

Fiscal Year 2008

# Accomplishments Report



SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY

Environmental Protection &  
Natural Resources Department



# Environmental Protection & Natural Resources

## Mission Statement

The Environmental Protection & Natural Resources Department protects, preserves, restores, and regulates the Community's natural resources and archaeological heritage by enforcing regulatory programs and providing educational opportunities to the Community.



*Cover Photo: A newborn foal and its mother on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.*

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# Introduction



EPNR 2008 Staff Photo (left to right)

Front Row: Denise Taylor, Jenifer Williams, Ondrea Barber, Gina Leverette, Angela Cruz, Kari Morehouse  
Middle Row: Amy Miguel, Joe Herrera, Tudor Montague, Corwin Smith, Kevin Evanishyn, Chris Horan, Garfield King  
Back Row: Daniel Daggett, Stan Belone, Tom Wright, Mark Aaron, Brian Gewecke, Greg Little  
Not Pictured: Wang Yu

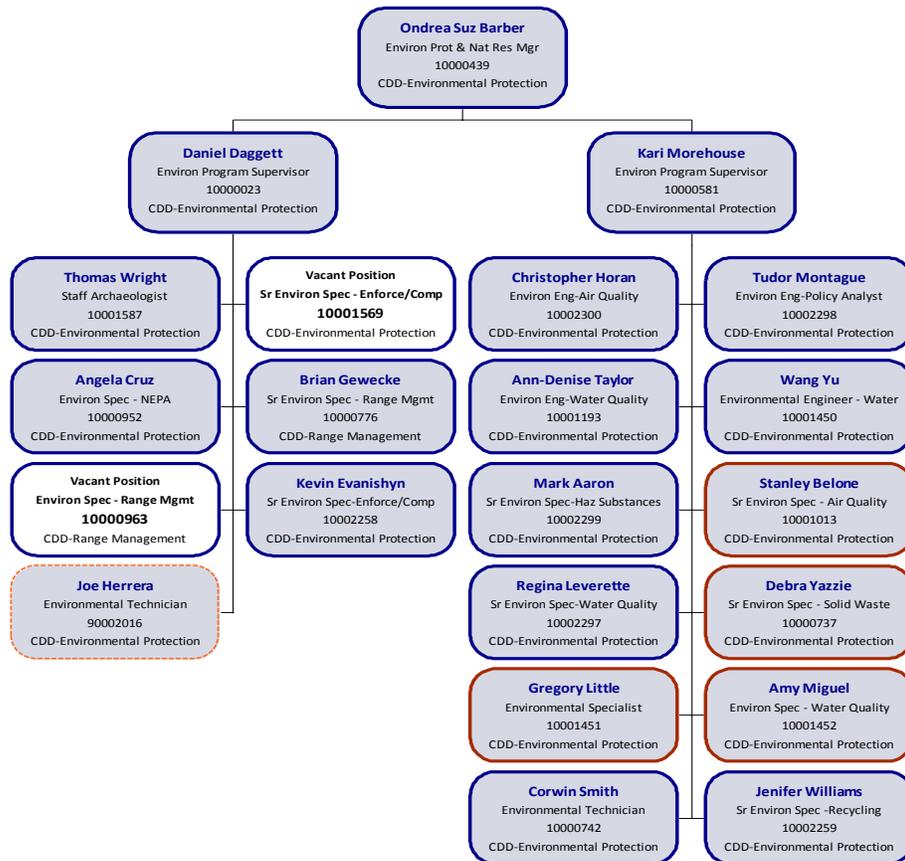
## Environmental Protection & Natural Resources

The mission of the Environmental Protection & Natural Resources Department (EPNR) is to protect, preserve, restore, and regulate the Community's natural resources and archaeological heritage by enforcing regulatory programs and providing educational opportunities to the Community. EPNR administers environmental regulatory programs, addresses environmental issues, and monitors growth and development to reduce the impact to the Community's environmental and natural resources. EPNR staff perform site inspections and monitoring activities to ensure compliance with Community and Federal laws. EPNR also manages and analyzes data, writes technical reports, and performs environmental outreach and education to increase awareness about environmental issues that impact the Community.

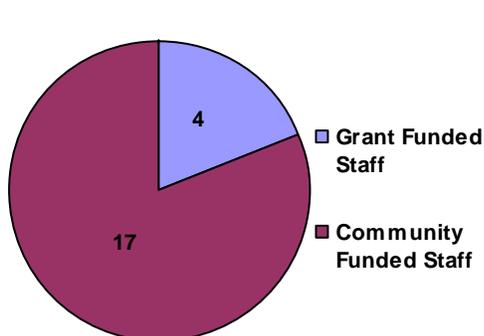
EPNR consists of five distinct programs, with varied environmental and natural resource components. These include the Air Quality Program (AQP), Land Use Compliance Program (LUC), Range Management Program (RMP), Water Quality Program (WQP), and the Environmental Policy and Program Development (EPPD). Hazardous substances, pesticides issues, solid waste, recycling, and policy development are all housed under Environmental Policy and Program Development. The major accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2008 (FY2008) of these five programs are explored in the following pages.

# Administration

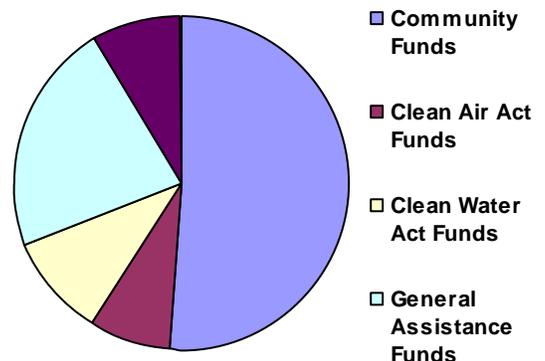
During 2008, EPNR welcomed new staff along with some internal promotions. Angela Cruz and Tom Wright joined EPNR's LUC Program, Tudor Montague, Debra Yazzie and Mark Aaron joined the EPPD Program, Amy Miguel and Denise Taylor joined the WQP, and Corwin Smith joined the AQP.



EPNR organizational chart (current as of January 2009).



Funding Sources for EPNR staff salaries.



Sources of funding for the EPNR departmental budget.

# Air Quality Program



Staff presenting to prospective business clients.

## Summary

The Air Quality Program's (AQP) primary mission is to assess the SRP-MIC air-shed and develop and implement an innovative regulatory program to address air quality issues. The AQP continues to develop a regulatory component whereby the Community can establish its jurisdictional authority for air pollution sources within its exterior reservation boundaries. The AQP focuses on protecting Community health and welfare by maintaining and enhancing air quality.

## Monitoring Program

With funding assistance from US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region IX, the AQP has established a network of five ambient air monitoring sites to identify and assess various air pollution sources impacting the Community.

### **The program collaborated with 26 Community businesses to establish an emissions inventory.**

The inventory identifies and quantifies air pollution sources created within the Community. These inventories provide the program with itemized lists of pollutants each business is adding to the air-shed of the Community, and this data is important because much of the air pollution impacting the Community is not produced within the Community—it is generated in the metro Phoenix area and is carried to the Community via the prevailing winds. The AQP has a well-established ambient air monitoring network consisting of five monitoring sites. These sites monitor for specific criteria and toxic air pollutants. Pollution monitoring data continues to be reported to the EPA's Air Quality System, and quarterly and hourly ozone data are reported daily to the AIRNOW data center.



(L) AQP staff discussing the air quality monitoring site;  
(R) Documentation of an agricultural dust complaint.

## Regulatory Development

It has been an exciting year regarding the AQP regulatory development. With the well-established functional air monitoring network, special attention was devoted to commencing activities for the development of the Community's regulatory capabilities. In an effort to undertake air quality programs under the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) of 1990, the program initiated the Eligibility Determination by EPA Region IX. The Eligibility Determination Application under Treatment as State (TAS) was finalized, approved by the Council, and formally submitted to the EPA Region IX during FY 2008. EPA Region IX deemed the application complete and put the application through a thirty-day public comment period.

**The Eligibility Determination under the Clean Air Act was approved.**



TAS award ceremony at San Carlos, Arizona—Region 9 RTOC meeting.

The AQP has developed finalized drafts of open burning, fugitive dust, and agriculture ordinances by working with the Community's Office of General Council (OGC) to support its tribal implementation plan (TIP).

# Special Projects

## Brownfields Feedlot Clean-up and Assessment

EPNR was awarded a total of \$550,000 in Brownfields Cleanup and Assessment funds from the EPA for a three-year period commencing in FY2007. Only 49 grants were awarded nationwide.

**SRPMIC was one of only two tribal governments selected for this highly competitive grant opportunity.**

The project will help to assess and clean up the former 160-acre feedlot area located within the north-central portion of the Community.

Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments were completed, which include:

- Comprehensive soil and groundwater sampling for the entire site—over 176 samples collected and analyzed for metals, pesticides and nitrates;
- Redevelopment and reconditioning of two on-site deteriorated production wells into active groundwater monitoring wells; and
- Geophysical ground survey to detect potential buried waste—two areas within the project site were identified in Phase I.



Well redevelopment at the Brownfields site.



Collecting soil samples at 5' depth, which were tested for pollutants of concern.

## National Environmental Information Exchange Network (NEIEN) Project

The NEIEN project is a major initiative within EPNR that began in 2003 to streamline data collection, data submissions, and data management. During FY2008, EPNR developed web-based automated data quality checking and validation tools that enhanced the availability, integrity, quality, and utility of data exchanged. The technical computer aspects were also transferred to the Community's Information Technology Department to implement the Air Quality Subsystems data flow in a secure environment.

**SRP- MIC is only the 4th Tribal Nation to establish a functional Node on the Exchange Network.**

## American Bar Association Public Service Project

The Community was honored to host the 2008 American Bar Association (ABA) Public Service Project at the Salt River High School. Since the focus of the project was based on environmental issues, EPNR became very involved in planning and organizing this special event. The Project, titled "Climate Change and Community Development: Science and Public Policy for Future Tribal Leaders," included a mock public hearing that focused on climate change, science, and environmental policy issues.

Members of the Young River People's Council played the role of a governing body, while students from SRP-MIC High School, the Gila River Indian Community, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, and the Tohono O'odham Nation served as stakeholders.



Stakeholders present to the Young River People's Council during the event.

Attorneys from the ABA Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources, teachers, SRP-MIC Office of General Council, and EPNR staff assisted in making this event a resounding success.

## Nestwatch Program

The SRP-MIC has been coordinating with the Arizona Department of Game and Fish (Game and Fish) to provide management and oversight of the Desert Nesting Bald Eagle since 2003. The Nestwatch Program is headed by Game and Fish and two people are assigned to monitor each nest during the entire breeding season. Coordination includes collecting data used to measure the success of breeding pairs. This year, all nests fledging healthy young eagles.

**The nest sites on the Community fledged an above-average total of 5 eaglets.**

The data collected this year from each of the young was incorporated into the Game and Fish overall yearly status report.



(L) Nestwatch staff collecting data from a young eaglet in the spring of 2008; (R) Eight-week old eaglets.

# Land Use Compliance Program



View of Red Mountain.

## Summary

The Land Use Compliance (LUC) section facilitates compliance for all home sites, rights-of-way, commercial development, and other ground-disturbing construction projects within the SRP-MIC. LUC conducts environmental and cultural resource surveys prior to lease approval to ensure the protection of the Community's cultural and natural resources. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) applies to residential, commercial, and other projects within the Community that require the use of federal funding. NEPA allows for a complete environmental review and evaluation of projects initiated on Community lands. The Archaeology Program ensures compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1996, and the Community's Antiquities Ordinance (SRO-102-86) that provides additional protection of archaeological sites on the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

Multi-agency collaboration is necessary to ensure compliance with applicable Federal and Tribal legislation dealing with the environment and historic preservation.

## National Environmental Policy Act and Other Activities

Home site environmental inspections for new construction are routinely performed, in addition to any other new construction projects within the Community in order to achieve compliance with National Environmental Policy Act and applicable Tribal law. This year, extensive coordination with Engineering and Construction Services, Public Works, Membership and Real Property Management, the Community Development Department, and others took place as needed to ensure that all projects were in compliance with environmental and archaeological laws and tribal ordinances.

**This year, the program completed environmental and archaeological reviews of 54 home sites for Community members, 4 commercial projects in the Pima Corridor, and 3 tribal rights-of-way projects.**

A proposal for the widening of Pima Road and construction of a bridge across the Salt River at Dobson Road were closely reviewed and commented on with outside agencies. In addition, the program completed an Arizona Department of Transportation certification for the Salt River Materials Group Buckeye Facility.

## Archaeology

The archaeologist employed under LUC works to achieve compliance for all ground disturbing construction activity on the Community per the National Historic Preservation Act. Archaeological surveys and monitoring projects are routinely conducted and reported on, and this year some of these have added important new information about the Community's cultural resources.

**One of the largest archaeological monitoring projects this year was at the new administrative building, the Two Waters complex, along Osborn Road east of Longmore Road.**

Work was also conducted with the SRP-MIC Cultural Resources Department regarding archaeological and cultural concerns, both within the Community (e.g., threatened archaeological sites) and beyond its external boundaries (e.g., master planning for Papago Park). Research is also underway on historic adobe structures throughout the Community and on other special topics as requested.

An historic photograph of a traditional adobe house on the Community.



## Enforcement and Compliance

This is a new component of the LUC program, and is a clearinghouse for all environmental enforcement and compliance actions by EPNR. Program-building activities include creating and reviewing standard forms for use during inspections and for compliance actions, and creating standard operating procedures for running the program.

**A major accomplishment this year was the inspection of four agriculture maintenance yards to identify existing and potential deficiencies.**

Two of the four agricultural yards had issues requiring further action. Two operations provided plans to address deficiencies and the program has been working with them to ensure these are completed. In addition, an inspection was performed for farming-related maintenance yards to identify existing and potential environmental hazards.



Monitoring trenching activities on Osborn Road near the new Tribal government buildings.

# Range Management



New foal among the wild horse herd on the SRP-MIC range.

## Summary

The Range Management Program (RMP) was created as a result of a Community Ordinance set forth in 1995 which protects wild horses on the Community from sale and slaughter. It also requires RMP to reduce and prevent overpopulation, and to ensure the general health of the herds. The RMP also managed a herd of donated bison.

## Wild Horse Management

As stated in the Community Ordinance, the RMP is responsible for the management of the wild horse population. This includes daily feeding, cleaning of facility stalls, capturing injured or unhealthy animals, vaccinations, and identification of the latest herd management techniques. Staff collaborated with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to complete a study on appropriate herd size on for wild horses on SRP-MIC rangelands. Each plant species, dry weight and forage worthiness on varied rangeland was correlated to find how many acres are needed to support one horse for one month.

**During periods of normal rainfall, the range can support 50-60 horses.**

Given that the current population is larger than this recommended number, RMP staff are researching mare contraception options to humanely decrease the herd population in the future.

## Adoption Program

Since 2005, the Community has accepted applications from parties interested in adopting colts selected from the wild horse population. Those interested in adopting and caring for up to four horses may submit an application for adoption.

**Three wild horses from the Community's herd were successfully adopted this year.**



SRP-MIC horses on the open range.

## Bison Management

In 1995, the Crow Nation of Montana donated a small herd of five buffalo to the Community in appreciation for assistance that the SRP-MIC had provided to that Nation. By 2007, the herd numbered 26 animals.

**In August of 2008, the SRP- MIC Tribal Council voted to relocate the bison herd from Clarkdale, Arizona to an area more suited to their natural environment.**

With advice from the InterTribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC), the bison herd was moved to the Santee Sioux Tribe in Niobrara, Nebraska. The bison herd now lives in a 640 acre pasture with mixed tall and short prairie grass.



SRP-MIC bison grazing in their new home on the lands of the Santee Sioux.

# Environmental Programs & Policy Development

## Summary

The Environmental Programs and Policy Development Program (EPPD)'s main goal is to prevent pollution within the Community. Activities carried out by this program are supported by the development of policies and ordinances designed to reduce the risks of exposure from contaminants and to safeguard human health and the environment. EPPD is comprised of the Solid Waste, Hazardous Substances, Recycling, and Environmental Policy Programs.

## Solid Waste

The Solid Waste Program works to reducing risks associated with exposure to solid waste. The program responds to illegal dumping incidents in the Community and develops plans for their cleanup.



Illegal dumpsite on range lands (L) discovered and (R) hauled off by EPNR staff.

**A total of 1,929 waste tires were removed from the Community storage facility.**

The Solid Waste Program coordinates removal and recycling of inoperable vehicles and waste tires free of charge for Community residents.

## Hazardous Substances

The Hazardous Substances Program manages household hazardous waste collection and removal and works in concert with the solid waste program to address accidental spills and illegal dumping issues for the Community.

Regular inspections and investigations of agricultural and non-agricultural pesticide application and use and pesticide storage facilities within the Community are also administered under the Hazardous Substances Program.

**Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Manuals for Inspection/Investigation and Compliance/Enforcement and Pesticide in Groundwater Project were completed this year.**



Oil spill contained at McDonald on the onramp to the Loop 101.

## Recycling

This new program focused on outreach to Community governmental departments and businesses, working to inform them of recycling options and providing them with materials to ensure recycling was taking place.

### **A recycling Open House was held that educated over 80 Community members and staff.**

In addition to the Open House, several types of outreach and promotional items were circulated throughout the Community to spread the word on recycling.

The recycling program also manages the “Clean & Green Campaign”, which is geared toward changing habits to create a “greener” lifestyle and way of doing business. Six Community residents and five Community programs are currently participating in this new environmental initiative to incorporate and encourage environmental habits at home and the office.



(L) Participants at the Recycling Open House match “green” building products with the recycled materials they are made from; (R) Elementary school children learn which items are recyclable and which are not.

## Environmental Policy

The Environmental Policy Program works to monitor, create and recommend environmental laws and regulations. The newly established program develops and refines environmental policies, ordinances, and processes to ensure protection of the Community’s environmental and natural resources.

### **Five draft ordinances were completed this year and are being reviewed by our Office of General Council.**

The draft Agricultural and Structural Pesticide Ordinances and the Stormwater Ordinance were completed and are currently pending legal review by the SRP-MIC Office of General Council (OGC). The draft Dust and Open Burning Ordinances have been completed and reviewed by OGC, and we anticipate taking them forward for Council consideration in 2009.

# Water Quality Program



The Salt River flowing through the Community.

## Summary

The Water Quality Program (WQP) has overall responsibility for ensuring the waters within the Community are in compliance with water quality standards, which were updated for the SRP-MIC during this year. The program enforces SRP-MIC and federal regulations to protect water quality.

The WQP collects and analyzes monitoring data to ensure the quality and safety of surface and groundwater. This data is used to create annual reports, which inform the Community of the surface and groundwater quality. Additionally, the WQP performs educational outreach to other departments, Community schools, and Community members to increase awareness of the importance of environmental stewardship and the Community's watershed. In addition to protecting the Community's surface and groundwater, the WQP manages the Community's wetlands to mitigate nonpoint source issues.

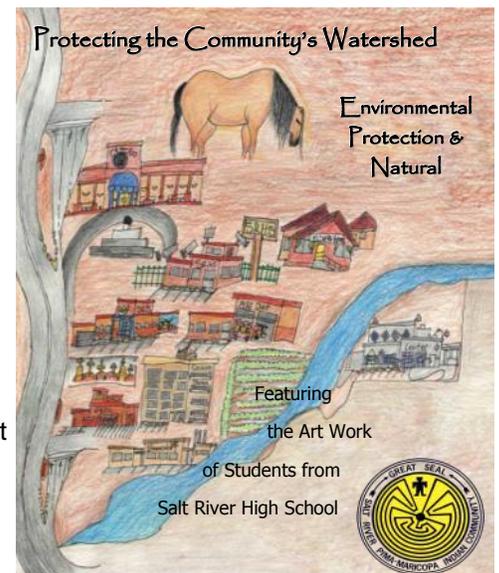
## Document Development and Reports

The WQP develops and updates documents to reflect current federal standards and guidelines as well as consideration of any SRP-MIC cultural practices or concerns.

**Plans are underway to complete a fish tissue study which will look for potential toxins in tissue of fish within the Community.**

Programmatic documents are revised every 2-5 years, or as needed. Some programmatic documents updated this year include the Watershed-Based Plan and the Nonpoint Source Management Plan. The SRP-MIC Water Quality Standards and Treatment as a State document (TAS) were submitted for EPNR management review. The 2007 Water Quality Assessment Report was completed.

Staff also completed a creative collaboration with the Salt River High School Art Class to create a Community-specific outreach booklet for children. The booklet



Front cover of the Watershed Outreach Booklet.

## Water Quality Monitoring

The WQP monitors the Community's water resources to maintain and improve surface and groundwater quality. Monitoring is conducted along the Verde and Salt Rivers several times during the year to ensure the safety and quality of the water. This year, the program implemented bacteria sampling during the summer months to ensure the water is safe for swimming and other recreational activities.



Staff measuring depth-to-groundwater levels at a well on the Community; (R) Preparing the tag line for biannual sampling along the Verde River.

### **The program completed a special study which looked at pollutants in agricultural runoff.**

This study was spurred by Community Member concerns regarding irrigation canals that run through housing areas. Groundwater sampling was conducted at selected wells this year. Samples are analyzed for such parameters as metals, inorganics, and pesticides.

### **The program organized a groundwater sampling training course for SRPMIC staff and 4 tribes from Arizona and California.**

The groundwater training was provided free of charge utilizing EPA grant funds.

## Constructed Wetlands

The Community currently has two wetlands. The Cottonwood Wetland, the Community's first wetland, was built in 2003 and is near the Salt River and the Loop 101/202 interchange. This wetland receives care and maintenance from EPNR's WQP staff, and is regularly monitored for water quality parameters. The Cottonwood Wetland serves as a habitat for wildlife, an attractive Community amenity, and an educational and recreational opportunity.

### **Over 10 tours were conducted this year at the Cottonwood Wetland.**

The wetland reduces pollutant loading to the Salt River channel by providing water quality treatment and erosion control. It was expanded this year to remove salt cedar and expand the native vegetation onsite.

This year the Community's second treatment wetland—the Lehi Wetland—was built. It was also constructed in an area to reduce pollutant loading to the Salt River channel.

# Earth Day 2008

“Our Earth, Our Home... Let’s Protect It”

O’Odham translation: “Et Jevedga, Et Kidak... Tik o si sap nukdat”

Over the past five years, EPNR has coordinated Earth Day activities by organizing one Community clean-up activity and completing various outreach events to educate the Community on important environmental issues and concerns, promote environmental stewardship, and help spark an interest in environmental careers.

April 22nd is officially acknowledged each year, nationally and globally, as Earth Day. EPNR hosts annual Earth Day activities to promote environmental awareness throughout the Community.

## Activities

### Earth Day clean up activities resulted in the collection of over 6 tons of waste!

- School Poster Contest for grades K thru 12 and all Community elders
- Environmental Fair with over 20 booths featuring native wildlife, Community programs and projects, and environmentally-friendly products and services
- Activities for kids, including an inflatable moonbounce and a petting zoo
- 4th Annual “Team Up & Clean Up” Challenge
- Salt River Police Department Explorers won the challenge
- Two Community senior residences were cleaned up by the Salt River Fire Department volunteers

### Over 600 volunteers participated in the clean up event!

EPNR would like to extend a thank you to the Community members, programs, volunteers, and organizations for making the Earth Day 2008 event the most successful EPNR Earth Day event to date.

More than 20 miles of roadway and 450 bags of solid waste were collected in two hours by Community departments, families, and partners.



Winning entry in the SRPMIC School Poster Contest.

# Earth Day 2008 Photos



(L) The Young Marines do their part to beautify the Community; (R) Councilman Tom Largo participating with the team from Administration.



Children enjoying the petting zoo during the Environmental Fair.



2008 Team Up & Clean Up Challenge Winners-Salt River Police Department Explorers.



(L) Volunteer groups help clean Community roadways; (R) Bagged trash that was later hauled to the Salt River Landfill.

# Conclusion

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Fiscal Year 2008 was a busy and exciting time for the EPNR Department. The approval of the FY2008 and FY2009 budgets provided funding that will enable the Department to leverage EPA grant funding. Several EPA grants were awarded during FY2008 which will provide financial resources in order to expand and develop environmental programs and projects on behalf of the Community.

Significant accomplishments include the demolition and cleanup of several abandoned structures within the Community, cleanup of seven significant illegal dumpsites, launching the Community's first Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) process for the Request for Environmental Reviews, launching of the Brownfield Assessment and Clean-up Projects, and continuous air monitoring for toxics and criteria air pollutants near the Loop 101 and 202 interchange. Construction is underway for the Lehi District Wetland, and multiple Earth Day outreach activities resulted in an increased awareness of environmental protection and stewardship throughout the Community.

EPNR staff made great strides this year to uphold the Department's mission to protect, preserve, restore, and regulate the Community's natural resources and archaeological heritage by enforcing regulatory programs and providing educational opportunities to the Community. Long-term planning and strategies are being developed to ensure that EPNR maintains and enhances the important services it provides to the Community. The completed strategic plan will guide EPNR and its staff for fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010.

EPNR partners with various Community Departments and Divisions in order to provide the highest quality services and activities to the Community. Continued partnerships and collaborations are essential to our success. EPNR would like to thank everyone for their support of our programs and activities and we look forward to a positive and productive 2009!



The Verde River.



# Environmental Protection & Natural Resources

## Contact Us!

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