Flowing Grace Boutique RV Retreat

"Thoughtful Stewardship of the Land Through Conservation, Recreation, and Community."

A 24pad (reduced in size by 20%) than the original request, and is a lowimpact RV site that rests on 3.30 acres of a 30-acre parcel designed to protect and enhance the Riparian ecosystem.

Short, Mid and Long-Term stays available.

Flowing Grace Boutique RV Retreat

This is a small boutique RV park designed to blend into the rural landscape with permeable gravel pads, native landscaping, dark-sky lighting, and extremely low traffic impact.

2-3 x set back buffer zone from The Riparian than previous approvals in Cochise County.

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

24
RV pads (small footprint)

600 ft
buffer that is east of the San Pedro River

Low
traffic density & noise (staggered arrivals/departures)

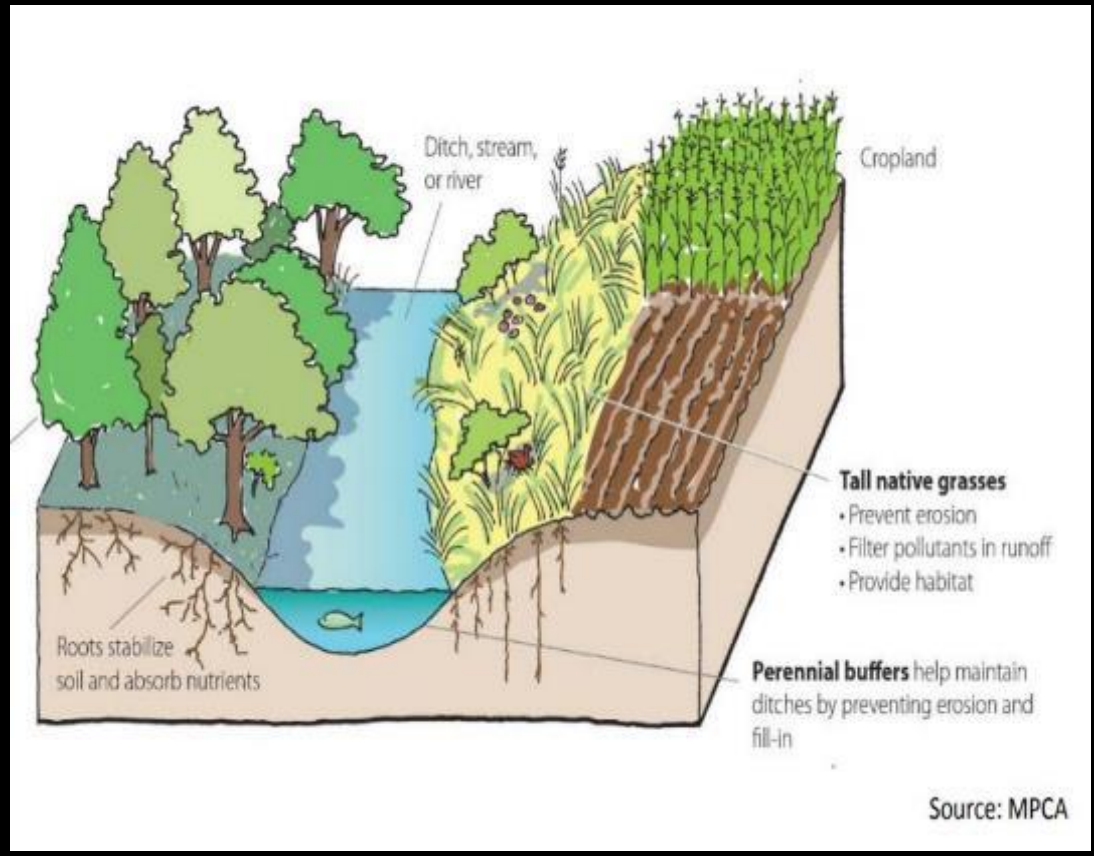
What makes this like no other area Tourist destinations in Cochise County

Eco-friendly built to keep usage away from the river while enhancing the habitat. Supporting the Riparian Sanctuary.

Native revegetation: additional trees, shrubs, and existing dense sacaton grass reinforcement.

Education + stewardship: birding-friendly, Leave No Trace, dark-sky oriented.

A managed “buffer + stewardship zone” provides space for native revegetation, erosion control, and visitor education.



BIRDING AND RV TRAVEL IS A GROWING TOURISM DRAW IN COCHISE COUNTY

RV travelers visiting Cochise County expect destinations like this, and the heart of Miracle Valley is an ideal location to support that need. They want the connection to nature around them and spectacular views as their backdrop.

BLM describes the area as a premier destination for wildlife viewing and RV travelers delight, including birdwatching.

A low-noise, full hook-up, low-light RV base nearby supports birding visitation while reducing pressure for dispersed camping near sensitive riverbanks.

SOURCE:
Bureau of Land Management

Source: BLM San Pedro Riparian NCA; Photos: USFWS (Public Domain)

Economic Impact of RV Tourism

- RV travelers spend an average of $300 per day, per RV in the local economy. (RV Industry Association).
- These 24 RV sites could generate $2,000,000 - $2,625,000 + into the local economy. (KOA Camping and Outdoor Hospitality Resort)

Project Benefit:

- The proposed RV site supports sustainable tourism in Cochise County while maintaining strong environmental protections.
- Small eco-tourism developments increase local employment and support rural businesses.
- The proposal for this RV Park is in-line with other B&Bs, RV Campgrounds and County demand for more rural sites.
- Efficient land usage for the area vs. other options on this 30 acre parcel.

Source: AZ Office of Tourism

BUFFER SCIENCE: 600 FEET IS A CONSERVATIVE SETBACK

Literature Setback Benchmark: 300 ft

Project Setback: 600 ft

What science says buffers do:

Vegetated buffers improve water quality by filtering sediment and nutrients, and they provide habitat and movement corridors.
A widely cited buffer literature review notes that tracts of 300 ft can help support forest-interior wildlife habitat.
—the 600 ft setback exceeds that benchmark 2x.
The setback, combined with native planting and managed access, reduces the primary campground stressor: trampling and vegetation loss near rivers/riparians.
—the 600 ft setback exceeds that benchmark 2x.
In riparian corridors, restore gaps in higher order streams first to provide the greatest benefit for biodiversity.
—the 600 ft setback exceeds that benchmark 2x..

SOURCE: Conservation Buffers is a Research Landscape Planner guide in partnership with the National Agroforestry Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station that is Comprised of Over 80 design guidelines that were developed from more than 1,400 research articles from disciplines as diverse as agricultural engineering, conservation biology, economics, hydrology, landscape ecology, social sciences, and urban ecology.

Sources: Wenger riparian buffer review; EPA riparian buffer synthesis

Reinvesting in the land: enhance roots, more cover, more resilience

Plant additional native trees and shrubs suitable for local riparian/upland transition zones as needed. Current site is Primarily Sacaton Grass over the 600 ft. buffer, protected area and is ideal for the usage.

Reinforce existing sacaton (tall grass) cover to stabilize soils and reduce erosion.

Use mulch/woody debris where appropriate to build soil organic matter and reduce dust.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

Benefits of Native Sacaton Grass for Riparian Protection

Preventing Soil Erosion Along Riverbanks

Sacaton grasses develop **deep, fibrous root systems** that bind soil together and stabilize stream banks. These roots **anchor sediment and reduce bank erosion** during rain events or seasonal flooding.

Dense vegetation slows moving water, reducing its ability to carry soil away.

Evidence:

Sacaton can **"prevent soil erosion on embankments, ditches, and other highly erodible sites."**

Native riparian vegetation root systems increase **resistance to erosion and promote bank stability** as well as Absorbing Flood Energy and **Slowing Runoff.**

SOURCES: Natural Resources Conservation Service *and* **Santa Fe River Canyon Riparian Forest Restoration Project**

Capture

Rain gardens / swales
slow water

Filter

Native vegetation
traps sediment

Recharge

Infiltration supports
soil moisture

Buffers work (and this plan strengthens them)

EPA synthesis documents how riparian buffers reduce pollutants and support aquatic and terrestrial habitat functions. By keeping RV activity 600 ft away and restoring native vegetation, the project reduces the chance of runoff and human-caused impacts reaching the river and exceeding the Benchmark of 300 ft.

SOURCE: Conservation Buffers is a Research Landscape Planner guide in partnership with the National Agroforestry Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station that is Comprised of Over 80 design guidelines that were developed from more than 1,400 research articles from disciplines as diverse as agricultural engineering, conservation biology, economics, hydrology, landscape ecology, social sciences, and urban ecology.

Sources: EPA riparian buffer synthesis; Wenger buffer review

MANAGED RECREATION REDUCES RIPARIAN PRESSURE

A permit-controlled alternative to dispersed riparian camping

Without a managed base, recreation can spread into sensitive areas (informal trails, trampling, firewood collection).
This project concentrates use where it can be monitored and managed—keeping the river corridor more attractive, quieter and less trampled and littered as currently managed by BLM and charitable foundations (see recent pictures).
Site rules and education align with agency best practices for riparian protection.

Operating commitments (permitready)

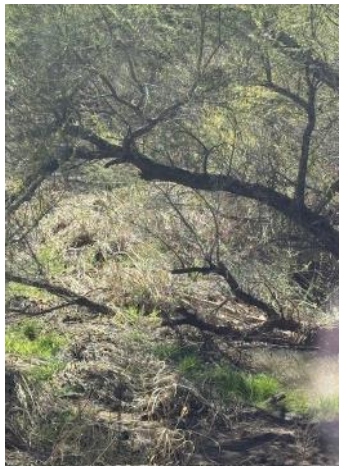
Quiet hours + dark-sky lighting
Clearly defined walk paths & boundaries
Trash, recycling, and pet-waste controls
On-site host / stewardship presence / education and clean-up

San Pedro River/Riparian before 30 RV Pads


November 8, 2025


January 21, 2026


January 27, 2026


March 11, 2026

PHOTOS: Bennie Schmidt – Date Stamped

Yosemite National Park: Tuolumne Meadows Campground (NPS, 2025)

NPS realigned roads to create a 150foot buffer from the Tuolumne River.
NPS removed and relocated 21 campsites within a sensitive 100foot buffer zone to restore riparian habitat in a
Wild & Scenic River corridor.

The 600ft setback is substantially larger than buffer distances used in major federal campground rehabilitation focused on riparian protection.

SOURCE: National Park Service

Source: NPS Tuolumne Meadows Campground news release (June 27, 2025)

Agency guidance commonly recommends setbacks from streams

USDA Forest Service Region 4 guidance: “Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes, rivers and streams.”
Our design places overnight use 600 feet from the river—3× the common guidance distance.

SOURCE: USDA Forest Service Region 4

Source: USDA Forest Service Region 4 Information Board Guidelines

Casa de San Pedro B&B → San Pedro Riparian Corridor

Based on aerial mapping and parcel boundaries: Approximately 250 feet from the riparian cottonwood corridor.

The property itself sits on roughly 28 acres adjacent to the San Pedro River corridor.

250 + ft existing setback

600 ft project setback

Source: USDA Forest Service Region 4 Information Board Guidelines

Evidence that closing/redirecting use helps vegetation rebound

BLM's Riparian Restoration technical reference summarizes a campground study:
76 saplings/acre in open (trampled) sections vs 338 saplings/acre in closed sections. See the photo taken March 11, 2026 overlooking the Red – One Lane Bridge.

Our plan has no foot traffic accessing the Riparian and keeps RVs 600 ft. outside the Riparian corridor.

PHOTOS: Bennie Schmidt – March 11, 2026

Friends of The San Pedro River

March 16, 2025 ·

The Hereford Bridge Trailhead

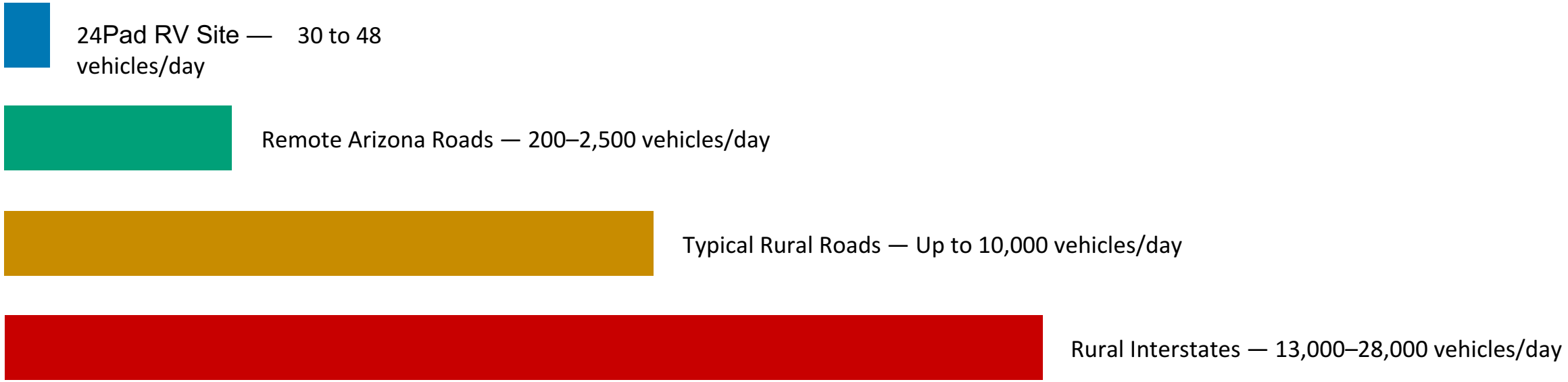
The BLM maintains a trailhead where Hereford Road crosses the San Pedro River. You can search for Hereford Bridge Trailhead in Google Maps. This area is lush due to artesian springs that feed the river here. It is a popular spot for birding, fishing, and horse riding. There is a large parking area, pit toilet, a shelter, and easy access to the San Pedro Trail.

The San Pedro Trail is the major trail axis that traverses most of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) from north to south. It is open to hikers, horse riders, and bicyclists. It is maintained year-round, generally, and is suited for horses and bikes.

PHOTOS: Bennie Schmidt – March 11, 2026

Traffic Impact Comparison: Project vs Rural Roads

Estimated daily vehicle trips compared with typical rural traffic volumes Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT data).



Sources: Federal Highway Administration traffic statistics; Arizona Department of Transportation
Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data.

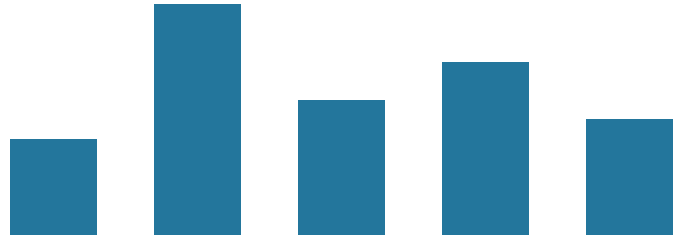
Project Finding:
The proposed 24pad RV site generates minimal additional traffic relative to normal rural transportation patterns, supporting low environmental disturbance and minimal infrastructure demand.

LOW-DENSITY USE = LOWER DISTURBANCE

24 pads means fewer trips, less noise, and fewer impacts

Smaller campground footprint → fewer vehicle movements versus large, high-turnover RV parks.
Staggered arrivals/departures spread traffic through the day—reducing peak congestion and localized disturbance.
Managed circulation and designated pads keep “social trails” from forming—protecting vegetation and soils.

Illustrative: lower peak traffic



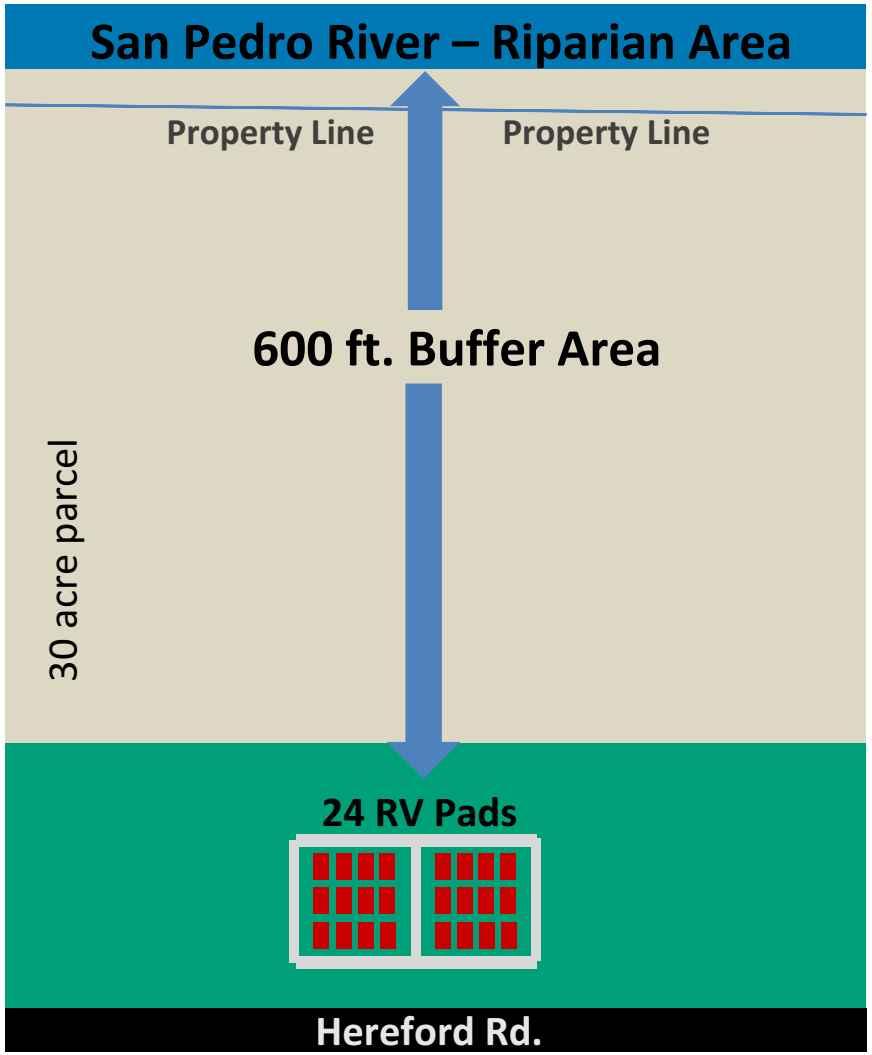
Arrivals/departures spread out over time.

Why this matters

Reduced noise and lights help riparian wildlife behavior and birding quality.
Lower wear-and-tear on soils → less dust and erosion.

Conceptual 24-Pad RV Site Layout (Low Impact Design)

Illustrative layout showing two 12-pad sections, internal roads, San Pedro River/Riparian native vegetation buffers.



IN SUMMARY

"This represents a small, carefully designed use of private land with minimal footprint using 10% of our 30 acre parcel. We share the goals of Cochise County of giving more recreational travel options, increasing County revenue and tourism while enhancing and maintaining the health of the riparian ecosystem.

Compared with many other potential land uses, it has very low traffic, minimal water demand, and uses permeable surfaces and native vegetation to protect and stabilize the Riparian."

This land use exceeds environmental standards such as drainage management, 600 ft. buffered safe zone and environmental stewardship at the same time "

Lets look at other ideas for our land usage that doesn't require County Approval:

- **Large-Scale Subdivision Development**
- **Intensive Crop Farming**
- **Large Cattle Operation**
- **Private, Unmanaged Off-Road Vehicle Use**

Effect on the Riparian by damaging the habitat, increased groundwater demand, pesticide runoff, soil erosion from heavy animal traffic, manure runoff, vegetation destruction, noise and dust pollutants, sediment entering waterways, septic system concentration, increased traffic and infrastructure.

Permit Request

Approve a low-impact, conservation-forward RV site that:

- **Provides a managed alternative to dispersed Riparian camping as currently being done and trashed by river hikers/hunters/tent campers**

- **This projects falls in line with The Southern San Pedro area plan, low impact, small scale in size, opportunity for growing tourism, no opposition from area neighbors.**

200 plus Cochise County residents supporting this permit to move forward.

Next step: County approval to proceed with detailed engineering and a formal habitat stewardship plan.