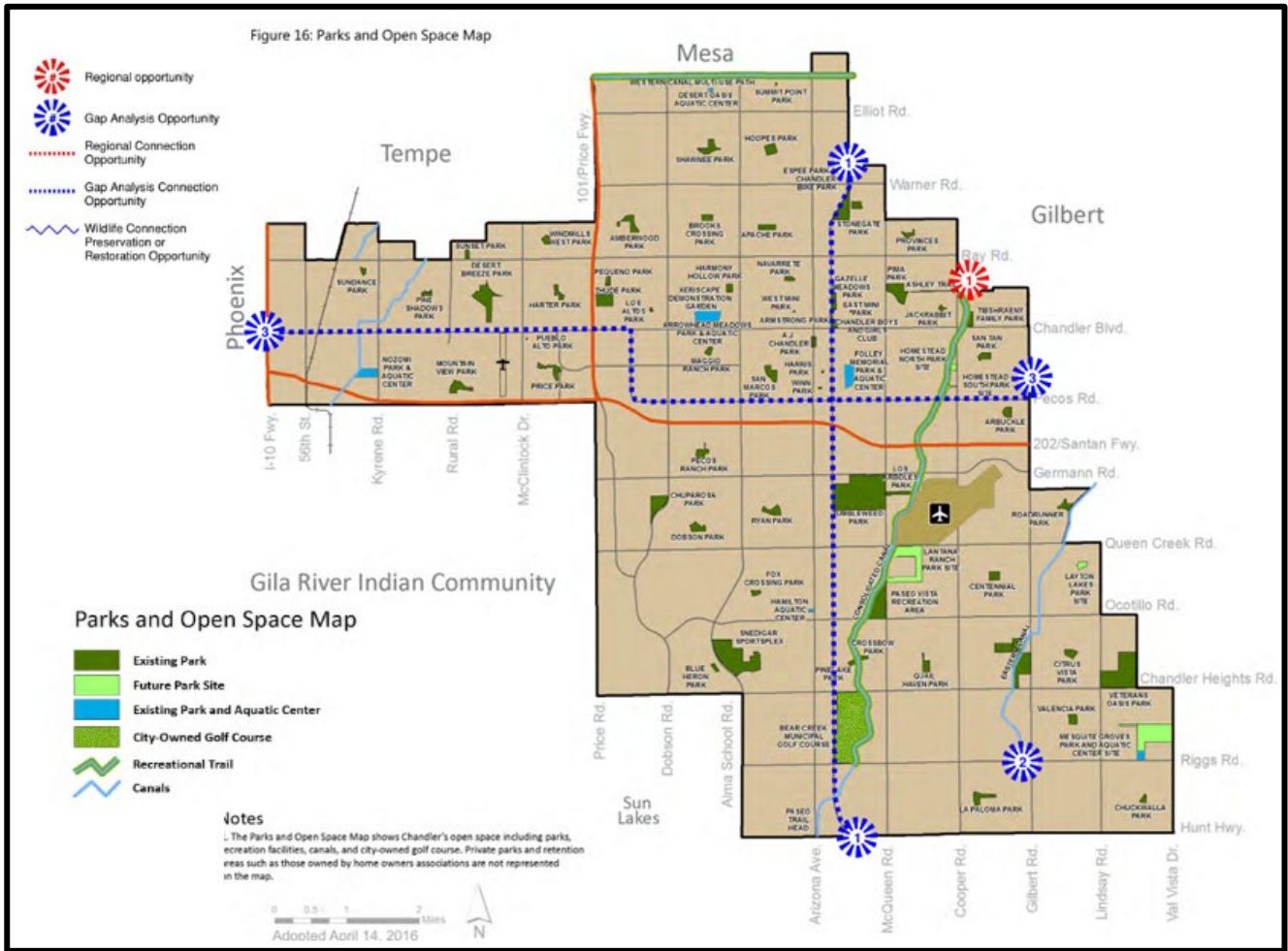


Figure 20 - Chandler Parks and Open Space

**Regional Service Opportunities**

- Regional trailhead/connection opportunity where Consolidated Canal intersects with Maricopa Trail/Western Canal.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Provide a trail/path following the alignment of the existing railroad.
- Continue pedestrian access beyond the southern limits of the Eastern Canal.
- Provide an east-west connection (see the first General Opportunity).

**TEMPE**

Home to more than 190,000 people, as well as Arizona State University's original campus, Tempe (Figure 21) has a well-developed and diverse park and recreational system that comprises 52 parks, including the Tempe Town Lake and Rio Salado Parks, two desert preserves, multiple sports complexes, a Cactus League spring training facility, and two city-managed golf courses. Already a well-connected city, Tempe is home to a community that values open space, outdoor recreation, and multi-modal mobility.

## GENERAL PLAN 2040

- Enhance pedestrian, bike, and transit connections to produce a "20-minute city" through a vibrant mix of commercial, recreational, civic, and residential establishments within a one-mile walking distance, a four-mile bicycle ride, or a 20-minute transit ride.
- Open Space, Recreation, and Cultural Amenities: Utilize parks, schools, and multi-generational centers as organizing components in neighborhoods. Integrate urban parks and open space into each neighborhood hub as an equal partner with the built environment. Ensure that as the community grows, amenities essential to the quality of life build upon the many



Figure 21 - Tempe Bikes and Pedestrian Network

already in place, such as public art and art centers, museums, libraries, walking and biking paths, cultural events, and parks and recreation facilities.

- Public Open Space is land that can be accessed or viewed by the public that is primarily used for outdoor recreation, events, preservation of natural resources, or the promotion of public health and well-being. This includes the following public facilities: parks, playfields, paths, plazas, golf courses, and retention basins.
- Private Open Space recognizes private property's role in open space provision within our community. This category is for identifying and recognizing such land and does not imply restrictions on changes of use. Property identified on the projected land use map as private open space has written consent of the owner to be so designated.

## TEMPE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN (JULY 2021)

- The City of Tempe Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a ten-year plan.
- Informed by extensive community engagement, the plan includes principles that guide short, mid-and long-term strategies and actions for managing and providing parks and recreation facilities and programs over the next decade.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- **Inclusion:** Providing community access and opportunity regardless of color, gender orientation, age, income, or ability.
- **Resilience:** Parks and recreation facilities and programs that help the community.
- **Thrive:** Despite disruptive environmental, societal, and health events.
- **Strategic:** A flexible system that focuses on continuous improvement.
- **Sustainability:** Parks and recreation systems and services that enrich and sustain the community, nurture the environment, and contribute to the economy.

### OPPORTUNITIES

#### General Opportunities

- Implement the Rio Salado Master Plan and Kiwanis Park Management Plan.
- Develop and implement a Preserves Management Plan.

#### Regional Service Opportunities

- Regional opportunity to connect Tempe and Mesa east-west.

#### Gap Analysis Opportunities

- Develop a multiuse path along North Highland Lateral Canal to connect Tempe and Guadalupe.
- Provide a multiuse path north-south following the alignment of the existing railroad.
- Provide additional pedestrian crossing points across Salt River.

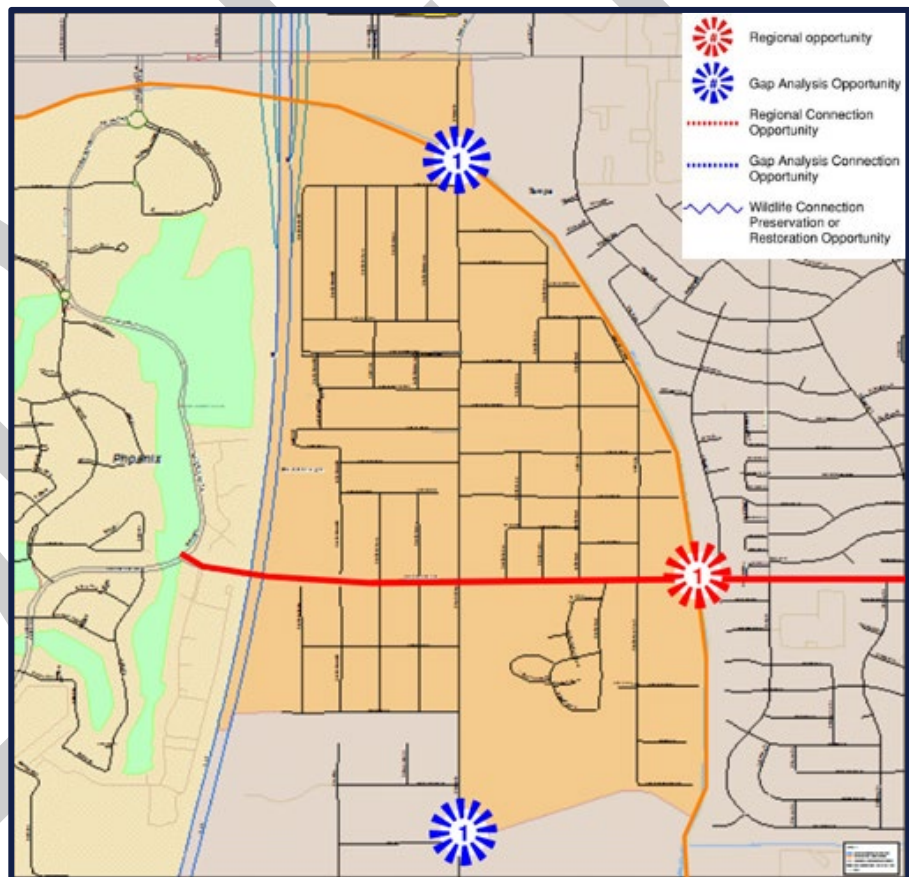


Figure 22 - Guadalupe Connection

## GUADALUPE



While the Town of Guadalupe (Figure 22) is only 512 acres, approximately 6,500 people live within it. The town is nestled between Tempe and southern Phoenix, near South Mountain Park and Preserve. The Maricopa Regional Trail passes through Guadalupe.

## **PRIORITY PLAN (2018)**

The Priority Plan is intended to be a flexible tool that guides budget decisions, aligns Town resources, and promotes forward thinking. The plan focuses on proximity, sustainability, and making Guadalupe a cultural destination can all be supported through the use of parks, trails, and open space. The Town's goals include improving and upgrading parks and developing a new park.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Regional Service Opportunities**

- Develop a pedestrian crossing at I-10 and the Maricopa Trail.

### **Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Provide a north-south pedestrian connection through Guadalupe.

## **SOUTHWEST REGION**

### **BUCKEYE**

Buckeye (Figure 23) is a rapidly growing city located in the west valley and, in 2022, encompasses a planning area of 639 square miles with an estimated population of 107,000. The Maricopa Trail connects the White Tank Mountains, Estrella Mountain, and Buckeye Hills Regional Parks. City-owned Buckeye trails provide recreational trails in Skyline Regional Park and walking paths around Sundance Park and Earl Edgar Recreational Facility.

### **CITY GENERAL PLAN 2040**

The City's Imagine Buckeye 2040 General Plan was ratified in 2018. This plan includes an open space element and land stewardship element that indicates the high degree of importance among residents

to preserve natural areas. It builds on the existing network of paths and trails to create greater regional connectivity and safe areas for unimpeded wildlife travel. Buckeye has three primary planning documents that provide direction for this planning effort:

- Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Buckeye Wildlife Corridors Best Practices Guide (Draft Document).
- Area Drainage Master Plans, El Rio Design Guidelines and Planning Standards, and El Rio Specific Area Plan.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Connect the Maricopa Trail and local paths to regional resources such as surrounding mountain ranges, rivers, open spaces, and parks within the city.
- Focus resources on the Rivers to Ridges concept to provide linear green belts between large-scale habitat blocks such as the White Tank Mountains to the Hassayampa and Gila Rivers and Buckeye Hills.
- Connect trails between Skyline Regional Park and WTMRP.

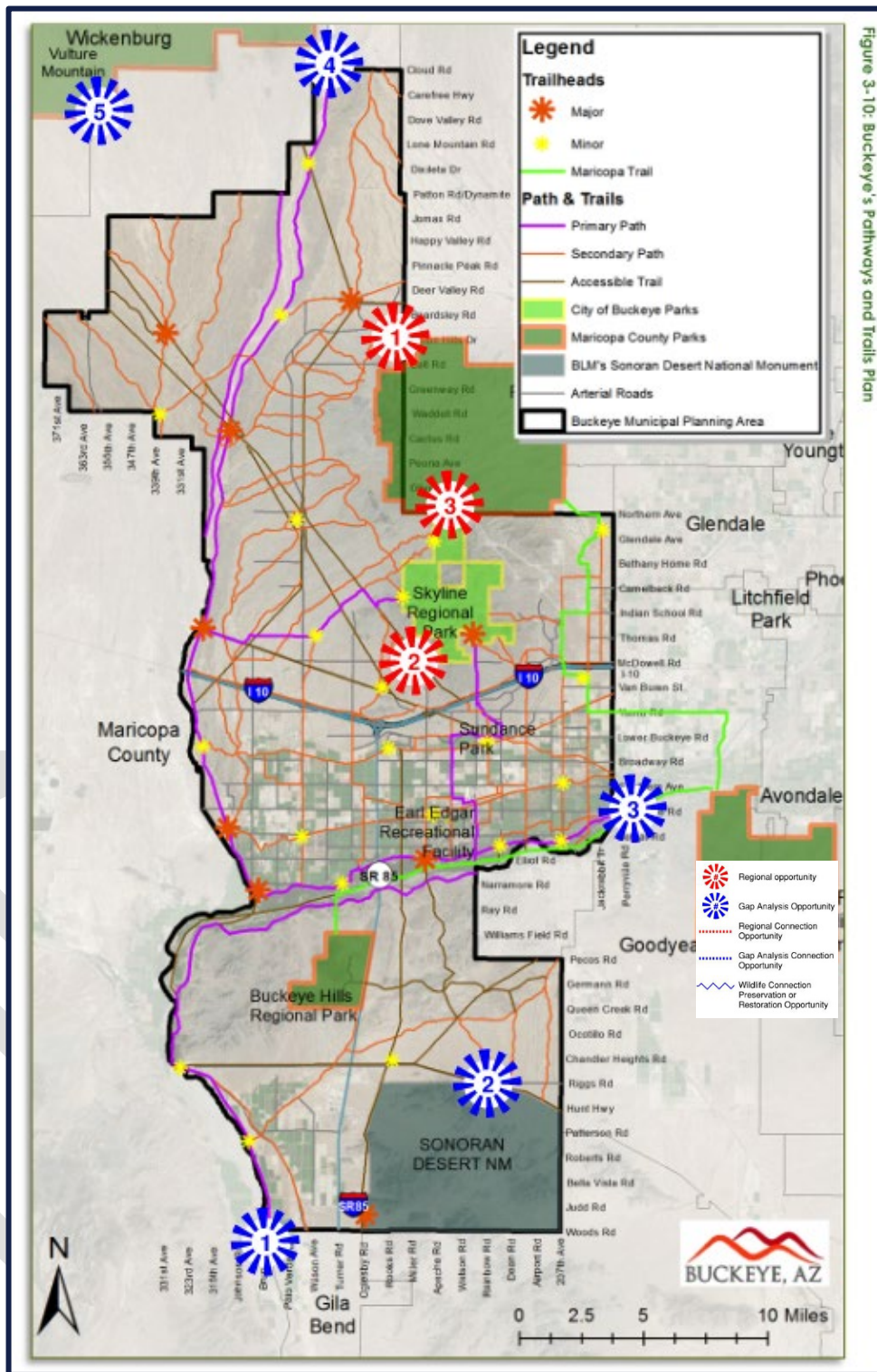


Figure 23 - Buckeye Pathways and Trails Plan

Figure 3-10: Buckeye's Pathways and Trails Plan

- Establish areas for OHV use, potentially in BHRP or on BLM lands using BLM-approved Travel Management Plans.
- Provide support to County, BLM, and/or the USFS for management of OHV use.
- Work collaboratively with the County and other partners on providing northern access at WTMRP to benefit Buckeye residents living in the northern reaches of its planning area.
- Develop a land preservation plan that evaluates lands that have the highest ecological value for open space preservation. Through the plan, investigate the feasibility of acquiring State Trust lands on the western side of the White Tank Mountains.

### **Regional Service Opportunities**

- Work through the BLM processes to deliver a lease through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act for 1,350 acres located to the southwest of Skyline Regional Park near I-10 and Tonopah-Salome Highway. This application was submitted by the city in 2020. In addition, expand the current lease for Skyline Regional Park to an additional 640 acres on the east side of the park, adjacent to the Verrado Master Planned Community. This lease application was submitted by the city in 2016.
- Protect open space and trail connections between WTMRP and Skyline Regional Park.

### **Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Provide trails on the west side of the White Tank Mountains to the Hassayampa River to connect these two vital open-space amenities. Similarly, connect the White Tank Mountains south to the Gila River for the "Rivers to Ridges" concept.
- Provide a direct "primary path" to the Sonoran Desert National Monument from the north that could establish a connection from BHRP.
- Continue Gila River corridor open space to the confluence of the Gila, Salt, and Agua Fria Rivers and provide trail connectivity to connect the communities of Avondale, Goodyear, and Buckeye. This could provide a secondary connection between Estrella Mountain and Buckeye Hills Regional Parks. Extend Hassayampa River trails north to connect Buckeye and Wickenburg and to provide connections between VMRA and WTMRP.



Figure 24 - Gila Bend Connection

## GILA BEND

The Town of Gila Bend (Figure 24) is aptly located at the great bend of the Gila River and contains an abundance of open space acreage. The area and river are adjacent to the Sonoran Desert National Monument, located to the east of the Town. BHRP is located just north of Gila Bend and includes 4,474 acres of undisturbed land. This area lends itself well to regional connectivity, as it provides a network of open space and trails within 30 miles of the Town. The Gila Bend Mountains are located north of the Town and include the Woolsey Peak Wilderness Area. Painted Rock State Park is located on the northwestern edge of the planning area and is administered by Arizona State Parks.

The MCPRD's 2004 Regional Trail System Plan identified six trail segments within the Gila Bend planning area. These segments are conceptual corridors and are anticipated to be developed in conjunction with future adjacent development.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Based on its proximity to open space, Gila Bend has the potential to function as a hub for recreational and associated economic activity as the southern access point to these opportunities.
- The potential to expand incorporates approximately 84,000 acres of BLM land in the area if legislation (HR 1348) is approved by Congress in the future. This area has been documented to contain a high number of cultural and archeological resources and petroglyphs and is an area considered sacred by several Arizona tribal communities.
- Opportunities for shared-use trails and paths in the Town along existing wash corridors.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Provide a multiuse trail along the Gila Bend Canal
  - Protect and develop wildlife crossing areas at major highways and interstates.
  - Protect open space corridors along washes to ensure free movement of wildlife between the Gila River and the BMGR.

**GOODYEAR**

Goodyear (Figures 25 and 26) is located southwest of Phoenix, West of the Agua Fria River. The confluence of the Tres Rios, or Agua Fria, with the Salt and Gila Rivers, occurs between Goodyear and Avondale. The city was named after the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, which purchased 16,000 acres of land in 1917 to grow cotton to produce vehicle tire cords. However, most of the population growth in Goodyear occurred after 1990, when it was the third-fastest growing city in Arizona from 1990 to 2000.

With a history in agriculture, as Goodyear continues to grow, they have diversified and expanded recreational opportunities from traditional facilities such as the Goodyear Ballpark for spring training events and small community parks, to a newly built Goodyear Recreation Center. It is an 86-acre recreational campus providing state-of-the-art recreational amenities including a 30-acre community park and aquatic center.

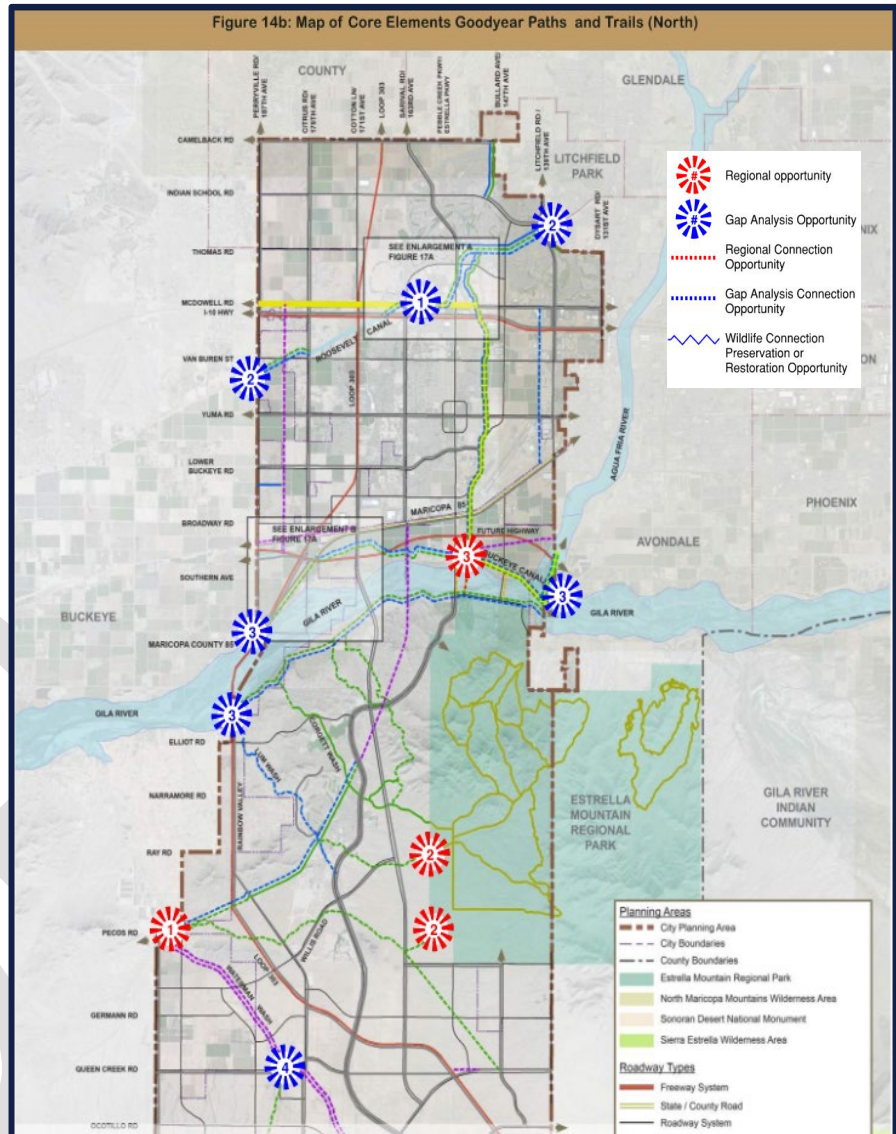


Figure 25 - Goodyear Paths and Trails (North)- Opportunities

**PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

The Goodyear Parks and Recreations Master Plan aligns well with the MCPRD SSMP by focusing on shared priorities, including connecting communities through regional trail linkages, providing equitable access to regional park amenities, celebrating the regional heritage of the area, and providing healthy outdoor nature experiences for residents of the County.

The 2014 Goodyear Parks and Recreation Master Plan recognizes the growth in Goodyear as the city transitions from a small town to a mid-sized city. The 2014 plan includes recommendations for short- and long-term planning, funding, construction, and maintenance of park system infrastructure. Connections to adjacent cities, protected sites, public open space, and regional parks in and around Goodyear provide access to open spaces including EMRP, Estrella Wilderness Area, and Sonoran Desert National Monument.

City goals include partnering with the MCFCD and other stakeholders to implement the El Rio Vision and Plan and providing recreational open space along the Gila River to create a linear regional park.

An update to Goodyear's Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan is currently in-progress.

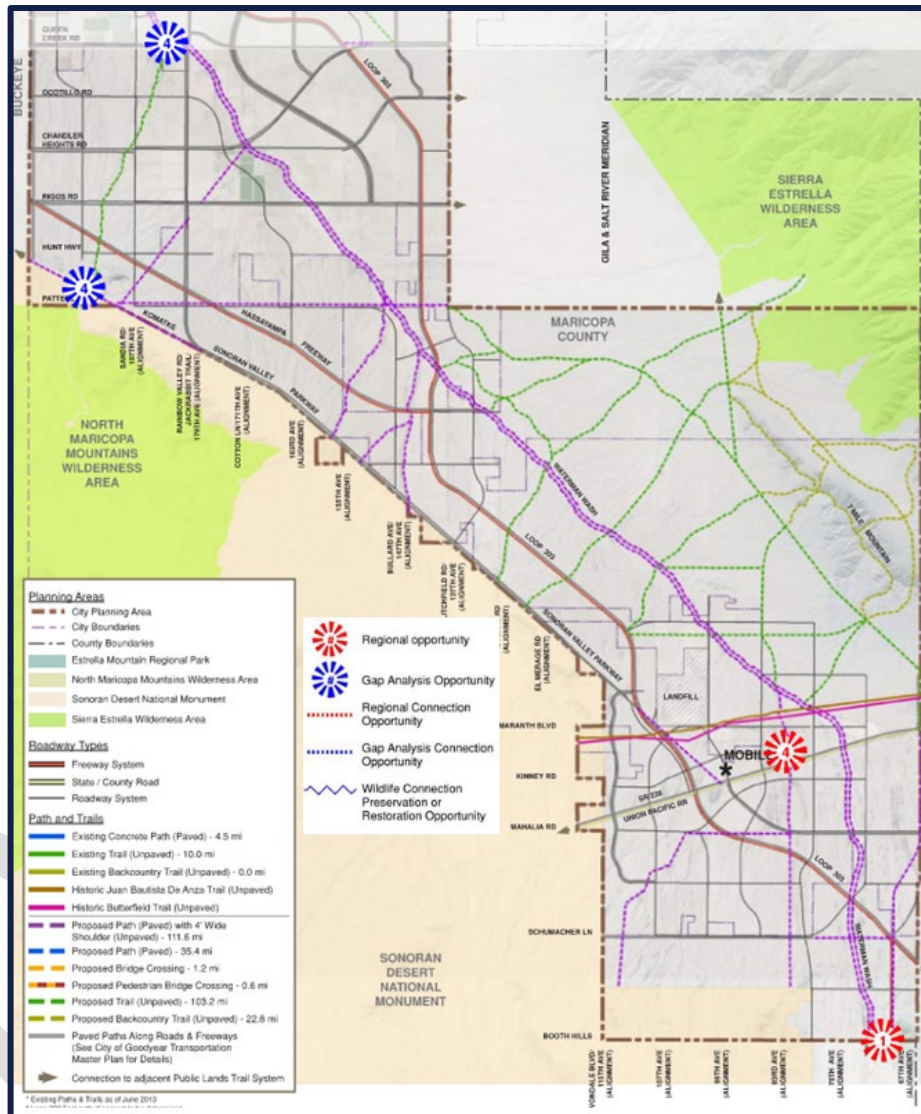


Figure 26 - Goodyear Paths and Trails (South)

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Incorporate capital improvements funding for open space/park development along the Gila and Agua Fria River corridors via the El Rio Project.
- Protect wildlife in partnership with Goodyear, the BLM, AZGFD, and the Sonoran Institute to protect wildlife.
- Incorporate buffer-area around protected areas in Goodyear's land use planning.

### Regional Service Opportunities

- Preserve as a major wildlife corridor lands connecting the Sonoran Desert National Monument, the Gila River, and the EMRP and Wilderness Area.
- Develop and maintain additional access points and connections to EMRP.
- Connect to the Maricopa Trail from Bullard Wash.

- Incorporate trail connections between Goodyear and Mobile into Sonoran Valley Parkway planning and design.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Provide a safe pedestrian path across Interstate 10.
- Develop multiuse paths along canals and connect to Buckeye, Avondale, and Litchfield Park.
- Connect the Gila River corridor through Goodyear.
- Developing a proposed trail connecting Waterman Wash to the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

**AVONDALE**

Avondale (Figure 27) is located southwest of Phoenix, at the convergence of the Agua Fria and Gila Rivers. The city covers 30,425 acres, with a total 2019 population of 84,736. The city is a prime connection for the rest of the Metro Phoenix area to regional natural resource parks, EMRP and Tres Rios and engages with the Maricopa Trail along the Aqua Fria, Salt and Gila Rivers.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**General Opportunities**

- Enhance transportation corridors by providing sidewalks and soft paths along roadways, (see City of Phoenix trails along Lower Buckeye Road.
- Enhance the Agua Fria River Corridor by connecting to trails and paths leading to community parks.
- Connect trails and open space to existing and planned trail systems in new developments.
- Create connections between HOA trails and larger trail systems by filling in gaps.
- Coordinate trail connections with the Development and Engineering Services Department as well as surrounding jurisdictions.
- Other possible trail locations include:

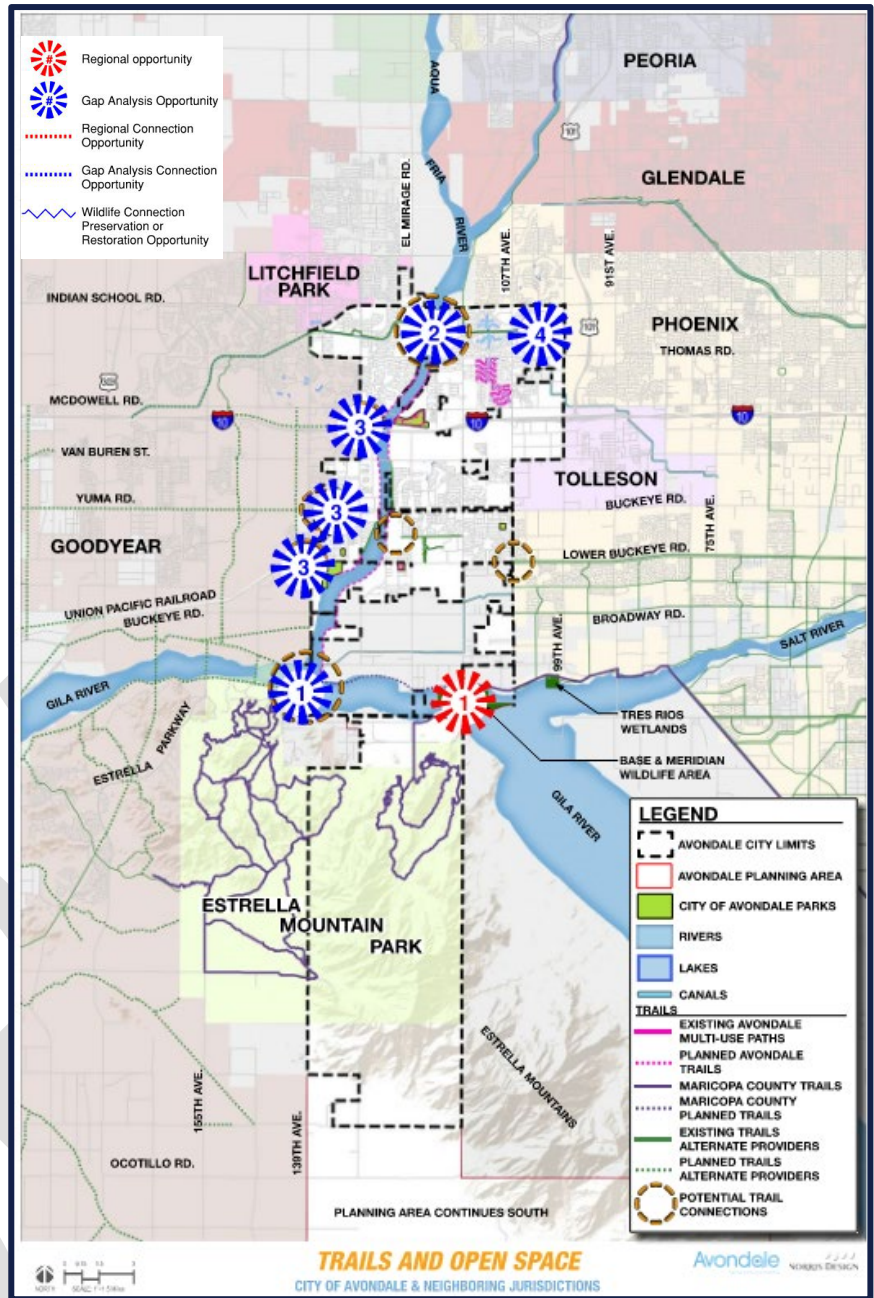


Figure 27 - Avondale Trails and Open Space - Opportunities

- Buckeye Canal: Alignment in Maricopa County. The Western end has a flat dirt access road that connects to the Agua Fria.
- Lower Buckeye Road: City of Phoenix multiuse path with sidewalk and soft path along Lower Buckeye Road east of Avondale. The roadway runs West and crosses the Agua Fria. Las Ligas Park and Festival Fields are located on Lower Buckeye Road.

**Regional Service Opportunities**

- Connect river trails to regional natural resource parks, including Estrella Mountain Park, Tres Rios Wetlands and Base and Meridian Wildlife Area.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Connect to Goodyear and Phoenix existing and proposed Salt and Gila River corridor trails and paths.
- Tie into proposed trails identified in Goodyear.
- Extend canal path southeast into Tolleson.

**LITCHFIELD PARK**

Litchfield Park (Figure 28) is a three-square mile city situated between Phoenix and Goodyear, approximately two miles north of Interstate 10. Being land-locked, most opportunities related to the SSMP related to pedestrian connectivity.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Connect to Goodyear and Avondale via canal trails.
- Continue existing open space and trails north to connect with Glendale's planned trails.

**TOLLESON**

Located approximately six miles northeast of Estrella Mountain Regional Park, Tolleson (Figure 29) is a small city with an area of 5.7 square miles and an approximate population of 6,500 as of the 2010

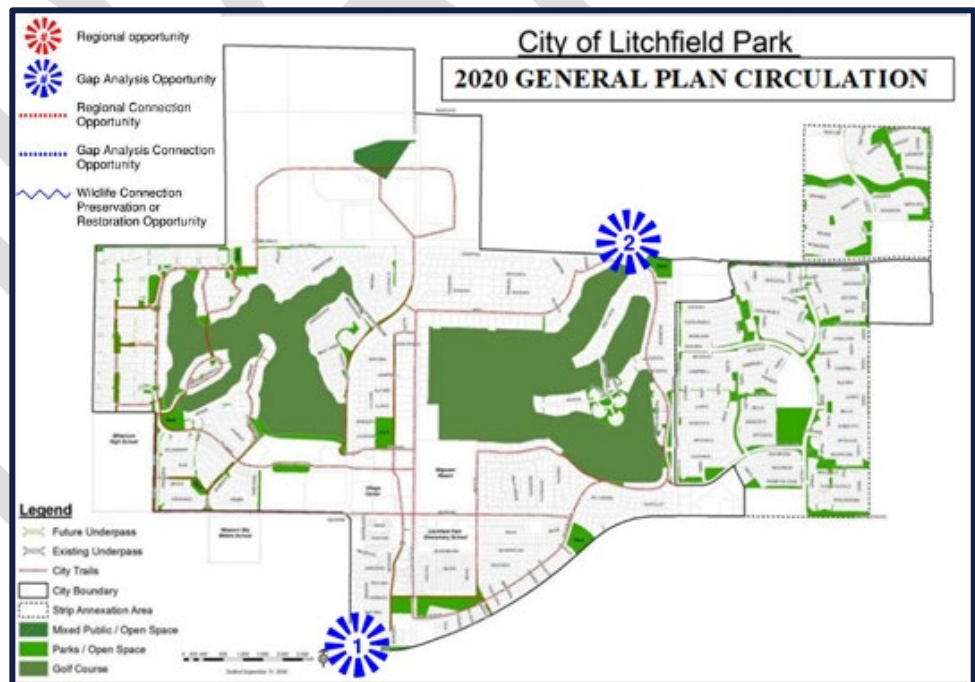


Figure 28 - Litchfield Park Circulation



Census. It is in the southwest quadrant of the metropolitan area, situated between the cities of Phoenix and Avondale. The Roosevelt Irrigation District Canal is in the eastern part of the city, between 91<sup>st</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> Avenues.

**General Plan 2024 Goals**

- Enhance parks and recreational resources through development and coordination with other entities.
- Continue to coordinate with schools to provide parks and recreational resources.
- Continue to coordinate with the private sector to provide parks and recreational resources (e.g., The Boys & Girls Club).
- Coordinate with Maricopa County, Avondale, Phoenix, and other interested entities to expand Tolleson's parks and recreational resources.
- Develop a network of trails, which connects local parks, and connects to neighboring city trail systems.
- Develop a trail system along the canals.
- Develop an off-street trail system connecting parks and other recreational areas.
- Collaborate with Avondale and Phoenix to connect on and off-street non-motorized facilities.
- Connect canals to path and trail networks.

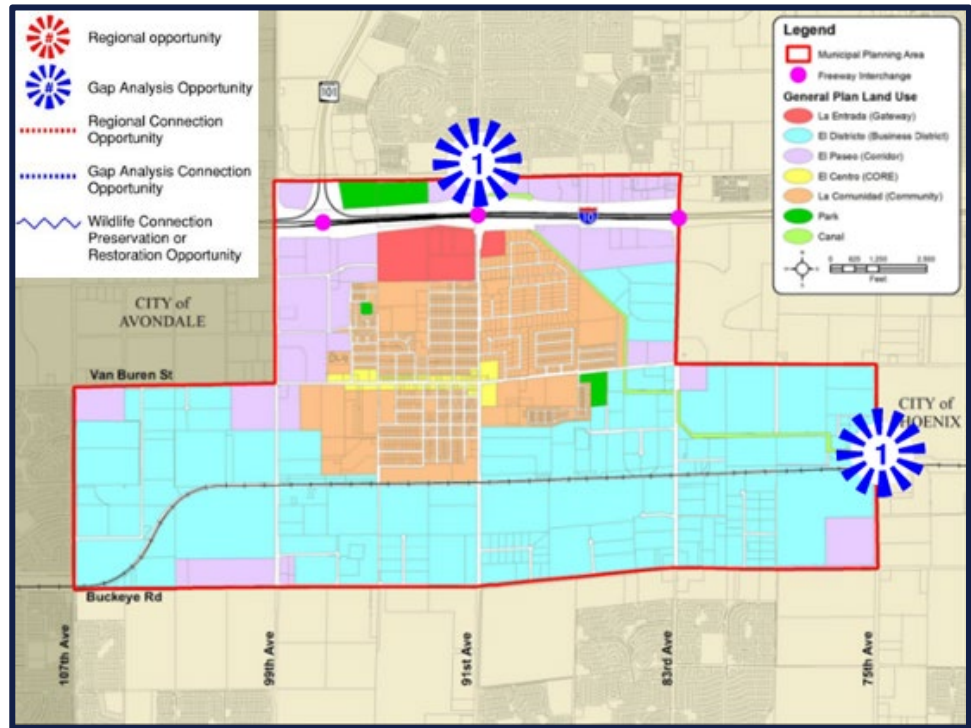


Figure 29 - Tolleson Land Use Plan

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**General Opportunities**

- Partner with Avondale and Phoenix to achieve trails network goals.

**Gap Analysis Opportunities**

- Connect Tolleson to the future leg of the Sun Circle via the Roosevelt Irrigation.
- District Canal.

# FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT OF MARICOPA COUNTY

The Flood Control District of Maricopa County (District) was created in 1959 to reduce the risk of flooding to people and property. The District's projects have significant impact on the ecosystem and open space within the County, as any intervention of watercourses does.

## District Mission

Our mission is to reduce risk from flooding so that property damage and loss of life is minimized, economic development is supported in a safe and responsible manner, and storm water is recognized as a resource for the long-term benefit of the community and environment.

## District Vision

We are a community partner working with citizens and stakeholders to reduce risk from flooding. We accomplish this through exceptional customer service, technical expertise, fiscally responsible actions, and multiuse projects.

## Floodplain Management Plan (2020)

This district-wide Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) is an update to the 2015 Floodplain Management Plan for Unincorporated Maricopa County and was developed to identify flood hazards and provide recommendations for mitigate flooding vulnerability within the County. The FMP assists the District in prioritize funding for future studies and projects.

## Area Drainage Master Plans/Studies (ADMP/S)

ADMS are produced with the purpose of investigating, identifying, and assessing flooding problems within the prescribed study area. Once an ADMS is complete, an ADMP is produced to include mitigation alternatives for the flood hazards identified in the corresponding area study. Recent and in-progress ADMP/S are listed by region below.

### Northwest Region

- Wittmann ADMP (In Progress)

### Northeast Region

- Metro Phoenix ADMP Update
- Middle Indian Bend Wash ADMS
- Desert Mountain ADMS (In Progress)
- East Shea Corridor ADMS/P (In Progress)
- Cudia City Wash Design Concept Report (in Progress)

### Southeast Region

- East Maricopa County ADMS
- Ahwatukee Foothills ADMS
- San Tan West ADMS (ADMP in Progress)
- North Mesa ADMS (In Progress)

### Southwest Region

- Sun Valley ADMP
- Buckeye/Sun Valley ADMS
- Gila Bend ADMP Update

## EL RIO CONFLUENCE LAKE CONCEPT (LAKE)

The Lake project was initiated in response to the El Rio Watercourse Master Plan (WCMP) recommendation to develop the Lake as a demonstration project of components for the overall WCMP and El Rio Design Guidelines and Planning Standards. The demonstrated components will include flood control elements, riparian habitat and river function enhancements, and active and passive recreational facilities developed through local and federal partnerships.

- Among the many project objectives of the Lake, the following are pertinent to this SSMP:
- Creation of a regional county park amenity for boating, recreation, bird watching and tourism
- Preservation and restoration of some of the Gila River's natural functions and native riparian habitat
- Heightened regional awareness of the Gila River and the importance of water conservation and river management
- Exploration of potential supporting economic development activities

## STATE AGENCIES

### ARIZONA STATE PARKS

#### Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2018-2023)

The 2018 – 2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is intended to guide outdoor recreation managers and decision-makers on policy and funding issues. While local, state and federal agencies have their own detailed management plans used to guide development, operation, land and resource management, the SCORP promotes a holistic, statewide view. It provides decision-makers and outdoor recreation managers with a thoughtful analysis of the most significant outdoor recreation issues facing Arizona today and suggests strategies to address these issues during the next five years.

The plan is produced every five years with the following objectives:

- Establish outdoor recreation priorities for Arizona.
- Set evaluation criteria to allocate the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants.
- Protect, conserve, and manage Arizona's public lands, recreation spaces, and unique places for current and future generations.
- Encourage a highly integrated and connected outdoor recreation system throughout Arizona.
- Ensure Arizona's diverse and growing population has access to outdoor recreation spaces and opportunities to enjoy a range of recreation activities.
- Communicate linkages between outdoor recreation, individual wellness benefits, community health, and a thriving economy.
- Elevate public participation and engagement in outdoor recreation planning initiatives and issues.

When the updated SCORP is approved, County Parks will utilize the updated plan when considering land uses and future projects.

## Arizona's Priority Outdoor Issues

The priority issues were identified through the SCORP planning process, an online survey of recreation providers, a focus group of millennial participants, and public input obtained via social media, a web survey, and feedback at public meetings throughout the process. The 2018 SCORP Working Group, State Parks staff, and Arizona State University researchers analyzed the data and information to identify the following priority issues: the means to strengthen the four pillars of outdoor recreation in Arizona.

### 2018 SCORP Priority Issues:

- Preservation and Conservation
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Engagement
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Marketing, Communication, and Education Opportunities
- Funding

The SCORP process revealed four additional important themes from the data for consideration. These themes inform many of the priority issues, so it was deemed appropriate to discuss them separately.

- Technology: Technology in providing outdoor recreation,
- Inclusion: Including today's youth in outdoor recreation
- Connectivity: Both in the physical, social, and ecological systems, connecting parks, trails, and communities are embedded within all outdoor recreation issues.
- Funding: ASPT needs to identify the next major statewide funding source.

## ARIZONA STATE LAND DEPARTMENT

The Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) manages approximately 9 million acres of State Trust lands. This Trust was established at the time that Arizona was declared a territory by an Act of Congress in 1863. As described on the ASLD website, Congress authorized the conveyance of federal land grants to territories in the West at statehood to provide foundational support for basic public services, such as education and penitentiaries. Congress mandated that those lands be held in perpetual trust, and that standards for management and disposition of those lands would be codified within the states' constitution."<sup>1</sup>

Because all uses of Trust Land and its resources must compensate Trust Beneficiaries, the land should be put to its "highest and best" use, and is intended to be used to fund Common Schools and 12 other trustees providing foundational public services within the state.

State trust land is subject to acquisition and private development; as I-11 and "urban sprawl" continue into the County's western portion, the need for preserving critical wildlife corridors is increasingly urgent.

<sup>1</sup>Arizona State Land Department, Our Agency & Mission. Retrieved from: <https://land.az.gov/our-agency-mission>

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Hillside slope ordinances create a condition in which Open Space is the highest and best use for some State Trust Land.
- Undeveloped State Trust Land represents some of the best opportunities for creating critical wildlife linkages.
- Some of the pristine areas that buffer the regional parks is State Trust Land. There is an opportunity for the County to identify scenic corridors through some of these parcels to ensure the maintained quality of park user experience and ecosystems.
- Daisy Mountain is an example of State Trust Land that affords an opportunity for partnership between ASLD and the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department. Based on the topography of the mountain, hillside slope ordinances make the associated parcels less feasible for development. While the land is still publicly owned, a temporary use and management agreement could be established to formalize hiking and other recreational uses of the area.

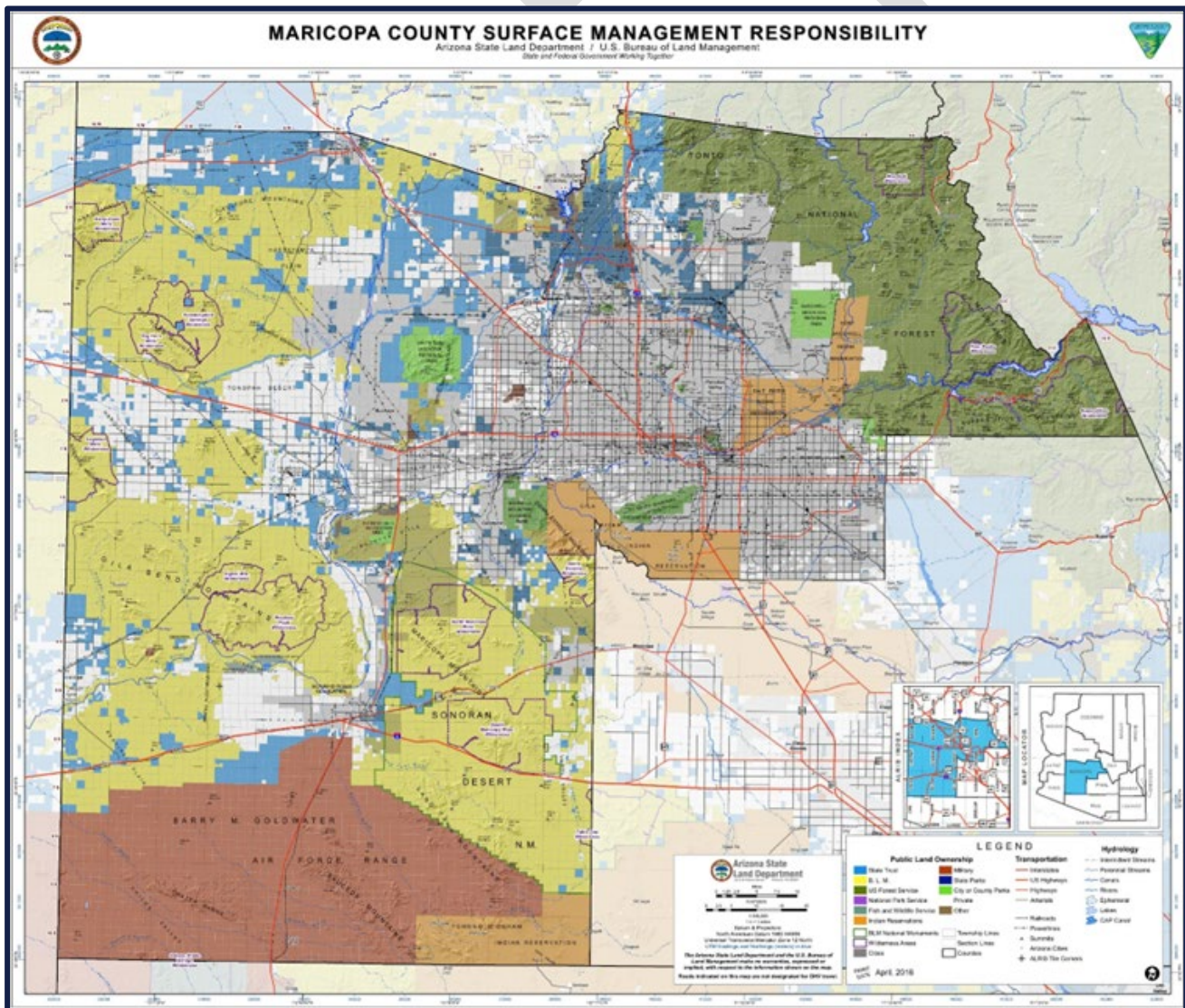


Figure 30 - Maricopa County Surface Management Responsibility Map

# FEDERAL LANDS

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)

The BLM governs an eighth of the United States' land mass, including 12.1 million acres in the state of Arizona. BLM manages outdoor recreation, livestock grazing on 9,224 square miles within Maricopa County. Representing 29% of the County's area, the vast majority of BLM Land in the SSMP area is located in the western half of the County.

BLM Land that is included in the SSMP planning area is broken into 4 distinct planning areas, including Agua Fria National Monument, Bradshaw-Harquahala, Lower Sonoran, and Sonoran Desert National Monument.

A Travel Management Plan is in development for the Hummingbird Springs and Big Horn Mountains area within the Bradshaw-Harquahala planning area.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Develop a cooperative management approach for strategically identified recreation areas in partnership with the BLM.
- Vulture Mountain campground facilities are a model of partnership opportunity to implement buffer zones and provide amenities on smaller parcels leased by the County (RPP Act Lease).
- Identifies a buffer zone, approximately 2 miles wide, around BLM lands designated as wilderness areas.
- Implement additional regional trail connections.
- Develop an OHV-Use areas cooperative management strategy in partnership with the BLM, City of Buckeye, and USFS.
- Develop a target-shooting cooperative management strategy in partnership with the BLM, the City of Buckeye, and USFS.
- Protect lease lands for both recreational and conservation uses prior to the further development of Interstate 11 (I-11) corridor, which will bring additional growth and development to the west valley, including within current BLM land.

### Regional Service Opportunities

- Protect habitat for wildlife movement between large wilderness areas and within the Lake Pleasant RCA. Provide multiuse path/trail connections through these corridors.
- Provide system-wide connections between Regional Parks for both humans and wildlife.
- Develop a Regional Trailhead and Park at the Vulture Mountains.
- Develop Regional Trailheads and a Park at the Big Horn Mountains Wilderness and Hummingbird Springs Wilderness.
- Extend the park system east to Eagletail Mountains.
- Expand LPRP and corresponding services into surrounding BLM Land.
- Develop Regional Trailheads and the park at Signal Mountain/Woolsey Peak.
- Create additional access points within the Sonoran Desert National Monument.
- Expand BHRP area.

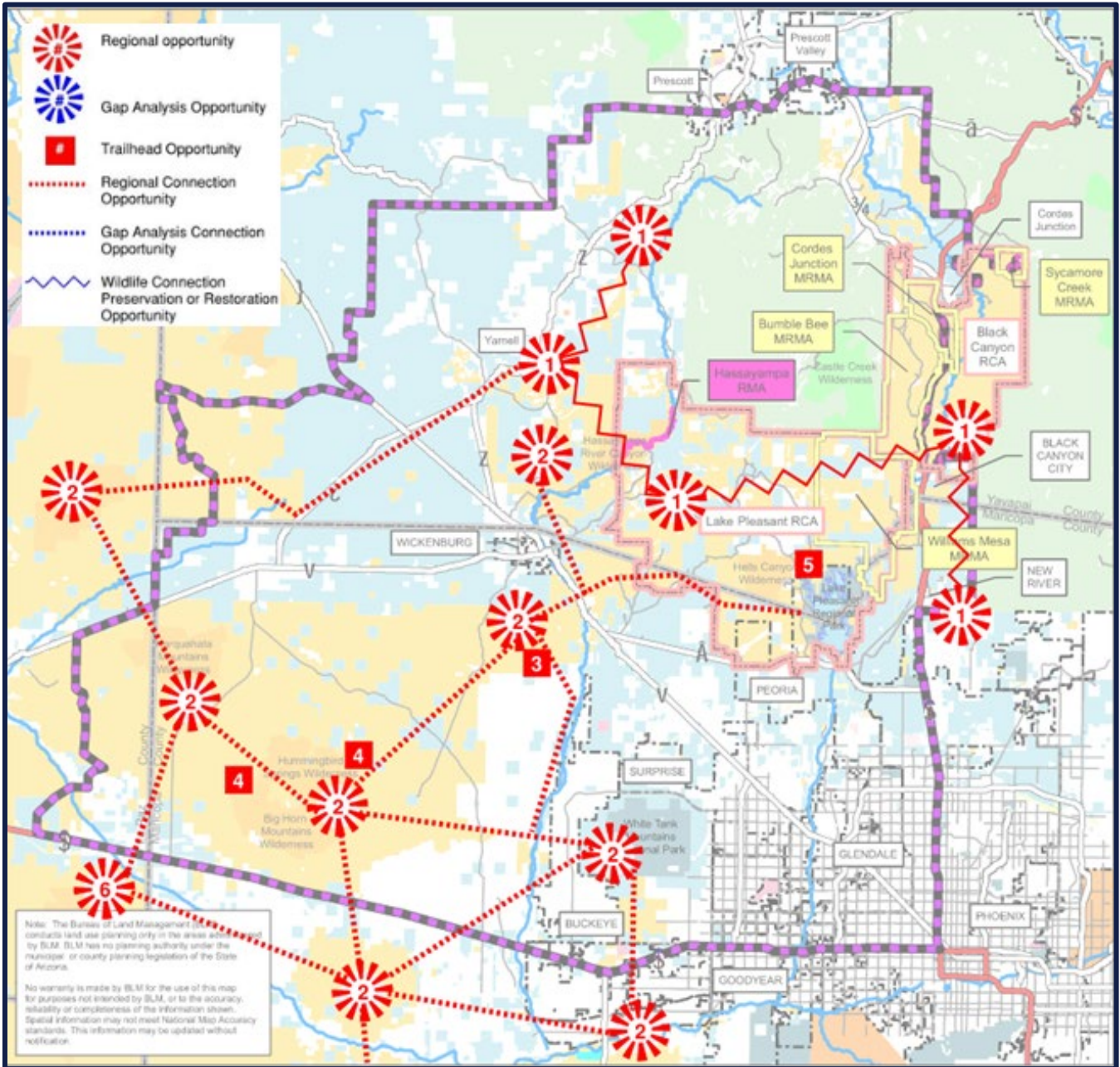


Figure 31 - Bureau of Land Management



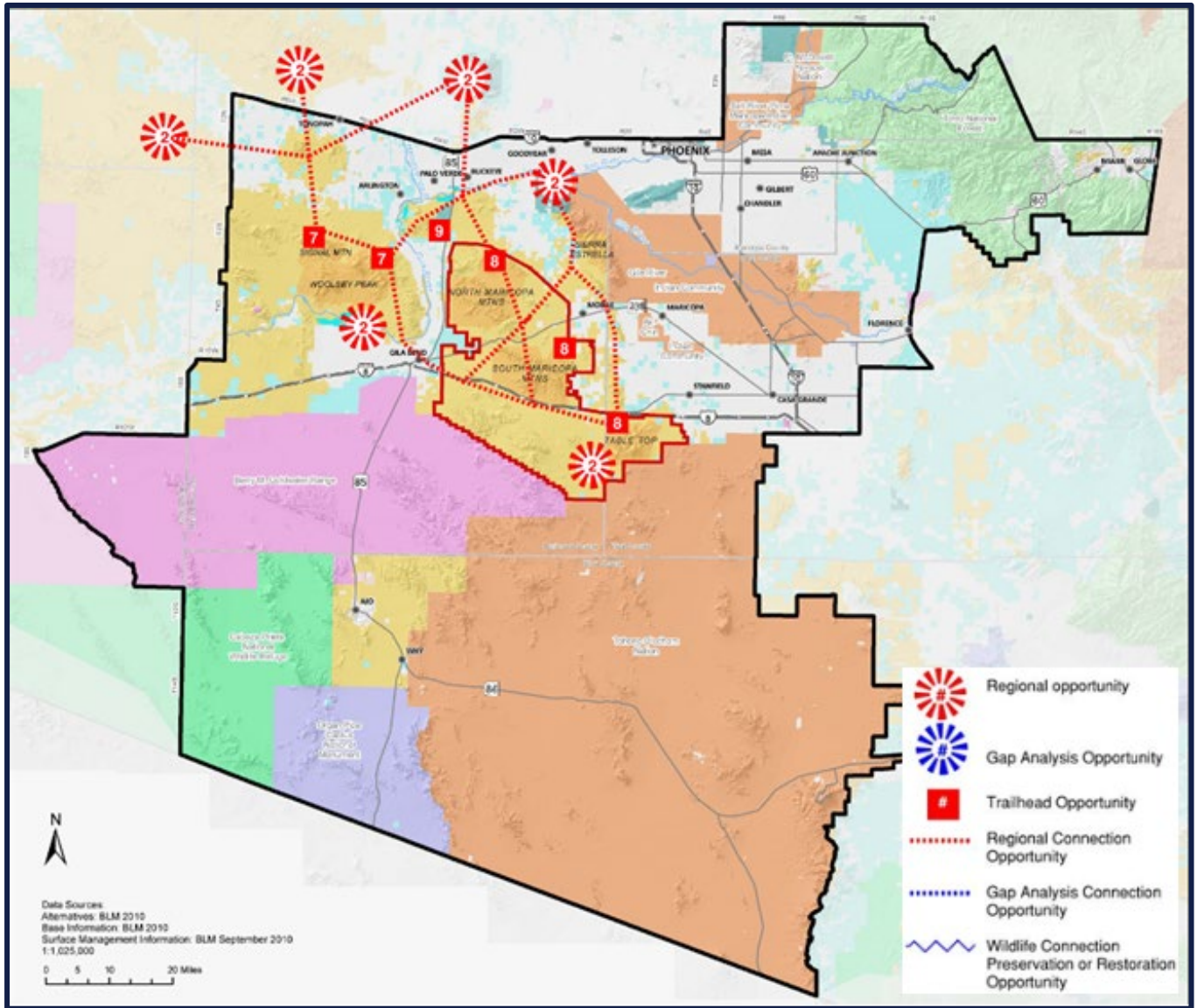


Figure 32 - Bureau of Land Management

## TONTO NATIONAL FOREST (TNF) TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN (2021)

Travel Management Plans first became required in 2005, when the United States Forest Service (USFS) published the Final Travel Management Rule, which provided travel management regulations governing off-highway vehicles and other motor vehicles on national forests and grasslands. The final rule was a response to increases in use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) and the corresponding deterioration of forest resources caused by 20 years of unmanaged OHV use.

The Tonto National Forest approved the Travel Management Plan Record of Decision in October 2021. This plan provides a system of roads, trails and areas designated for motor vehicle use within the Forest. With this Travel Management Plan, four new OHV permit zones will be established within the Forest. This is a response to increasingly high OHV use throughout the Forest, especially in the new



permit zone areas, all located within Maricopa County. All other previously authorized uses are still permitted in the new OHV permit zones.

## LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN (2022)

The 2022 Forest Management Plan is TNF’s first updated plan since 1985. This plan is the principal document that guides management on the Tonto National Forest to achieve the agency mission is the Land and Resource Management Plan (also referred to as the “forest plan”).

## ARIZONA NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL (ARIZONA TRAIL)

The 800-mile Arizona Trail is runs through the entire length of the state, connecting Mexico to Utah. Eighty-five percent of the trail is located on federal land and the entire segment of the trail that passes through Maricopa County is within the TNF.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### General Opportunities

- Recreation Interface Transition Zone (RITZ)
  - RITZ Definition: A high-use recreation area where developed and undeveloped areas meet.
  - Implement a buffer, approximately five miles wide, from the urban interface into the Forest
  - Work with cities/towns to establish development buffers to protect natural open space. Plan adjustment for population growth.
- Implement best management practices and partnerships with the County for trail maintenance and management of high use areas. An example of a similar relationship between the County and the Forest can be seen at the Utery Mountain Regional Park Wind Cave Trail.
- Explore development of additional multiuse trails and access points.
- Assist TNF with development and management of trailheads and wayfinding.
- Explore options for increased wildlife connectivity and habitat/ecosystem health.
- Partner with TNF, BLM, and the ASLD to manage unauthorized OHV use.
- Continue sharing updates from Maricopa County Planning and Development for a 3-mile buffer to Tonto National Forest.

### Regional Service Opportunities

- Assist TNF in development and management of regional recreation services at Seven Springs
- Develop Regional multiuse connection at Skunk Creek Wash to connect TNF to Daisy Mountain. Protect riparian habitat.
- Develop Regional multiuse connection at Little Squaw Creek Mesa to connect TNF to Table Mesa.
- Establish a conservation area along the Salt River Corridor west of Horseshoe Bend.

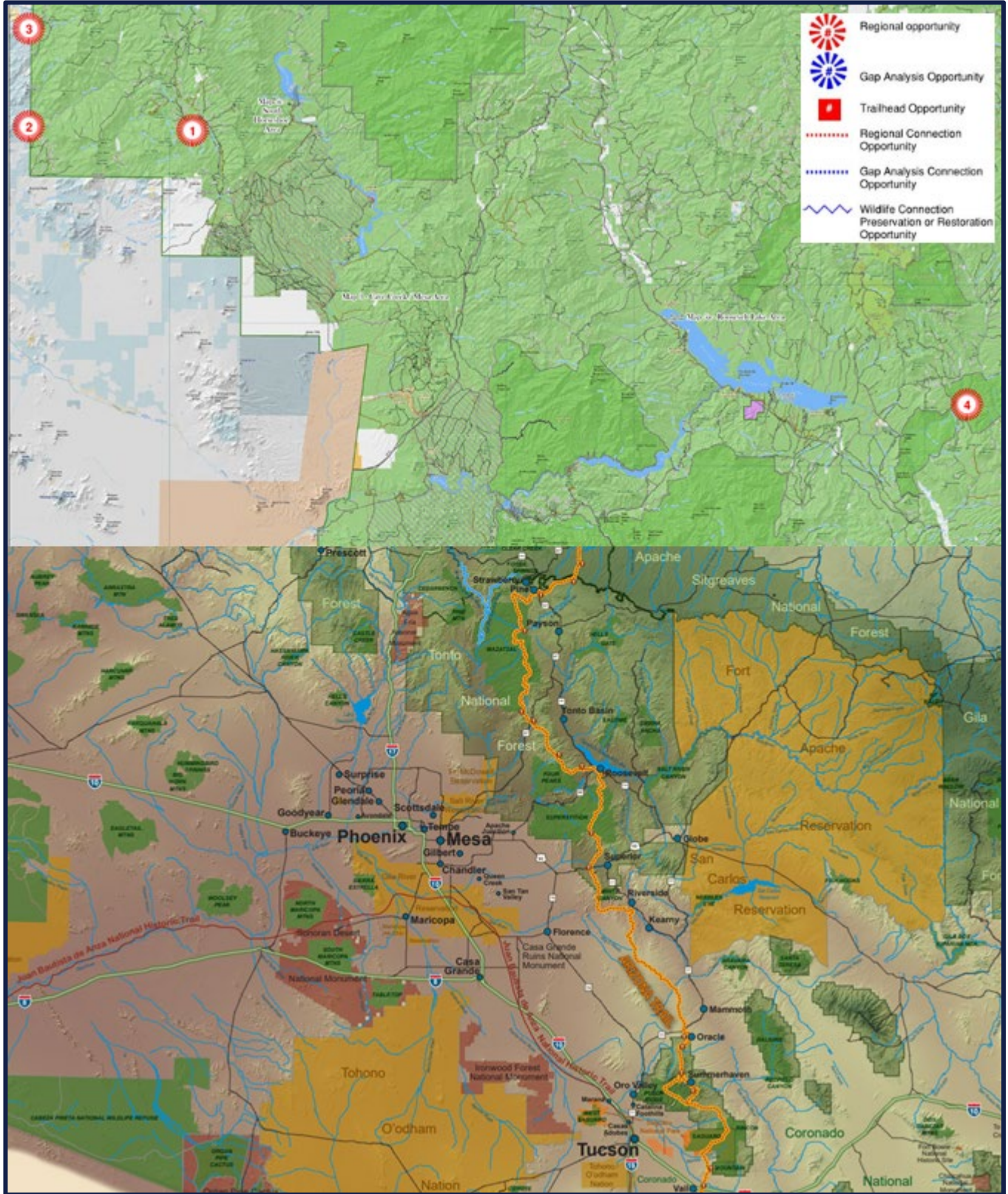


Figure 33 - Tonto National Forest - Travel Management Plan (upper) and Arizona National Scenic Trail (lower)

## TRIBAL LANDS

Tribal nations are sovereign nations. There are 22 federally recognized tribes in Arizona, with three in Maricopa County that consist of approximately 5% of the land area of the County (2016 Vision 2030 plan pg. 20).

Tribal nations within Maricopa County include:

- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
- Gila River Indian Community
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
- Tohono O’Odham
- Ak-Chin Indian Community

As sovereign nations, tribal communities are not subject to the regulations and policies of the County. Below is a brief overview of the tribal communities in Maricopa County based on desktop research as well as through stakeholder meetings and discussions. The identified opportunities are provided as suggestions and are not intended to direct or prescribe tribal action.

With tribal lands concentrated between the municipal development of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area and Open Space, the protection of wildlife corridors coordination is an opportunity for collaboration. If recreation collaboration opportunities arise in the future, the MCPRD will be a willing partner to coordinate and enhance regional recreation and connectivity opportunities.

Below, brief descriptions of each tribe have been sourced from each nations’ public website or provided by a community representative. For more information about Tribal lands in Maricopa County and elsewhere in Arizona, visit [www.aztribaltransportation.org](http://www.aztribaltransportation.org).

### AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY

Ak-Chin Indian Community is located southwest of the City of Maricopa, which is located directly south of South Mountain after being buffered by the Gila River Indian Community.

“The Ak-Chin Indian Community was established by the U.S. Government in 1912 when President Taft signed for a reservation of 47,600 acres, which was reduced to less than 22,000 the following year. Our tribe’s government was formed in 1961 under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. In a 1984 federal settlement, we gained water rights to the Colorado River, enabling us to continue using irrigation to support our agriculture and other needs.”<sup>2</sup>

### FORT MCDOWELL YAVAPAI NATION

The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is in the northeast portion of the County, east of McDowell Mountain Regional Park.

“The Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation is a 950-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

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ak-chin.nsn.us/about/>

once nomadic Yavapai people, who hunted and gathered food in a vast area of Arizona’s desert lowlands and mountainous Mogollon Rim country.”<sup>3</sup>

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Location on the order of Tonto National Forest and “RITZ” presents an opportunity for coordination and collaboration.

## GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY

The Gila River Indian Community is located south of the Phoenix metropolitan area, approximately 34 miles south of Sky Harbor International Airport. The reservation boundaries span from east of Estrella Mountain Regional Park to east of San Tan Mountain Regional Park.

“Today the people who now reside within the reservation of the Gila River Indian Community the Pima and Maricopa are in the planning stages of an irrigation project of monumental proportions. The plans are to establish an irrigation system to deliver water to 146,300 acres. From District 1 in the Blackwater area to the farms of the Pee-Posh in District Seven. It will again take the effort of all the people to make major decisions, just like in the old days. There will be impacts to the community members in many ways and they will all have to be addressed. It will take years to complete but in the end the community members will once again hear the sweet music of rushing water.”<sup>4</sup>

The Hohokam Pima National Monument is an ancient Hohokam village within the Gila River Indian Community that is open to the public.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore recreation and open space coordination opportunities with Community Land bordering Estrella Regional Park.
- Continue restoration efforts to remove invasive and noxious species from the Salt River Corridor, including tamarisk, that chokes out important native species in riparian areas.

## SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY

The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community is more centrally located in the Phoenix metropolitan area, directly east of Scottsdale at Pima Road. It spans from the Salt River to south of Shea Blvd. east of Paradise Valley and south of Fountain Hills.

*From Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community –*

The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC or Community) is dedicated to the protection of wildlife and their habitat and securing and enhancing open spaces within SRPMIC boundaries. The Community works continuously to restore its riparian and natural preserve areas through grants and self-funded projects. Throughout the years, the SRPMIC has completed various medium to large-scale efforts that protect streams, create wetlands, build habitat for wildlife use, and enhance spaces for Tribal cultural and recreational use. Some of

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fmyr.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gilariver.org/index.php/about/history>

these efforts include the removal of thousands of square feet of invasive plant species (mainly salt cedar), the revegetation of areas with native plants, the removal of illegal dump sites, and riverbank stabilization and erosion control. The Community has also been diligent in providing quality environmental outreach and education to Tribal members to enhance stewardship and further promote the strong ties of its people to the wildlife and natural resources around them. *SRPMIC is a sovereign nation, and Tribal land other than promoted entertainment and government services spaces are not open to the public.*

## TOHONO O’ODHAM NATION

The Tohono O’odham Nation is in Maricopa and Pima counties. A relatively small portion of the reservation is in the southernmost part of Maricopa County.

“The Tohono O’odham Nation is a federally-recognized tribe that includes approximately 28,000 members occupying tribal lands in Southwestern Arizona. The Nation is the second largest reservations in Arizona in both population and geographical size, with a land base of 2.8 million acres and 4,460 square miles, approximately the size of the State of Connecticut. Its four non-contiguous segments total more than 2.8 million acres at an elevation of 2,674 feet.”<sup>5</sup>

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore coordination efforts to provide recreation and preservation along the southeast edge of Sonoran Desert National Monument, the Tohono O’Odham, the BLM, National Forest Service, and County.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tonation-nsn.gov/about-tohono-oodham-nation/>

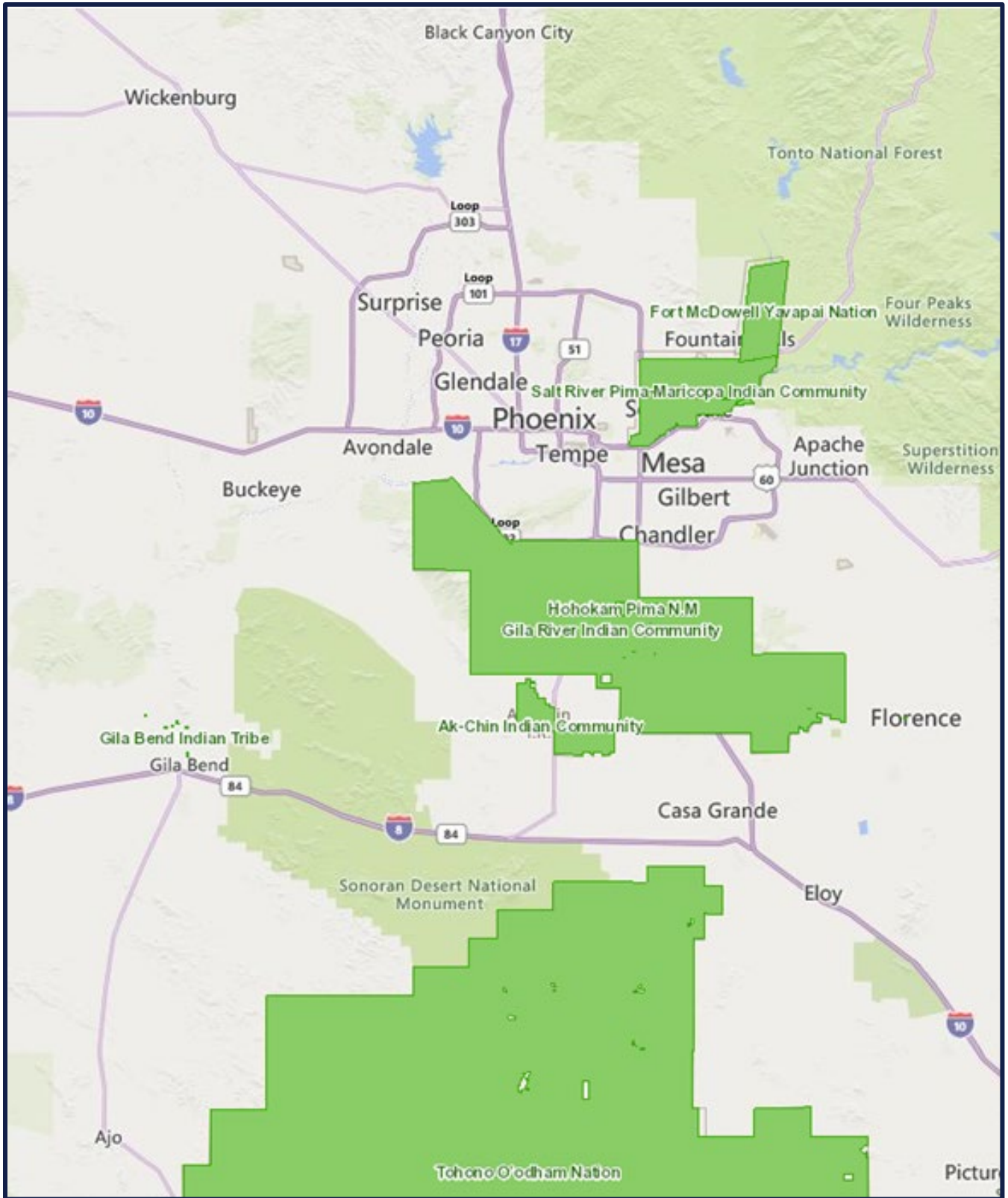


Figure 34 - Tribal Land

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## APPENDIX D - PV 2030 PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY SUMMARY

How can Maricopa County Parks and Recreation contribute to improving community, health, well-being and enhancing the quality of life in Maricopa County?

### ACCESSIBILITY (139)

- Comments relating to accessibility ranged from:
  - Increasing accessibility for various disabilities,
  - Providing access for a more diverse population,
  - Making natural outdoor spaces accessible, attainable, and affordable,
  - Increasing access to those who do not normally get out into nature,
  - Developing partnerships with schools with high percentages of free/reduced meals with transportation and educational walks in the parks as field trips.

### MAINTENANCE (95)

Most comments regarding maintenance focused on maintaining existing trails and providing clean and safe parks.

### MARKETING (63)

- Several comments regarding marketing. Suggestions included:
  - Advertising nature hikes and the health and wellness benefits,
  - Information on amenities and activities offered in the parks,
  - Opportunities to provide access for those who may otherwise not come to the parks,
  - Information where people with disabilities can experience the parks, and
  - Creating a more prominent presence on social media.

### CONSERVATION (60)

- Comments on conservation included:
  - Preserving natural areas and open spaces.
  - Protecting open space ahead of development and protecting riparian and wash habitats.
  - Additionally, protecting river corridors and greenway connections between parks and providing a peaceful and serene environment away from city sights, noise, and smells benefit physical and mental health.
  - Create buffers between the parks and developments, including TNF and BLM recreation lands.
  - The ecosystem's health and protecting critical wildlife linkages through open space acquisition.

### ACTIVITIES (54)

- Comments also focused on the following:
  - Activities that MCPRD could promote programs such as bird walks, education biking tours, etc., that get folks outdoors to learn about cultural and natural resources.
  - Provide more exercise programs, such as Tai Chi or places for yoga and meditation, and shade where possible.
  - Offering opportunities for people to rent gear and help remove barriers to entry for recreational opportunities such as kayaking, biking, or camping.
  - Increase workout equipment on trails/paths and increase citizen science program offerings.



## PARK EXPANSION (40)

- Comments on park expansion included:
  - Requests and suggestions on funding the development of parks, trails, and open spaces.
  - Expanding the park system and protecting critical wildlife and river corridors is imperative.

## TRAILS (26)

- Comments about trails included:
  - Adding more miles of trails with varying difficulties.
  - Maintaining the trails, adding wayfinding signage, provide more safe, walkable tracks, paths, and trails throughout the parks.
  - Adding trails for e-bikes and scooters, and
  - Providing more parking at popular trailheads.



*Dixie Mine Trail at McDowell Mountain Regional Park.*

## BIKING (21)

- Biking included concerns about:
  - User conflicts due to various speeds of activity on the trails, including requests for new separate trails for equestrians and mountain bikers.
- The need for more competitive tracks and more urban trail systems that link with the parks and keep pedestrians and bikers safe and off city streets.
  - Grade-separated street crossings could help curb biking accidents.
  - A few comments referenced E-bikes having access to all trails.

## EVENTS (20)

- Numerous ideas for events were submitted, including:
  - Hosting orientation events about the parks to learn what is available,
  - Organized group walks or hikes,
  - Quarterly "get to know us" programs,
  - Increasing recreational events for all ages, and
  - Providing natural spaces where a family can gather.

## EDUCATION (18)

- Education comments included ideas for educating those new to the region on "how to enjoy the resource without creating more damage."
- Others mentioned guided hikes and expanded educational outreach programs to schools to teach youth about nature.

## SAFETY (13)

- For safety, comments included:
  - Following rules and regulations,
  - Keeping open space secured from lawlessness,

- Ensuring parks are safe for everyone by having a presence or regular patrol of interpretive rangers.

## **PARTNERING (10)**

- Suggestions about partnering ranged from:
  - Advertising the parks by partnering with county public health and animal care departments to promote their health and wellness programs and adopt pets.
  - Improving the urban environment by partnering with the Flood Control District to focus on mini-parks and green infrastructure could benefit the communities and ecosystem.

## **ARE THERE ANY SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT NEED TO BE BETTER SERVED BY THE COUNTY'S PARKS DEPARTMENT? IF SO, WHO AND WHY?**

- Many comments related to accessibility, specifically accommodation in improving wheelchair access with a widened walkway and ensuring at least one trail system per park can be accessible. Additionally, many comments referenced better serving various demographic groups. In contrast, others commented on providing access and programs for specific user groups.

## **UNDERPRIVILEGED POPULATIONS**

- Underprivileged comments focused on the following:
  - Kids within urban metro areas may not have access to high-quality natural areas nearby, and parent(s) who are too busy working and cannot afford simple fees to enroll them in nature programs.
  - Recommendations on providing access to economically and socially struggling communities, including those of color, Latino, and indigenous communities.
  - Specific areas within the valley are underserved, including those living along or near the Salt River in Central Phoenix.
  - Public transportation is important to access the parks, providing those in the central city with education and recreation.

## **ENTRY FEES AS AN ECONOMIC BARRIER**

- Comments regarding entry fees ranged from:
  - The day-use fee was a barrier to entry for some.
  - Fee reduction suggestions for low-income individuals, Veterans, and senior populations.
  - Free days for County residents.
  - Access was noted as lacking or insufficient for public transit, preventing many people from individuals from visiting the parks.

## **PROVIDING UNIVERSAL ACCESS**

- Improving the trails and accommodations for all groups, including the MT system.
- There was an interest that the parks should focus on maintaining the natural simplicity of the park without adding every sporting event.

## SPECIFIC USER GROUPS

- Mountain bikers requested the development of new trails, competitive tracks, and youth mountain biking programs.
- Equestrian comments included separated trails without motorized use, better horse watering systems, and drinking fountains.
- Other requested trails in EMRP without equestrian use.
- Disc golf stated the need for more course locations.
- Another group commented on the need for off-road recreation activities and pointed out that the County continues to mitigate areas with no designated off-road recreation opportunities.
- Water sports access at LPRP, many recommendations for small watercraft accommodations, including:
  - Adding multiple piers dedicated to non-motorized crafts,
  - Adding a floating island dock,
  - Open space and dedicated beach for windsurfing/ canoe/kayak setup, and
  - An equitable fee structure for hard shell kayaks, paddle boards, and inflatable boats and boards. Currently, there is no charge for inflatables.



*Interpretive hike in the Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area.*

## PARK STEWARDS

- Various educational programs educate the public on becoming stewards of the environment and encourage youth to spend time in nature. Examples include:
  - More school interaction - at the schools and field trips to the parks.
  - More on Leave No Trace education.
  - Teach about the importance of the ecosystem.
  - More interactive and hands-on outreach programs that encourage curiosity in the natural environment.
- Environmentally friendly horticulture /indigenous farming practices.
- Participation by MCPRD at Community outreach events (share maps, and highlights of park features).

## COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

- Marketing was an opportunity to share information about the System and help all public segments know about offerings and the benefits of spending time in nature.
- A few responses suggested prospects for partnering to help better serve the community, including:
  - For an equitable approach, seek partnerships that improve access the lowest-income communities.
- Recommendation for MCPRD to work with the Maricopa Association of Governments on parks and recreation standards in:
  - Trail ratings,
  - Signage, and
  - Connectivity across communities, including public transportation, so access is not limited to only those possessing a vehicle.

## ACCESS FROM NEW DEVELOPMENT

- Other comments focused on park access from new development, including expansion of parks, trails, and open space.
- New housing developments need more green space, and many new developments should have greater open space regulations that allow for more parks. Suggestions include:
  - The purchase of additional land with future growth patterns in mind ensures residents have access to the park and build the subdivisions around park access points, not the other way around.
- Improve access to open parkland or natural desert spaces through pocket parks, multi-use trails adjacent to roadways, and incorporating parkland strips into all new developments.

## SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION

- Camping sites are difficult to find as they are booked and filled quickly and can be challenging for residents.
- Allow residents to rent last-minute campsites.

## WILDLIFE

- A focus on wildlife and habitat protection is needed.
- Wildlife viewing within their natural environment is an important reason for visiting.



*Campers at McDowell Mountain Regional Park.*

## TEN YEARS FROM NOW, WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIONS YOU HOPE THE COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT WOULD HAVE ACCOMPLISHED?

- This question gets at the heart of this planning process. Respondents were asked specifically about the future and provided over 700 comments. Many of the responses here are seen and described in some form in the previous open-ended questions. Still, the number of responses can be categorized to assist in prioritizing future actions. The following are categorized responses ordered by general magnitude. Many comments contained responses that could fit multiple categories, but the overall priorities and main categories were relatively consistent.

### **MAINTAINING EXISTING PARKS** was a consistent and high-priority theme.

- Some of the comments that expressed the overall tenor of this theme included maintaining existing facilities, infrastructure and current land/trails, investing in sustainable projects, plan regional recreation while protecting resources.

### **EXPAND A REGIONAL SYSTEM**

- Was ranked similarly to park maintenance and was equally important; most notable was the need to keep up with the increasing population by acquiring more land to expand or add parks, including trails, by working with regional jurisdictions for a linked system.

## CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- Was ranked nearly equally with maintenance and expansion; standing out is protecting the natural and water resources, such as removing invasive species, fire prevention, and addressing development encroachment.

## PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS

- For all populations of current and future visitors by increasing access to underrepresented communities.

## OTHER COMMENTS

- Multiple responses included having adequate enforcement, a safe environment, programming, added camping spaces, and more water-based opportunities

DRAFT





## Maricopa County's regional parks provide beautiful open spaces to connect with nature:

**Adobe Dam Regional Park**  
23280 N. 43rd Avenue  
Glendale, AZ 85310  
(602) 506-2930 ext. 8

**Buckeye Hills Regional Park**  
26700 W. Buckeye Hills Drive  
Buckeye, AZ 85326  
(602) 506-2930 ext. 6

**Cave Creek Regional Park**  
37019 N. Lava Lane  
Cave Creek, AZ 85331  
(602) 506-2930 ext 8

**Desert Outdoor Center at Lake Pleasant**  
41402 N. 87th Avenue  
Peoria, AZ 85383  
(602) 372-7470

**Estrella Mountain Regional Park**  
14805 W. Vineyard Ave.  
Goodyear, AZ 85338  
(602) 506-2930 ext. 6

**Hassayampa River Preserve**  
49614 U.S. Hwy. 60 89  
Wickenburg, AZ 85390  
(602) 506-2930 ext. 9

**Lake Pleasant Regional Park**  
41835 N. Castle Hot Springs Rd.  
Morristown, AZ 85342  
(602) 506-2930 ext. 1

**McDowell Mountain Regional Park**  
16300 McDowell Mtn. Park Dr.  
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268  
(602) 506-2930 ext 3

**San Tan Mountain Regional Park**  
6533 W. Phillips Road  
Queen Creek, AZ 85142  
(602) 506-2930 ext 7

**Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area**  
44000 N. Spur Cross Road  
Cave Creek, AZ 85331  
(602) 506-2930 ext 8

**Usery Mountain Regional Park**  
3939 N. Usery Pass Rd.  
Mesa, AZ 85207  
(602) 506-2930 ext 4

**Vulture Mountains Recreation Area**  
Located South of Us60  
Wickenburg, AZ 85390  
(602) 506-2930

**White Tank Mountain Regional Park**  
20304 W. White Tank Mountain Road  
Waddell, AZ 85355  
(602) 506-2930 ext. 5