

5.5.6 San Simon

The watershed and its namesake watercourse San Simon Wash originates just north of the County line in Maricopa County in the Saucedo Mountains and drains over 60 miles southward to Mexico. Its eastern edge is the Baboquivari Mountains over 60 miles to the east of the wash as it passes into Mexico. Almost, entirely within the Tohono O’odham Nation, within Pima County it is comprised of 1,370,641 acres (2,141.6 square miles).

Figure 226 – San Simon Watershed Map



5.5.6.1 Flood Characteristics

This watershed is almost entirely within the Tohono O’odham Nation, classified as Zone D indicating that it like other federal lands has not generally had flood risk mapping completed under the National Flood Insurance Program. Mining claim inholdings, that pre-date establishment of the Reservation system including Trust and Allotted Lands are also present.

The table below provides a summary of historic USGS gaging station records.

Table 65 - San Simon Watershed USGS Gages

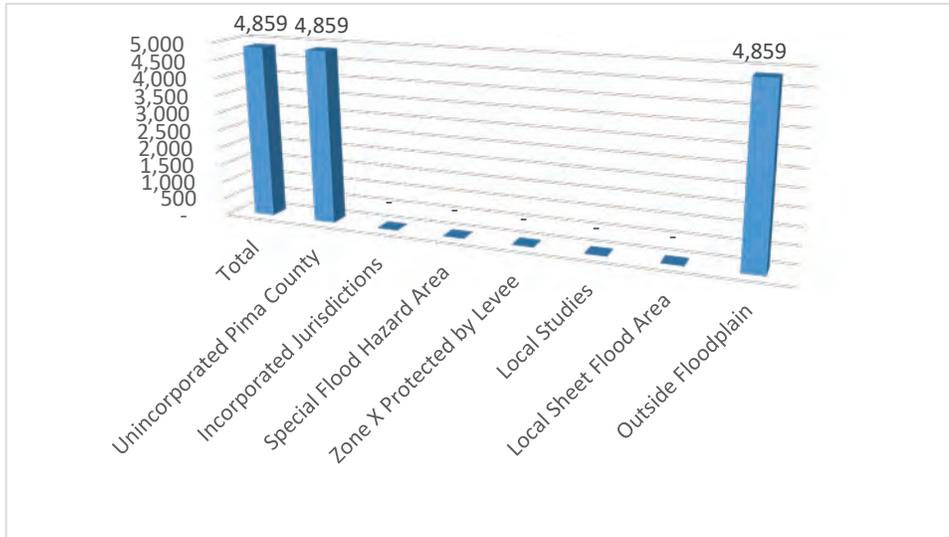
USGS Gaging Station	Sells Wash TRIB at Sells, AZ 09535200	Vamori Wash at Kom Vo, AZ 09535300	San Simon Wash near Pisinimo, AZ 09535100
Period of Record	1962-09-26 to 1976	1972-08-10 to 2014-10-09	1972-08-09 to 2014-10-09
Watershed Area (sq. m)	26.80	1250	569
Flood Peak of Record (cfs)	2800	10400	12500
Date	09-13-1966	10-03-1983	09-24-1976

There are currently no Pima County ALERT gages or regulatory discharges in this area.

5.5.6.2 Existing Development & Infrastructure Trends

Population distribution between incorporated and unincorporated areas shown below. This chart also shows the distribution of residents within known floodplains.

Figure 227 - San Simon Wash Watershed Population Distribution



This watershed is entirely within the Tohono O’odham Nation and therefore classified as vacant under the Pima County Assessor’s Land Use Code. It includes housing, ranching, irrigated agriculture, a museum, college, hospital, long-term care and other facilities governed and operated by the Nation. This watershed includes the communities of Sells, San Simon, Pisinimo, Gu:Vo, Hickiwan and many others and extends from the Maricopa County line to Mexico encompassing over 50 by 50 miles. Manger’s dam, a community in Go:Vo District is the site of a historic dam. In 2019, this dam overtopped and required sandbagging to prevent flooding of the village and communities in Mexico. The National Weather Service is coordinating a rainfall and streamflow monitoring system with the Nation’s emergency responders.

Figure 228 - San Simon Watershed Ownership in Acres

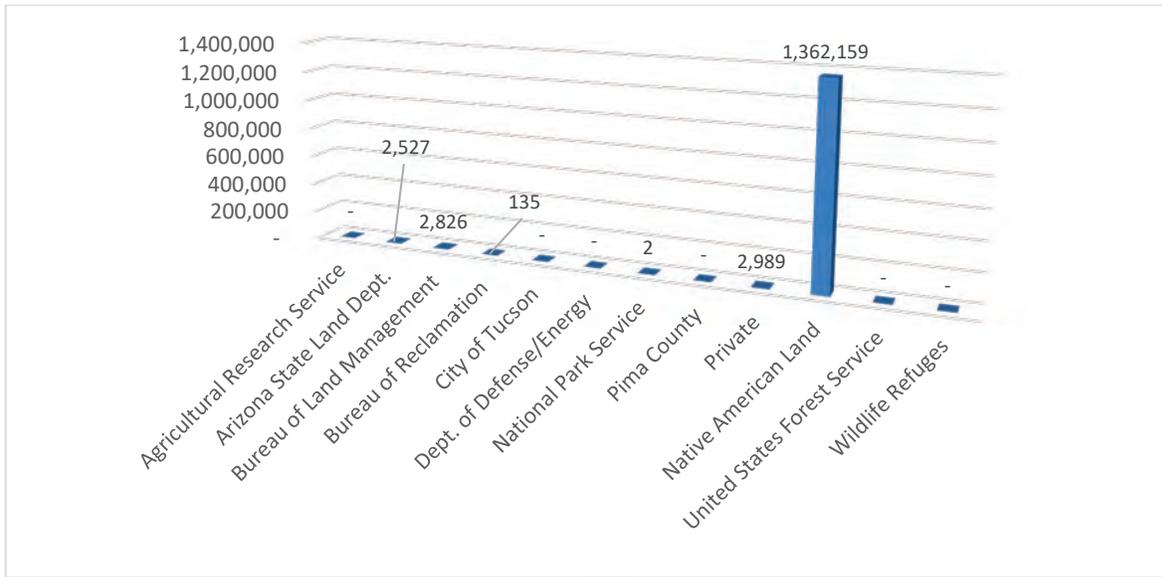
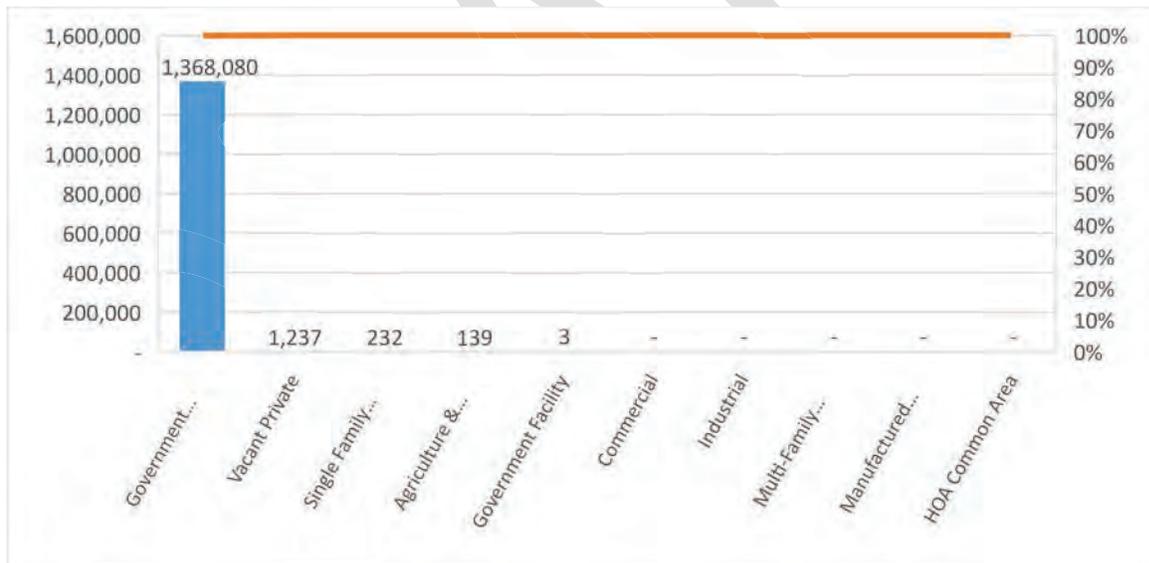


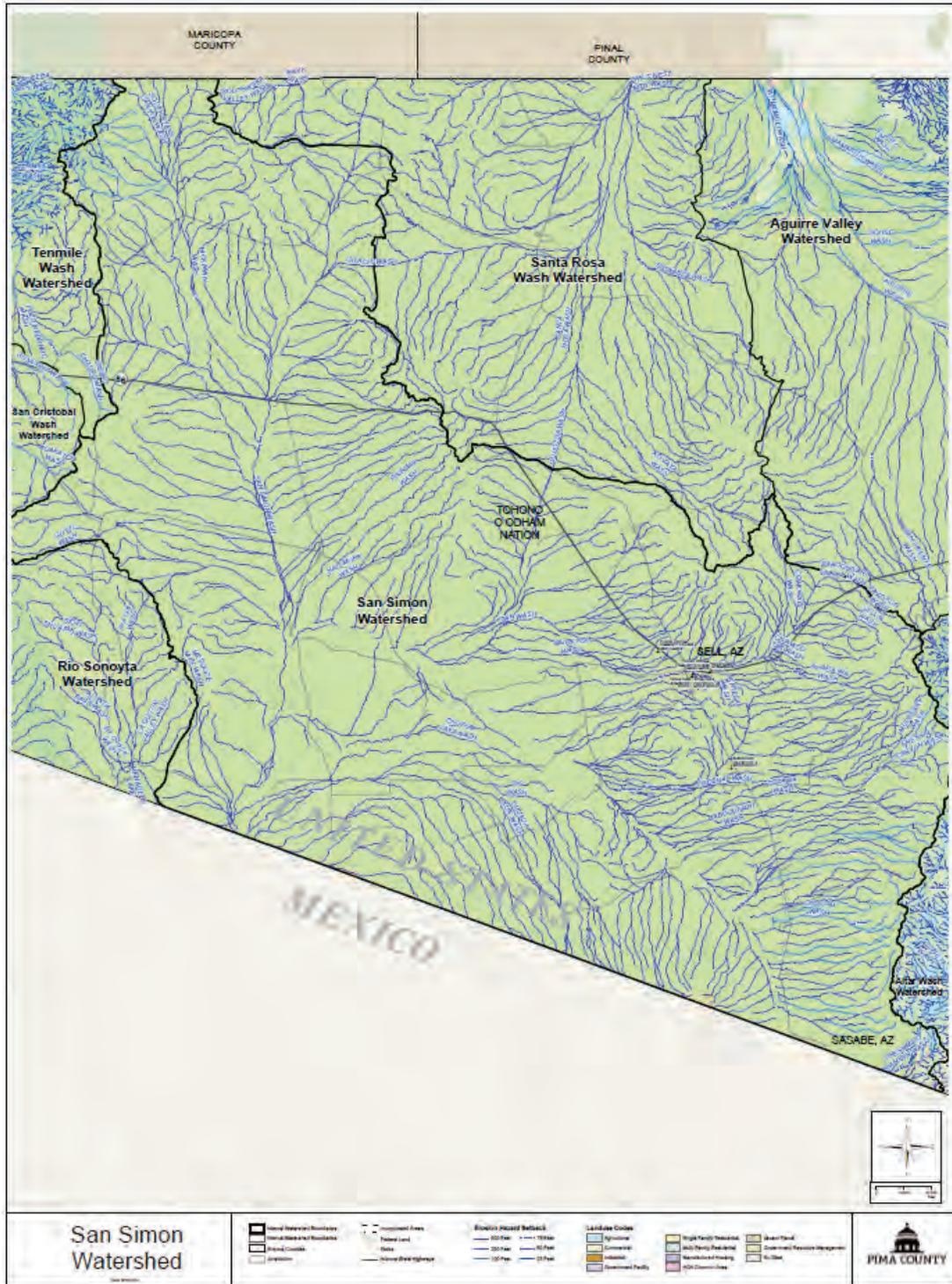
Figure 229 - San Simon Watershed Land Use in Acres



Because it is within federal land, FEMA has mapped no floodplains. The land uses on the chart includes areas of private land outside the Nation's boundary and a few inholdings. Many of the Nation's largest communities are within this watershed including the capitol Sells, traditionally known as Turtle Got Stuck. Sells includes the hospital, schools, waste treatment facilities, and extensive housing. Traditionally the O'odham were floodwater farmers. Flooding still affects many of the tribal communities. The Nation has participated in development of the Pima County Inter-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan in the past and has embarked upon significant roads improvements including those completed in cooperation with the State of Arizona on Route 86. This has greatly

improved all accessibility during times of flooding for residents of the unincorporated portions of the County west of the reservation. The map below shows land uses within the limited amount of unincorporated area.

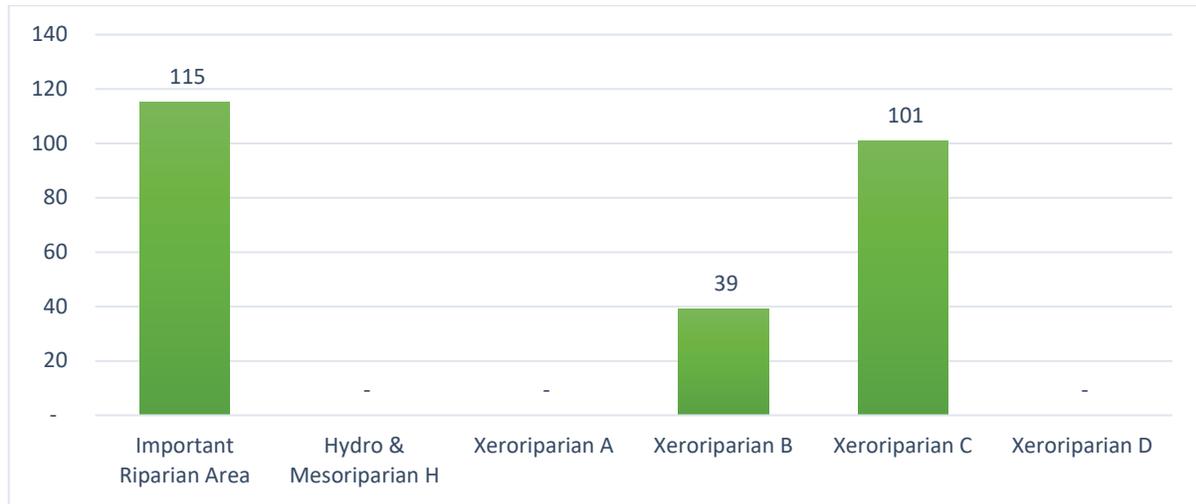
Figure 230 - San Simon Land Use



5.5.6.3 Riparian Habitat and Natural Areas

As shown on the figure below, there are 255 acres of Pima County Regulated Riparian Habitat in this watershed, and 115 acres of IRA. There are also 44 preserved acres in this watershed and there is no regulatory floodplain.

Figure 231 - San Simon Watershed Riparian Habitat in Acres



It is interesting to note that the area around the confluence of the two major watercourses within this watershed is a significant and diverse bosque.



Satellite Image of Bosque at the Confluence of the Vamori and San Simon Wash

5.5.6.4 Historic Floodplain Management Approach

The watershed is almost entirely within the Tohono O’odham Nation and there is no District maintenance responsibility.

5.5.6.5 Needs – Capital Improvement

The District completed no projects during the prior five years, and none planned for the next five years. The 2019 Flood Response Manual identifies no specific items of concern in this watershed.

5.5.6.6 Floodplain Management

Although this watershed is entirely within the Tohono O’odham Nation (Nation) and therefore access was the only future need identified, it is also worth noting that the Arizona Department of Transportation has completed significant improvements to State Highway Route 86 that traverses the Nation. This includes replacement of numerous dip sections with culverts and bridges as well as addition of fencing and wildlife crossings. While this has greatly improved all weather, accessibility to western Pima County many villages within the Reservation remain isolated during flood events. The Nation has also completed improvements along Route 86 to improve accessibility and reduce flooding from Gunsight Wash in the village of Schuchulik just east of Why.

