



NEWS
For Immediate Release

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VALLEY FORWARD PRESENTS TOP ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD TO PHOENIX RIO SALADO PROJECT

PHOENIX – The Rio Salado Environmental Restoration Project in Phoenix won top honors – the President’s Award – in Valley Forward’s 26th Annual Environmental Excellence Awards (EEA) program, Arizona’s oldest and most prestigious competition of its kind.

The inspiration and vision for this landmark project was conceived more than 40 years ago and was among the first initiatives Valley Forward advocated for when the environmental public interest organization was founded in 1969. A five-mile urban wildlife and habitat resource, Rio Salado is located in south Phoenix and has become a source of pride for the entire Valley. The project was recognized for bringing life back to a once dry, barren Salt River and holding promise as a catalyst for revitalizing areas well beyond its banks.

The award was announced October 13 at Valley Forward’s Environmental Excellence Awards gala, held in partnership with SRP. Nearly 700 community leaders throughout Arizona attended the event at the Phoenix Convention Center, the city’s newest *green* building. Robin Sewell, host of Arizona Highways TV, served as mistress of ceremonies.

In addition to the President’s Award (best of show), Rio Salado won two first-place Crescordia Awards in the categories of Open Space & Connectivity (Parks) and Environmental Stewardship – the SRP Award. Crescordia is a Greek term meaning, “to grow in harmony,” and Valley Forward’s President’s Award is selected from among all Crescordia recipients.

A wetland marsh, mesquite bosque and cotton and willow forest re-establish the native sustainable habitats once prevalent within the Salt River corridor before the river was dammed in the early 1900’s to provide a reliable water supply for the Valley. Stretching from 19th Avenue to 28th Street, the 595-acre project integrates a low flow channel and terrace areas that serve to acknowledge and respect the natural movement and force of water.

“It is especially gratifying for our organization to honor this project since it has been at the heart and soul of Valley Forward since its inception,” said Diane Brossart, president of Valley Forward. “In the 1980s, we advocated for the regional restoration of the Salt River, however, Maricopa County voters rejected that initiative. We commend the city of Phoenix for revitalizing this important stretch of riverbed, which provides connectivity to the Tempe Town Lake and is a testament to our vision.”

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Environmental Excellence Awards/Add 1

Environmental stewardship is demonstrated in every facet of the Rio Salado Project. Many of the site furnishings – walls, pedestrian bridges, path curbing and waterfalls – were constructed with recycled concrete pieces found in the river. The National Audubon Society will locate its nature center in the river corridor, and the city plans to use the project as a giant outdoor laboratory with areas designated for classrooms. Beyond the river’s boundary, Phoenix has developed a community land use plan defining goals and policies to guide development decisions adjacent to the banks of the Salt River.

Valley Forward and SRP recognized 37 projects submitted by Valley businesses, government agencies and non-profit organizations for significant contributions to the environment. In addition to the President’s Award, 18 first-place Crescordia awards and 26 awards of merit were presented.

The awards have become particularly competitive among Valley municipalities. This year, the city of Phoenix is associated with eight finalist projects, Scottsdale with five, Glendale and Maricopa County with three projects each, Mesa, Peoria and Tempe with two each, and one apiece for Apache Junction, Avondale and the state of Arizona.

“It is inspiring to be able to spotlight projects that contribute to the sustainability and livability of Valley communities,” said Richard Hayslip, assistant general manager of SRP. “Environmental stewardship has been a guiding principal at SRP since 1903, and we are proud to celebrate the achievements of so many who share that commitment.”

Valley Forward received a record 122 entries in this year’s competition. Projects were submitted in 22 categories, including: buildings and structures, site development and landscape, livable communities, open space and connectivity, art in public places, environmental technologies, environmental education/communication and environmental stewardship.

Win Holden, publisher of *Arizona Highways* and a longstanding community leader, led the diverse panel of jurists whose collective expertise encompassed each of the award categories. Panelists include: Art Jordan, director of commercial construction for Linthicum; Michael Pyatok, principal of Pyatok Architects and executive director of Stardust Center for Affordable Homes & the Family; Jeff Kratzke, vice president of Olsson Associates; Diane McClosky, a landscape architect and principal of McCloskey Peltz, Inc.; Philip J. Lagas, vice president of Brown & Caldwell; Charlene Saltz, water/natural resources agent at the University of Arizona; Jeff Williamson, executive director of The Phoenix Zoo; and Laurie Lundquist, an artist, educator and principal of Willco Art and Design.

Valley Forward is a 37-year-old association that brings business and civic leaders together to convene thoughtful public dialogue on regional issues and to improve the environment and livability of Valley communities. The organization operates with the belief that business must take a leadership role in solving the complex and sometimes controversial problems that confront growing population centers.

In addition to Rio Salado, EEA first-place Crescordia winners and recipients, include:

Mesa’s Evergreen Historic District Infill Gem (Neil Lannieur, Donna DiFrancesco, Steve Priebe):

This colorful Spanish colonial-style home is an infill project located in the Evergreen Historic District in Mesa. Green building principles were utilized throughout construction. Dual plumbing was installed to allow use of gray water. An energy efficient CMU block system with an insulated core was used for the exterior walls. Windows were selected for their efficiency and durability to the outside elements, with certified sustainable forest wood used for the interior framing. In addition, a grid-tied solar electric system fulfills part of the electric needs of the home.

Lon’s at the Hermosa Inn (Don Ziebell, Oz Architects, Inc.): A partial renovation and addition to Lon’s at the Hermosa – a small boutique hotel in Scottsdale – features an underground wine cellar, a living room function space and an executive board room, all of which complement the existing historic building. Originally the home of a well-known cowboy artist/actor in the 1930’s, the facility was previously converted to a highly regarded restaurant. Using reclaimed and antique materials sympathetic to the existing building, the recent renovation and addition are difficult to discern from the original.

Desert Botanical Garden Facilities (John Douglas, Douglas Architects): As one of the top 10 cultural attractions and a designated historic property, the Desert Botanical Garden is a special community amenity. Founded in 1938 as a small garden club for the Saguaro Society, the garden grew to more than 250,000 annual visitors by 1992, and a master planning process was initiated for the 160-acre site in Papago Park. The placement, configuration and palette of materials for the buildings consider the transition a visitor makes from the automobile to the pace of a garden setting. The buildings are kept low, below the height of the existing native trees and act as backdrops to the surrounding landscape. All new structures were placed on previously disturbed land; no natural habitat or garden was displaced even though over one acre of new structures was added. A highly visible rainwater harvesting system at the entrance to the garden expresses the importance of water in the desert.

North Tempe Multi-Generational Center (Michael Kelly, Michael Wilson Kelly-Architects, Ltd.): A joint use facility with Laird Elementary School, the North Tempe Multi-Generational Center provides cultural, social, recreational and educational opportunities to an area bounded by Rio Salado and Tempe Town Lake, Indian Bend Wash, Papago Park and south Scottsdale. The natural environment influences the entire design with the project theme – “A River Runs Through It” – evidenced by a 700-foot-long metaphorical river emanating from a mountain source, alluding to man-made interventions along the Salt River.

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Interdisciplinary Science & Technology Building 3 (Neal E. Jones, Jones Studio): Located on the Arizona State University Polytech campus, this project occupies the former Williams Air Force base at the eastern fringe of the Valley. It is the first campus project to involve the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) process, meriting an application for Gold certification. The walled gardens create a transitional entry sequence and an organizational element for interior space. The proximity of nature to the workspaces assures each scientist within beautiful garden views.

Arizona State University Foundation Building (Michael Dollin, Urban Earth Design): This project incorporates several new buildings on a six-acre site and is designed for LEED certification. Both the height of the building and size of the parking structure grew during the development phase, and the relative depth of the plaza between them became more pronounced, suggesting the form of a canyon. A lush, shade-tolerant palette was developed that included Arizona sycamore trees and giant bamboo, resulting in a distinctively riparian quality. The inclusion of a sculpted stonewall with three waterfalls to soften the urban setting allows the canyon metaphor to fully emerge.

CAP Basin Sports Complex (Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Inc. on behalf of the City of Scottsdale): What was once a 70-acre barren, dusty parcel of land and a one-week-a-year parking lot during Scottsdale's FBR Open Golf Tournament, is now a lush, 10-field soccer/team sports complex and source of pride for the city. The primary use for the CAP Basin Sports Complex is event parking for the FBR Open. The high volume of required event parking presented a challenge in the public park design process. Park features were laid out over the event parking grid pattern, then the grid was disguised and softened with curvilinear walks and landscaping that wouldn't interfere with parking approximately 7,000 cars. Trees and other plantings will grow around the perimeter of 670 paved parking spaces, leaving the fields available for parking.

Lost Dog Wash Trailhead – McDowell Sonoran Preserve (Weddle Gilmore Architects on behalf of the City of Scottsdale): Preserving open space and providing connectivity were guiding principles in the design and development of the Lost Dog Wash Trailhead, which serves as a staging area for exploration of Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. From Lost Dog Wash, hikers, mountain bicyclists and equestrians can access a network of more than 17 miles within the preserve. Well over 500 cacti were salvaged and utilized for revegetation of the site and scarred areas throughout the preserve. Parking areas and driveways were developed with stabilized decomposed granite and the rammed earth walls of the structures utilize material that was excavated during construction of the foundation. The project uses numerous green building strategies.

Fragmented Landscape (Gerry Fathauer, City of Mesa): The artwork screens change dramatically in appearance from day to night in this unique creation at the Mesa Arts Center. During the day, dune images are most visible from inside the building looking out. At night, they are more visible from outside the building, backlit by light reflecting off of the theater lobby walls and ceiling. In daylight, the dune patterns take on the colors of the sky and passing clouds, as well as ambient light reflecting off of the surrounding buildings. When sunlight passes through the screens, intricate shadow images of the dunes are projected onto the walls and floor of the lobby. The second shade screen is composed of thousands of blue-anodized, three-inch square aluminum flaps that move in the wind and create the illusion that the building has been submerged in a vertical sheet of rippling blue water.

B20 Bio-diesel Alternative Fuel Program (David Smith, Maricopa County): The challenges of improving air quality and maximizing resources is a high priority within Maricopa County, one of the fastest growing regions in the country. In an effort to help lower emissions and utilize available natural resources, the county has implemented the use of bio-diesel, a clean burning alternative fuel produced from domestic and renewable resources. Bio-diesel contains no petroleum, but can be blended at any level with petroleum diesel to create a bio-diesel blend. This alternative fuel requires no special infrastructure and is simple to use, biodegradable, nontoxic, and essentially free of sulfur and aromatics. The county is utilizing a bio-diesel blend consisting of 20% bio-diesel and 80% diesel.

Beaulieu Residence (Bryan Beaulieu, Sustainable Engineering, LLC): The Beaulieu family embarked on a four-year worldwide quest on green building and desert architecture prior to beginning their Scottsdale custom home project. What they ended up with was not a house in the traditional sense, but a series of living spaces, indoors and out, integrated into the desert – a hexagonal floor plan with pyramidal, earth covered, planted roofs sloping up to ventilation openings. The entire structure is poured reinforced concrete with infill block walls. There is no insulation as such. Ceramic insulating coatings, radiant mylar films, heat shields and large shade structures are designed to reflect the sun's heat, not just slow it down. There are no paints, stains, particle board, drywall, carpeting, wood framing, plastics or aluminum used in the construction. All walls and ceilings are coated with a natural material that absorbs or releases water vapor to help regulate humidity.

Nuestro Bello Desierto – Our Beautiful Desert (Mary Lu Nunley, City of Phoenix): Recognizing that the Spanish Language Dominant (SLD) market is growing rapidly in our metropolitan area and that many of these residents are unaware of the need for water conservation, the City of Phoenix Water Services Department created Nuestro Bello Desierto. This targeted campaign is designed to educate the SLD community on how to embrace and care for the desert. The city's research showed that this particular population often uses more water than other ethnic groups in the Valley. To help these residents respect and adapt to the water realities of their current environment, Nuestro Bello Desierto features an array of educational materials and outreach efforts, including brochures, videos and Hispanic directed media relations.

A.K.A. Green Environmental Building Center (Jeff Frost and Mick Dalrympl, a.k.a. Green): A hands-on demonstration and education center for homeowners, architects, developers and students to learn about environmentally-friendly building techniques and products, a.k.a. Green is a unique facility that fosters better informed design decisions. a.k.a. Green was launched in 2005 in response to perceived obstacles to green building in the Valley. The Scottsdale facility now serves as a clearinghouse for green building education, communication and activities. Its showroom features hundreds of environmental building materials for the general public and industry professionals, class tours for design and architecture students, workshops on topics such as solar photovoltaics and permaculture, traveling presentations on global warming and related issues, as well as hands-on educational experiences for children and community meeting space.

Arizona State Envirothon (Rodney Held, Arizona State Envirothon): An environmental competition for students, Arizona State Envirothon was conceived by a group of natural resource professionals in 1997. The state joined the North American Canon Envirothon as a participating member that same year, and held its first official competition in 1998 with about 50 students vying for scholarships and other prizes. The 2006 Arizona Envirothon involved more than 100 students representing 20 high schools. Its purpose is to increase awareness of environmental issues and promote wise stewardship of the Earth's natural resources. Each year, teams of students are engaged in a year-long study on environmental resources and current issues. They must acquire a basic knowledge of water, soil, wildlife, forestry, agriculture and energy and waste management.

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East Valley Water Forum (Kathryn Sorenson, East Valley Water Forum): The East Valley Water Forum was originally convened in 2001 as a small group of municipal water providers who met to address common water resources issues that were creating both competition and opportunity among their ranks. Today, the forum represents a broad partnership of tribal, public, and private water agencies and interested stakeholders involved in water resource management in the East Salt River Valley of Arizona. Participants include the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Gila River and Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Communities, Arizona Department of Water Resources and State Land Department, Central Arizona Project, Salt River Project and all East Valley Water Providers.

El Rio Watercourse Master Plan (John Hathaway, PE, Stantec): At more than 40,000-square miles, the Gila River drainage area is one of the largest watersheds in Arizona and an irreplaceable natural and cultural resource. This area is also one of the fastest growing sectors of Maricopa County. In recent times, the Gila River has experienced several large flood events resulting in significant damage to property and infrastructure. The El Rio Watercourse Master Plan project demonstrates the potential to revitalize the river and enhance the quality of life in the West Valley while simultaneously providing quality flood protection. The locally driven, comprehensive planning process, including visioning, goal setting, modeling of future conditions and public participation, could also be adopted for other rivers throughout the country.

2006 Environmental Excellence Awards Winners

BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Single Family Residence

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Mesa's Evergreen Historic District Infill Gem
Submitted by: Neil Lannieur

AWARD OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Lakes Residence
Submitted by: Architekton

BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Historic Preservation

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Lon's at the Hermosa Inn
Submitted by: Oz Architects, Inc.

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Lazarus Professional Building
Submitted by: R. Nicholas Loope, FAIA

Name of Entry: Willo Restoration/Renovation
Submitted by: Gabor Lorant Architects Inc.

BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Large Scale and Community Development

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Desert Botanical Garden Facilities
Submitted by: Douglas Architects

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Apache Junction City Hall & Municipal Court
Submitted by: Dick & Fritsche Design Group

Name of Entry: USAA Phoenix Campus
Submitted by: USAA

BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Industrial and Public Works

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: North Tempe Multi-Generational Center
Submitted by: Michael Wilson Kelly-Architects, Ltd.

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BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES (Cont.)

Industrial and Public Works

AWARD OF MERIT

Name of Entry: North Mountain Visitor Center
Submitted by: Douglas Architects

BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

Public Assembly

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Interdisciplinary Science & Technology Building 3
Submitted by: Jones Studio, Inc.

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Desert Edge High School Expansion Project
Submitted by: Agua Fria Union High School District #216

Name of Entry: City of Scottsdale Senior Center at Granite Reef
Submitted by: Gabor Lorant Architects Inc.

SITE DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE

Large Scale and Community Development

AWARD OF MERIT

Name of Entry: USAA Phoenix Campus
Submitted by: USAA

SITE DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE

Urban Plazas

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Arizona State University Foundation Building
Submitted by: Urban Earth Design

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: City of Peoria Desert Fusion Garden
Submitted by: City of Peoria

Name of Entry: Murphy Park Renovations, Glendale AZ
Submitted by: Sherman Group, Inc.

SITE DEVELOPMENT AND LANDSCAPE

Industrial and Public Works

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: CAP Basin Sports Complex
Submitted by: Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Inc.

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OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIVITY

Trails

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Lost Dog Wash Trailhead - McDowell Sonoran Preserve
Submitted by: Weddle Gilmore Architects

OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIVITY

Parks

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Rio Salado Environmental Restoration Project
Submitted by: City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation

AWARD OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Tres Rios Butterfly Garden
Submitted by: Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Fragmented Landscape
Submitted by: City of Mesa

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Airport Rental Car Center - Ed Carpenter Dichroic Glass Sculpture
Submitted by: City of Phoenix Aviation Department & Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture

Name of Entry: Chaparral Water Treatment Plant
Submitted by: Swaback Partners

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES

Public Sector

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: B-20 Bio-diesel Alternative Fuel Program
Submitted by: Maricopa County

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Kyrene Reclamation Facility Expansion and Membrane Conversion
Submitted by: City of Tempe Water Utilities Department

Name of Entry: Maricopa County Installs Energy Efficient Thermal Solar System at Desert Outdoor Center
Submitted by: Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

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ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES

Private Sector

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Beaulieu Residence
Submitted by: Sustainable Engineering LLC

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Medtronic Microelectronics Center
Submitted by: Kirk Lewis

Name of Entry: Optima Biltmore Towers Solar Arbors
Submitted by: Perfect Power, Inc.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION/COMMUNICATION

Public Sector

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Nuestro Bello Desierto (Our Beautiful Desert)
Submitted by: City of Phoenix Water Services Department

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Art in the Garden
Submitted by: City of Glendale Water Conservation Office

Name of Entry: Focus: WILD Arizona
Submitted by: Arizona Game and Fish Department

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION/COMMUNICATION

Private Sector

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Green Environmental Building Center
Submitted by: a.k.a. Green

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION/COMMUNICATION

Educators, Students and Non-Profit Organizations

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Arizona State Envirothon
Submitted by: Ecologic Solutions

AWARD OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Mission: Environmental Literacy for Teachers
Submitted by: Arizona Foundation For Resource Education

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: Rio Salado Environmental Restoration Project
Submitted by: City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: City of Scottsdale Environmental Management System (EMS)
Submitted by: City of Scottsdale

Name of Entry: Nature's Ally - City of Phoenix's Natural Resources Division
Submitted by: Rene Vera

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Resource Management

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: East Valley Water Forum
Submitted by: Teresa Makinen

AWARD OF MERIT

Name of Entry: City of Phoenix 2005 Water Resources Plan Update
Submitted by: City of Phoenix Water Services Department

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Public Policy / Plans

CRESCORDIA

Name of Entry: El Rio Watercourse Master Plan
Submitted by: Stantec

AWARDS OF MERIT

Name of Entry: Thunderbird Conservation Park Master Plan
Submitted by: Logan Simpson Design Inc.

Name of Entry: City of Peoria Desert Lands Conservation Overlay District
Submitted by: City of Peoria

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Name of Entry: Rio Salado Environmental Restoration Project
Submitted by: City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department