

Cultural and Historic Resource Acquisitions



Valencia Archaeological Site

Site: 67 acres
Cost: \$940,000
Acquired: March 15, 2010
Fund: 2004 Bond Funds
Grant: State Parks Growing Smarter

Background

The 67-acre core of the Valencia Site was purchased at auction from the Arizona State Land Department in December 2009. The purchase cost was \$940,000. Half the funds came from Pima County 2004 Bonds, with the other half funded by an Arizona State Parks Growing Smarter Grant. The 67-acre Valencia Archaeological Preserve, located in the City of Tucson, is owned by Pima County.

Cultural and Historical Significance

The Valencia Archaeological Site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, attesting to its national significance. The Valencia site is a large prehistoric Hohokam settlement, one of the best preserved in the City of Tucson. The preserved portion of the site represents its core, where the major ceremonial ballcourt is located, along with many large plazas and middens, and as many as two thousand domestic houses. The Valencia settlement, located adjacent to the Santa Cruz River, was occupied for over seven hundred years. Such a long occupation clearly demonstrates that the Hohokam intimately understood the Sonoran Desert environment, and that they knew how to live sustainably within that environment. To the Tohono O'odham Nation, the Hohokam Valencia Site is an ancestral home, and is a traditional cultural place in their historic landscape within Pima County.

Management

Pima County will protect the 67-acre core of the Valencia Site by preserving it in place. Some new protective perimeter fencing, conducive to the passage of wildlife, will be erected. Signage will advise the public that this is a Pima County Conservation Area that is protected from unauthorized use and damaging activities. Invasive species, such as buffleggrass, will be eradicated, but only using methods that do not disturb the fragile archaeological resources.

Value to the Community

The Valencia Archaeological Site provides a sense of place representing the deep history of human occupation in the Tucson area. The Preserve provides open space with native vegetation within the modern urban community. When accessible through trails and educational interpretive signage, the Preserve will become a focal point of local visitation. It is expected that the Valencia Site will also be a focal point of heritage tourism in the Santa Cruz River Valley.

In the future, it is hoped that interpretive trails and signage will be added, to provide the public an understanding of this important site, and enhance its educational value. As the Santa Cruz River undergoes habitat rehabilitation, the Valencia Site will be linked to public pathways along the river.



Hohokam ballcourt - Photo by Henry D. Wallace

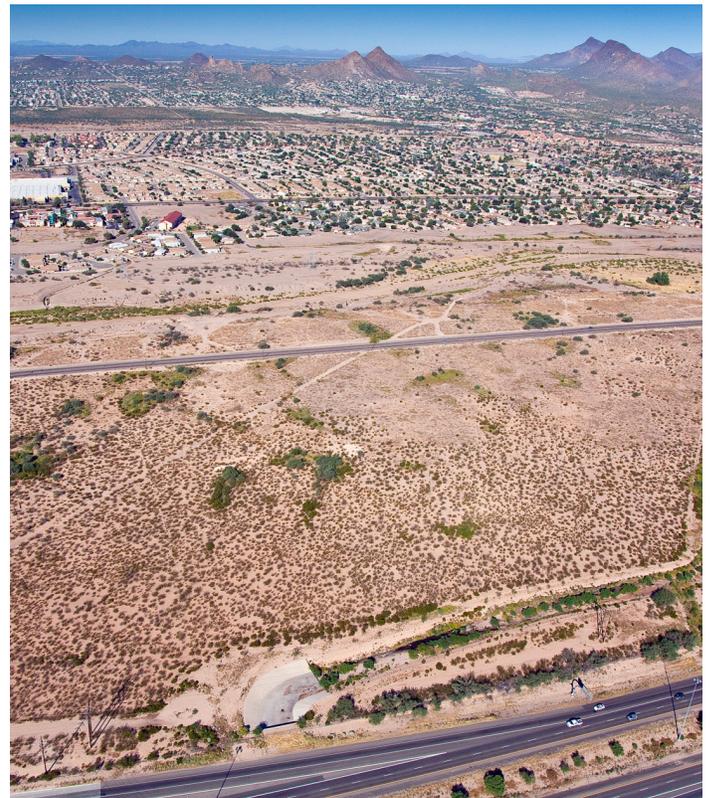


Photo by Henry D. Wallace