Rio Salado Audubon Center

3131 South Central Ave., Phoenix, Arizona

Project Team:

Owner/Operator – National Audubon Society
Owner – City of Phoenix
Architect – WEDDLE GILMORE black rock studio
Contractor – Okland Construction
Landscape Architect – JJR|Floor
Structural Engineer – Rudow + Berry
Mechanical & Plumbing Engineer – Kunka Engineering
Electrical Engineer – Woodward Engineering
Civil Engineer – Kland Huval Engineering
Environmental Engineer – SCS Engineers
Geotechnical Engineer – Ricker, Atkinson, McBee & Associates
Waste Water Engineer – Bartholomew Engineering
LEED/Specification Consultant – GreN A/E Consulting
Energy Consultant / Commissioning – Quest Energy Group

This project is in the process of finalizing the LEED certification submittal and is currently targeting a LEED Platinum rating.

Project Description:

The Rio Salado Audubon Center is an 8,000 sf Interpretive Center / Nature Center being developed by the National Audubon Society in partnership with the City of Phoenix. The center will serve as an icon and gateway for the $100M Rio Salado Habitat Restoration that was recently completed on a nine mile section of the Salt River.

The Rio Salado Audubon Center is strategically located in the multicultural heart of the City providing nature based education in an under served part of the community. The primary theme of the Audubon Center will be to "tell the story of the river". The center includes interactive exhibitions as well as a multi-purpose learning center. The interior exhibition will be coupled with several interpretive trails to provide opportunities for self-directed learning and exploration both indoors and outdoors.

The project incorporates a number of green building strategies as proof of the commitment to ecological sensitivity, advocacy, education, and public awareness.

- Site Selection – Site was previously developed as a sand and gravel operation.
- Public Transportation Access – Multiple bus lines within 1/8 mile from site. Bus lines connect to a transit center to the south and the light rail system to the north.
- Bus storage is provided for visitors and employees. Shower facilities are provided for employees who bike to work.
- Preferred parking is provided for low-emitting and fuel efficient vehicles.
- Agreement with the City of Phoenix allowed on-site parking to be kept under the number required by code. Preferred parking is provided for carpools.
- Over 121,000 square feet of open space is provided. This is 77% of the site and 29% more area than what is required by zoning.

- Pervious pavement and integration of bioswales reduce pollutants in runoff water and minimize erosion.
- Trees, shrubs and plants are zoned to illustrate different habitats found along the Rio Salado corridor. This approach introduces visitors to multiple educational opportunities while providing the ecological benefit of reducing heat island effects.
- Waste water from sinks, toilets and the shower is treated through an innovative on-site system that provides approximately 1,400 gallons per day for on-site landscape irrigation.
- Water use is reduced by over 40% compared to standard systems through the use of dual flush toilets and waterless urinals.
- A roof-integrated 20 kw photovoltaic system will generate approximately 50% of the Center's required energy. The panels also provide much needed shade as they cantilever over the north view terrace.
- Over 75% of construction waste was diverted from landfills to recycling centers.
- Over 20% of building materials have recycled content.
- Over 20% of building materials are regional materials.
- Adhesives, sealants, paints, coatings, carpet and composite wood materials all meet low-emitting materials standards.
- The mechanical and electrical systems are designed to maximize efficiency and comfort while minimizing power needs.

This project makes every effort to safeguard unique natural resources while connecting to the metropolis of Phoenix through both built and programmed avenues.