

Over 1,100 residents evacuated in Arizona due to wildfire

NewsWire
June 29, 2023

More than 1,100 residents in the desert region of the US state of Arizona have been evacuated due to a wind-driven wildfire, authorities said.

The wildfire, dubbed Diamond Fire, started on Tuesday afternoon near Scottsdale, a city in the Phoenix metropolitan area, according to the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management.

As of Wednesday night, the fire exploded to 2,500 acres without any containment, burning through grass and brush just northwest of the McDowell Mountains, Xinhua news agency quoted the Department as saying in its latest update.

The nearby **McDowell Mountain Regional Park** has been closed due to the active fire west of the park.

The Department said that hand crews made excellent progress getting line around the fire overnight.

“Crews will work against critical fire weather, hot and dry conditions, high winds and low relative humidity – all which play a crucial factor in fire activity,” it added.

Officials said that approximately 1,145 residents were evacuated

near the fire affecting more than 100 homes.

“We have one report of a secondary structure lost, but due to the fire activity a full damage assessment cannot be conducted at this time,” said the Department.

About 300 firefighters, with aircraft support, are continuing their efforts against the blaze.

Evacuation Orders Lifted as Diamond Fire Burns in North Scottsdale

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NNN News (nnn.ng)
June 29, 2023
By DAYO ADEGOKE



Evacuation Orders Lifted as Diamond Fire Burns in North Scottsdale

As the **Diamond Fire** continues to burn in north Scottsdale, the Arizona Department of Forestry lifted evacuation orders just after 7 p.m. Wednesday, while urging residents to remain cautious as they returned home. The agency said that the fire had been 30% contained at 1,960 acres – a smaller figure than before thanks to more accurate mapping.

The agency said investigators believed the fire to have been human-caused, but added that it

would not say what the source of the fire’s ignition was due to the ongoing investigation.

The Diamond Fire began as a brush fire at about 5:15 p.m. Tuesday, near 130th Street and **Ranch Gate Road**. Early Wednesday, fire officials calculated the fire had consumed an estimated 2,500 acres.

According to InciWeb, Diamond impacted multiple homes and forced evacuations by Scottsdale police. Scottsdale reported that nearly 100-plus homes had been evacuated, affecting at its peak about 1,145 people.

“Approximately 25–30 engines are assigned to the fire, also working structure protection along the southern flank of the fire. We have one report of a secondary structure lost, but due to the fire activity, a full damage assessment cannot be conducted at this time. Aircraft has finished up for the night and remains assigned to the fire if needed again on Wednesday,” officials said on InciWeb.

As of the afternoon of June 28, the number of personnel assigned to the fire had grown from 250 to about 300 from multiple agencies as the Diamond Fire began pushing south.

Maricopa County Supervisor Tom Galvin, who represents the area, spoke about the community response during a county meeting on the morning of June 28. “This is a community that was very scared last night,” he said. “They were very worried. This fire moved fast.

The Diamond Fire started near 130th Street and Ranch Gate Road in north Scottsdale, 11 miles southwest of the [Rio Verde](#) community. The fire quickly began moving east toward the **McDowell Mountain Regional Park**, according to Scottsdale police.

All evacuation orders were lifted the evening of June 28.

In the parched community of Rio Verde Foothills, where many homes have been without a stable water supply for months, residents rallied to get neighbors and animals out of the fire's path as quickly as possible.

Cody Reim, one of the people who helped move livestock, said the winds shifted the flames away from the community "literally at the last minute." "It was absolutely a miracle," he said.

Foothills residents told [The Arizona Republic](#) on the night of June 27 that they were unaware of any injuries. But many could still see the orange glow from McDowell Mountain Regional Park as they went to bed.

One secondary structure was lost, Davila said.

On Wednesday, fire officials said road, park, and trail closures remained in place.

Eastbound traffic at 128th Street and Ranch Gate Road had been closed as crews got to work on controlling the blaze.

Those in the area near Rio Verde, 144th Street, Desert Holly Drive, and 130th Street were also asked to avoid the area.

McDowell Mountain Regional Park has been closed until further notice.

According to a tweet from Scottsdale, the Scottsdale Fraesfield and Tom's Thumb trailheads and surrounding trailheads at McDowell Sonoran Preserve were closed beginning the morning of June 28. "All other preserve access points and connecting trails are available for summer hikers," the tweet said.

Additionally, the Arizona Department of Forestry and [Fire Management](#) urged those flying drones above the fire to avoid the airspace, as crews piloting aircraft to mitigate the fire would be forced to the ground. Due to the displacement of over 1,000 residents in the area, the [American Red Cross Arizona](#) had opened an evacuation center at Cactus Shadows High School for those in need of assistance. However, the Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management announced on the afternoon of June 28 that the school would transition from a shelter to a heat relief station open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. until further notice.

The school is at 5802 E. Dove Valley Road in Scottsdale. Anyone in need of help is urged to call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit its website at [redcross.org](#).

Animals were evacuated to the Cave Creek rodeo grounds at 37201 N. 28th St. in Cave Creek,

said County Manager Jen Pokorski.

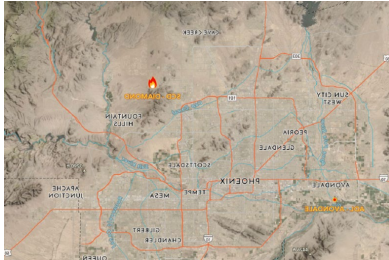
Arizona Fire Map, Update as Questions Raised Over Origins of Diamond Blaze

BY [ALEKS PHILLIPS](#) ON 6/29/23 AT 9:36 AM EDT
Newsweek

Large bush fire that began on Tuesday and led to the evacuation of over 1,000 residents of a rural community to the northeast of the Arizona capital Phoenix continues to burn but is contained, officials say.

Fire crews now believe that the massive blaze—which according to the latest estimate covers 1,960 acres near Scottsdale—was started by humans, raising questions about whether it was intentional. Some residents believe it was linked to a new-build development, according to local news reports.

The fire began on Tuesday evening [near the McDowell Mountain Regional Park](#). Maricopa County officials told residents of the nearby settlement just before 7 p.m. local time on Tuesday to evacuate an area spanning nearly 1,850 acres.



A map showing the location of the Diamond Fire relative to Scottsdale and Phoenix, Arizona. As of June 28, the bushfire covered an area of 1,960 acres, officials said. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF WILDLAND FIRE, OPENSTREETMAP

Shortly after 1 a.m. ET on Wednesday, Scottsdale Fire Department said that a team of more than 200 firefighters was on the scene tackling what has been dubbed the Diamond Fire.

Around the same time, official estimates put the bushfire's size at 2,500 acres. At 6:38 p.m. (9:38 p.m. ET) on Wednesday, Arizona State Forestry said that the blaze had been 30 percent contained and occupied an area of 1,960 acres.

It added that the decrease in footprint from the prior estimate was "due to more accurate mapping," that the fire was staying within its footprint—despite warnings that a current heatwave made the spread of wildfires more likely—and that crews were "mopping up" the "hot edges."

Earlier that evening, at 9 p.m. ET, officials lifted the evacuation order but urged returning residents to "use caution" as fire crews continued

to work to put out the blaze and to avoid the burn area.



Emergency crews survey the Diamond Fire near Scottsdale, Arizona, on June 28, 2023. The local fire department is now investigating after the fire was determined to be started by humans. ARIZONA STATE FORESTRY

However, they added that the Diamond Fire had been "determined to be human-caused" and was now under investigation by both Arizona State Forestry and Scottsdale Fire Department.

"Due to the ongoing and active investigation...we will not be releasing information on the ignition source at this time," Arizona State Forestry said on [Twitter](#).

Ashley Holden, a reporter with local news channel [ABC 15](#), tweeted later the same day that she had "heard concerns from multiple homeowners" in the Rio Verde Foothills to the east of the evacuation zone about "construction being the cause of the fire."

One person was said to have given the outlet footage, which Holden published online, appearing to show the nascence of the bush fire, which she said had been "near a home being newly constructed."

She added that when she approached Arizona State Forestry about the claims, they could not say more about the cause of the fire at present but that investigators were "collecting information."



The Diamond Fire blazes near Scottsdale, Arizona, on June 28, 2023. In Scottsdale, temperatures are expected to remain above 100 degrees Fahrenheit through the weekend. ARIZONA STATE FORESTRY

Newsweek reached out to the Scottsdale Fire Department and Arizona State Forestry via email for comment on Thursday. The National Weather Service (NWS) has warned that strong winds and low humidity have created "critical fire weather conditions" over most of northern Arizona, with the threat expected to continue through the weekend.

Meteorologists have [issued excessive heat warnings](#) for swathes of the southwest caused by a heatwave that is expected to continue into next week. In Scottsdale, peak temperatures are expected to remain sustained above 100 degrees Fahrenheit through next Tuesday, topping out at 113 degrees on Sunday.

"Heat is the deadliest weather in Arizona," the NWS said, noting

that between 2010 and 2020, there were 3,091 heat-related deaths in the state; the [next most lethal weather phenomenon was flooding](#), which took 35 lives over the same period.

Officials have not reported any deaths or injuries as a result of the current wildfire.

'Diamond' wildfire continues to burn in outskirts of Phoenix as residents return following evacuations

The Diamond Fire quickly grew to 2,500 acres, prompting evacuations in North Scottsdale and Southwest Rio Verde. The fire is just outside Tonto National Forest.

By [Emilee Speck](#), [Chris Oberholtz](#)Source [FOX Weather](#) | June 29, 2023

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – A fast-growing [brush fire](#) temporarily prompted evacuations in the outskirts of Scottsdale, [Arizona](#), as fire crews worked to contain the blaze.

The Diamond Fire quickly grew to 2,500 acres, prompting evacuations in North Scottsdale and Southwest Rio Verde. The fire is just outside Tonto National Forest.

[As of late Wednesday evening, the fire decreased to 1,960 acres](#) and was 30% contained but still poses a threat.

The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management said the fire was determined to be human-caused. Officials said they would not be releasing information on the ignition source at this time due to the ongoing investigation.

Multiple homes were impacted and immediately threatened, forcing the evacuation of 100-plus homes and 1,145 residents, authorities said. As of 7 p.m. Wednesday, all evacuations were lifted, and residents were able to return home. [McDowell Mountain Regional Park](#) still remains closed. Some trails within the Scottsdale trail system in the McDowells are also closed.

About 150 firefighters remain on the scene Thursday to battle the blaze.

[Fire Weather Warnings](#) were in place Tuesday when the fire started and have since been removed for the area. On Thursday, the only warnings remained in southwestern [Colorado](#) until 8 p.m. MDT for gusty [winds](#), low relative [humidity](#) and dry fuels.

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation increasing fire restrictions

By [Jill Ryan](#)
Published: Thursday, June 29, 2023 - 2:38pm

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation are [increasing the](#)

[fire restrictions](#) at all the parks they oversee.

The [Diamond Fire](#) borders [McDowell Mountain Regional Park](#). Nearby residents and park staff had previously been evacuated, but there was some fire damage.

To keep more parks, which often border residential homes fire free, the head of the county's Parks and Recreation has heightened fire restrictions to prohibit all smoking, except in enclosed vehicles or campers.

What also remains banned until future notice is all campfires, fire pits and charcoal-powered grills. Gas and propane grills are still allowed.

Yavapai County joins cities, parks with fireworks bans, fire restrictions

[Perry Vandell](#)[Kye Graves](#)
Arizona Republic
June 29, 2023



The Yavapai County Board of Supervisors signed a temporary order instituting heightened fire restrictions that includes a ban on fireworks starting on Thursday at 8 a.m.

Other restrictions include no campfires except in designated

areas or smoking unless inside a car, building or developed recreation site.

"As a community, we must prioritize safety and do our part to prevent any accidents or mishaps that may result in a fire," Yavapai County Board of Supervisors Chairman James Gregory said in a written statement. "The importance of these safety measures cannot be emphasized enough during these critical fire weather days."

The ban will remain in effect until the "risk has diminished and there is agency consensus that restrictions may be lifted."

High fire dangers have forced the hand of some Arizona state parks and national forests as well. Per the Arizona State Parks & Trails website, both [Alamo Lake State Park](#) and [Tonto Natural Bridge State Park](#) have outlawed charcoal grilling as part of their fire restrictions.

At Alamo, only propane grills and fire rings are allowed.

More Stage 1 fire and smoking restrictions

Delving deeper into the do's and don'ts during wildfire season, a slew of Stage 1 fire and smoking restrictions go into effect Thursday, with some having been implemented at the beginning of June.

[Stage 1 restrictions ultimately means](#) that fires, campfires, charcoal, coal and wood stoves are prohibited, except within a developed recreation site. Smoking is also prohibited, except within an enclosed vehicle, building or a developed recreation site. As always,

fireworks are prohibited on all national forest and state lands.

For the [Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest](#), [Coconino National Forest](#), [Williams Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest](#) and [Prescott National Forest](#), restrictions went into effect Thursday starting at 8 a.m.

Some areas and parks already had fire restrictions in place:

- [Flagstaff](#)
- [Coconino County and county parks](#)
- [Sunset Crater](#)
- [Grand Canyon National Park](#)
- [Red Rock State Park](#)
- [Slide Rock State Park](#)
- [Maricopa County and state trust land fire restrictions](#)

Maricopa County enlisted its annual fire ban beginning on May 1 and in light of the recent [Diamond Fire](#) in north Scottsdale, the Parks and Recreation Department has increased its fire restrictions, prohibiting smoking at its regional parks beginning Thursday.

"Given what we're seeing at [McDowell Mountain Regional Park](#), we have decided to heighten our fire restrictions to include smoking. This decision is not a knee-jerk reaction to the current situation, but rather a preventative measure to keep park visitors, the natural resources, and communities that surround the parks safe," Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Director R.J. Cardin [said in a statement Wednesday](#).

[Smoking in Maricopa County regional parks](#) will only be permitted within enclosed vehicles or campers. Individuals must ensure all materials are fully extinguished and disposed of properly.

State Trust lands within Apache, Navajo and Yavapai counties also had their Stage 1 restrictions commence on Thursday as these lands in Gila, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Pinal and Yuma counties have already been implemented, [according to the Department of Forestry and Fire Management](#).

16 Must-Visit Small Towns in Arizona

Written by [Jennifer Hollohan](#)

Updated: June 29, 2023

AZ Animals

Every state has its own unique charm that attracts visitors. The small local towns each have their own spin on history, distinctive flare, and fun attractions. But the small-town culture in Arizona is in a class of its own. The state's mining history, notoriety as a Wild West stomping ground, rich Native American heritage, and unmatched views draw people from all over. With so much to see and do in the vast state, we wanted to help you narrow down your adventures. So, below, you will find information on sixteen must-visit small towns in Arizona. Read on and find your new vacation inspiration!

1. Jerome

This captivating town is known for its rich mining history and artistic community. It sits on the side of Cleopatra Hill and was

originally a booming copper mining camp. But Jerome experienced a decline in the mid-20th century, transforming into a ghost town.

In the 1960s, artists and craftsmen revitalized the town, transforming its historic buildings into galleries, studios, and unique shops.

Today, exploring the narrow streets of **Jerome** feels like stepping back in time. Art galleries, boutiques, and cozy cafés line the winding streets inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the vibrant arts scene. Tasting rooms showcase the area’s wine and cider-making skills.

Visitors can tag along for one of the many ghost tours through the town’s haunted past. And the Jerome State Historic Park is a must-visit. It offers a glimpse into the town’s mining past with exhibits and preserved structures.



Jerome has a long, rich mining history to explore.

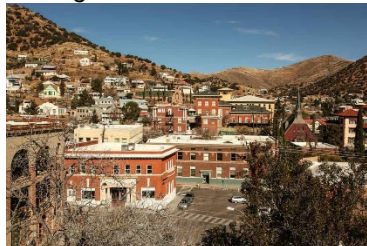
2. Bisbee

This town made its mark in the late 1800s as a major mining hub. The town’s architecture today reflects that mining heritage, with Victorian-style houses and charming storefronts. Those storefronts are home to incredible shops, galleries, and restaurant culture.

While exploring Bisbee, don’t miss the Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum. It provides insight into the town’s mining past and the lives of its residents.

Take a walk on **Bisbee’s** Heritage Stairs before stopping by to see the Copper Miner sculpture, and then finish the day off with a ghost tour of the area.

But, for an unforgettable experience, take the Copper Queen Mine Tour. It descends into the depths of a copper mine, allowing visitors a chance to learn about the challenges of mining life.



Bisbee is reportedly haunted and offers ghost tours for visitors.

3. Tombstone

While you are in Cochise County visiting Bisbee, consider heading to Tombstone. This famous Wild West town is best known for the shootout at the O.K. Corral. And there is still plenty of history alive. Visitors get to immerse themselves in the days of Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and the infamous gunfight of 1881.

The historic district of Tombstone has restored buildings, museums, and attractions that offer a glimpse into the town’s lively past. Visitors can even find a place to stay that **dates back to the 19th**

century for a truly immersive experience.

Witness reenactments of the famous gunfight, stroll along Allen Street, and explore the Bird Cage Theatre, which operated as a saloon, gambling hall, and theater during its heyday.



Stop by Tombstone to watch a reenactment of the shootout at the OK Corral.

4. Benson

Cochise County is home to yet another small, must-see town. **Benson** sits on I-10 and is easy to miss. But it is worth the detour. Unlike some of its neighbors, it was never a mining community. Instead, it was founded after the Southern Pacific Railroad came to the area.

Just outside of town, visitors can delight in the splendors at Kartchner Caverns State Park or wander the grounds of a Benedictine monastery. Or they can marvel at the natural wonders of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area and Dragoon Mountains, the Apache ancestral home. Then stop by the Mescal Movie Set, where countless westerns have gotten filmed. Before leaving, don’t forget to stop by Zearings Mercantile for a treat to go!



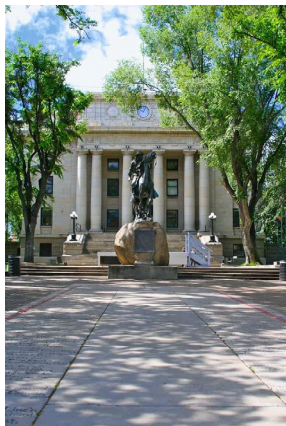
Downtown Benson, Arizona.

5. Prescott

Located in the Bradshaw Mountains, [Prescott](#) is a charming town that seamlessly blends history, natural beauty, and outdoor activities. Prescott boasts a picturesque downtown area with tree-lined streets, historic buildings, and welcoming shops and restaurants.

Explore the town's vibrant Wild West history on the Heritage Trail & History Hunt. Or step back in time at one of the oldest bars in the nation – [The Palace](#). The Sharlot Hall Museum provides an opportunity to learn about Arizona's territorial history.

Outside of town, the Prescott National Forest offers hiking trails, picnic spots, and breathtaking views. And don't miss the annual World's Oldest Rodeo, held every July, where you can experience the excitement of Western tradition.



Courthouse Plaza in Preston, Arizona.

6. Wickenburg

Immerse yourself in cowboy heritage and a taste of the Old West in [Wickenburg](#). This traditionally western town has not lost an ounce of its charm. Rugged desert landscapes surround Wickenburg. And the town provides an authentic

glimpse into Arizona's cowboy culture.

While in Wickenburg, consider visiting the Desert Caballeros Western Museum, which showcases Western art and artifacts. Or embrace the cowboy lifestyle by taking a horseback ride or attending a rodeo. Ample hiking trails and Jeep tour opportunities round out the true Western experience.



Vulture Gold Mine in Wickenburg, Arizona.

7. Sedona

The town of [Sedona](#) is a unique destination that captivates visitors with its natural beauty and outdoor activities. Sedona has a distinctive charm that ensures visitors return again and again.

Sedona is renowned for its majestic red rock formations. These stunning landmarks attract hikers, photographers, and nature lovers from every corner of the world. Oak Creek Canyon offers breathtaking hiking trails and swimming holes. And the [Coconino National Forest](#) provides a chance to take a jeep tour, go mountain biking, and camp.

Once you have finished your outdoor adventures for the day, take advantage of the award-winning wineries in the area.

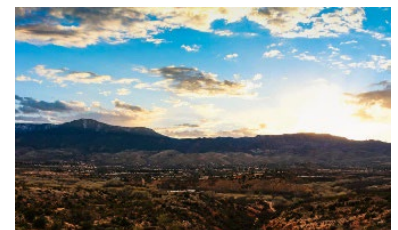


Seven Sacred Pools in Sedona, Arizona.

8. Cottonwood

Not too far from Sedona is another can't-miss town, Cottonwood. This small town has a laid-back atmosphere and a thriving arts scene. The historic Old Town district is a delightful place to explore. Its charming Main Street features galleries, boutiques, and wine-tasting rooms.

Visitors can browse unique artwork, sample local wines, and soak up the creative ambiance that permeates the town. A short drive from [Cottonwood](#) takes you to the Tuzigoot National Monument, where you can explore ancient Native American ruins and learn about the region's indigenous history. The charming area is also home to Dead [Horse Ranch State Park](#). It is the ideal location for bird watchers and anglers.



Not too far from Sedona is another can't-miss town, Cottonwood, Arizona.

9. Globe

Nestled in the spectacular Tonto National Forest, [Globe](#) is a historic mining town with a rich cultural heritage. The

town's past is intricately tied to its rich mining history. Visitors can head out for adventure in the nearby rugged Pinal Mountains or stick closer to town for a taste of Western culture.

But don't miss the Salado Indian Ruins at the Besh Ba Gowah Archaeological Park and the Tonto National Monument to get a true taste of the area's Native American history. History buffs will also love the Gila County Historical Museum, which tells some wonderful Arizona tales.



Globe, Arizona, at the beginning of the 20th century.

10. Tubac

With its Spanish colonial architecture and vibrant arts community, Tubac is a small town with a big cultural heart. Established in 1752 as a Spanish presidio, Tubac is one of Arizona's oldest European settlements.

Today, [Tubac](#) is known for its art galleries. They showcase diverse artwork, including painting, sculpture, ceramics, and jewelry. As you explore the spectacular array of regional art, take a break at one of the delicious local restaurants.

And natural lovers can't get enough of the picturesque beauty of the Santa Cruz River

Valley. Hiking and birding await along the river!



Tubac Art Festival in Tubac, Arizona.

11. Clarkdale

Nestled in the Verde Valley, [Clarkdale](#) is a quaint town intimately tied with the state's mining community. Founded in 1912, it was a company town for local miners. Now, Clarkdale welcomes visitors with its fascinating history and eye-catching surroundings.

The Arizona Copper Art Museum is a highlight of Clarkdale. It showcases a stunning collection of copper artwork and artifacts. Visitors can also take a ride on the Verde Canyon Railroad. There are plenty of themed journeys to choose from, depending on what time of year you visit. And if there's enough time, consider taking a short drive out to [Tuzigoot National Monument](#), where you can experience the wonder of its historic pueblo.



Clark Memorial Clubhouse in Clarkdale, Arizona. The clubhouse was built as part of a planned community (company town) near the United Verde Copper Company's smelter in Clarkdale.

12. Ajo

Located in the Sonoran Desert, Ajo is a hidden gem known for its Spanish-style architecture. The town's unique blend of Mexican and American influences adds to its cultural appeal.

[Ajo Plaza](#) lies in the heart of the town and features Spanish Colonial Revival buildings dating back to the early 20th century. A stop at the Ajo Historical Society Museum helps visitors experience and learn about the town's rich history.

Outdoor adventurers will love Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument and Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. Both offer a chance to hike, bird watch, and immerse in the desert's diverse ecosystem.



Church in Ajo, Arizona.

13. Patagonia

Intrepid explorers will find a natural wonderland not far outside Tucson, in [Patagonia](#). Breathtaking purple mountains surround the small town. It offers a tranquil escape for visitors.

The Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve is a haven for birdwatchers, with over 300 bird species found in the area. But it is not the only place to get your fill of birdwatching. The Tucson Audubon Society's Paton Center for Hummingbirds, Patagonia Lake State Park, and Sonoita Creek State Natural Area all provide ample opportunities to

spot your favorite feathered friends.

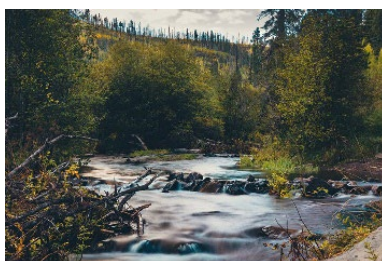
Other outdoor adventures include world-class mountain biking trails and hiking in the Coronado National Forest. After your adventures, pop by one of the local eateries or restaurants to refuel.



Varied Bunting Passerina versicolor, Patagonia Lake ranch estates, Santa Cruz County, Arizona.

14. Greer

Escape to the cool pine forests of Greer, a picturesque town nestled in the White Mountains. Greer offers a peaceful retreat for outdoor enthusiasts and those seeking solace in nature in the summer and winter. Grab your fishing rod for a chance to catch trout in one of the 630 miles of river or one of the nearby 22 lakes. Or hit up one of the sixteen local hiking trails and keep your eyes peeled for over 70 species of birds!



Greer sits in the stunning White Mountains and is the perfect location for all your outdoor adventures.

15. Carefree and Cave Creek

This pick gives visitors a two-for-one treat. Carefree and Cave Creek are two must-see towns nestled in the Sonoran Desert. They offer a serene environment and an abundance of recreational activities. The top stop on any itinerary should be the Carefree Desert Gardens. This spot shows off how spectacular a desert botanical garden can get. Or head out to Cave Creek Regional Park and Tonto National Forest for outdoor adventures. There, you can experience ATV rides, horseback riding, hiking, and water sports.

Carefree boasts a wealth of art galleries, delicious food, and tasty local wines. And Cave Creek combines the best of the West with contemporary live music for a truly unforgettable experience.



Carefree Sundial, Arizona.

16. Williams

Located on Historic Route 66, Williams is a delightful small town that serves as the gateway to the Grand Canyon. Williams offers a nostalgic experience reminiscent of a bygone era.

Visitors can explore six blocks of historic downtown. They will find colorful storefronts, old-fashioned soda fountains, and Route 66 memorabilia there. They can also ride on the Grand Canyon Railway and get

rewarded with breathtaking views. Then, upon their return, they can head to the Bearizona Wildlife Park for a real treat. Williams' small-town charm and proximity to one of the world's natural wonders make it a must-visit destination for Arizona travelers.



Take a Grand Canyon Railway from Williams.

Swimmer whose body was found at Lake Pleasant identified as DeAndre Taylor

[Fernando Cervantes Jr.](#)
Arizona Republic
June 27, 2023



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office officials released the identity on Tuesday of a man whose body was recovered from Lake Pleasant.

The man, identified as 32-year-old DeAndre Taylor, was seen by witnesses swimming in Lake Pleasant on Monday morning

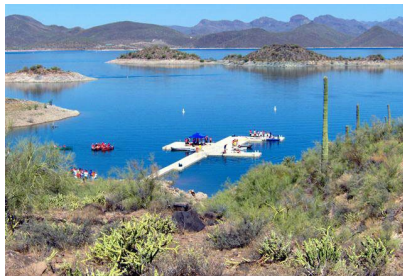
but failed to resurface, officials said.

Sheriff's deputies responded to the Sunset Ridge area of the lake at about 11:30 p.m. on Monday, with divers recovering Taylor's body from the lake five hours later at about 4:30 p.m.

Another body was [pulled from Lake Pleasant on Thursday](#), with this being the fourth drowning death at the lake this year, according to Sgt. Monica Bretado, a Maricopa County Sheriff's Office spokesperson.

Phoenix man drowns in Lake Pleasant

Posted Tuesday, June 27, 2023 2:01 pm
DAILY INDEPENDENT NEWS MEDIA



Lake Pleasant

A 32-year-old Phoenix man has been identified as the person who drowned Monday in **Lake Pleasant**.

DeAndre Taylor went underwater while swimming Monday morning and didn't resurface, according to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

His body was found in the afternoon on June 26 after he was last seen in the Sunset Ridge area.

Evacuations ordered in Scottsdale as brush fire rages near McDowell Mountain Regional Park

[Fernando Cervantes Jr.](#)
Arizona Republic
June 27, 2023

Evacuations were ordered in north Scottsdale on Tuesday afternoon as a fast-moving brush fire threatened neighborhoods.

More than 1,000 people were under evacuation orders Tuesday night, authorities said. Officials closed eastbound traffic at 128th Street and Ranch Gate Road as the Diamond Fire raged nearby.

According to the Scottsdale Police Department, the fire was moving east toward the **McDowell Mountain Regional Park**, with evacuations being announced for this area:

East of 136th Street, south of Rio Verde Drive, west of 152nd Street and north of Jomax Road.



The blaze broke out at around 5:15 p.m. and within hours had burned 3.9 square miles of land without any containment, fire officials said.

Carlos Aguirre lives in a new community in north Scottsdale and said his wife called saying that their community was being evacuated.

"She got out and didn't take the dog so we're a little nervous," he said.

View the map: [Here's where the Diamond Fire is burning in north Scottsdale](#)

Brendan Birdoes said he is building a home in the area that was being evacuated.

"Our friend told us this was happening," Birdoes said. "He was out here mountain biking and so we came out to see what was going on."

No homes had burned and no injuries were reported. There was no immediate word on what sparked the fire.



Scottsdale Fire Capt. David Folio said at a news conference that the fire began in Scottsdale but has since moved into county and state lands to the east and the command post has been turned over to the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management.

Officials have not been able to assess damage, forestry department spokesperson Tiffany Davila said. "The fire was just too active," she said. "It was producing erratic fire behavior."

The fire has been fueled by grass and brush that dry out quickly once things start to warm up, Davila said.

Brush fire reported north of McDowell Mountain Regional Park

Jun 27, 2023 Updated Jun 27, 2023
The Fountain Hills Times

A brush fire was reported north of Fountain Hills Tuesday afternoon, June 27. Town Manager Bo Larsen provided The Times with the following update. No additional updates have been reported as of 7 p.m.: "Scottsdale Fire is working a brush fire in the area of 130th St. and Rio Verde Dr. There is a large column of smoke visible to the north of town. At this time there is no threat to the town. There are currently no evacuation orders in place for the residents in that area."

The Times will provide additional updates as they are made available.

According to social media posts from Arizona State Forestry, the blaze is approximately 700 acres and moving north with more than 25 engines and hand crews ordered to combat the blaze.

UPDATE: Now referred to as the Diamond Fire, the Maricopa County Emergency Alert Center ordered evacuations Tuesday evening for those living near McDowell Mountain Park, with a Northern boundary of Rio Verde Drive, southern boundary of Jomax Road, western boundary of 130th Street and eastern boundary of 160th Street. It was also announced Red Cross had established a shelter for those evacuating at Cactus Shadow High School, 5802 E. Dove Valley in Scottsdale. The shelter was scheduled to open at 9:30 p.m.

Cave Creek takes steps toward safer trails with establishment of helipad at Spur Cross Ranch

Allison Brown

Published on Jun 27, 2023



The establishment of a dedicated helicopter landing site will significantly bolster emergency response capabilities in the area.

After two fatal hiking incidents in 2022 and an uptick in mountain rescues in 2023 so far, the Town of Cave Creek established a safe helicopter landing site for emergency incidents in the **Spur Cross Ranch Conservation area**.

The town's public works crew was able to use existing resources to grade, fill, level and seal an already disturbed mine site location, just north of the Spur Cross parking areas, which will now serve as a dedicated landing spot for any emergency medical or fire incidents.

Jim Ford, director of community risk reduction for Cave Creek, emphasized the importance of these improvements.

"Last year, we had 11 trail rescues in the town, and this year already, we're up to 13, and it's only halfway through the season," he explained. "We had two fatal rescues in the Spur Cross Conservation area last fall, and so we've been working on what we can do to make that better and improve that process."

No one likes looking for parking, but when it's an emergency response helicopter, there isn't exactly time to circle around. Ford said previously, the parking lot would be used as a take off or landing site, but, if the lot was full, the helicopter had to land on the roads. This meant blocking traffic, flying over houses and horses and "a lot of ongoing issues," according to Ford.

The new helipad location eliminates all of that.

"It all came together really fast once we started looking at the issues and decided we needed to do something, because we're out there more often than we thought we would be," Ford said.

Within a few weeks of searching, town staff found a

site that could just be adjusted and fixed up to serve as a landing spot. Once the location was determined, Ford said he brought the pilots for Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and Department of Public Safety to show them the site and get their input and approval. With the green light from the experts, the town's public works crew wasted no time in making the necessary improvements. The crew had previously done the Spur Cross parking lot, so they already had all the equipment and materials needed.

"I wasn't expecting it to go so fast, but those guys did it very quickly for us. In fact, they already used it once to do another rescue," Ford said.

The helipad isn't the only thing the Town of Cave Creek has done in an effort to enhance rescue operations. It also secured a grant from Firehouse Subs Firehouse Foundation, which enabled the acquisition of a versatile all-terrain utility vehicle equipped with a specialized stretcher.

Ford said this addition will allow the town to do rescues and carry people out on stretchers without having to resort to using a helicopter. That vehicle was recently delivered and is getting the finishing touches. To promote safety and educate hikers, signs have also been put up at the Spur Cross Conservation area, the Black Mountain Trailhead and in Maricopa County parks at the Go John Trailhead.

"They all say the same thing: here are things you need to

think about when you're hiking," Ford said.

"Make sure your phone is charged before you go, make sure people know where you're going and when you're expected back. Make sure you take enough water for you and whoever else you take with you – whether it's your dogs or people – and when you're halfway done with your water then it's time to turn around and come back."

With this year's trail rescues already surpassing last year's total, these tips can be life saving. Out of the two hiking-related deaths that occurred last year, both people were in good shape and regular hikers. "You look at these incidents after they happen and it's just tragic. We know this could have been prevented," Ford said. "Well, we can't control what people do and the actions they take, but we can surely advise them whether it's a good decision or a bad decision."

Stella Apartments Coming to San Tan Valley 2024

[San Tan Valley News](#)
[SanTanValley.com](#)
Monday, 26 June 2023

San Tan Valley is poised for some changes with the announcement of a new apartment community, Stella, developed by Thompson Thrift. As our community has grown, so has the demand for various types of housing. While some residents express concerns over increased congestion, others see this as an opportunity for

more affordable living options in the area.

Stella, located near North Gary Road and West Hunt Highway on a 20-acre site, will consist of 308 apartment units across 12 buildings. Thompson Thrift, a real estate company known nationally for multifamily developments, has shared their plans for the Class A community, slated to begin construction this month, and welcoming residents in late 2024.

Apartment Amenities

The apartments at Stella will feature a range of amenities. The interiors are planned to have quartz countertops, stainless steel appliances, hardwood-style flooring, and options for patios or private yards. In addition, the units are expected to include smart thermostats, high-speed internet access, and Alexa-compatible smart hubs.

Community Amenities

Within the community, Stella will offer a resort-style swimming pool, outdoor entertainment kitchen, community grilling areas, and two dog parks. Additionally, a fully-equipped fitness center and a pickleball court are among the amenities planned.

The development will also be in close proximity to retail options such as Starbucks, Walmart Supercenter, and various fast-food outlets. For outdoor enthusiasts, the **San Tan Mountain Regional Park** is situated two miles west of the property.

Mixed Reactions from the Community

As with any development, there are mixed feelings among the residents of San Tan Valley. Some community members are concerned about the potential increase in traffic and congestion. They worry that adding a large apartment complex might strain the existing infrastructure.

On the other hand, others see Stella as a potentially more affordable living option in a housing market that has been increasingly challenging for many. The addition of rental units may offer alternatives for those who find themselves priced out of the homeowner's market.

It's important that as a community, San Tan Valley weighs the pros and cons and engages in constructive dialogue. Thompson Thrift's project is progressing and it remains to be seen how it will impact the area.

SanTanValley.com will undoubtedly keep an eye on the development of Stella, and it's essential for residents to stay informed and communicate their concerns and hopes for the future of our community.

For more information and updates on this development and others, keep your eyes on SanTanValley.com.

MCSO finds body of swimmer reported missing in Lake Pleasant

Jun 26, 2023, 12:37 PM
| Updated: Jun 27, 2023, 9:30 am
BY [KTAR.COM](#)

PHOENIX – The body of a swimmer who went missing in **Lake Pleasant** was found Monday, authorities said.

The man was identified Tuesday as 32-year-old DeAndre Taylor, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office said.

Deputies were dispatched to the lake northwest of Phoenix for a possible drowning around 11:30 a.m. Monday.

A witness at the scene said a man didn't resurface after going underwater while swimming in the Sunset Ridge area on the south side of the lake.

MCSO and Peoria Fire-Medical were involved in the search.

No other details were made available.

Emergency helipad established at Spur Cross

By Cole Januszewski, Foothills Focus Staff Writer
Jun 23, 2023



The Town of Cave Creek Public Works crew recently established a helicopter landing site for emergency incidents in the Spur Cross Conservation Area, ensuring safer and faster rescues. (Town of Cave Creek/Submitted)

The town of Cave Creek recently established an emergency helicopter landing pad just past the north end of the **Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area** parking.

The pad, marked with "No Parking" signs, will give helicopter pilots a safe landing zone away from residential neighborhoods during emergency incidents that occur in the Spur Cross area – overall making rescues safer and faster.

Jim Ford, the director of community risk reduction and emergency fire and medical services, said the idea for the pad came about as the number of rescues in the Spur Cross Conservation Area has increased recently. Last year saw 11 helicopter rescues, with 13 this year already.

He also said the old system of landing in a parking lot or blocking off roads could be inefficient and unsafe.

"About a month and a half ago, we had two helicopter rescues on the same day," he said. "The first one was a lady with a broken ankle. The helicopter rescued her and when they came back to the parking area, there were so many cars that the helicopter didn't feel comfortable landing and not doing damage to the cars.

"The next option was to block off Spur Cross Road. The sheriff and fire department had to block off the roads for a while so that we could unload that person and transport them. That's not as safe, or

convenient, of an operation as when we have a dedicated spot.”

Ford said they chose the north end of the Spur Cross parking area because they were already planning to seal the disturbed mine in the area. This allowed them to build the pad with the town’s existing resources. He also said they built the pad with input and approval from the pilots from both the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office and the Department of Public Safety.

The landing pad could also be used for more than emergency rescues. Ford said they built the site large enough to hold portable water tanks. These tanks, if implemented, would assist helicopters with water drops during forest fires.

Altogether, Ford said this project was a “tremendous improvement” to the infrastructure in the area. “This benefits the entire area, not just the town of Cave Creek,” he said. “This will benefit the Tonto forest and regional parks. It will benefit a lot of folks and help us in emergencies. If you wait until after the emergency happens, then it’s often too late to make those kinds of decisions or it makes the decisions much more difficult.”

Person dead after being pulled out of water at Lake Pleasant

Pleasant

Watch the latest ABC15 Arizona in Phoenix headlines any time.



By: abc15.com staff
Posted at 3:35 PM, Jun 22, 2023 and last updated 3:35 PM, Jun 22, 2023

PEORIA – An adult is dead after drowning at **Lake Pleasant** Thursday afternoon.

Officials say bystanders had pulled the individual out of the water and began CPR before crews arrived.

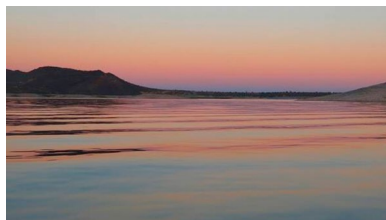
The individual died at the scene.

This incident is currently under investigation.

No further information is available.

1 dead after drowning at Lake Pleasant, Peoria fire says

Jun 22, 2023, 4:09 PM
BY KTAR.COM



Lake Pleasant Regional Park (Facebook Photo/Lake Pleasant Regional Park)

PHOENIX – A person is dead after drowning Thursday at **Lake Pleasant**.

Fire crews from Peoria Fire-Medical responded to Pleasant Harbor Marina on a call about an adult patient who had been taken out of the water on one of the marina slips.

Prior to crews arriving at the scene, bystanders had performed CPR on the patient. However, they did not survive, according to Peoria Fire-Medical.

The scene is now being investigated by Peoria police.

No other information was available.

Town of Cave Creek approves \$56.6 million budget, highlights year's accomplishments

Cave Creek Mayor Bob Morris
Published on Jun 22, 2023



One of the most important responsibilities of the Cave Creek Town Council is our fiduciary duty.

Overseeing the contents and approving the final version of our annual budget sets the stage for how effectively the town operates and accomplishes its goals.

The Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024) budget is a structurally balanced spending plan that will preserve our strong financial foundation and provide the resources we need to deliver high-quality public services to our community.

I am happy to report that after two work study sessions and three council meetings to publicly discuss the contents and merit of the programs being proposed, the FY2024 budget was approved by a majority of the council on June 5, in the amount of \$56,555,961.

This amount includes state and federal grant applications and FY2024 capital expenditures within the town’s FY2024-2028 capital improvement plan. The approved budget amount becomes the town’s expenditure limit for FY2024. Expenditures can be moved or reduced but the overall total expenditures cannot be increased.

The best news is that bonds from our utility acquisition and expansion are nearly repaid. Once reaching more than \$66 million, the debt will be reduced to about \$21 million after the July 1 payment is made.

Strategic Planning

In January 2023, the council’s two-day strategic planning retreat initiated and guided the budget development process. Council and staff focused on setting goals for each of the five categories within the town’s strategic plan:

- Public streets, safety and services
- Community culture

- Water supplies and infrastructure
- Financial viability
- Governance

We prioritized large capital projects including upgrades to our fire station as well as securing our Central Arizona Project (CAP) water distribution system via an interconnection with Phoenix. Particular attention was paid to allocating significant funding for traffic and pedestrian safety measures, road paving projects and revitalizing our Town Core medians and pathways.

All the elements in the strategic plan closely align with Cave Creek’s general plan, which was approved by voters in 2021.

Sustaining the Organization Revenue from local sales taxes, state-shared revenues, fees and construction sales taxes primarily support the town’s operations and maintenance activities. Numerous items in the budget relate to successfully maintaining a high-functioning governmental organization, including employee compensation and benefits, fire services and water and wastewater utilities in both Cave Creek and Desert Hills.

As many residents know, the town created its own fire department in 2021 without resorting to a property tax. Other projects found within this budget cover much needed and long overdue infrastructure improvements. Looking to the future, we remain cautiously optimistic that our revenues will remain strong.

Summary of FY2023 Accomplishments:

- Continued implementation of an intergovernmental agreement between the Town of Cave Creek and Daisy Mountain Fire and Medical Services.
- Received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for FY2023 Budget.
- Received the GFOA Certificate of Achievement Award for annual comprehensive financial report (ACFR) in FY2022.
- Prepared and received council approval of utility rates over six years.
- Produced informational newsletters, website, social media, community forums, video library, tourism outreach.
- Prepared drought management plans, emergency operations plan, reviewed and advised town code and zoning ordinance language changes and land use cases before the planning commission and town council.
- Partnered with Maricopa County and Desert Foothills Land Trust to acquire 30.6 acres of open space adjacent to **Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area** (SCRCA).

- Prepared land and location leases to relocate the Foothills Food Bank to larger facilities on town property.
- Implemented large scale trail maintenance projects and constructed safe pathways at SCRCA.
- Coordinated renovation of rough stock chutes at rodeo grounds for safety and functionality.
- Improving digital application processes for inspections, permits and plan reviews.
- Lowered law enforcement costs for FY2023 rodeo.
- Managed a caseload of 123 code compliance complaints.
- Experienced a significant drop in wildland fires and associated damage due to creation of new fire department.
- Received a Firehouse Foundation public safety grant to purchase equipment to assist with incidents on local trail system.
- Hosted brush removal and drop offs resulting in more than 100 tons of collected materials from residents.
- Prepared and presented five-year capital improvement plan to council.
- Adopted monthly service charges and usage rates for water and wastewater services and capacity fees ensuring financial

viability of enterprise systems.

- Seeking to fully fund pavement management plan by end of 2026 with 2.4 million in pavement maintenance projects and roadway connections expected in FY2024.
- Implementing pedestrian safety measures as identified in local agency safety study.
- Started the new integrated utility master plan to evaluate existing wastewater system to ensure future growth.
- Completed a rate and capacity fee structure adopted by council.
- Completed upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, piping repairs at Rancho Manana Lift Station and cleaning and inspection of collection systems.
- Improving the town’s GIS mapping of the water system.
- Adopted a water shortage and drought management plan.
- Completed upgrades to the Cave Creek SCADA system.
- Nearing design completion for Phoenix interconnect.
- Recharged over 700 acre-feet of unused CAP water to generate storage credits.
- Worked with Carefree Water Company to complete the separation of water accounts and water system within Carefree.

Per the town’s vision statement, Cave Creek strives to be a dynamic, safe and well-maintained community where growth and preservation are balanced, and public needs and challenges are met.

As you can read from the information found within this presentation, and to a much greater degree in our FY2024 budget found online, through collaboration, professionalism, productivity and fiscal stewardship, we are able to accomplish the goals we set for ourselves.

We are proud of these results and are confident that our community supports our efforts and priorities.

Thank you for your interest in how our town is managed and governed. Transparency is key. Please let me know how we can improve and further exceed your expectations by contacting me at Mayor@CaveCreekAZ.gov. For budget details, visit CaveCreekAZ.gov/Budget.

Thompson Thrift to Develop Luxury Multifamily Community Near Phoenix

Cision PR Newswire
22 Jun, 2023, 13:12 ET

PHOENIX, June 22, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- [Thompson Thrift](#), a full-service nationally recognized real estate company and one of the nation’s leading multifamily developers, announced today the development of Stella, a

308-unit, Class A multifamily community in the Phoenix suburb of San Tan Valley. Thompson Thrift plans to begin construction in June and welcome new residents beginning in late 2024.

"San Tan Valley is part of Arizona's rapidly growing Pinal County," said Josh Purvis, managing partner for Thompson Thrift Residential. "We are excited that residents will have a top-quality new rental option to choose from when Stella opens its doors next year."

Located on a 20-acre site near North Gary Road and West Hunt Highway, Stella will consist of 12 two- and three-story buildings, a resort-style swimming pool with adjacent lawn and outdoor pavilion, two pickleball courts, two dog parks and relaxing gardens with fruit trees and fountains. The one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartment homes will offer up to 1,513 square feet and residents will be able to select from a variety of layouts and signature amenities including private enclosed yards or patio options and detached single-car garages. The apartment homes will be finished with elegant quartz countertops, hardwood style-flooring, stainless steel appliances, high-speed, instant-on internet access, ceiling fans, full-size washer and dryer, smart thermostat and an Alexa-compatible smart hub.

The pet-friendly luxury community will be close to multiple outdoor activities, including hiking, biking, or exploring the **San Tan Mountain Regional Park**, a national park

that is located two miles west of the property. Residents will be living near an array of retail options that include national tenants such as Starbucks, Taco Bell, Panda Express, Chipotle and Burger King, with a high-volume Walmart Supercenter adjacent to the property. In addition, Hunt Highway provides future residents with ease of access to nearby Queen Creek, Mesa, Gilbert, Chandler and Loop 202.

The employment corridor along Loop 202 features high-paying jobs from companies such as Liberty Mutual, Deloitte, Dignity Health and Isagenix. Additionally, Arizona State University's new Mesa City Center, a new state-of-the-art digital media learning center, is 10 minutes north. The area is also home to two airports - Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport and the Chandler Municipal Airport.

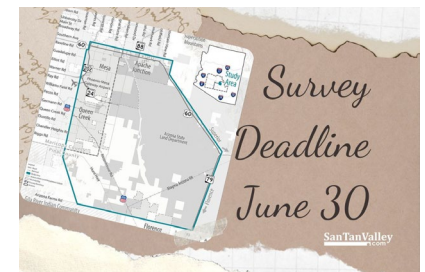
Since its founding more than 30 years ago, Thompson Thrift has invested more than \$4 billion in real estate developments in 21 states. The company and its leaders are frequent recipients of distinctions and awards conferred by regional and national organizations that reflect the company's ongoing commitment to creating environments of excellence in both the community and the workplace.

This will be Thompson Thrift's sixth community in Arizona.

Let's Shape Our Travel Future

Together: The Superstition Vistas Transportation Study

Pinal County News
SanTanValley.com
Wednesday, 21 June 2023



Hey there, San Tan Valley folks! We want to talk about an exciting project that's set to change the way we travel in our area: The Superstition Vistas Multimodal Transportation Planning Study (or SVMTPS, to keep it short).

In simple words, the SVMTPS is all about designing a transportation network that works better for us all—whether we're walking, biking, driving, or using public transport. It's like making a master plan for how to get around, both in the next few years (by 2030) and further down the line (by 2050).

The cool part? This plan isn't being cooked up in some back office. It's based on real-life stuff like what we need right now, how our county is growing, the roads we're planning to build, our energy and water systems, our land use plans, and some clever computer modeling of how we'll likely travel in the future.

The project is focusing on a vast area of Northern Pinal County that's mostly undeveloped right now.

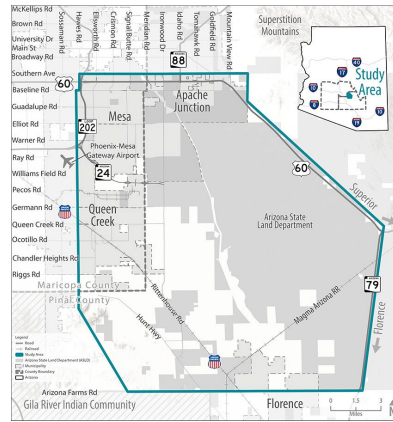
We're talking about a big slice of land from Hawes Road in Mesa and Queen Creek, and stretching to the **San Tan Mountain Regional Park** in the west. On the south side, it includes the Gila River Indian Community, San Tan Valley, and Florence. The east boundary runs along State Route 79 and US 60, and in the north, it goes up to Southern Avenue in Apache Junction and Mesa.

But here's where you come in. This isn't just a project for the experts - it's for everyone who lives, works, or travels in our area. The whole study will take around 18 months, and we've divided it into five main steps. At each stage, we'll be checking in with you and others who have a stake in our area's future.

How can you get involved? Well, for starters, there's a [survey](#) that you can take part in until June 30th. It's your chance to tell us your thoughts, share your ideas, and ask your questions. [Click here](#) to join the conversation and help make the best transportation plan for our community.

So, why not get involved and help shape our travel future? Your opinion really matters to us. This study is all about making our journeys smoother, faster, safer, and more enjoyable. Let's get moving!

[Complete Survey Here](#)



Best Day Trips From Phoenix To Take This Summer

World Atlas
June 21, 2023

The US state of [Arizona](#) is hot, and so is its capital Phoenix. With desert all around, the sun feels scorching. Summers are blazing, making residents and tourists look for good spots to beat the heat. Phoenix is a metropolitan with pulsating nightclubs, luxurious spas, expansive golf courses, redefined cityscape, southwestern cultural influence, and exciting outdoor pursuits. It is a vibrant place to spend some time, but what makes it more appealing is the abundance of attractions to discover in the vicinity.

[Phoenix](#) sits in a convenient location, from where big cities, natural hotspots, charming towns, and other attractions are easily accessible. Tourists can plan some day trips to experience what the area has to offer. While some popular places are about 3-4 hours away, there are several under 2-hour destinations for the perfect

summer escape near Phoenix. So let us look at the 10 best day trips from Phoenix to take this summer.

Prescott

About an hour and a half drive from Phoenix will take visitors to [Prescott's historical and lively town](#). The temperature is low by fewer degrees than in Phoenix, and the place is captivating with its traditional architecture, specialty boutiques, and buzzing art spaces. Visitors will also have the option to try canoeing, kayaking, paddleboarding, rock climbing, trekking, and mountain biking. The town is particularly known for its attractive avenue, full of classic bars and refurbished clubs, Whiskey Row. It provides an idyllic setting for bar tripping with karaoke, standups, and a lively atmosphere. Tourists can also spend their evenings strolling and soaking in the captivating beauty.

Lake Pleasant Regional Park



View of Lake Pleasant in Lake Pleasant Regional Park, Sonoran Desert, Arizona

The state's largest artificial lake is Lake Pleasant, just under an hour's drive from the city. It feels like a drop of relief in the expansive desert surroundings. Visitors can enjoy boating, paddleboarding, and even jet skiing in the lake and enjoy the cool waters. One can also lounge on the beach areas or go fishing. Biking and trekking

routes are also available in the regional park for adventure enthusiasts. Visitors can also have a picnic or set up a camp to make the best out of the trip. Weekdays are the best to visit without any crowds. Overall, it will be a thrilling encounter.

Montezuma Castle National Monument

Those looking for cultural and historic immersion can drive for about an hour and a half to reach the Montezuma Castle National Monument. The attraction exhibits the lifestyle and residence of the eight-centuries old Arizonian natives, Singuas. Set in the Camp Verde range, one can admire the captivating main castle and other dwellings, along with soaking in the magnificent views of the area and flora and fauna. Monetzuma's Well is another attraction in the vicinity, known for the vegetation growing around. It will be a stepping-back-in-time experience for everyone.

Cottonwood

Afternoon traffic flows through Main Street in the historic downtown quarter, via Matt Gush / Shutterstock.com

The quaint town of Cottonwood is a hidden gem of Arizona. The presence of more than 24 vineyards offering artisan wines makes this place a must-visit when in Phoenix. The wineries provide tasting rooms, wine sampling, and special tours to familiarize visitors with the process. One can relish the stunning sights of Verde Valley while sipping on exquisite wines. The Dead Horse Ranch State Park, on the banks of Verde River, in the vicinity, is the

place to check out for mountain biking, trekking, and picnics. Visitors would also like the charming atmosphere and the unique handcrafted items in the town.

Saguaro National Park



Cactus thickets in the rays of the setting sun before the thunderstorm, Saguaro National Park, southeastern Arizona

The rare Saguaro Cactus is among the highlights of Arizona. Saguaro National Park is a Tuscan gem offering the best opportunities for hiking, horse riding, wildlife watching, and photography. The sunset is absolutely gorgeous from [Saguaro National Park](#), making even the desert seem like a paradise. Visitors can also explore the region of Tuscan and its captivating architecture, cultural attractions, and beautiful landscapes. The region also houses a myriad of heritage and charming people, a bonus for those planning to visit the area.

Salt River

Water bodies and summer escape go hand-in-hand. Salt River is the ultimate beat-the-heat destination near Phoenix, just under 40 minutes drive. The student population swarms the area during weekends, so weekdays are the best to visit. Tourists can enjoy various water pursuits like paddleboarding,

kayaking, tubing, or floating in the cold waters. Wildlife spotting is another exciting activity with diverse fishes, bald eagles, and wild horses in the region. People can also simply lounge on the shores and admire the stunning landscape.

Payson

The Ellison Creek waterfall with tourists and locals sitting and swimming at the Water Wheel Falls hiking trail in Payson

The quaint mountain town of Payson provides a cool respite from the arid desert. It is a picturesque hour and a half drive from Phoenix and offers a pleasant environment and a variety of outdoor pursuits. The Tonto National Forest, encircling the town, provides a wealth of hiking and riding paths for outdoor lovers. The Mogollon Rim has a stunning background for exploration with its soaring cliffs and dense pine trees. The downtown is full of charming boutiques, art spaces, and inviting cafes, making it ideal for strolls and window shopping. Payson is the perfect place for a calm and replenishing day vacation.

Scottsdale

Urban sunset over downtown Scottsdale Arizona
Scottsdale, just twenty minutes away, is a top choice for a day getaway from Phoenix owing to its magnificent resorts, thriving art culture, and retail stores. The flourishing town caters to various interests by combining contemporary conveniences with the allure of the desert. History enthusiasts can check out the charming Old Town Scottsdale boasting its breathtaking architecture and

cultural institutions, while art lovers may browse the Scottsdale Arts District. The town offers several golfing venues and beautiful hiking paths, including the well-known Camelback Mountain. One of the biggest shopping centers is Fashion Square, with a wide selection of upscale stores and shops. Scottsdale offers a day excursion that mixes leisure, culture, and extravagance.

Canyon Lake

Just an hour from Phoenix, Canyon Lake is the ideal place to escape the city. Get away from the city and explore Canyon Lake, tucked away in the Tonto National Forest. The gorgeous lake offers a tranquil and idyllic day trip option. Renting a boat allows visitors to discover the lake and engage in activities like fishing, paddle boarding, and kayaking while looking for quiet coves. The marina on the lake provides boat trips and supervised nature tours that offer a distinctive viewpoint on the local animals and geology. For those who would rather stay on dry land, there are a variety of hiking paths that run through the nearby Superstition Mountains and provide the lake's sweeping views. It is an excellent summer day adventure.

Tempe

Tempe, just 15 minutes away from the Phoenix metropolis, is a bustling city that provides various sights and things to do for a day trip. [Tempe, where Arizona State University is located](#), boasts a vibrant cultural and artistic scene with a youthful spirit. Visitor options include the ASU Art Museum, showcasing modern art, and the

ASU Gammage Theatre, hosting live performances. There are many chances for outdoor activity at Tempe Town Lake, including kayaking, paddle boarding, and cycling around the picturesque walkways encircling the lake. The city's main strip, Mill Avenue, is brimming with stores, eateries, and entertainment establishments, offering several dining and shopping opportunities.

[Phoenix is stunning](#) and teeming with things to do. Day trips would be the best way to explore not just the city but also the nearby attractions. So, if planning to visit Phoenix, ensure to check out the spots and have the best summer experience.

Cave Creek establishes new emergency helicopter landing site

By [Sonoran News](#)
June 20, 2023



The Town of Cave Creek Public Works crew established a safe helicopter landing site for emergency incidents that occur in the **Spur Cross Conservation Area**.

They were able to use existing Town resources to grade, fill, level, and seal an already disturbed mine site location, just past the north end of the Spur Cross parking areas. Any potential hazards were removed from the immediate area.

This will now allow for all emergency medical responses and possible future fire incidents, to have a safe and dedicated location to land, load and/or unload people or materials when working on the trails in the Preserve, and the nearby Tonto National Forest, or the Cave Creek Regional Park. Should there be a need for a rescue via helicopter in that area in the future, the helicopter can land safely and away from any residential areas, in an area where no parking will be allowed.

“No Parking” signage will be installed soon, as well as a windsock to assist pilots with landings and take-offs.

Before any Town resources were used, actual on-site evaluations were conducted with the pilots from both the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office and the Department of Public Safety to get their input and approval.

The new approach and take-off routes will not have any major impacts on existing residential neighborhoods.

This will greatly reduce the need for future helicopter use and rescues to land on Spur Cross Road, or in other nearby residential areas.

The site is also large enough that the Town of Cave Creek will have future meetings with the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, and the Tonto National Forest to evaluate the possible use of portable tanks during the high fire season, that could assist with water drops in the event of a wildfire in this important area.

The Town of Cave Creek Water Department is looking into the possibility of installing a fire hydrant that will be located on an existing Spur Cross Road dead-end water main, which would also be used to assist with fire operations in this area.

“This will have a major positive impact on future emergency incidents in this area of the community.”

PHOENIX TO SEDONA DRIVE: WHAT TO SEE AND DO ON YOUR DAY TRIP

Written By: [ThePlanetD Team United States](#)

Published On: June 18, 2023

A Phoenix to Sedona drive is one of the most unlikely, lesser-discussed [road trips in the US](#). Unlike many of the US’ mammoth road trips, this Sedona road trip can easily be tackled in a day. And the route splits Arizona in two – heading north up to central Arizona and passing some of the [best places to visit in Arizona as you go](#). Only just over two hours in length, the Phoenix to Sedona drive covers 117 miles. It whisks

you from one of Arizona’s [most iconic big cities](#) into the heart of red rock country. The drive incorporates red rocks galore and tons of hiking trails. There are cultural attractions, too, like Montezuma Castle National Monument.

In this guide, we’ll cover everything worth knowing about the Phoenix to Sedona drive – which is actually a lot. There’s an ultimate itinerary coming up, plus answers to some common FAQs, and even some things to do in Sedona and Phoenix. You can easily squeeze these things in before and after your day trip of a lifetime. Let’s get started.

Phoenix To Sedona Drive Itinerary

So, you are ready to tackle the Phoenix to Sedona drive. This is easily one of Arizona’s top road trips – and day trips – and we’ve prepared the ultimate itinerary so you don’t miss out on a thing. You’ll be cutting through central Arizona and the dramatic desert landscape. Surrounded by natural beauty, this is the perfect day trip for wildlife, hiking, or animal lovers. We’ll first cover the most direct route, then provide an alternate route if you fancy a detour.

Best Sedona Tours From Phoenix

Below are some of the top tours from Phoenix to Sedona. These are great if you don’t have a car.

Top Activities and Tours:

- [Sedona Day Trip from Phoenix](#) (Most Popular)
- [Grand Canyon and Sedona Day Adventure from Scottsdale or Phoenix](#) (Our Favorite)

- [Montezuma Castle, Jerome, and Sedona Day Tour From Phoenix](#)
- [Small Group Sedona Red Rock and Native American Ruins Day Tour](#) (Best Deal)

The easiest way to complete the Phoenix to Sedona drive is to fly into Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. From Phoenix Airport, [rent a car](#), drive to Sedona using this itinerary, and then fly from Sedona Airport. Or, if you really want, you can drive back to Phoenix after spending a few nights in Sedona. If you plan a return trip, this is the perfect time to utilize our alternative route – you get the best of both worlds. Got your paper and pen ready? Then let’s start. This is the ultimate itinerary to experience the Phoenix to Sedona road trip.

1. Lake Pleasant Regional Park



Distance from Phoenix: 55 minutes

Time required: 1 hour

Lake Pleasant Regional Park is a vast recreational area and one of the first notable attractions you pass as you begin your Phoenix to Sedona drive. Lake Pleasant has over a hundred campsites and RV spots – it is a hugely popular natural getaway for those living in Phoenix. When driving from Phoenix to Sedona, it is best for an early morning refresher, thanks to its

wealth of water activities. You could go for a sunrise kayak. Or, if you leave it until 10 am, take a ride on the world's largest floating waterslide at H2. Whoa!



Pack swimwear and a towel; use Lake Pleasant as the perfect wake-up spot. It is nice to start your day with some activity, and in summer especially, Lake Pleasant has a wonderful atmosphere.

2. Rock Springs Cafe In Black Canyon City

Distance from Phoenix: 49 minutes
Time required: 30 minutes
Black Canyon City is a little desert town once used for mining. The old mining town is now a brief stop-off point on the drive from Phoenix to Sedona. However, the unassuming town has one major draw – [Rock Springs Cafe](#). The cafe has an aesthetic trucker vibe, with a faint sign etched in true Southern hospitality style on its walls.

The cafe is full of character with links to the old bootlegging days and over a hundred years of local history. Its special pies are just an added bonus. Rock Springs ships pie all over the US and serve them to visitors on arrival. We suggest stopping by for a quick brunch after your water activities on Lake Pleasant.

3. Badger Springs Trail

Distance from Phoenix: 1 hour 10 minutes
Time required: 1 hour
Badger Springs Trail is a 1.5 miles hike with a trailhead within the Agua Fria National Monument. Short but sweet, this trail is easy to complete and suitable for hikers of all capabilities so long as they have basic mobility. The trail drops you down along the banks of the Agua Fria River, immersing you in Arizonian wildlife and taking you to some spectacular Perry Mesa petroglyphs hidden inside a canyon. Badger Springs Trail is perfect for spending an hour or so stretching your legs. The trail is relatively busy but not packed, so it is a nice opportunity to see some petroglyphs without straining your neck to peer over crowds.

4. Agua Fria National Monument

Distance from Phoenix: 1 hour 10 minutes
Time required: 1 hour
Now that you've officially entered the central region of Agua Fria National Monument, you can genuinely appreciate the 71,000 acres of protected natural space. Badger Springs Trail is a great way to start your time in the national monument – especially with its history, wildlife, and Agua Fria River access.

However, after this, we'd suggest spending a little extra time in the area with binoculars, just taking a break from driving and enjoying the views. You can spot coyotes, mountain lions,

mule deer, and even antelope if you are lucky.

You can detour to the Pueblo La Plata site at this point if you want as well. Visiting Pueblo La Plata involves a 40-minute drive through a remote desert landscape to see an ancient Native American Settlement.

5. Montezuma Castle National Monument

Distance from Phoenix: 1 hour 45 minutes
Time required: 30 minutes
Speaking of Native American history, Montezuma Castle is one of the [best things to do in Arizona](#). The 20-story cliff dwelling is a remarkable early settlement cut into limestone rock. This ancient stone pueblo is one of the US' most revered historical attractions. You can take a ranger-led tour of Montezuma Castle or visit independently. It is just a short walk from the parking area along a paved track – taking under 10 minutes to complete. While you can't enter Montezuma Castle, you can get fabulous views from just outside.

Montezuma Castle National Monument is situated just outside of Camp Verde. It is easily one of the best historical attractions you can add as a stop-off on your journey from Phoenix to Sedona, and you should definitely tick it off.

6. Red Rock Scenic Byway
Distance from Phoenix: 1 hour 50 minutes
Time required: 20 minutes
Many people say that the Red Rock Scenic Byway is a gateway to Sedona. The scenic drive is approximately 7.5 miles long

and cuts through some spectacular red rock formations. Since Sedona is famed for its red rocks, it is no wonder this entering road is full of bright, cherry-red rock features.

Driving, it only takes 20 minutes; this byway is on the direct route from Phoenix to Arizona. It is the easiest attraction to combine with this road trip – you won't have to go out of your way. And in fact, the only way this will take extra time is if you want to stop and take some quick photos.

7. Bell Rock

Distance from Phoenix: 2 hours
Time required: 1-2 hours
Bell Rock is a dramatic red rock butte you pass just before entering Sedona. As a final stop-off before entering the city, we recommend stopping and hiking (or mountain biking) up Bell Rock. The trail is only 0.8 miles out and back, but you'll reach an elevation gain of 203 feet – so be prepared to get slightly out of puff.

This trail is ranked as moderate, and you'll need to bring some water and sound, sturdy shoes. However, it is one of Sedona's most iconic hikes, so it is fantastic to complete. The panoramic view you get on this hike makes it all worthwhile.

Things to Do in Peoria, Az

June 20, 2023

Photo by Megan Ellis
DriftTravel.com

Are you looking for an exciting destination to explore? Look no

further than Peoria, AZ! Located in the heart of the Sonoran Desert, offers a wide array of things to do in Peoria for visitors of all ages. From outdoor adventures to cultural experiences, this vibrant city has something for everyone. Whether you're a nature enthusiast, history buff, or thrill-seeker, Peoria will captivate your senses with its natural beauty, rich heritage, and thrilling activities. So if you want to move to Peoria you should consider [Method Moving and Storage of Peoria, AZ!](#) Instead of adding more stress to your already overwhelming to-do list, seek their assistance in packing up your belongings. They offer quick packing services using materials of high quality throughout the industry.

When it comes to things to do in Peoria, AZ, the possibilities are endless. Nature lovers can immerse themselves in the breathtaking landscapes by embarking on hikes through picturesque trails at Sunrise Mountain Preserve or enjoying the recreational activities at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. If you're interested in the arts and culture, Peoria has you covered with its cultural institutions like the Challenger Space Center and the Peoria Center for the Performing Arts. These attractions offer interactive exhibits, educational programs, and live performances that showcase the wonders of space and the talents of local and international artists.

Explore the Natural Beauty of Peoria
Enjoy Outdoor Activities in Peoria

When it comes to things to do in Peoria, it has plenty to offer. The city is surrounded by stunning natural landscapes, providing endless opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts.

Hike the Trails at Sunrise Mountain Preserve
Begin your outdoor exploration by embarking on a hike at the Sunrise Mountain Preserve. This scenic desert park boasts numerous trails of varying difficulty levels, allowing hikers to immerse themselves in the beauty of the Sonoran Desert. From breathtaking panoramic views to unique desert flora and fauna, the Sunrise Mountain Preserve offers an unforgettable hiking experience.

Visit **Lake Pleasant Regional Park**

For water lovers, a visit to Lake Pleasant Regional Park is a must. This expansive reservoir offers a plethora of recreational activities, including boating, fishing, kayaking, and paddleboarding. Enjoy a day on the water, soak up the Arizona sun, and revel in the natural beauty surrounding Lake Pleasant.

Discover Peoria's Cultural Scene
Beyond its natural beauty, Peoria is also home to a vibrant cultural scene that celebrates art, science, and performing arts.

Visit the Challenger Space Center
Unleash your inner astronaut and visit the Challenger Space Center. This unique facility offers interactive exhibits, simulators, and educational programs that allow visitors to learn about space exploration.

Discover the wonders of the universe and get a taste of what it's like to be an astronaut.

Experience Thrilling Adventures
Go on an Off-Road Adventure
For those seeking thrilling adventures, Peoria offers exciting off-road experiences that will get your adrenaline pumping.

Take a Desert Jeep Tour
Hop aboard a rugged Jeep and embark on a thrilling desert jeep tour. Traverse rugged terrains, navigate through sandy washes, and witness the awe-inspiring beauty of the desert landscape. Knowledgeable guides will share interesting facts about the flora, fauna, and history of the region, making your off-road adventure both exhilarating and educational.

Try ATV Riding in the Sonoran Desert
If you prefer a more hands-on approach, rent an ATV and set off on an adrenaline-fueled adventure through the Sonoran Desert. Feel the rush as you zoom across sandy trails, conquer challenging dunes, and soak in the breathtaking desert vistas. ATV riding in Peoria is an experience that will leave you with memories to last a lifetime.

Take to the Skies
For a unique perspective of Peoria's beauty, take to the skies and indulge in exhilarating aerial activities.
Go Hot Air Ballooning over Peoria
Drift gently above the picturesque landscapes of Peoria as you embark on a hot air balloon ride. Watch the sunrise or sunset paint the sky with vibrant colors as you float

peacefully in the air. Enjoy panoramic views of the city, desert, and mountains, creating a truly enchanting experience that will take your breath away.

Try Tandem Skydiving
A fun thing to do in Peoria is tandem skydiving! If you're a thrill-seeker, why not take the leap and experience the ultimate adrenaline rush with tandem skydiving? Feel the exhilaration as you freefall through the sky, enjoying breathtaking views of the desert below. With an experienced skydiving instructor by your side, you'll feel safe and secure as you embark on this unforgettable adventure.

Delve into Peoria's History and Heritage
Peoria's rich history and heritage are waiting to be discovered. Immerse yourself in the stories of the past as you explore the city's historical sites and landmarks.

Visit the Peoria Arizona Historical Society Museum
A thing to do in Peoria this weekend may be the Peoria Arizona Historical Society Museum. This museum showcases the history and culture of Peoria and its surrounding areas. Discover fascinating artifacts, photographs, and exhibits that bring the city's heritage to life. Gain insights into the early settlers, indigenous tribes, and the growth of Peoria over the years.

Indulge in Shopping and Dining
Some things to do in Peoria include shopping and dining experiences catering to all tastes and preferences.

Shop at Park West
Indulge in a shopping spree at Park West, a premier outdoor shopping destination in Peoria. This upscale mall features a wide range of stores, from high-end fashion boutiques to popular brands. Explore the shops, discover the latest trends, and find the perfect items to complement your style.

Discover Local Cuisine
A family thing to do in Peoria, Arizona, is Peoria's dining scene is a melting pot of flavors, offering a variety of cuisines to tantalize your taste buds. From Southwestern delicacies to international fare, you'll find a plethora of options to satisfy your cravings. Sample traditional Mexican dishes, savor mouthwatering BBQ, or enjoy a gourmet dining experience at one of Peoria's renowned restaurants.

Enjoy Family-Friendly Activities
Peoria is a fantastic destination for families, offering a range of activities that are sure to entertain both children and adults alike.
Visit the Wildlife World Zoo, Aquarium & Safari Park
Embark on a wild adventure at the Wildlife World Zoo, Aquarium & Safari Park. This expansive wildlife park is home to a diverse collection of animals from around the world. Marvel at the majestic lions, observe playful dolphins, and encounter exotic creatures up close. With interactive exhibits, animal encounters, and thrilling shows, the Wildlife World Zoo is a must-visit for animal lovers of all ages.

Conclusion

Peoria, AZ, offers a myriad of experiences for visitors looking to immerse themselves in natural beauty, thrilling adventures, rich history, delicious cuisine, and family-friendly activities. From hiking the trails at Sunrise Mountain Preserve to exploring the city's cultural scene, there is something for everyone in Peoria. Whether you're seeking outdoor thrills, cultural enrichment, or simply a relaxing getaway, Peoria will not disappoint. So pack your bags, embrace the desert charm, and embark on an unforgettable journey through the vibrant city of Peoria, AZ.

KB Home Announces the Grand Opening of Its Newest Community in Queen Creek, Arizona

BusinessWire.com
June 16, 2023 08:00 AM Eastern
Daylight Time

The Enclaves at Sonrisa offers personalized, new homes in the Phoenix area close to desirable schools and outdoor recreation, priced from the mid \$400,000s.

KB Home announces the grand opening of its newest community in Queen Creek, Arizona. (Photo: Business Wire)

QUEEN CREEK, Ariz.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--KB Home (NYSE: KBH) today announced the grand opening of The Enclaves at

Sonrisa, a new community of single-family homes in Queen Creek, Arizona. The new homes at The Enclaves at Sonrisa are designed for the way people live today, with popular design features like modern kitchens overlooking large great rooms, expansive bedroom suites with walk-in closets, and ample storage space. The community's floor plans feature up to five bedrooms and three baths. Homeowners will appreciate The Enclaves at Sonrisa's planned amenities, which will include ramada shade structures, table tennis, a children's play area and a picnic area with barbeque pits. The new community is also close to desirable schools.

What sets KB Home apart is the company's focus on building strong, personal relationships with every customer, so they have a real partner in the homebuying process. Every KB home is uniquely built for each customer, so no two KB homes are the same. Homebuyers have the ability to personalize their new home, from floor plans to exterior styles to where they live in the community. Their home comes to life in the KB Home Design Studio, a one-of-a-kind experience where customers get both expert advice and the opportunity to select from a wide range of design choices that fit their style and their budget. Reflecting the company's commitment to creating an exceptional homebuying experience, KB Home is the #1 customer-ranked national homebuilder based on homebuyer satisfaction surveys from a leading third-party review site.

"We are pleased to offer homebuyers in the Phoenix area spacious new homes close to desirable schools and outdoor recreation that live bigger for less," said Kevin McAndrews, President of KB Home's Phoenix division. "Homeowners will appreciate living near outdoor recreation, including championship golf courses and **San Tan Regional Park** for camping, hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. At KB Home, we're here to help you achieve your dream with a personalized new home built uniquely for you and your life."

Innovative design plays an essential role in every home KB builds. The company's floor plans inspire contemporary living, with a focus on roomy, light-filled spaces that have easy indoor/outdoor flow. KB homes are engineered to be highly energy and water efficient and include features that support healthier indoor environments. Thanks to quality construction techniques and materials, every home KB builds is designed to be ENERGY STAR® certified – a standard that fewer than 10% of new homes nationwide meet – to deliver greater comfort, well-being and utility cost savings than new homes without certification.

The Enclaves at Sonrisa is situated on East Mockingbird Drive just off South Ellsworth Road and near Loop 202 and U.S. Highway 60, providing access to job centers in Mesa, Chandler and Gilbert. The new community is also close to shopping, dining and entertainment at Queen Creek Marketplace and Costco® as

well as family friendly activities at Queen Creek Olive Mill, Schnepf Farms and FatCats Queen Creek.

The Enclaves at Sonrisa sales office and model homes are open for walk-in visits and private in-person tours by appointment. Homebuyers also have the flexibility to arrange a live video tour with a sales counselor. Pricing begins from the mid \$400,000s.

For more information on KB Home, call 888-KB-HOMES or visit kbhome.com.

Surprise photographer's work fills Vista Center

Desert landscapes on display until July 6
Surprise Independent
Posted Sunday, June 11,
2023 8:49 pm

The Vista Center for the Arts is hosting an art exhibit, Desert Landscapes Photography through July 6 at 15660 N. Parkview Place.

Visitors can take in scenic views of the desert by local photographer, Chuck Kyle.

This exhibit is open during summer box office hours, which are from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays through Thursdays. The Vista Center is closed on holidays.

Originally from Wisconsin, Kyle lived 25 years in El Paso, Texas, before coming to Arizona. He

and his wife, Luciana, moved to Surprise 16 years ago.

Kyle worked as a general manager in the Corrugated Paper manufacturing industry until 2017.

With his home's proximity to the **White Tank Mountain Regional Park**, he took up hiking every weekend and in 2015 started his landscape photography in earnest.

In that same year he purchased an Epson 9890 44" printer and began to print his photographs on canvas and gloss paper. Kyle also bought a high-end mat cutter and began to buy frames in bulk to do his own matting and framing, which he continues to this day.

His exhibit proves no other location can surpass the Arizona for it's absolute raw beauty.

Whether Northern Arizona or all the way down to the border with Mexico, the diversity of the landscape is all over the exhibit.

With all of this beauty around us it is not hard to find subjects to photograph, including the trademark saguaro cactus. They are as individual as people and Chuck finds new subjects to shoot everywhere he goes in Southern Arizona.

To purchase fine art from this exhibit, contact gallery manager Kara Poling, kara.poling@dysart.org or call 623-876-7155.

18-year-old swimmer found dead in Lake Pleasant identified by MCSO

[Jose R. Gonzalez](#)
Arizona Republic
June 8, 2023

Authorities have identified the swimmer whose body was recovered Wednesday evening from a marina at **Lake Pleasant**.

Jovanni Thomas-Padilla, 18, was [found dead by divers after going underwater and not resurfacing](#) at the Scorpion Bay Marina in Peoria, according to the sheriff's office. Around 4:20 p.m. on Wednesday, deputies were dispatched to the marina for a man who had difficulty swimming before he went under and did not come back up.

Rescue crews from both the sheriff's office and the Peoria Fire Department assisted in the search. Additional information regarding the incident was not released.

MCSO recovers body of man who didn't resurface at Lake Pleasant

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office crews found the body of the man who went underwater and didn't resurface at Lake Pleasant Wednesday.



By: [abc15.com staff](#)
Posted at 4:51 PM, Jun 07, 2023
and last updated 12:59 PM, Jun 08, 2023

PEORIA, AZ – Maricopa County Sheriff's Office crews found the body of the man who went underwater and didn't resurface at **Lake Pleasant** Wednesday.

Officials say the man was having difficulty swimming near Scorpion Bay Marina before going underwater around 4:30 p.m.

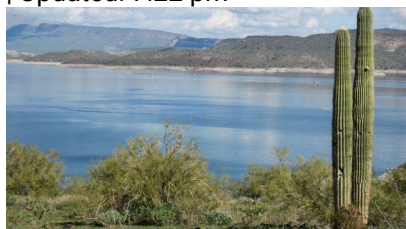
The man's body has since been found.

He was identified by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Thursday as 18-year-old Giovanni Thomas-Padilla.

Officials did not provide any further information.

Authorities recover body of man who didn't resurface at Lake Pleasant

Jun 7, 2023, 5:03 PM
| Updated: 7:22 pm



(Facebook Photo/Lake Pleasant Regional Park)
Share
BY [KTAR.COM](#)

PHOENIX – Authorities have recovered the body of a man who didn't resurface in the waters at Scorpion Bay Marina at **Lake Pleasant** on Wednesday afternoon.

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office said the man was having difficulty swimming before he went underwater at about 4:20 p.m.

MCSO announced it had recovered his body just after 7 p.m.

The identity of the man was not released on Wednesday.

No other information was immediately available.

Deputies recover, identify body of swimmer who didn't resurface at Lake Pleasant

The man was having trouble swimming before he went under, deputies say.

By [Alexis Cortez](#)

Published: Jun. 7, 2023 at 5:02 PM MST|Updated: Jun. 8, 2023 at 12:37 PM MST

LAKE PLEASANT, AZ (3TV/CBS 5) – Maricopa County deputies have identified the body of a swimmer recovered at **Lake Pleasant** on Wednesday afternoon. The sheriff's office says 18-year-old Giovanni Thomas-Padilla was found after

more than two hours of searching.

Just before 4:30 p.m., investigators were called to the Scorpion Bay Marina for a man who was having trouble swimming. However, he went under and never resurfaced, deputies said. Around 7 p.m., deputies confirmed Thomas-Padilla's body was found.

The investigation is ongoing.

Swimmer dies after not resurfacing at Lake Pleasant marina

[Aidan Wohl](#)

Aidan Wohl, Arizona Republic
June 7, 2023

A man died after authorities say he went underwater and didn't resurface at Scorpion Bay Marina in Peoria on Wednesday afternoon.

According to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, at around 4:20 p.m., deputies were sent out to Scorpion Bay Marina after receiving a call about the incident. Search efforts were conducted by deputies and the Peoria Fire Department.

About three hours later the body of the man was found, Sgt. Calbert Gillett with the sheriff's office said.

The man's identity was to be released Thursday, the sheriff's office said. Additional details were not released.

The investigation was ongoing, the sheriff's office said.

18-year-old identified as body recovered from Lake Pleasant, MCSO says

Dive teams were dispatched to Scorpion Bay Marina after receiving reports a man was having trouble swimming, went underwater, and failed to resurface.



Author: Heather DeShong,
Channel 12
Published: 4:59 PM MST June 7, 2023
Updated: 2:54 PM MST June 8, 2023

PEORIA, Ariz. — [Maricopa County Sheriff's deputies](#) have recovered the body of a man who went missing after going underwater at **Lake Pleasant**.

MCSO said deputies and Peoria Fire dive teams were dispatched to Scorpion Bay Marina around 4:20 p.m. after receiving reports a man was having trouble swimming, went underwater, and hadn't been seen again.

Authorities said the man has been identified as 18-year-old Giovanni Thomas-Padilla. A [GoFundMe](#) has been created in his name.

Body of swimmer found at Lake Pleasant's Scorpion Bay Marina, MCSO says

By FOX 10 Staff
Published June 7, 2023
Updated June 8, 2023
[FOX 10 Phoenix](#)

MARICOPA COUNTY, Ariz. - Authorities found the body of a man who went swimming in Lake Pleasant and never came back up, the [Maricopa County Sheriff's Office](#) said on Wednesday afternoon.

At around 4:20 p.m. on June 7, the sheriff's office responded to [Scorpion Bay Marina at Lake Pleasant](#) for a man they said had trouble swimming before he went underwater and never came back up.

His body was found not long after.
He was identified as 18-year-old Giovanni Thomas-Padilla.

Authorities recover body of man who didn't resurface at Lake Pleasant

Jun 7, 2023, 5:03 PM
| Updated: 7:22 pm



(Facebook Photo/Lake Pleasant Regional Park)

Share
BY [KTAR.COM](#)

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The identity of the man was not released on Wednesday.

No other information was immediately available.

The Best Parks and Trails in Apache Junction, AZ: A Guide to Outdoor Recreation

Patch
June 1, 2023



The [Apache Junction](#) area in Arizona is a great destination for outdoor recreation, boasting some of the best parks and trails in the region.

Lost Dutchman State Park is one of Apache Junction's most popular attractions, offering numerous outdoor activities including hiking, horseback riding, camping, biking and more. It features a variety of trails ranging from mild to challenging, providing something for all skill levels. The park also offers stunning views of Superstition Mountains and Saguaro cacti that visitors can enjoy while exploring its trails.

Picacho Peak State Park is another favorite spot for outdoor recreation in Apache Junction. It's home to over 4 miles of scenic trails that lead to spectacular mountain views. From the summit, you can see the city below as well as surrounding mountains and desert scenery. Some visitors even get bird's-eye views of migrating hawks during fall months! Additionally, there are plenty of picnic spots and playgrounds perfect for a family outing.

For an off-the-beaten-path experience, try exploring **Usery Mountain Regional Park**. With more than 30 miles of hiking trails ranging from easy to difficult, it's an excellent place for day hikers seeking to explore unique terrain without taking on too much risk or difficulty. Its picturesque Sonoran Desert vistas are breathtaking, as well as rare wildflowers that bloom throughout spring months.

Apache Junction is also close to Lost Goldmine Trail which meanders through rugged terrain with beautiful views of Four Peaks mountain range

along the way. This trail has been used by Native Americans for centuries but is now open to the public for hiking and horseback riding adventures! Along with incredible panoramas of canyons and mountainsides, this route also leads to an abandoned mine where many believe lost gold may still be hidden away -- making it a great place for aspiring treasure hunters!

No matter what type of adventure you're looking for, Apache Junction has something special waiting just around the corner! So if you're ready to explore Arizona's great outdoors in style -- these parks and trails are sure to hit the spot!

PRESS RELEASE:

Fire Restrictions Increased in Maricopa County's Regional Parks

June 28, 2023



Recently, small brush fires have started popping up around the valley. On June 27, a five-acre brush fire exploded into a 2,500-acre wildfire in a matter of hours. This wildfire, now known as the Diamond Fire, borders

McDowell Mountain Regional Park, which is managed by Maricopa County.

"On June 27, working closely with Scottsdale Fire Department, we evacuated and closed McDowell Mountain Regional Park to protect visitors and staff," said Maricopa County Supervisor Thomas Galvin, who represents District 2, where the park is located.

"Unfortunately, some fire damage did occur, though so far, it has been minimal. Since the majority of the County's regional parks now border housing communities, I have asked our Parks Department if there are additional measures we can take to minimize the chance of a wildfire igniting in one of our parks. Fortunately, there are, and we are taking action."

"For the past month, my team has been monitoring the moisture in the air and the vegetation in the parks," said R.J. Cardin, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation director. "We have also been strategically clearing brush in areas to create fire breaks and defensible spaces. This spring, we had an abundance of vegetation growth, which now serves as fuel to help spread wildfires. Given what we're seeing at McDowell Mountain Regional Park, we have decided to heighten our fire restrictions to include smoking. This decision is not a knee-jerk reaction to the current situation, but rather a preventative measure to keep park visitors, the natural resources, and communities that surround the parks safe."

Effective Thursday, June 29, smoking in Maricopa County's regional parks will be prohibited, except within enclosed vehicles or campers. Individuals who smoke are asked to ensure that all materials are fully extinguished and disposed of properly. The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department initiated its annual fire ban on May 1.

The department's decision to increase fire restrictions aligns with the [Bureau of Land Management](#), [Tonto National Forest](#), and [Arizona State Park's](#) current fire restrictions.

The usual restrictions, which include banning the use of all campfires, fire pits, and charcoal in grills or any other manner, are still in effect; however, it is acceptable to use gas/propane grills in designated areas. Violation of Park Rule R-113 may result in a citation. A date to lift the fire ban has not been established.

Eleven Maricopa County regional parks have been affected by the fire ban: Lake Pleasant Regional Park, White Tank Mountain Regional Park, Adobe Dam Regional Park, Buckeye Hills Regional Park, Estrella Mountain Regional Park, Hassayampa River Preserve, San Tan Mountain Regional Park, Usery Mountain Regional Park, McDowell Mountain Regional Park, Cave Creek Regional Park, and Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area.

If you have any questions regarding the fire ban, contact the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department at (602)

506-2930, or visit www.maricopa.gov/parks.