



FEMA

Flood-Prone Property Restored to Open Space

Roosevelt, AZ - In 1911 the Bureau of Reclamation constructed Theodore Roosevelt Lake, the first major structure constructed under the Federal Reclamation Act, formed by the construction of a masonry dam on the Salt River, submerging about 10 miles of the original river bed beneath the waters.

In the 1960's, many homes were constructed along the south shore of the lake and were repeatedly subject to damage from flash flooding. Roosevelt Estates is one of the communities in this area. This area, and these homes, had been damaged repetitively in flooding events because of their location near the confluence of the two major drainages.

During the 2003 monsoon storms, six to twelve inches of rain fell in a 12 hour period, flooding six homes near the corner of Ash Street and Palo Verde Drive, the geographic low point of the Roosevelt Estates where Campaign Creek and Pinto Creek converge. Three of the homes suffered substantial damage, making two of them uninhabitable. Altogether 20 homes lost all utilities for a day and phones were out for one week. The damage zone was eight miles square.

In the summer of 2002, the largest, most severe fire in Arizona history, the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, burned nearly a half-million acres of wilderness and triggered a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Arizona. Gila County applied for and received FEMA hazard mitigation grant funding from the State. Because the hazard mitigation funds were available for any priority risks, Gila County used the grant monies to purchase flood-damaged homes in Roosevelt Estates and to return the lots to a natural state.

Limited funds restricted the purchase to only three homes with the most damage—amounting to over 50% of their fair market value. The costs for purchasing the three homes totaled \$298,388.45, including appraisal and escrow fees. The savings from damages prevented to these three properties from floods occurring in 2005 and 2006 equaled more than \$500,000.

Gila County placed permanent deed restrictions on the properties, preventing any future development except for public facilities associated with open space or recreational use. In 2006, cottonwoods, eucalyptus trees and native chaparral grow among the rocks and the acquired properties show no sign of ever having been built upon.



Gila County,
Arizona



Quick Facts

Year:

2002

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$298,388.00 (Actual)

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)