

**The Iron Bridge Conservation Area** is one of the most visited portions of The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Gila River Preserve because it is a mere ½ hour from town and because the old highway two-track next to the river is an easy place to walk. This property was purchased in 2007 by the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish and TNC. The river corridor has been transformed during the past 9 years; without year-round grazing cottonwoods and willows have had a chance to establish and grow. Consequently, there's diverse bird habitat. Southwestern Willow Flycatchers have even begun to nest on the site.

This September a Youth Conservation Corps crew sponsored by the Wellness Coalition built a foot trail to enable people to better explore the property without getting lost in weeds. The trail is on the east side of the river and heads south paralleling the river. The path is a short loop (approximately 1/2 mile) with a spur (1/4 mile) that leads to the river at the downstream end of this property. Habitat along the trail includes riparian vegetation and grasslands on the floodplain terraces. The trail will be maintained by hikers and birders. Please visit and use the trail frequently!

Directions: The Iron Bridge Tract is located approximately 22 miles northwest of Silver City (between mile markers 86 and 87, downstream of where Hwy 180 crosses the Gila River. Parking is located on both the east side of the river next to a green ranch gate that can be seen from Hwy. 180 and on the west side of the river off of Iron Bridge road. From either side, you can walk along the old highway roadbed that leads to the Iron Bridge.

For questions regarding directions and access, email Martha Cooper at; [mschumann@tnc.org](mailto:mschumann@tnc.org) or call 575-535-4417 or 575-590-2594.

