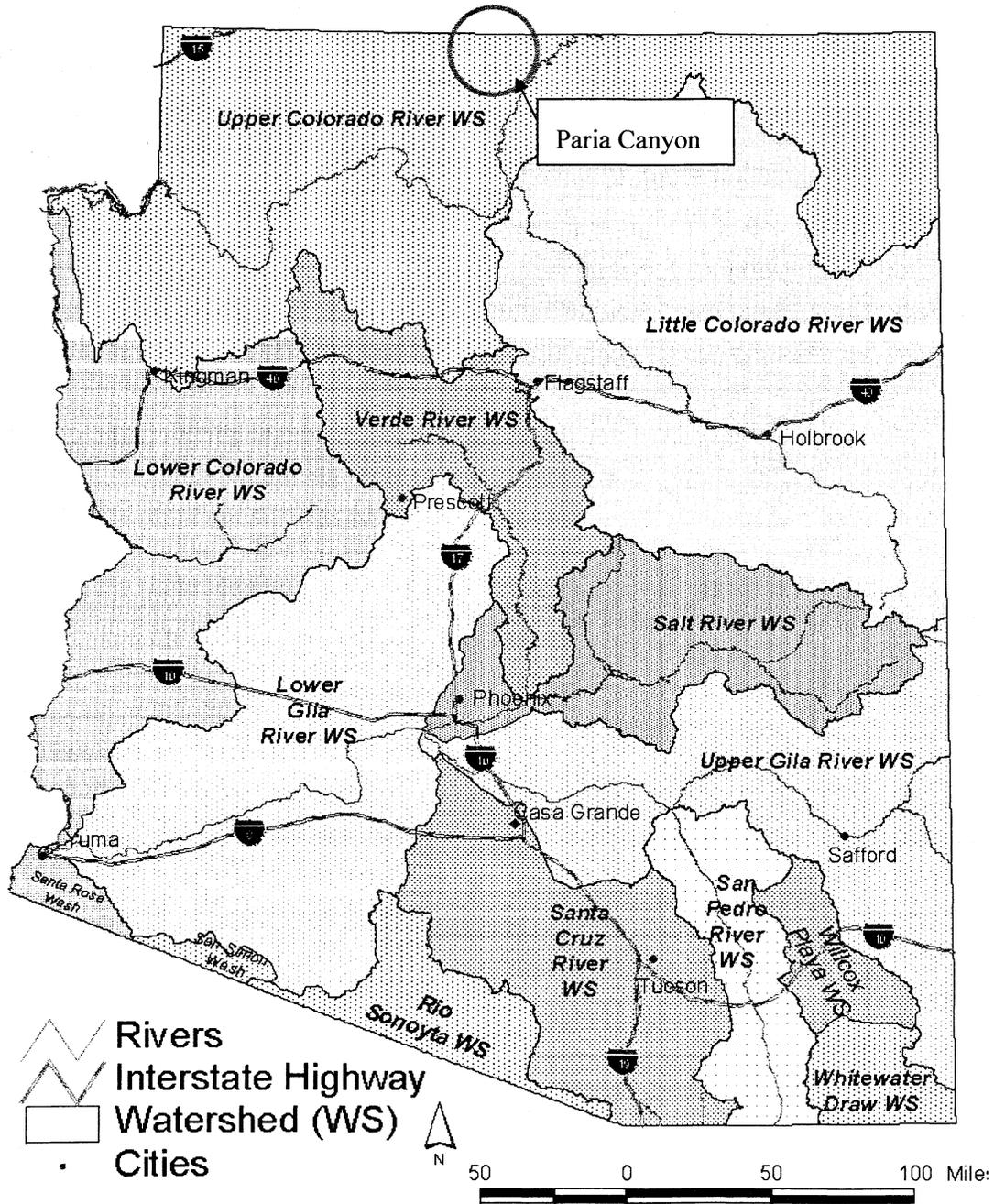


ARIZONA WATERSHED MAP

FY 2007



Title of Project: Paria River Exotic Removal Project: Phase I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this project is to restore and preserve natural conditions in the Paria River Canyon and Buckskin Gulch by decreasing the negative impacts of non-native shrubs and trees such as tamarisk and Russian olive and to enhance wildlife habitat by protecting and restoring native riparian vegetation through natural recruitment following treatment.

The Paria Canyon - Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Area contains 112,500 acres (92,500 acres in Coconino County, Arizona and 20,000 acres in Kane County, Utah) of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The area is approximately 10 to 30 miles west of Page, Arizona. Included are 35 miles of the Paria River Canyon, 15 miles of the Buckskin Gulch, Coyote Buttes, and the Vermilion Cliffs from Lee's Ferry to House Rock Valley. In Arizona, the Paria Canyon - Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness is part of the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument. The National Monument encompasses approximately 293,000 acres of land, approximately 280,000 acres of which are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Its centerpiece is the majestic Paria Plateau, a grand terrace lying between two great geologic structures, the East Kaibab and the Echo Cliffs monoclines. The Paria River Canyon winds along the east side of the Paria Plateau to the Colorado River and is valued as a Wild and Scenic River. The canyon provides opportunities for a primitive experience and solitude; the area is generally natural and undisturbed. Recreation typically includes hiking, backpacking, and some horseback riding.

The Grand Canyon Trust has recently acquired grazing permits for the Kane and Two Mile ranches, which extend across 850,000 acres, and include the Paria Plateau and portions of the Paria River Canyon. The Trust is working in collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies to maintain and restore natural conditions across this landscape. The Trust is now working with the BLM to address the invasion of non-native riparian species along the Paria River corridor and to restore the system to more natural conditions.

Many of the terraces existing along the Paria River have become invaded by non-native tamarisk and Russian olive trees (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), and these species are becoming especially well established along the lower reaches of the river, near the confluence with the Colorado River. The Trust and the BLM have begun a partnership to remove tamarisk and Russian olive along the length of the Paria River from the state line to the wilderness boundary, near the confluence with the Colorado River in the form of a multi-phase project. This proposal is designed to aid Phase I of the project: 17 miles from the Arizona state line to Wrather Canyon. This section of the stream contains low to moderate densities of tamarisk and Russian olive intermingled with an abundance of native trees and shrubs.

In the proposed project, tamarisk and Russian olive will be removed by cutting stems close to the ground using hand tools followed by application of a selective herbicide to the cut stems. In areas where large numbers of stems are cut, the debris will be piled along the banks of the river and burned. Periodic re-treatment will also occur. Post-treatment recovery of native vegetation will be closely monitored. Natural recruitment is highly likely in the project area because native vegetation is still dominant in this area, and it is expected that the diverse native vegetation already present in the canyon will replace the exotic plants following their removal. Post-treatment recruitment of native vegetation will be of key importance in determining the ultimate success of the project, and will help to guide the appropriate course of action for eradication and re-vegetation efforts future project phases in the lower sections of the river.

The combined in-kind contribution from the BLM and Grand Canyon Trust is \$116,188.00. This work is expected to be a largely volunteer-driven effort (approximately 11,000 volunteer hours). The Trust has been recruiting volunteers since 1999 to work on a variety of conservation projects in the greater Flagstaff area and across the Colorado Plateau. Beginning in 2005, the volunteer program began focusing primarily on restoration projects located on the Kane and Two Mile ranches. In the last year, the Trust has recruited over 200 volunteers and 10,000 hours. Moreover, the Trust continues to focus their efforts on integrating conservation education with volunteer work by providing comprehensive presentations given by Trust staff and local professionals during volunteer field trips. The Trust has also recently initiated a lecture series where the community can become engaged in local issues.

The Grand Canyon Trust recognizes the long-term investment that is required to make tamarisk and Russian olive eradication efforts successful. The Trust is dedicated to their role as stewards of this section of the Paria River, and is eager to take the steps necessary to sustain a healthy native riparian community. AWPf has already made contributions toward the eradication of invasive riparian species in the Colorado River below Glen Canyon Dam. Following the great success of tamarisk removal from tributaries in the Grand Canyon (#05-131WPF and #06-138WPF) and on the main stem at Lee's Ferry (#99-075WPF), the continuation of these efforts on the Paria River would be a worthy contribution toward the greater success of tamarisk eradication efforts on this section of the Colorado River.