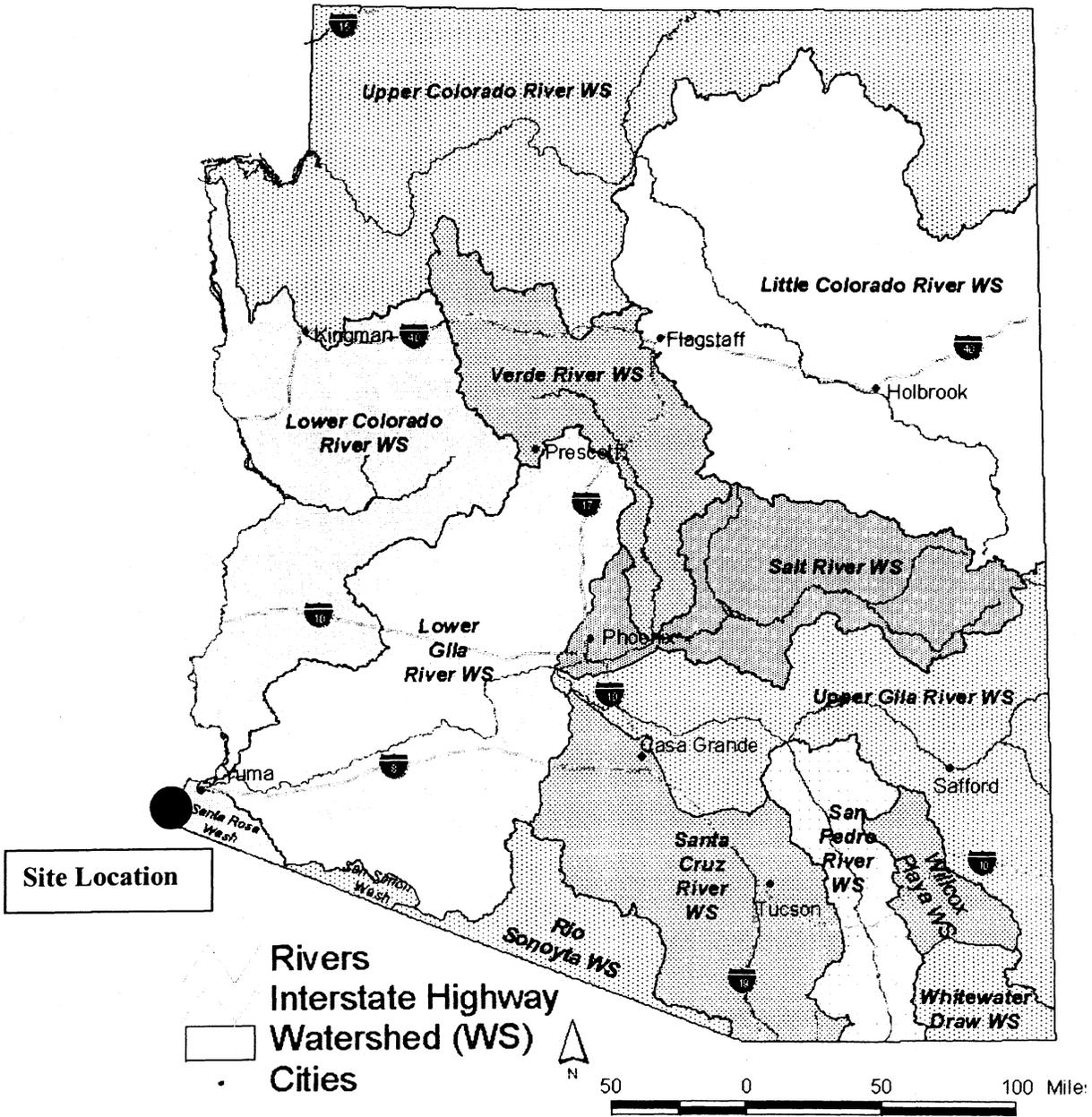


Arizona Watershed Map FY 2007



Title of Project: Cocopah Colorado River Restoration

Executive Summary

This proposal will restore 25 acres of native wetland, riparian, and upland vegetation, including 1 acre of bankline along the Colorado River, 19 acres of cottonwood/willow/mesquite forest, and 5 acres of fallow agriculture conversion to riparian/upland habitat within the Cocopah Indian Reservation in the Limotrophe District along the Lower Colorado River. Phase I of this restoration project has commenced, which included the initial exotic species removal from the site funded from the Department of Homeland Security. This AWPf proposal will fund the completion of Phase I, including riparian, wetland, and upland revegetation of the 25-acre site. This restoration project is an integral piece to the restoration of the lower Colorado River in order to increase habitat for wildlife by providing greater connectivity to native habitats as well as providing recreational, educational, and interpretive opportunities for the Cocopah Tribe and the public.

The aquatic, wetland, and riparian ecosystems of the lower Colorado River have been greatly altered and reduced by over a century of water development projects, deforestation, agriculture and development, and non-native species invasion. These activities have decimated native stands of cottonwood, willow, mesquite, and a variety of perennial and annual native grasses, forbs, flowers and shrubs and have promoted the establishment and proliferation of non-native, invasive species such as tamarisk and giant cane. Seasonal flooding that provided alluvial seed beds of native cottonwood and willow have ceased to occur causing the demise of natural recruitment of these species as well as ending the natural process of soil desalinization. Also, historic wetlands, aquatic habitats, and back water channels have filled in with sediment due to the lack of scouring flood flows. The ecological integrity of this system has been compromised, which has fostered the growth of low quality habitat dominated by tamarisk. Wildlife species, particularly resident and migratory bird populations, have declined with the loss of suitable cottonwood/willow and bulrush/cattail habitat. In the arid southwest, native wetland and riparian habitats have disproportionately higher species diversity and density than any other habitat type in the overall landscape, however have become extremely threatened.

The lower Colorado River is the homeland of the Cocopah Indian Tribe, which was the center of the Tribe's way of life. However, with the advent of hydroelectric power and various water management projects the riparian and wetland areas have suffered a radical loss of flow and have deteriorated to the point of being inaccessible and therefore useless to Tribal members and the general public. Initiating this restoration project, will provide a new opportunity to restore productive native habitat that will help recover native wildlife and a valuable resource for the Cocopah Tribe. The Cocopah Environmental Protection Office with funds from the Department of Homeland Security has already invested over \$100,000 to remove exotic vegetation on 100+ acres along the Colorado River within the Cocopah Indian Reservation. If funded, this monumental project will provide the next essential steps to restoring healthy native wetland, riparian, and upland habitat to prevent exotic vegetation re-growth and provide high quality habitat for wildlife. There has been limited restoration efforts in the Limotrophe District of the lower Colorado River. In order to accomplish this 25-acre wetland, riparian and upland restoration project, the following objectives have been proposed:

1. Restore approximately 1 acre of wetland and riparian bank line habitat along the slope of the Colorado River on the Cocopah Indian Reservation.
2. Restore approximately 19 acres of self sustaining riparian habitat supported by flood/drip irrigation adjacent to the Colorado River.
3. Restore approximately 5 acres of fallow agricultural land to native cottonwood/ willow/mesquite habitat adjacent to the 20 acre restoration site.
4. Obtain valuable data to apply to future restoration activities within the Limotrophe District.

This will be accomplished by completing the following tasks:

1. Planting and irrigation design based upon the site and soil analysis.
2. Follow up mechanical/herbicide weed removal on the 25 acres site
3. Revegetate 25-acres of native wetland, riparian, and upland habitats.
4. Plant and avifauna monitoring within the revegetation and wetland restoration areas