

THE COLORADO RIVER INDIAN TRIBES (C.R.I.T.) RESERVATION AND EXTENSION PROGRAMS



Purpose and Content

The following information is provided for use by potential researchers and others who are interested in the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation. Historical information and current data are combined to create a picture of the geographical, political, social and cultural aspects of this unique low-desert Reservation.

Part A: Setting (geographic, social, economic)

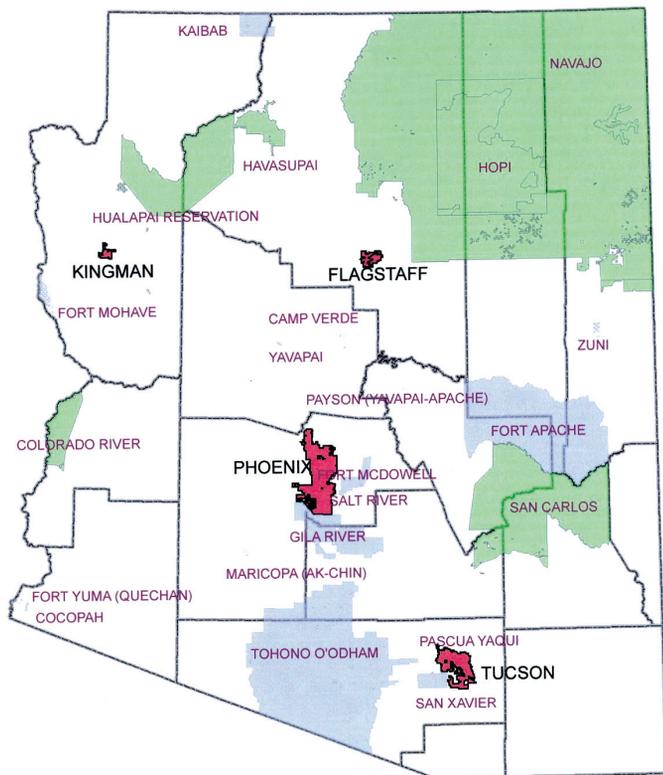
The Colorado River Indian Tribes (C.R.I.T.) Reservation, the second Indian Reservation in Arizona, was established in 1865 for the “Indians of said River and its Tributaries.” Initially, this included the Mohave, whose ties to the land date from prehistoric time and the Chemehuevi who, for generations, have also resided along the Colorado River from present-day Nevada south into Mexico. In 1945, a portion of the Reservation was reserved for colonization by Indians of other tribes, specifically the Hopis and Navajos. Today, the Colorado River Indian Tribes includes four distinct Tribes - the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi and Navajo. Although the four Tribes who share the Reservation function today as one geo-political unit, known as the Colorado River Indian Tribes, each continues to maintain and observe its individual traditions, distinct religions, and culturally unique identities (Colorado River Indian Tribes, 2005).

The C.R.I.T. Reservation is comprised of almost 300,000 acres (121,405 ha) of land with 353 square miles (914 sq.km) in Arizona and 66.7 square miles (173 sq. km) in California. It also includes 90 miles (145 km) of river shoreline along the Colorado River. The Reservation holds substantial senior water rights (717,000 acre feet) in the Colorado River, which is almost one-third of the total allotment from the

river for the state of Arizona. This water is predominantly used for irrigated farming via an extensive network of irrigation canals that cover the irrigable lands along the river (Colorado River Indian Tribes, 2005).

Mohave, with an ‘h,’ instead of **Mojave** with a ‘j’ is the spelling preferred by tribal members living in the Parker area (A. Flores, 2008) even though both are accepted spellings for a Native American people known among themselves as the *Aha macave*. Their name comes from two words: *aha*, meaning ‘water’, and *macave*, meaning ‘along or beside’ and, to them, it means ‘people who live along the river’. (Mojave Indians, 2003) The Mohave have farmed the lower Colorado River basin for over 800 years. Historically, they were adept agriculturists, having mastered complex methods of irrigation to grow crops of beans, corn and pumpkins. The Mohave could be a fierce people willing to protect their land, and also willing to venture far from it to trade. Traditionally, they were proficient traders traveling all the way to the coast of California and up into what is now Nevada. They exchanged their own surplus crops for desired and valued goods from coastal tribes (Mojave National Preserve, n.d.).

The **Chemehuevi**, a Mohave word meaning, ‘Those who play with fish,’ are a Shoshonean tribe, apparently an offshoot of the Paiute Indians. They are known to themselves as Nuwu (The People). Historically, they were a nomadic tribe that inhabited the east bank of the Colorado River from the Bill Williams River to Needles, California and extending westward as far as the Providence Mountains (Chemehuevi, 2007). The Chemehuevi were a wandering people, traveling



great distances on hunting excursions, and although they did live mainly on the natural products of the desert, they farmed on a small scale where possible. They are known for their beautiful, high quality baskets. More information on the Chemehuevi people can be found on their website at: <http://www.chemehuevi.net/home.php>.

The Hopi and Navajo joined the reservation following WWII. The **Navajo, or Diné**, is the largest tribe of North American Indians. Long ago, their ancestors lived in Northwestern Canada and Alaska. Over 1,000 years ago they began to travel south, eventually reaching the southwestern United States. Over time, due to their ability to accept and incorporate the best traditions, talents, and cultural concepts of the many tribes with which they came in contact, the Navajo became the most pervasive tribe in the Southwest. The Navajo have historically grown corn, beans, squash, and melons. They are also well known for their blankets and have created some of the finest textiles in North America (Welcome to the Navajo Nation, 2005).

Traditionally, and currently, the **Hopi** are highly skilled subsistence farmers. The name Hopi is a contraction of the native word Hópitu, meaning 'peaceful ones,' or Hópitu-shínumu, meaning 'peaceful little ones.' Hopi is a concept deeply rooted in the culture's religion, spirituality, and its view of morality and ethics. To be Hopi is to strive toward this concept, which involves a state of total reverence and respect for all things, to be at peace with these things, and to live in accordance with the instructions of Maasaw, the Creator or Caretaker of Earth. The Hopi observe their traditional ceremonies for the benefit of the entire world. The Hopi are skilled in weaving, dyeing, and embroidering and are also known for their silver work and their Kachina dolls (Hopi, 2007).

Communities

There are currently about 3,500 active C.R.I.T. Tribal members, made up of members from all four Tribes. The primary community on the C.R.I.T. Reservation is Parker, Arizona, which is located on a combination of Tribal land, leased land owned by C.R.I.T., and private land owned by non-Native individuals and companies. Poston is another, smaller community on the reservation, located 12 miles south of Parker (Colorado River Indian Tribes, (2005). During World War II, Poston was the site of one of the United States' largest Japanese internment camps, where thousands of Japanese-Americans were held over a three-year period. The camp sites are now home to a monument dedicated to those who died and suffered while in internment, and C.R.I.T. is currently in the process of creating a museum to commemorate the era. The U.S. National Park Service provides historical information and photographs regarding the camp on their web site: http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/anthropology74/ce10.htm.

Language

The **Mohave** language belongs to the River Yuman branch of the Yuman-Cochimí or Hokan linguistic family. It consists of about ten languages and various dialects, with speakers ranging from Baja California and northern Sonora in Mexico, to southern California and western Arizona in the USA (Redish, 2000, and Mojave National Preserve, n.d.). The **Chemehuevi** language is distinct from that of the other Colorado River Tribes. It is a Uto-Aztecan language of the Western Plateau closely related to Southern Paiute and is considered by many linguists to be a dialect of Southern Paiute (Redish, 2000, and The Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, 2008). The **Navajo** language is geographically and linguistically one of the Southern Athabaskan languages (the majority of Athabaskan languages are spoken in northwest Canada and Alaska). Navajo claims more speakers than any other Native American or First Nation language north of the U.S.-Mexico border, with more than 100,000 native speakers. This number has actually increased with time, while speakers of many other native languages have declined. During World War II, a code, based on the Navajo language, was used by code talkers to send secure military messages by radio to U.S. allies (Redish, 2000, and Welcome to the Navajo Nation!, 2005). The **Hopi** language is a Shoshonean dialect of Uto-Aztecan origin that appears to contain many archaic words and forms not encountered in the other dialects (Redish, 2000, and Hopi, 2008).

Schools

The Parker Unified School District is part of the State of Arizona School System and includes the Blake, Wallace and Le Pera Elementary schools, Wallace Junior High School, Parker High School and Parker Alternative School. The district currently includes 734 tribal students (2007-2008 school year) at the primary and secondary levels who make-up between 29 and 42 percent of the total student population as follows; Blake Primary - 177 tribal youth (36.4%), Le Pera

Elementary - 148 tribal youth (41.5%), Wallace Elementary - 132 tribal youth (37.1%), Wallace Junior High School - 87 tribal youth (37.3%), Parker High School - 174 tribal youth (29.3%) and Parker Alternative High School 16 - tribal youth (40%). The C.R.I.T. Education Department is moving forward on the necessary steps to start a Tribal school. With a working title of Four Nations Community School, it would begin as a Kindergarten and First Grade elementary school. From there, plans are to add grades incrementally to a K-3 school, making sure enrolled students are able to remain in the program through all four grades (U.S. School Directory, 2007).

Adult Education

At the Arizona Western College Parker Campus, Tribal members constituted 2% of the total enrolled students between 2004 and 2007 (U.S. College Search, 2007). The C.R.I.T. Tribal Education Center provides resources for students to obtain online degrees in Computer Information systems and Health Education. The Center also provides support in the form of a computer lab, after-school programs for grades K-12 and assistance in obtaining a GED. The Colorado River Indian Tribes supports higher education and provides funds to eligible C.R.I.T. tribal students who are pursuing a college degree at an accredited college or university (Colorado River Indian Tribes, 2005). The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension adds to these programs with workshops and dissemination of educational information on issues including agriculture; integrated pest management, youth development, technology, nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

The C.R.I.T. Library is recognized as the first tribally funded library in the United States. The library boasts unique archival materials on Native Americans and also includes some Japanese Internment Camp collections. In addition to standard library activities, educational programs on issues of current interest are provided by the staff for tribal members, as well as to the general public. Computer classes are offered at the library for all ages, and the entire Parker community is encouraged to participate. Additional information regarding the library can be found at <http://www.critlibrary.com/>.

The C.R.I.T. museum is currently located in downtown Parker. It houses cultural artifacts, exhibits, and photos showing Tribal history and cultural traditions from all four Tribes.

Predominant Ecological Types and Significance

The C.R.I.T. Reservation lies wholly within the Lower Colorado River Valley which is the largest, hottest, and driest subdivision of the Sonora and Mohave Deserts. Summer highs may exceed 120° F (48.5° C), with surface temperatures approaching 180° (82° C). The intense solar radiation from cloudless skies and low humidity (often less than 10%) suck life-sustaining water from exposed plants. Annual rainfall in the driest sites averages less than three inches (75 mm), and some localities have gone nearly three

years with no measureable rain. Even so, life exists here and it grows abundantly, if for short time periods, in the rare wet years (McNab and Avers, 1994, and Warner and Hendrix, 1984).

The valleys are dominated by low shrubs, primarily creosote bush (*Larrea divaricata*) and white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*). These are two of the most drought-tolerant plants in North America, but in the driest areas of this geographic area, even these are restricted to drainage courses. Annual species comprise well over half the flora (90% at the driest sites); they are mostly winter-growing species and appear in numbers only in wet years (McNab and Avers, 1994, and Warner and Hendrix, 1984). An extensive and very old mesquite bosque is located in the south end of the reservation. This bosque is an important cultural resource to the Mohave Indians. They use it for many ceremonies and other sacred purposes.

The Colorado River provides water and creates a narrow strip of lush vegetation that creates habitat for many animals and birds. Mammals include; desert kit fox, coyote, spotted skunk, spotted bat, black-tailed jackrabbit, ground squirrels, kangaroo rat, and white-footed mouse. Birds include eagles, hawks, owls, quail, roadrunners, finches, warblers, and orioles. In addition, millions of birds — more than 350 species — follow the Pacific Flyway migration route each year (Follow the Pacific Flyway, 2004). Eighteen of these species are considered common breeding species in the lower Colorado River Valley; seven of these are resident through the year. Reptiles include the desert tortoise, five species of rattlesnakes, several non-venomous snakes, and the chuckawalla lizard. Other desert creatures including the scorpion and tarantula spider are commonly found in the area (Warner and Hendrix 1984).

Economy

The Reservation's economy centers around agriculture, recreation, light industry, and government. The Colorado River serves as the focal point and lifeblood of the Reservation providing much needed water in an extremely arid environment for agriculture, recreation and tourism. In recent years, the Tribal economy has diversified greatly, and now includes forays and businesses in several different fields. Sand and gravel, real estate development and retail stores have all been part of the Tribes' economic development efforts. Over the past decade, a heavy emphasis has turned toward tourism. C.R.I.T. opened the Blue Water Resort and Casino in 1995 and has endeavored to attract both cultural and recreational tourists to the area.

Natural Resource-Based Economic Activities

Farming

The primary economic activity on the C.R.I.T. Reservation has always been agriculture, going back to the days when mesquite trees were plentiful along the banks of the river and were relied upon for everything from food to cooking to Tribal traditions and ceremonies. C.R.I.T. continues to have a

strong farming and agricultural industry, including growing alfalfa, grains, cotton, seed crops, guayule (pronounced 'why-YOU-lee') and melons. Approximately 84,500 acres (34,196 ha) are now under cultivation and another 50,000 acres (20,234 ha) are available for development (Colorado River Indian Tribes (2005).

Agriculture is predominately flood irrigated with water supplied through an extensive canal system. Irrigation on the reservation dates back to prehistoric times continuing through the last century when the first diversion was made in 1870 by a canal that allowed diversions only during high stages of river flow. Minor diversions were made until about 1898 when a 40 horsepower engine and 15 inch centrifugal pump was installed. This plant was enlarged in 1912 and in 1918. On June 28, 1942, all pumping ceased with the construction of Headgate Rock Dam which created Lake Moovalya and allowed for gravity diversion from the river on-demand. Water from this diversion runs through an extensive canal system that feeds the many farms on the reservation.

Hunting, Fishing and Recreation

The Colorado River is the Reservation's greatest recreational asset and most scenic attraction. Facilities for swimmers, boaters and water skiers may be found along the 90 miles of shoreline. Lake Moovalya is formed behind Headgate Dam and provides a very desirable location for camping, water skiing and fishing. The Blue Water Casino is located right on the water, just upstream from Headgate Dam. Fishing for trout, striped bass, bass, catfish, crappie and bluegill is excellent in the river and in the canal system. Dove, quail, waterfowl, rabbit, and predator hunting is also excellent. Reservation hunting and fishing permits are required. Camping permits are also available. All natural resources are managed by the Colorado River Indian Tribes Fish and Game Department. Information regarding wildlife management projects, closures, regulations, and hunt-fish permits can be found at: <http://www.geocities.com/critfishngame/>.

Ahakhav Preserve

The Ahakhav Tribal Preserve was established in 1995, and currently consists of 1,253 acres (507 ha) of wilderness area, about 250 acres (101 ha) of aquatic habitat and a 3.5 acre (1.4 ha) park. The preserve is centered around a reconstructed Colorado River backwater, which offers a variety of activities including fishing, canoeing, birding, and swimming. The preserve also maintains a 4.6 mile (7.4 km) fitness trail as well as a playground, landscaped picnic facility and a spur trail planted with native mesquite, cottonwood and willow. The picnic area is equipped with lush green grass, barbeque grills and picnic tables. The preserve serves many purposes. One is to provide recreational and learning opportunities to the surrounding community as well as visitors. Another is to serve as a re-vegetated area for endangered and threatened plants and animals native to the Lower Colorado River Basin. The preserve is an ongoing project to study methods of re-vegetation and restoration that may be used throughout the Reservation. The Preserve is great

for environmental and nature study programs for youth and adults, wildlife observations and the serene setting is ideal for family celebrations, weddings, picnics, and plain old fashioned barbeques. Additional information is available at: <http://www.ahakhav.com/>

Sand and Rock

Colorado River Sand & Rock is an enterprise of the Colorado River Indian Tribes that was established in October 1998. It supplies concrete ready mix, asphalt, sand, and gravel products to La Paz County, AZ and Riverside and San Bernardino Counties in California.

Blue Water Resort and Casino and the Colorado River

The Blue Water Resort & Casino provides more than 200 hotel rooms with views of the Colorado River. The resort includes a casino with more than 450 slot machines, Keno, Blackjack and many other gaming opportunities. It also has restaurants, a conference center and a multi-screen movie theater. Major national acts perform frequently at the resort's amphitheater. The Blue Water Resort & Casino is a great launching point for enjoyment of recreation opportunities on the Colorado River. The resort has a 160-dock marina, and is just one of dozens of locations where those interested in river recreation can enjoy what the Colorado River has to offer (Colorado River Indian Tribes, 2005).

Part B: History Of Extension

Unlike many other reservations, C.R.I.T. has had access to County Agricultural Extension Programs from Yuma County and La Paz County Cooperative Extension offices. The La Paz County office was opened in 1983 after the new County was formed by breaking away from Yuma County to the south. The Colorado River Indian Tribes= access to Extension Programs is also unique in that the La Paz County Extension Office is located on Reservation land. C.R.I.T. has historically joined with the County to help support Extension Programming on the Reservation and throughout the County. Billy Moore was the first County Director and was followed in 1984 by Woody Winans, who served as County Director for fourteen years. Janice Shelton was County Director from 1998 to 2003. The current County Director is Linda Masters.

In March of 1994, the first Extension Indian Reservation Program (EIRP) Agent, Mike Rethwisch, was hired. The Tribe requested that the agent focus on alternative crop possibilities and ways to improve crop production, crop marketing, and pesticides use. Non-greenhouse floriculture and the vegetable seed industry were also identified as areas that might benefit the Tribe. Mike worked closely with 4-H Youth Development and developed a 4-H Horticulture Identification and Judging Team that won the state championship.

In 1999, Martin Guerena was hired as the new EIRP Agent. Continuing with research into alternative crops, Martin presented information regarding jojoba and shrimp production. In addition, he conducted variety trials for established crops and developed plans for a vegetable crop infrastructure including cooling, packing, and shipping facilities.

Major Programs and Primary Collaborators

PROGRAMS	ISSUES	ACTIVITIES	COLLABORATORS
<i>Agriculture & Natural Resources</i>	Irrigation Water Conservation Precision Agriculture techniques to improve production and protect natural resources	Develop Irrigation Water Education Center	C.R.I.T. Natural Resources Conservation Service Parker Valley Conservation District Bureau of Indian Affairs Bureau of Reclamation
<i>4-H Youth Development</i>	Introducing youth to cutting edge technology Reestablishing a horse program	National 4-H Youth Leadership Technology Conference for youth ESRI GIS Mapping Conference for youth Gymkhana Events County Horse Shows	National 4-H USDA ESRI Local businesses and volunteers
<i>Family Consumer Sciences</i>	Promote healthy lifestyles through nutrition and physical activity education	Workshops in Nutrition Education, Food Safety, Bone Builders, Physical Activity, 5-a-day, Healthy Choices, Diabetes prevention and 4-H Challenge games.	C.R.I.T. Diabetes C.R.I.T. Recreation Indian Health Services Johnson O'Malley Program C.R.I.T. Tobacco

The current agent, Linda Masters, started on the Reservation in June of 2002. She has continued to provide information to the Tribe regarding alternative crops including citrus, guayule, date palms, and greenhouse crop production. In 2006, the EIRP program underwent a name change to the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP). Under the new name, the program continues to find collaborative partners and workshop presentation methods that will provide the best dissemination of educational material to the C.R.I.T. Tribal members and also to farmers who lease tribal lands. The current programs and methods of delivery are shown in the following table.

Successful Educational Delivery Methods

- Workshops for Tribal audiences presented “in the field” to demonstrate new technologies in a hands-on manner.
- Collaborate with other agents and University Specialists to host Agriculture Workshops for farmers and laborers. Promote safe use of pesticides and methods to increase crop production.
- Small group meetings to investigate methods for management of natural resources followed by presentations to Tribal Council or other larger audiences.
- Field trips with youth to learn about natural resources while also learning GIS/GPS technology. Use hiking to incorporate and promote physical activity.
- Computer workshops to learn GIS mapping programs.
- Include and encourage youth to participate in the development of GIS mapping instructional material. Promote critical thinking, coherent writing and presentation skills.
- Travel outside the state to national youth technology events.
- Use of interactive challenge games to teach leadership and teamwork to youth.
- Use of games and hands-on activities to teach nutrition.
- Promotion of Physical Activity through youth workshops and inclusion of activities in other programs

- Collaborate with C.R.I.T. agencies to promote healthy lifestyles, use of native foods to combat diabetes, and physical activity among adults.

Conclusions

More information, including Tribal contacts, available farm leases, and breaking news can be found on Tribe's website at <http://C.R.I.T.online.com>. For additional information on C.R.I.T., other Native American Reservations and the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program, see the University of Arizona Website at <http://www.indiancountryextension.org>. The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. maintains another website at <http://www.itcaonline.com> which provides individual pages specific to Native American issues in Arizona.

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