



Looking Forward

Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area
ANNUAL REPORT | FISCAL YEAR 2016/2017



A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

2017 was my first year as Chairman of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, following in the footsteps of past Chairs Steve Bell, Gary Munk, Patricia Ware, and Tom Rushin who guided Yuma's riverfront redevelopment since 2002. Aided by many partners, volunteers, and a dedicated staff, we have seen the completion of several beautiful riverfront parks, an extensive multi-use trail system, 400 acres of restored wetlands, major private investment on the downtown riverfront and the saving of Yuma's two state historic parks.

Progress in 2017 included improvements to the river bank of West Wetlands; bringing maintenance operations for the East Wetlands in-house; making the transition to the Colorado River State Historic Park; returning three restored Madison Avenue adobes to the private sector (and back on the tax rolls); and attracting a new hotel to the riverfront. As part of our involvement in the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, we also saw major strides in our advocacy efforts in Washington, DC.

The major issue facing the Heritage Area is the planned retirement in mid-2018 of Charles Flynn, who has served as the Corporation's only Executive Director since its inception in 2002. A board and staff



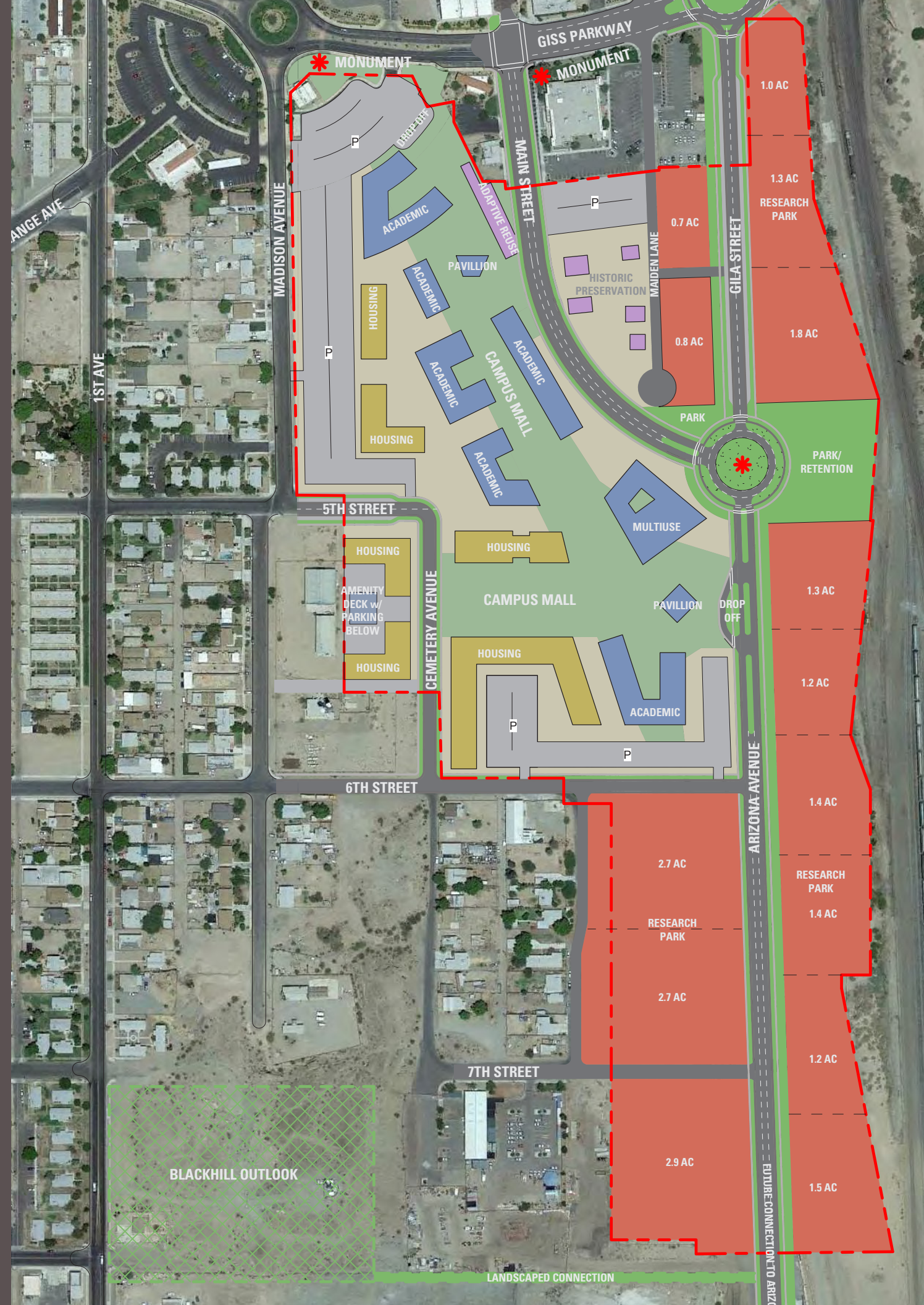
retreat resulted in a transition plan and strategic plan update, which will help guide the organization in the near and longer-term. We were careful to include our key partners in this process, as those partnerships are essential to our long-term viability. An important new initiative of our strategic plan will be the development of an endowment for the riverfront.

Despite the challenges ahead, we are confident that with the support of the Yuma community and our governmental and private sector partners, the future of the Heritage Area is bright.

Sincerely,

Brian Golding, Sr.

Brian Golding, Sr.
Chair, Yuma Crossing
National Heritage Area



WORKING TO PROMOTE PRIVATE INVESTMENT

The City of Yuma often looks to the Heritage Area to assist in redevelopment projects in historic downtown Yuma. This year the focus was on two projects.

First, the City was able to secure a second riverfront 114-room extended stay hotel with construction expected to begin in 2018.

Secondly — a more far-reaching and long-term project — is the planning done on the 60+ acres of the former railyards. The Heritage Area has been managing an EPA Brownfields grant to undertake voluntary environmental assessments in collaboration with private landowners. This site has been vacant and unused for almost 70 years and could, if redeveloped, have major impact on the downtown. Community leaders are exploring the idea of developing a four-year university and research park on the site. While much more work needs to be done, the project is off to a promising start.



YUMA WEST WETLANDS

This 110-acre riverfront park is unique in that it is located atop the former City of Yuma landfill, which operated from 1910-1970. Since 2000, the Heritage Area has led the effort to design, fund and build large sections of this riverfront park. In recent years, the main focus has been clearing and restoring the bank line. A \$300,000 Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management grant was recently secured to clear and restore the bank line all the way from West Wetlands to Gateway Park. However, after 17 years of effort, the park is only 70% complete.

In 2017, the Heritage Area worked with the City of Yuma to revise the park master plan to better meet the needs of the community and make it more affordable to complete. The revised plan will increase the number of picnic ramadas (in great demand); create a dog park; and relocate the maintenance functions away from the center of the park.

Above: The 2017 revised master plan for Yuma West Wetlands Park.

Right: With great effort, the overgrown bank line of Yuma West Wetlands has been cleared and new trails are now being enjoyed by the community.



Opposite page, top: Hiking trails are popular in the East Wetlands

Opposite page, bottom: Marshes in the backwaters of the East Wetlands are ideal habitat for wildlife

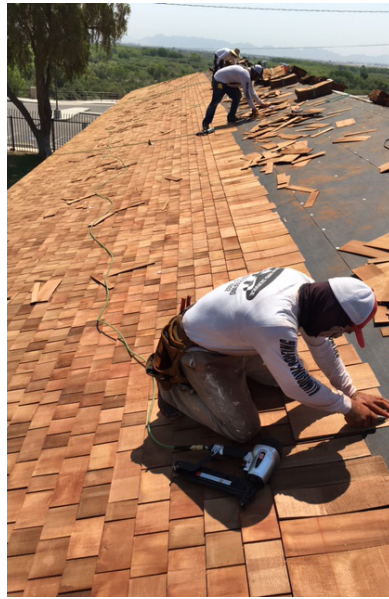
YUMA EAST WETLANDS

The Yuma East Wetlands is considered a model for wetlands restoration in the desert Southwest, thanks to a partnership among the Heritage Area, Quechan Indian Tribe, Arizona Game and Fish, and the City of Yuma. But long-term maintenance of the area remained a concern.

In 2013, the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program began providing funding for basic maintenance of the habitat. In 2016, maintenance of the area transitioned from Fred Phillips Consulting, the firm which designed and constructed the 400-acre restoration area, to an in-house operation. Our hope is to expand volunteer and educational programs in the future.

The East Wetlands, and all of Yuma's riverfront, is being featured at the 33rd Annual International Conference on Urban Waterfront Planning, Development and Culture being held in Yuma in late January 2018. The Heritage Area is co-hosting the conference with the Waterfront Center, an educational foundation based in Washington, DC.





ARIZONA STATE PARKS: A NEW COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIP

In 2016, the City of Yuma signed an historic agreement with Arizona State Parks, which ensures community management of the two state parks for the next 15 years.

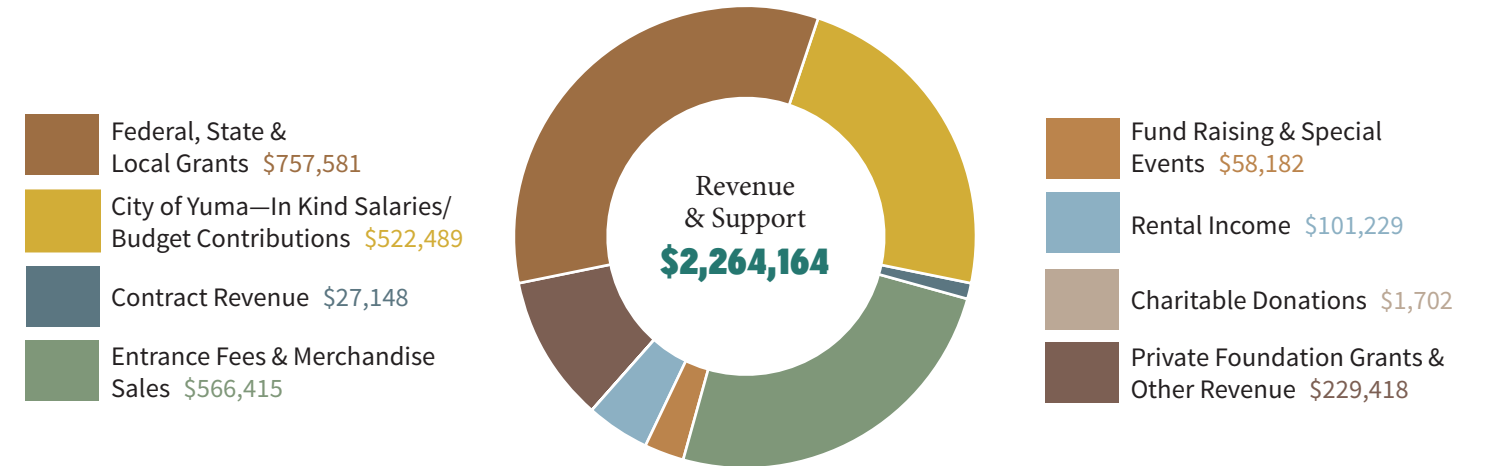
The Heritage Area has managed both state parks on behalf of the community since 2010, when state budget cuts threatened the parks' survival. Since then, through excellent management and marketing, the Yuma Territorial Prison has become operationally self-sufficient and has developed a long-term capital improvement program. The museum's roof was recently completely rebuilt, and a major new exhibit on the prison's hospital and medical practices was unveiled.

The Quartermaster Depot has never had broad public appeal, and as part of the strategic planning process, it

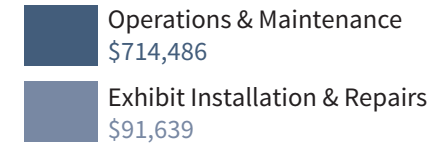
was determined that the park be re-themed to tell the story of the past, present and future of the Colorado River. Thus, the park was renamed the Colorado River State Historic Park. A small theater featuring short films on the Colorado River and an exhibit on John Wesley Powell has been installed.

Since telling the story of the past, present and future of the Colorado River is truly a theme of national significance, Senator John McCain has asked the National Park Service to assess whether the Colorado River State Historic Park might be eligible for designation as a National Park.

YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES For the Fiscal Period Ended September 30, 2017



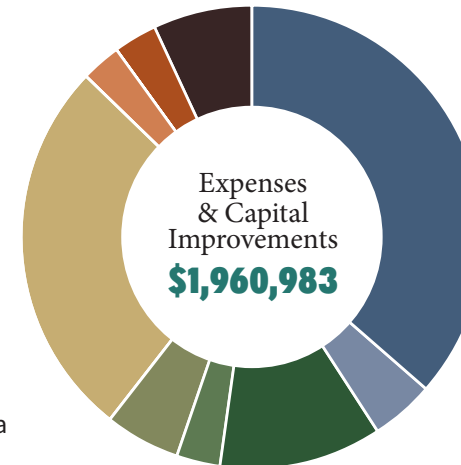
State Historic Parks (YTP/CR)



Wetlands Restoration

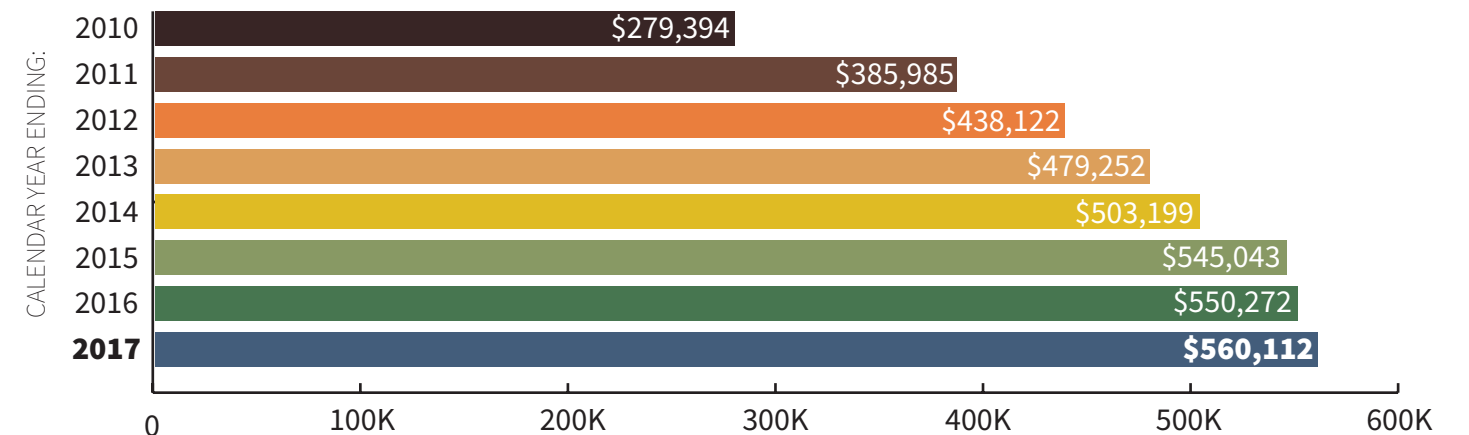


Administration & Operations



Excess (Deficit) of Revenue over Expenses: \$303,180

Yuma Territorial Prison: Annual Revenue Comparisons (Admissions/Merchandise)





SPECIAL THANKS

OUR DEDICATED STAFF

Charles Flynn, Executive Director

Rebecca Westhoff, Director of
Operations & Finance

Mike Guertin, Yuma Territorial
Prison State Historic Park Manager

Tammy Snook, Colorado River
State Historic Park Manager

Vianey Avila, Environmental Program
Coordinator

Cathy Douglas, Administrative
Specialist and Grants Manager

Ina Hall, Accounting Specialist

Suzanna Abril, Bookkeeper

Tina Clark, Curator and Historian

Teri Ingram, Events Specialist

Bobette Bauermann, Senior Planner

Maria Famanias, Custodian

Jesus Lopez, Custodian

*Yuma Territorial Prison
Guest Services Representatives:*

Martin Trujillo

Mario Ochoa

Daniella Laurel-Carlos

Lucinda Duwyenie

Hector Figueroa, Jr.

Izrael Avila

Yuma East Wetlands Project Field Staff:

Jorge A. Prado

Pio Fernandez

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HERITAGE AREA CORPORATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Bruce A. Gwynn, Vice-Chairperson

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Society

Russell McCloud, Yuma County
Supervisor

Shelley Mellon, RL Jones Insurance &
MVD Services

Douglas Nicholls, Mayor, City of
Yuma

Lisa Otondo, Senator, 4th District
Arizona

Lynne Pancrazi, Yuma County
Supervisor

Brent Range, Superintendent, Organ
Pipe Cactus National Monument

Tom Rushin, Retired

Debbie Townsend, Farmer



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