

# LOWER GILA RIVER COLLABORATIVE



## 2025 REPORT

[www.lowergilariver.net](http://www.lowergilariver.net)

River-related accomplishments of Lower Gila River Collaborative partners from May 2025-April 2026.

### ADVANCING SHARED GOALS



**Enhance**  
Partners enhanced ecological function, habitat, and connectivity by removing salt cedar and other invasive plants and planting native vegetation on 10 established project sites. Partners continued phased project implementation and maintained sites using hand- and mechanical-removal, treating resprouts, planting, and seeding.

**Mitigate**  
Partners reduced fire risk by removing dense, hot-burning tamarisk near critical infrastructure and communities. Many of the projects are designed to reduce flooding on agricultural lands and neighborhoods, including 87 acres on private land. The collaborative leverages \$10M in on-going state and federal funds to complete this work.

**Connect**  
Partners strengthened outdoor recreation opportunities with site improvements and connected to river communities via outreach. A Bureau of Reclamation watershed planning grant (~\$300k) increased outreach to the public, key partners, and landowners. Three flagship LGRC/RIO events engaged over 3,300 community members.

**Support**  
The Collaborative continues to study water and vegetation to support project success. New floodplain enhancement guide helps project managers decision-making with synthesized data, lessons learned. Partners are leveraging \$150k (ongoing) for drone monitoring. USGS and FCDMC continue monitoring flows, groundwater, and water quality.

### Recreation Improvements



#### BASE & MERIDIAN WILDLIFE AREA REPAIRED

Avondale and Arizona Game & Fish Department worked together in coordination with Gila River Indian Community to repair damage from recent flooding, upgrade access for boating and fishing, and host community events.

#### Community Events

#### 3,300+ PEOPLE ENGAGED

##### TRES RIOS NATURE FESTIVAL

The City of Avondale hosts this annual river celebration featuring kayaking, fishing, and more.

##### NATURE FEST PHOENIX

City of Phoenix and US Fish and Wildlife host this wildlife focused event, engaging 200 volunteers.

##### GRIC EARTH DAY

Gila River Indian Community hosts this annual celebration in Sacaton featuring over 46 partner organizations this year.

### Projects and Monitoring

#### 784 ACRES INVASIVE PLANTS REMOVED

Vegetation management projects to remove salt cedar and other invasive plants. All acres were retreatments or maintenance efforts.

#### 645 NATIVE PLANTINGS

Pole plantings, pollinator plants, and other native trees and shrubs.

#### 740+ ACRES ENHANCED

Seeding with native cover plants, grain crops for wildlife forage, and marsh enhancement.

#### 1,535 ACRES FLOWN

Audubon Southwest completed a second and third round of drone flights over 7 partner sites, monitoring plant cover and species change over time. Partners also monitor via repeat photos, tree survival measures, and acoustic bird data.



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