

# Water: A Scarce Resource in the West



Photo Courtesy of Rachel More-Hla.

Graham and Greenlee Counties have been facing moderate to severe drought conditions according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. This long-term drought has been impacting these areas for over fifteen years. The average rainfall in the city of Safford is eleven inches per year.

An important aspect of water management is to slow the movement of water. During rain events, water will move down the slope of the landscape towards the Gila River, in our watershed. By slowing water run-off, effects of erosion are minimized and water can recharge aquifers. Recharging the aquifer is important as many of our counties residents pull water from wells for irrigation, livestock watering, and drinking water supply

Many agencies and organizations across the west are employing simple techniques to slow water and sink water. One-rock check dams have been used as a management tool in Arizona for decades. Some benefits of these check dams are sediment deposition, water

harvesting, nutrient retention, re-vegetation, and bank stabilization.

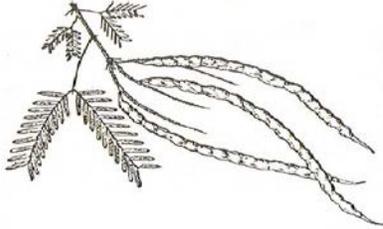
For more information on Arizona water management and the drought conditions visit <http://www.azwater.gov/AzDWR/StatewidePlanning/Drought/default.htm>

For more information on check dam projects visit <http://borderlandsrestoration.org/projects/the-babocomari-river-restoration-project/>



## Native Seeds Workshop Series

Each autumn we look forward to getting back outdoors and participating in the fun events our community has to offer. This fall the GWP, in collaboration with Borderlands Restoration, and the Nature Conservancy, will be hosting a series of workshops focusing on native plant seed collection, cleaning, and propagation, as well as large scale native grass production. The first workshop in the series will be led by Allegra Mount, with Borderlands Restoration, out of Patagonia, Arizona.



Join us as we explore seed production and seed banking endeavors with Borderlands Restoration and help collect plant materials from native forbs and grasses at the Deep Dirt Farm Institute with Kate Tirion.

These workshops will include an informational field trip to showcase native plant populations and seed collection practices. For more information on the first workshop and to RSVP, please contact Allegra Mount at [allegraceleste@gmail.com](mailto:allegraceleste@gmail.com). Space at each workshop will be limited, so RSVP soon! The second workshop in the series will take place in Aravaipa Canyon. For more information on that event, please contact Justin Johnson at [justin@gwpaz.org](mailto:justin@gwpaz.org).

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## Water Harvesting at Discovery Park

At the Eastern Arizona College, Discovery Park Campus, Justin Johnson, Rachel More-Hla, and the nursery staff have been working on capturing monsoon rains by installing water retention basins, and directing rain off the greenhouse roof to store in large tanks for future use. These projects are being completed by the Gila Watershed Partnership with support from the Bureau of Land Management and Eastern Arizona College.

The tanks at the Discovery Park Greenhouse hold about 4,000 gallons of water each. Graham County receives about 11 inches of rain a year, and with the roof size of the greenhouse, we hope to fill the tanks twice a year. This water will be utilized in the gardens around the greenhouse that benefit our plant production, and the birds and insects that need them.

Come visit the greenhouse Thursday mornings for an informational tour of the rainwater harvesting features.



## Current Project Updates

FOR MORE INFO SEE [WWW.GWPAZ.ORG](http://WWW.GWPAZ.ORG)

### Upper Gila Watershed Riparian Restoration

*...funded by The Walton Family Foundation, US Fish & Wildlife Partners Program, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and United Way of Graham County*

- Will replace invasive tamarisk with native species to restore natural habitats.
- Making final plans to begin the next phase of ground work this fall.

### Clifton Restroom

*...funded by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)*

- Installing restroom facilities in a recreational area just outside of Clifton.
- Final installation being completed.
- Water quality testing being done near site.
- Post-install re-vegetation planning has begun.

### San Francisco River Restroom

*... funded by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)*

- Will install a second restroom for recreation on the San Francisco River Greenlee County and reduce the E.coli levels on the river and make river recreation safer for our community.
- Work can begin now that we received SHPO cultural clearance.

### Developing Greenlee County as a Bird Watching Destination

*... funded by Freeport McMoRan Inc., Town of Clifton, and United Way*

- Contracts in place to line out the trails, work-up signage, and print brochures.
- New website is being developed.

### Hydro-geomorphology study of the San Simon Basin

*...funded by the US Bureau of Land Management*

- Working with Natural Channel Design to complete study and report management recommendations.



### Discovery Park Pollinator Garden

*... funded by Eastern Arizona College, US Bureau of Land Management, US Fish & Wildlife Service Partners Program*

- Installing pollinator garden at EAC Discovery Park campus, benefiting monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Earthworks have begun.
- Heavy machinery on site.

### WRRC Water Needs Assessment and Planning

*... funded by the US Bureau Of Reclamation & Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative*

- Water Supply & Demand meeting Sept 9th, 2-4PM, 921 Thatcher Blvd. Main Conf. Rm.
- Contact Dr. Kelly Mott-Lacroix for more information, [klacroix@email.arizona.edu](mailto:klacroix@email.arizona.edu).

## Botanical Etymology for Dummies

This month's species is *Tamarix ramosissima* or **Salt Cedar**, a riparian invasive shrub or tree, found throughout the West, known for altering the hydrology and ecology of lower elevation streams.

**Tamarix**, the Latin name for tamarisk, derived perhaps from Tamaris River where it grows in Spain on the border of the Pyrenees, or from the Hebrew tamar, for the palm tree.

**ramosissima**, Latin ramus, a branch, and -issima, the superlative; most branched, very much branched. The branching is of particular interest, since Salt Cedar is known to provide nesting habitat for migratory neotropical birds like the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher.



**Tamarix ramosissima**  
**Salt Cedar**



**GWP**

ON FACEBOOK TO KEEP UP WITH  
ALL OUR EVENTS!!

**Sept 16<sup>th</sup>** – STEM Trivia at JD's Grill House, 7-9PM.

**Sept 26<sup>th</sup>** – National Public Lands Day

**Sept 24-27<sup>th</sup>** – 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Gila River Festival. Silver City, NM

**Oct 10<sup>th</sup>** – Wildland Seeds Workshop #1. Patagonia AZ. Contact [justin@gwpaz.org](mailto:justin@gwpaz.org) for more info!

**Every Thursday** – Open Volunteer Hours with GWP, 8-11AM @ Discovery Park Greenhouse

## Thank you to our partners:

AZ Department of Agriculture  
AZ Department of Environmental Quality  
AZ Department of Transportation  
AZ Game and Fish Department  
AZ Geological Survey  
AZ State Land Department  
City of Safford  
Eastern Arizona College  
Farm Bureau  
Freeport-McMoRan Inc.  
Gila Valley Irrigation District  
Gila Valley NRCD  
Graham County  
Graham County Chamber of Commerce

Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Southwest Decision Resources  
Tamarisk Coalition  
Town of Clifton  
Town of Duncan  
Town of Pima  
Town of Thatcher  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Forest Service – Apache-Sitgreaves and Coronado  
U of A Cooperative Extension  
U of A Water Resource Research Center

EVENTS

## Get involved in your watershed

For more information contact  
the Gila Watershed Partnership at  
P.O. Box 1614, Thatcher, Arizona 85552

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and  
Instagram or email us at [info@gwpaz.org](mailto:info@gwpaz.org)  
[www.gwpaz.org](http://www.gwpaz.org)