



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

**Arizona**  
2021: Annual Manager's Report

# San Pedro Riparian

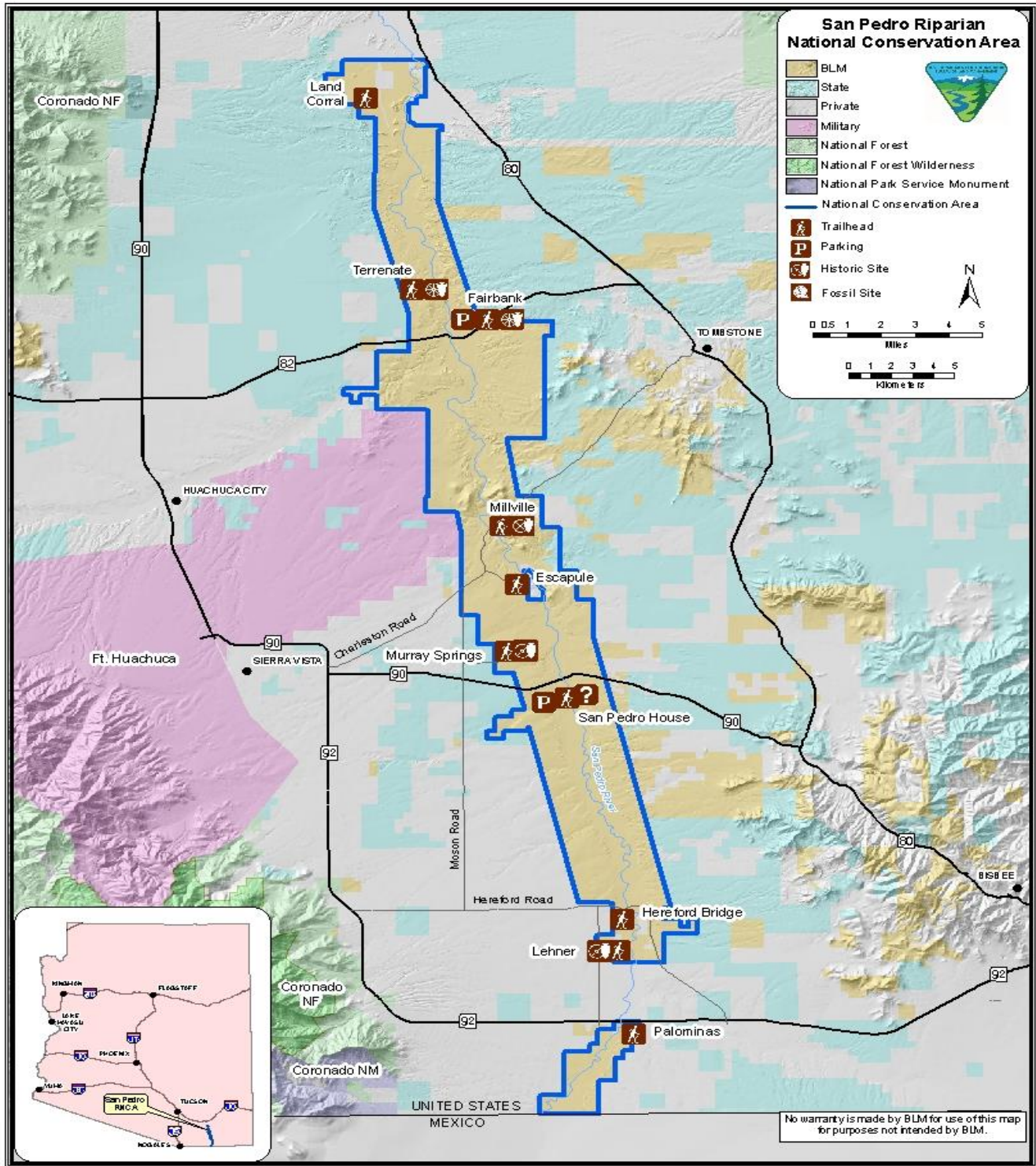
## National Conservation Area



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management



# Map



## Accomplishments

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With partner assistance from the Friends of the San Pedro River (FSPR), the Tucson Field Office (TFO) has developed and launched new missions in the Agents of Discovery (AOD) application (app). AOD is an educational, Global Positioning System (GPS)-based mobile game that engages kids of all ages to explore the natural and cultural environment. By using the app at select sites, app-users can find quizzes and challenges, and even win prizes.

Other significant accomplishments include:

- Re-engagement with the Arizona Site Stewards Program for routine monitoring of San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) cultural sites.
- Eight compliance inspections for four unique range allotments.
- Completed 14 reaches via Assessment, Inventory & Monitoring lotic protocol.
- Non-native invasive plant mapping surveys completed on over 450 acres of the San Pedro River corridor north of the Fairbank townsite and south of the Saint David Cienega.
- Worked with a utility cooperative to rebuild two additional powerline segments to modern standards, which will reduce risk of wildfires and support energy infrastructure.
- Adopt-a-Trail program contributed over 300 hours of trail maintenance activities.
- Completed post and rail safety fence around the popular San Pedro House cottonwood tree.
- Administered 12 Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) for wildlife and archaeological interpretive walks, organized group events, and outfitting-guiding services.



Figure 1. Agents of Discovery informational flyer for SPRNCA missions.



## Challenges

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Primary challenge is the loss of water within the San Pedro River and the concomitant loss of natural habitat for the incredibly large number of animal species the river corridor calls home. Additional challenges include loss of cultural resources (specifically historical structures) from lack of maintenance and attention, damage associated with inappropriate recreational use of the landscape, and unpermitted activities.



Figures 2 & 3. Monsoon waters in the San Pedro River following an unusually wet monsoon.

## Visitors

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In 2021, approximately 129,394 visitors came to the SPRNCA. However, due to pandemic-related visitor center closures and lack of docent tours, visitor data was limited to traffic counter hits, number of authorized SRPs, and historically low visitor data provided by the FSPR. Partner data indicated 130 education participants, 1,200 interpretive participants and a total of 8,650 volunteer hours.

## Partnerships

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The Friends of the San Pedro River (FSPR)

[FSPR | conserving and sharing the river \(sanpedroriver.org\)](https://sanpedroriver.org)

The FSPR is a non-profit volunteer group that supports the BLM's efforts of public outreach within the community. Their communications strategy addresses social media, publicity, and dissemination of the BLM's conservation message. While temporarily closed during the pandemic, FSPR is slowly re-opening its Fairbank and San Pedro House visitor contact stations. The visitor stations are independently operated and staffed by FSPR volunteers and one paid employee. Throughout 2021, as feasible, FSPR provided outdoor volunteer greeters at the San Pedro House to provide SPRNCA information to visitors.

Upper San Pedro Partnership

[Member Agency Profiles | Upper San Pedro Partnership](#)

The BLM participates in the Upper San Pedro Partnership, which is a consortium of federal, state, and local agencies as well as stakeholders and non-profit organizations.

The Nature Conservancy

[The Nature Conservancy in Arizona](#)

Every year, the BLM partners with The Nature Conservancy for the annual wet-dry walk of the San Pedro River. Since 2007, every mile of the river on the SPRNCA is monitored for perennial water at the driest time of the year (end of June).

Community Watershed Alliance

[Community Watershed Alliance - Overview, News & Competitors | ZoomInfo.com](#)

Other partners besides the BLM include Fort Huachuca, Arizona Game and Fish Department, City of Sierra Vista, and Cochise County. Many of these entities also partner with the BLM on projects throughout the San Pedro Watershed.





Figure 4. Vegetation clearing team at the San Pedro House.



Figure 5: Escapule Adopt a Trail volunteers working on removing vegetation within the trail.



## Science

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Several research and or study initiatives are occurring within the SPRNCA. Current research efforts conducted within the SPRNCA under BLM authorizations are summarized below.

The SPRNCA currently has five research and or study initiatives and all are ongoing. One is an ongoing fish population tracking study conducted by the Tucson Field Office. There are two ground water studies and one precipitation study being conducted by the TFO. The Sierra Club Water Sentinels, a local NGO, conducts surface water sampling, monitoring river health by testing for turbidity and other metrics.



Figure 6- Image of AIM Crew on San Pedro River near Lewis Springs Stage Recorder.





Above Left: Figure 7: Mark McCabe holds a non-native Yellow bullhead.

Above Right: Figures 8 & 9: Remaining two native fish in the San Pedro: Longfin dace and the Desert sucker.

Below: Figure 10: Emilio Corella looks on as Theresa Condo records data while Jeff Simms measures fish.

## Events

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All normally scheduled events were cancelled in 2021 due to Covid pandemic concerns.





# NATIONAL CONSERVATION LANDS

## **San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area**

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