



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
National Landscape Conservation System

## GILA BOX RIPARIAN NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

### Location

The 23,000-acre Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area (NCA) is located 20 miles northeast of Safford in Graham and Greenlee counties.

### Brief Description

A desert oasis, the Gila Box has four perennial waterways — the Gila and San Francisco rivers, Bonita and Eagle creeks. The area is comprised of patchy mesquite woodlands, mature cottonwood trees, sandy beaches and grand buffed-colored cliffs.

### Access

**West Entrance:** From Safford, travel east on State Route. 70 to Solomon. Turn left on Sanchez Road, cross the bridge and drive seven miles. At the Bonita Creek/Gila Box sign turn left onto a graded dirt road. Continue for 2.5 miles to the Gila Box entry sign.

**East Entrance:** Take State Route 70 east of Safford for 10 miles; turn north on State Route. 191. At milepost 160, turn left onto the Black Hills Back Country Byway. Follow this graded dirt road for four miles to the Gila River.

### Permits Required

Fees are charged for picnicking and camping at Owl Creek and Riverview. A permit is required to float the river. Pay stations are located at the campgrounds and river put-in. Use of Flying W Group Day Use Area adjacent to Riverview is free on a first-come, first-served basis. This site can also be reserved by calling the BLM in Safford; reservation fees are charged. Stay limit within the NCA is five days.

### Recreational Opportunities

River floating, fishing, hunting, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, hiking and birding are a few of the activities to be enjoyed here. Primitive roads beckon off-State Route vehicle and mountain bike enthusiasts.

### Facilities

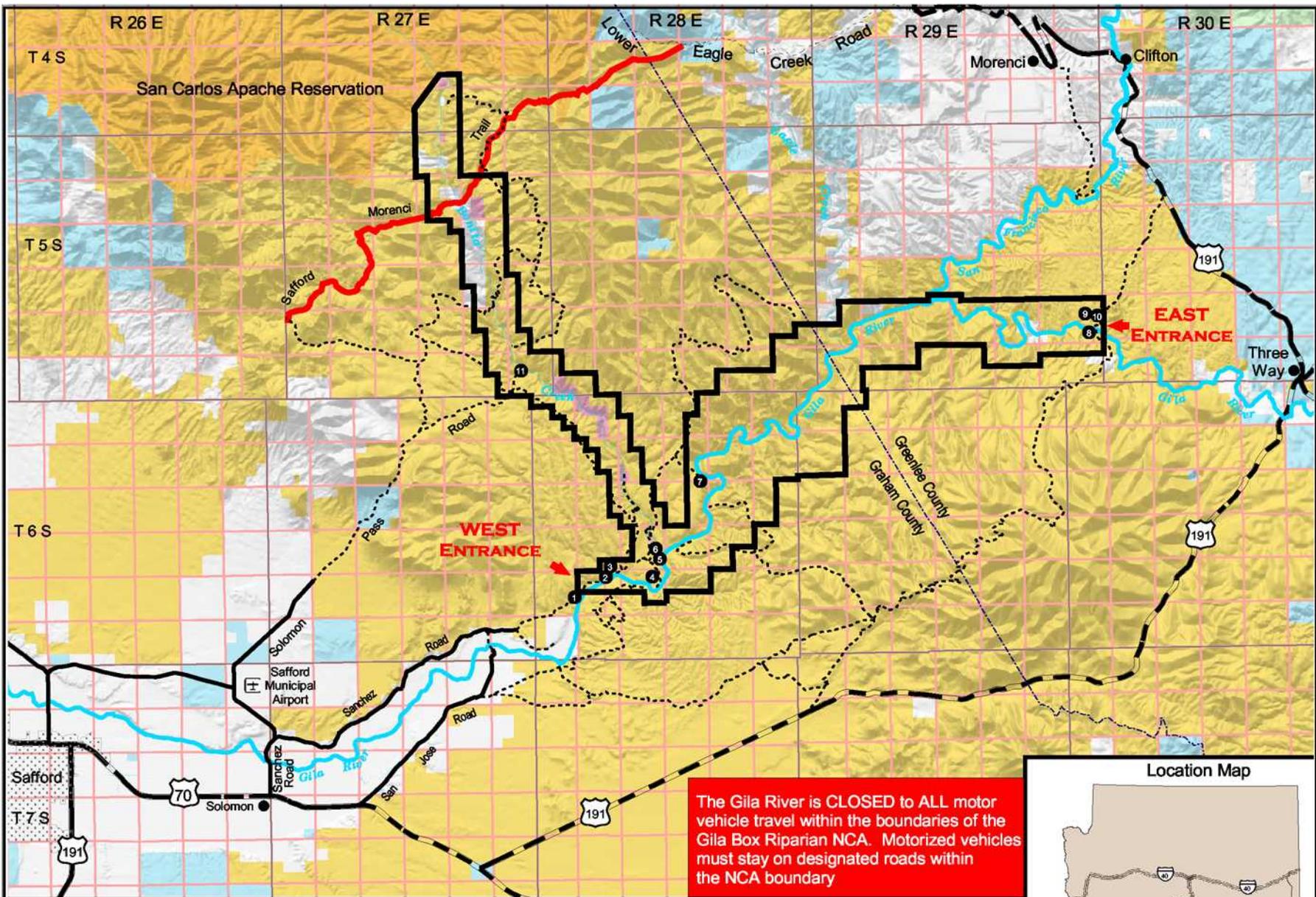
Owl Creek and Riverview campgrounds have tables, grills, ramadas and restrooms. The Flying W Group Day Use Area can accommodate 50 picnickers. The fully accessible Bonita Creek Watchable Wildlife Viewing Area offers a bird's-eye view of the riparian canopy. Other recreation sites include three small picnic areas (Old Safford Bridge, Spring Canyon, and Serna Cabin), Old Safford Bridge Boat Put In, and Dry Canyon Boat Take Out.

### Safety

Potential hazards exist, including year-round flash floods, extreme summer heat, cold winter days, and poisonous reptiles and insects.

### Contact

BLM Safford Field Office  
711 14th Avenue  
Safford, AZ 85546-3321  
(520) 348-4400  
[www.blm.gov/az/st/en.html](http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en.html)



The Gila River is **CLOSED** to ALL motor vehicle travel within the boundaries of the Gila Box Riparian NCA. Motorized vehicles must stay on designated roads within the NCA boundary



### Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

ARIZONA  
SAFFORD FIELD OFFICE

March 29, 2005

- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Highways
- Rivers
- Creeks
- RNCA Boundary
- Township Line
- Section Line

- Land Status
- BLM
  - Indian Lands
  - Private
  - State
  - USFS
  - City of Safford Lands

- 1 West Entrance Information Kiosk
- 2 Dry Canyon Boat Take Out
- 3 Spring Canyon Picnic Area
- 4 Riverview Campground
- 5 Sema Cabin Picnic Area
- 6 Bonita Creek Watchable Wildlife Area
- 7 Orange Cliff Overlook
- 8 Gila River Boat Put In
- 9 Old Safford Bridge Picnic Area
- 10 Owl Creek Campground
- 11 Lee Trail Parking Area & Trailhead

