



BUILDING A **FIRM, LONG TERM FOUNDATION**

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEARS 2020/2021 & 2021/2022





LETTER FROM THE CHAIR | SHELLEY MELLON

I assumed the leadership of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area in January 2022. My goal is to build upon the work undertaken by past Chairs Brian Golding Sr., Thomas Rushin, the late Patty Ware, Gary Munk, and Steve Bell.

With the retirement of Executive Director Lowell Perry, Jr. in July 2022, the Board decided to ask long-term Director Charles Flynn to come out of retirement and serve as interim Director. His primary goals were to assess the current status of the organization and help select and mentor a new Director.

The Board recommitted itself to the YCNHA 2017 Strategic Plan Update as the vehicle to develop an action plan for the coming years. We were also pleased to promote Cathy Douglas as the new Executive Director, based on her strong work ethic, commitment to our mission, and ten years experience with the organization.

Most importantly, we have established a solid financial basis for the long term. In November 2022, Yuma voters approved a 15-year extension of the local 2% Hospitality Tax, which provides the Heritage Area with a substantial match for our federal funding. In December 2022, Congress enacted a 15-year reauthorization for all National Heritage Areas, including Yuma. In addition, Congress increased overall funding for the 55 National Heritage Areas around the country for 2023. We thank the Alliance of National Heritage Areas as well as all of our local and state partners for their support. We will also seek to expand our financial base through additional grants and private philanthropy.

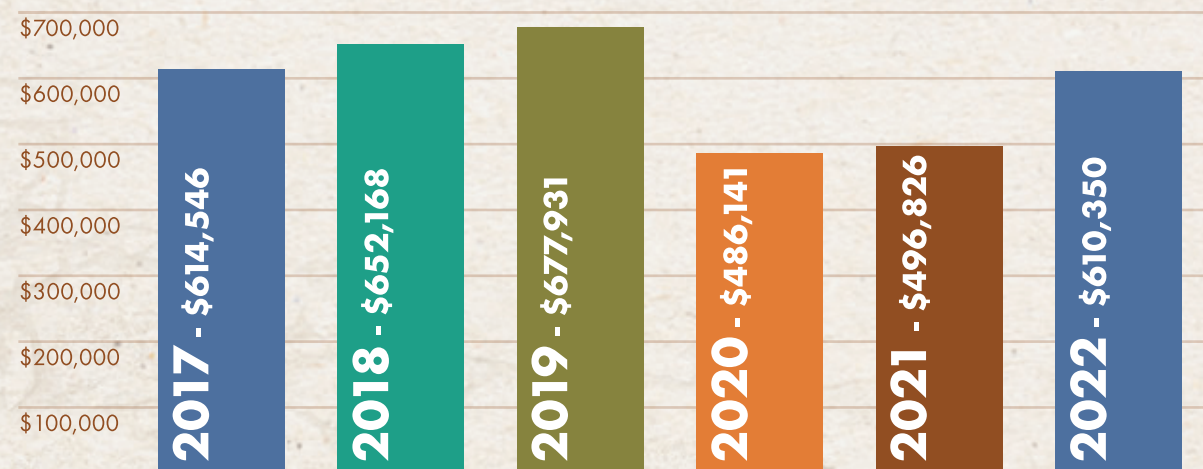
Sincerely,

Shelley Mellon
Shelley Mellon

Chair, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area

A strong return to pre-pandemic revenues.

YCNHA State Historic Park Admissions & Sales - 2017 to 2022



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR | CATHY DOUGLAS

Since October of 2022 when I became Director, my focus has been to continue and accelerate implementation of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area 2017 Strategic Plan Update. You will see in this report more specific details of what we have done and will be doing in 2023.

Highlights include:

- After collaborating with the City to complete the riverside trail extending all along the riverfront, we have secured a \$250,000 grant and are working with the Yuma Parks and Recreation Department to landscape and provide more parking at **West Wetlands**.
- We expect to begin construction of the **Sunset View Wildlife Area** in the far eastern section of the **Yuma East Wetlands**.
- We continue to successfully lead Yuma's State Parks, which the Heritage Area has been managing since 2010. We look forward to working with Arizona State Parks to undertake an ambitious capital program for the Yuma Territorial Prison, which is currently included in the state budget.

We welcomed the Arizona Preservation Foundation's annual conference to Yuma in October to showcase all the improvements in the downtown. We were also able to honor Tina Clark and her many accomplishments with the prestigious 2022 Elisabeth Ruffner Keystone Award for Community Leadership as she retires after 23 years of service to Yuma. There is a short video tribute to her on our website that is well worth viewing.



In November, the City's Parks and Recreation Department and the Heritage Area teamed up to work with the Gowan Company for their "Gowan Gives Day". Nearly 1,000 of their employees and family members from all around the world planted over one-hundred trees and cleaned up miles of Yuma's Colorado River shoreline.

This is the kind of collaboration that has been the hallmark of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area since its inception. We thank our many partners, including the City of Yuma, Quechan Indian Tribe, and Arizona Game and Fish Department, as well as our federal and state funding partners, private foundations and contributors, and community volunteers.

My staff and I pledge to carry on the tradition of restoring, preserving, maintaining, and promoting Yuma's history and culture. Feel free to contact me with any comments or questions at cathy.douglas@yumaaz.gov.

Sincerely,

Cathy Douglas

Cathy Douglas

Executive Director, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area



WEST WETLANDS

1

Since 1999, the Heritage Area has collaborated with the City of Yuma Parks and Recreation Department to develop the 150-acre West Wetlands Park—now Yuma’s most popular park.

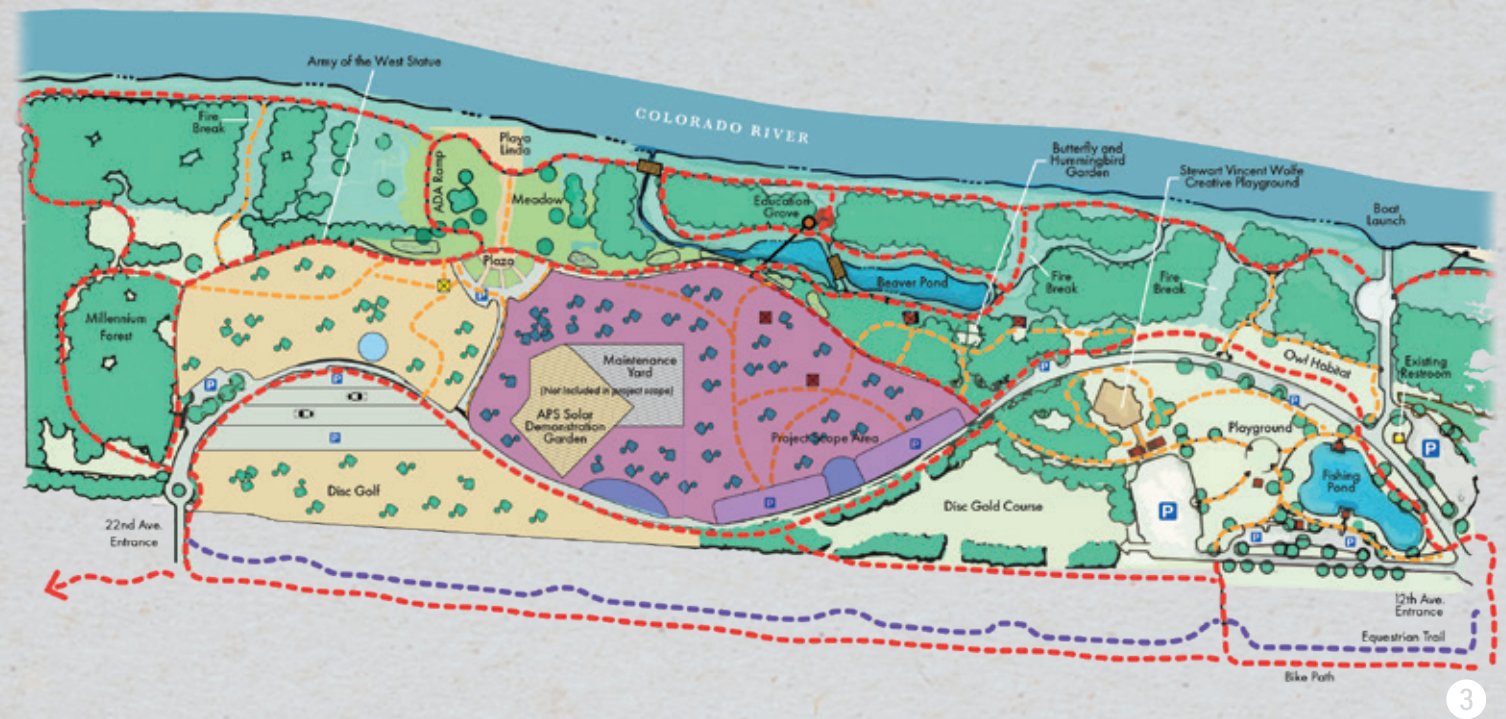
An excellent example of this collaboration is the completion of the riverside trail from West Wetlands to the East Wetlands. After the Heritage area completed a \$600,000 clearing and planting project funded by the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM), the City of Yuma followed up with a 4,000 lineal foot trail construction project funded by Arizona State Parks and Trails. The trail has quickly become a popular spot for families to stroll along the river.

As part of its Strategic Plan, the Heritage Area is committed to working with the City to complete construction of the 150-acre West Wetlands Park. Construction of West Wetlands began in 2002 and is now 70% complete. In 2022, the Heritage Area secured a \$250,000 grant from the Arizona Office of Tourism to add another 17 acres of landscaped parkland. The goal is to complete this project in 2023 with the help of the City’s Parks and Recreation Department.



2

1 West Wetlands pond | 2 A tranquil canoe trip along the West Wetlands | 3 Yuma West Wetlands Master Plan 2023 landscaping project highlighted in pink | 4 The newly added riverside trail | 5 Site for 2023 landscaping project



3

Yuma West Wetlands Master Plan 70% Complete



4,000 Linear Feet
of new walking
trails created



\$600,000
Clearing & Planting Project
Completed



17 acres to be developed
with secured
\$250,000 Grant



4



5



EAST WETLANDS

1

Since 2013, the Heritage Area has successfully operated and maintained the 400-acre Yuma East Wetlands (YEW), a Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCRMSCP) site. We are working with our partners to develop a new five-year plan for our LCRMSCP funding. While the LCRMSCP agreement provides funding for basic maintenance, the Heritage Area continues to seek additional grant funding to enhance habitat and to improve the visitor experience.

In 2022, our primary goal was to secure sufficient funding and complete design of the Sunset View Wildlife Area. This project is located at the far eastern corner of the YEW, adjacent to the Pacific Avenue Athletic Complex. Through a variety of sources, including federal ARPA funding through the City of Yuma; Arizona state grants; and a grant from AARP, we are beginning construction in 2023. The local Marine Corps Engineer Company has also pledged to provide equipment, personnel, and subject-matter expertise to perform the earth moving and grading work. This community relations project will provide a real world training exercise to help the Marines meet their training and readiness standards.

With funding provided from DFFM, we completed a \$113,000 hazardous fuels reduction project in 2021 and in 2022, we were successful in securing a \$76,000 grant to restore an additional 3,000 linear feet of bank line on the north side of the Colorado River at the YEW—another cooperative venture with our partner, the Quechan Indian Tribe. The bank line project will also get underway in 2023. We are continuing to expand our tribal collaboration with the Cocopah Indian Tribe by providing irrigation and trail building services to enhance riverfront restoration on Cocopah tribal land. We also developed a volunteer Adopt-a-Trail program with the funding assistance from Arizona Community Foundation. This program will help maintain our riverfront trails and promote ongoing stewardship of the YEW.

Another priority for 2023 is to find funding to establish an irrigation pipeline to bring fresh water into the South Channel marsh. Due to reduced river flows, there simply is not enough water to recharge and renew the marsh. A vibrant marsh is essential to the overall health of the YEW.



2

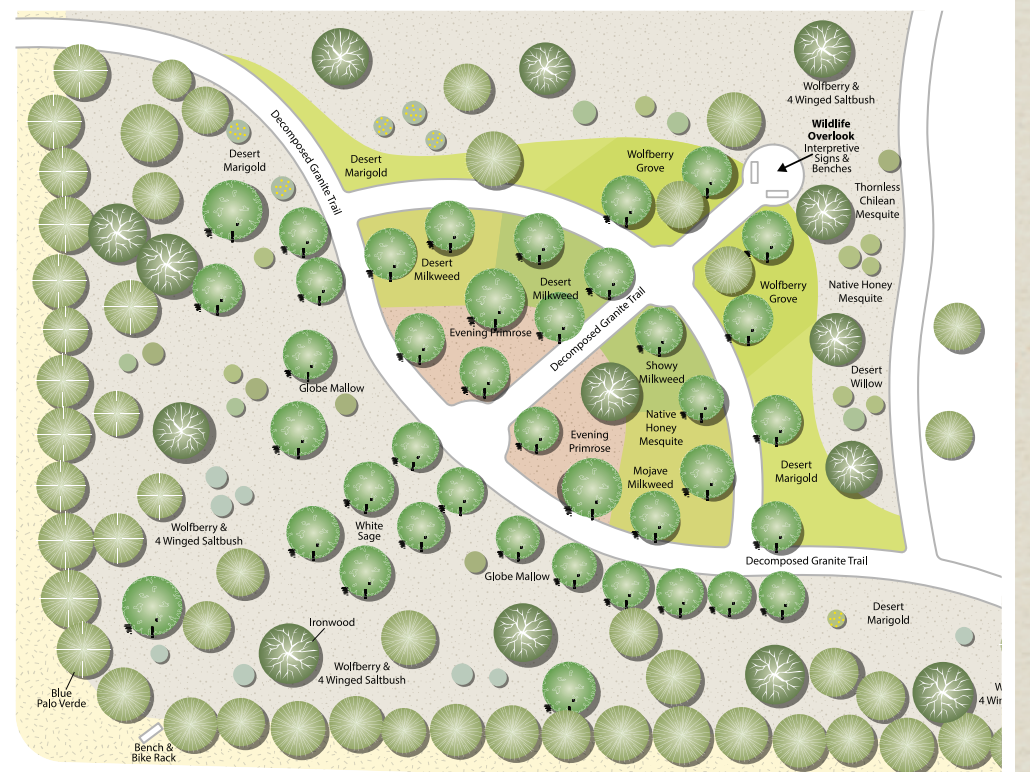


3

SUNSET VIEW WILDLIFE VIEWING AREA

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, in partnership with the City of Yuma, is excited to begin a new trail system, a wildlife viewing overlook, shade ramada, wildlife interpretive signage, and pollinating garden.

Construction is to begin in 2023.



South Ave 2E (Pacific Ave Extension)



4



5

1 A stand of cottonwood trees provides shelter for wildlife | 2 Arbor Day volunteer tree planting event | 3 Volunteer trailer with tools for maintaining the wetlands | 4 Removal of dead trees and brush encourages new growth and reduces fire fuel | 5 A vibrant marsh after a rare, high river flow

YUMA'S ARIZONA STATE PARKS

The parks are rebounding from the negative economic impact of the pandemic. The Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park (YTPSHP), which has been financially self-sufficient, suffered almost a \$200,000 reduction in annual gross revenues during the pandemic, but is now recovering to nearly pre-pandemic levels. The Colorado River State Historic Park (CRSHP) has benefited from additional revenues from gift shop sales, but still relies on funding from the City of Yuma and from our Heritage Area funding provided by the National Park Service.

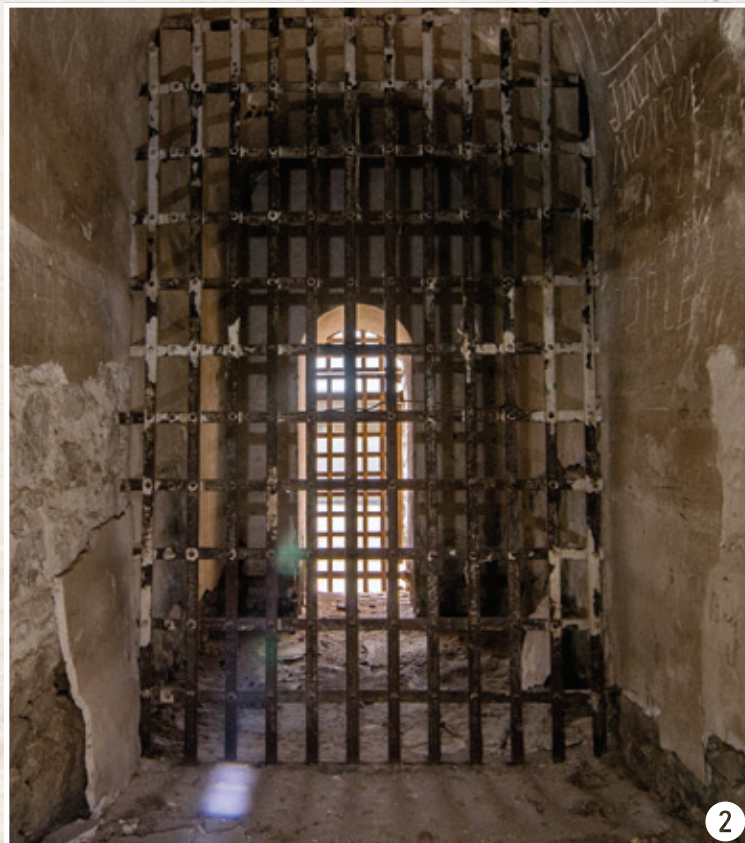
The recent focus has been on determining how best to invest capital funds as they become available. The State of Arizona has made a significant capital commitment to the YTPSHP, with design funds coming in July 2023 and construction funding coming in July 2024. Our immediate priorities include the construction of much needed new restrooms to accommodate growing attendance, historic building preservation, and upgrading our aging electrical and lighting systems to facilitate evening special events, which are much in demand.

At the CRSHP, our capital focus is on working to maintain our historic adobe structures, which are some of the oldest in the State of Arizona. We are exploring ways to preserve the Corral House, which needs a new roof system and grading improvements to divert rainfall away from the adobe walls.



1

Our capital focus is on working to maintain our historic adobe structures.



2



3



4



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6



7

- 1 New sidewalks at the Colorado River State Historic Park help divert water away from adobe buildings |
- 2 Yuma Territorial Prison cell shows its age |
- 3 Prison cell block |
- 4 Dia de los Muertos celebration at the prison |
- 5 Xeriscape helps to slow erosion of the Prison's sally port |
- 6 Christmas on the Colorado family event at Colorado River State Historic Park |
- 7 Colorado River State Historic Park's aging storehouse

GOWAN COMPANY

A Great Corporate Partner

While the Heritage Area values all of its partners and volunteers—without whom we could not do what we do—we wanted to feature the Gowan Company this year. Back in 2018, they invested considerable volunteer manpower and funding to construct the Gowan Grove in the Yuma West Wetlands.

In 2022, at their corporate gathering in Yuma of employees from all over the world, Gowan expanded its efforts to make improvements all along the riverfront. They replaced and planted over 100 trees in areas impacted by intense summer storms and blight in both the West Wetlands and Gateway Park. Other crews did clean-up along the riverfront; assembled new benches and picnic tables for the new Sunset View Wildlife Area; and made improvements to the 1/8 scale miniature railroad operated by the Yuma Territory Live Steamers.



The Gowan Company represents the heart and soul of Yuma and we so appreciate their support!

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Heritage Area conducts multiple outreach and educational programming activities. With funding provided from the National Park Foundation's Outdoors for Kids grant, we designed a new 4th grade field trip program to the Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park (YTPSHP) and the Yuma East Wetlands. This program provided 1,400 students from Yuma County schools a fun and engaging way to learn about their local history by participating in an "escape room" like activity at the YTPSHP. Kids scoured the museum grounds and used what they learned to unlock clues allowing them to escape. After their prison escape, the kids took a stroll through the Yuma East Wetlands to witness first-hand how the native habitat sustains all of the wildlife species that now live in this restored conservation area.

This program has quickly become very popular for our largely Title 1 schools, and with the support of a 2nd Outdoors for Kids grant awarded in 2022, we are expanding field trip options to include the Colorado River State Historic Park, as well as developing a digital field trip series narrated by a talking beaver named Bucky.



YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the Fiscal Period Ending September 30, 2021 and September 30, 2022

Federal, State & Local Grant

2021	2022
\$678,382	\$763,498

City of Yuma In-Kind Contribution

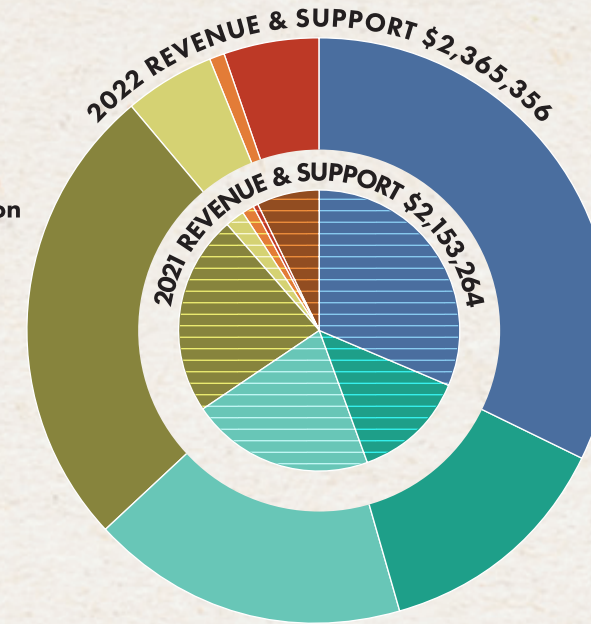
2021	2022
\$283,022	\$314,114

Contractual Revenue

2021	2022
\$451,227	\$418,650

State Parks Entrance Fees & Merchandise Sales

2021	2022
\$497,315	\$611,111



Rental Income

2021	2022
\$50,655	\$118,215

Charitable Donations

2021	2022
\$20,449	\$15,637

Private Grants, Events & Other

2021	2022
\$22,476	\$124,131

Paycheck Protection Plan Loan Forgiveness

2021	2022
\$149,738	N/A

State Parks - Operations Expenses

2021	2022
\$817,569	\$926,772

Yuma East Wetlands Restoration & Maintenance

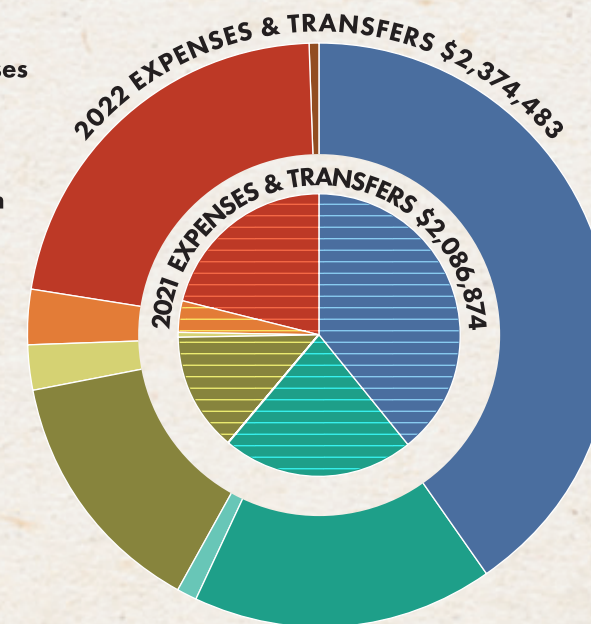
2021	2022
\$459,387	\$378,520

Yuma West Wetlands Restoration Project

2021	2022
\$1,610	\$29,015

City of Yuma In-Kind Expenses

2021	2022
\$283,022	\$314,114



Heritage Programming and Education

2021	2022
\$14,278	\$56,892

Historic City Hall and Pivot Point Plaza

2021	2022
\$74,759	\$73,984

General and Administration Expenses

2021	2022
\$436,249	\$500,186

Loss on Sale of Donated Property

2021	2022
N/A	\$95,000

Excess (Deficit) of Revenue Over Expenses 2021 - **\$66,390**

Excess (Deficit) of Revenue Over Expenses 2022 - **(\$9,127)**

OUR DEDICATED STAFF

- Cathy Douglas, *Executive Director*
- Africa Carrasco, *Executive Assistant*
- Teri Ingram, *Events Coordinator*
- Sarah Halligan, *Marketing & Communications Specialist*
- Priscilla Starr, *Accounting Manager*
- Maribel Hansen, *Senior Staff Accountant*
- Sylvia Atondo, *Staff Accountant*
- Tammy Snook, *Colorado River State Historic Park Manager*
- Martin Trujillo, *Retail Operations Coordinator*
- Jesus Lopez, *Colorado River State Historic Park Maintenance*
- Mike Guertin, *Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park Manager*
- Mario Ochoa, *Guest Service Shift Supervisor*
- *Guest Service Representatives:*
Daniella Hammond
Jaime Valle, Jr.
Nicole Crawford
- Jesus Melendrez, *Natural Resources Program Manager*
- *Yuma East Wetlands Project Field Staff:*
Jorge Prado Sr.
Pio Fernandez
Jorge Prado Jr.
Angel Limones
- Susana Famanias, *Custodian*

YCNHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Shelly Mellon, *Board Chair*,
RL Jones Insurance & MVD
Services
- Bruce Gwynn, *Vice-Chair*,
Yuma County Historical
Society
- Tom Rushin, *Secretary/
Treasurer*, Retired
- Chris Wheeler, Prison Hill
Brewing Company
- Amber Shek, Greater Yuma
Economic Development
Council
- Emilia Cortez, Girl Scouts of
Southern Arizona
- Reetika Dhawan, Arizona
Western College
- Linda Elliot-Nelson, Arizona
Western College
- Clint Harrington, Pilkington
Construction
- Douglas Nicholls, Mayor, City
of Yuma
- Karen Watts, Council
Member, City of Yuma
- Jonathan Lines, Yuma County
Supervisor
- Lisa Otondo, Arizona State
Senator, District 4

OUR GENEROUS INVESTORS

- Frankie Almodova
- Wayne Benesch
- Santa Carol
- Amanda Coltman
- Linda Elliot-
Nelson Family
Charitable Fund
- Julie Engel
- Brian Golding, Sr.
- Sarah Halligan
- Russell Jones
- Jay Parke
- Edward Otto
- Rachelle Richards
- Amber Shek
- James Sheldahl
- Kevin and
Michelle Stoleson
- Jewel Whitebeck
- Kathy Wong
- Yuma Association
of Realtors