



PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE

Partnerships At Work: Proactive Flood Mitigation Protects Early Childhood Learning Center

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Months of planning and coordination by the Pascua Yaqui Office of Emergency Management paid off just in time.

On June 16, 2026, work was completed to reduce flood risk near the Early Childhood Learning Center. The very next day, more than an inch of rain fell across the Pascua Yaqui Reservation, putting those mitigation efforts to the test.

As part of pre-monsoon preparedness efforts, the Pascua Yaqui Office of Emergency Management (OEM) met with Pascua Yaqui Facilities Management to review lessons learned from the previous years, identify areas of concern, and discuss possible mitigation strategies. One location emerged as a priority: the newly developed Early Childhood Learning Center.

“When we began discussing areas of concern with Facilities Management, we recognized the potential flood risk at the Early Childhood Learning Center. This prompted us to conduct a site assessment. We then partnered with the Pima County Regional Flood Control District and our Facilities Management team to identify solutions that would help protect the facility. We believed collaboration with internal and external partners would lead to the best outcomes.” - Andre Matus, Director, Pascua Yaqui Office of Emergency Management.

Working together, OEM, Pascua Yaqui Facilities Management, and the Pima County Regional Flood Control District combined local knowledge and experience with technical expertise to evaluate the site and identify measures that could reduce the effects of future flooding.

The result was a coordinated plan.

Facilities Management implemented several improvements just before significant rainfall arrived, including clearing debris from the wash southeast of the Early Childhood Learning Center to improve water flow and reinforcing a protective berm south of the facility to help redirect stormwater away from the building.

When thunderstorms produced more than an inch of rain across the Reservation, with some areas of the Tucson region receiving more than two-and-a-half inches, the Tribe’s preparations were put to the test.

“Emergency management is about recognizing risks early and bringing the right people and resources together to address them. The work at the Early Learning Center demonstrates what can be accomplished when we combine the expertise of our Tribal departments with that of our external partners. We are grateful to Facilities Management and the Pima County Regional Flood Control District for their commitment, expertise, and willingness to work alongside us to turn planning into meaningful action” Paul Mesa, Deputy Director, Pascua Yaqui Office of Emergency Management.



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Following the storm, the work continued.

OEM reconvened Facilities Management and the Pima County Regional Flood Control District to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures that had been implemented, identify lessons learned, and discuss additional opportunities to improve other areas at risk of flooding.

“We were thrilled to discover the Pascua Yaqui Tribe had taken swift action after inviting us to discuss flood mitigation strategies. After seeing rainfall totals from the storm, we feared there may not have been enough time to execute these plans. Fortunately, their quick response and strong collaboration saved the day” said Eric Shepp, Director of Pima County Regional Flood Control District.

The collaboration demonstrates the value of proactive planning, strong partnerships, and continued investment in preparedness to help protect Tribal infrastructure and services.



Top: Shows the debris and overgrowth that was removed from the wash located southeast of the Early Childhood Learning Center. **Bottom left:** Shows the protective berm that required reinforcement located south of the Early Childhood Learning Center. **Bottom Right:** Depicts the reinforcement work done on the protective berm located south of the Early Childhood Learning Center.