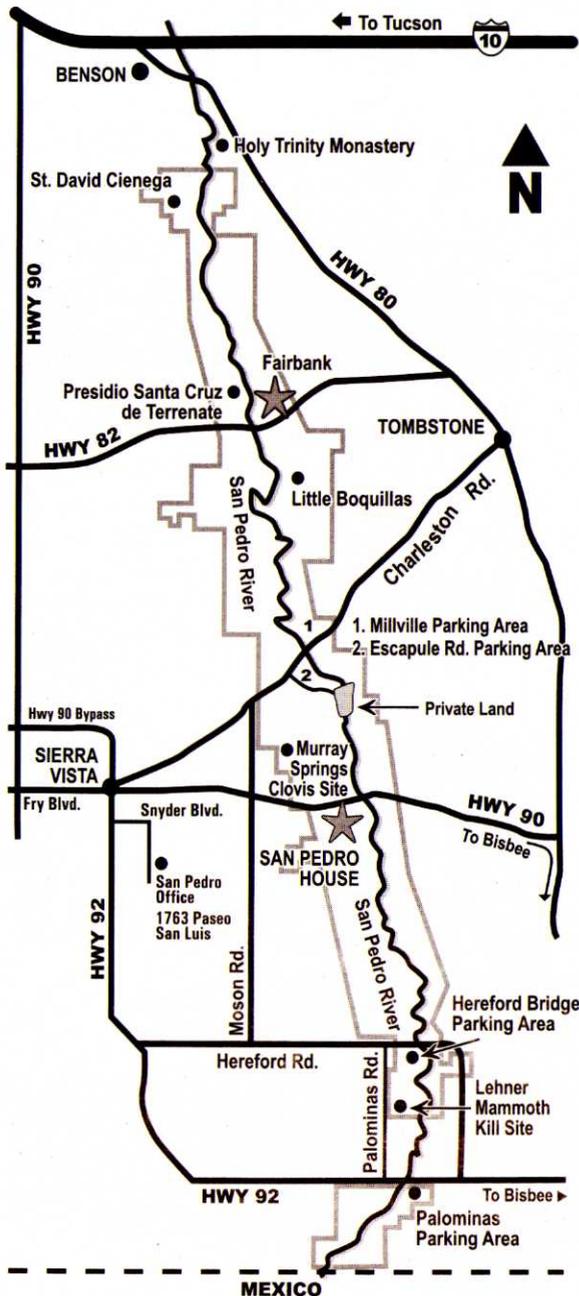


## MAP

Fairbank Historic Townsite is located on Highway 82 between Tombstone and Whetstone, just east of the San Pedro River. The parking lot is open everyday from dawn to dusk. No overnight parking.



## SAN PEDRO RIPARIAN NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

In 1986, through a land exchange, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acquired Fairbank along with 40 miles of river corridor, which in 1988 was designated the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.

The 56,000 acre riparian corridor features some of the richest wildlife habitat in the Southwest. Here you'll find 82 species of mammals, dozens of different reptiles and amphibians and nearly 350 species of birds. In addition, the river supports one of the largest cottonwood-willow forest canopies remaining in Arizona and is one of the last free-flowing rivers in the Southwest.

The area also contains significant cultural resources dating back approximately 11,000 years to the Clovis people, the first known occupants in the upper San Pedro River Valley. The river valley was home to a Spanish fortress, several stamping mills, the ore-processing towns of Charleston, Millville, Contention and others. The Boquillas Land and Cattle Company set up its ranch headquarters just south of Fairbank. One of the ranch manager's houses, now the restored San Pedro House on Highway 90, is open daily.

Today, the area is open for public use and enjoyment. The SPRNCA offers a wide variety of recreation opportunities including bird watching, wildlife viewing, photography, hiking, back-country camping, seasonal hunting, horseback riding, nature study and environmental education.



### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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# FAIRBANK HISTORIC TOWNSITE



Located on the San Pedro River, the town of Fairbank came into existence in 1881 with construction of the New Mexico and Arizona Railroad.

Fairbank was the nearest train depot to the rapidly growing Tombstone and quickly became an important transportation and supply hub, eventually serving three rail lines. The town had an elegant hotel, with a restaurant and bar, a post office, several businesses and a schoolhouse.

With several historic buildings still remaining, Fairbank is now part of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. The area is open daily for the public to enjoy.



San  
Pedro  
Riparian  
National  
Conservation  
Area

## BEHIND THE NAME FAIRBANK

The town was named after Nathaniel Kellogg Fairbank, a Chicago grain broker who helped finance the railroad and was a founding member of the Grand Central Mining Company in Tombstone. Fairbank was a busy transportation and supply hub with stage coaches, three train depots and a maze of tracks including a wye to turn the locomotives.

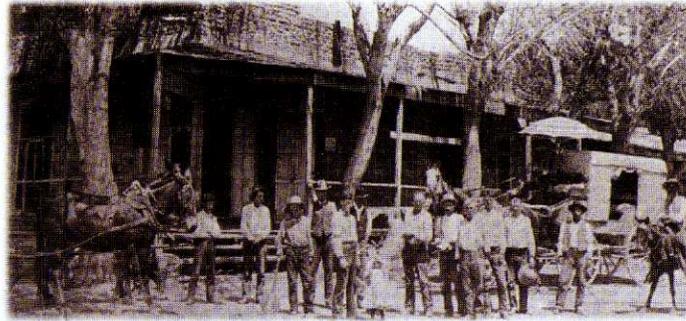


Photo courtesy of the Arizona Historical Society Tucson

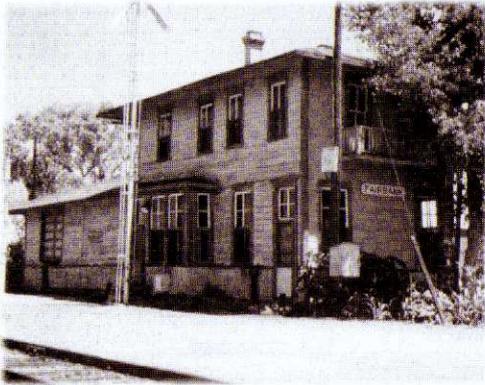


Photo courtesy of Bureau of Land Management

## RAILROADS

- 1881 - New Mexico and Arizona Railroad built a line from Benson to Fairbank, where the tracks turned west and headed to Nogales. In 1888 the rail line was extended to Bisbee, then to Douglas in 1901 to serve the smelters and mines.
- 1894 - Arizona and Southwestern Railroad built a line from Benson to Fairbank.
- 1903 - Spur tracks were built from Fairbank to Tombstone.
- 1912 - Spur tracks were built from Lewis Springs to Ft. Huachuca.

## MORE HISTORY

In 1890 and 1894 floods wreaked havoc on all the towns along the river and destroyed parts of Fairbank. An earthquake in 1887 altered the course of the San Pedro River, knocked railroad tracks out of place and devastated structures in the town of Fairbank.

The most notorious act of violence was not caused by Mother Nature, but was an attempted train robbery in February of 1900. A group of lawmen-gone-bad, the Stiles-Alvord gang tried to rob the Wells Fargo boxcar at its stop in Fairbank. Jeff Milton, an ex-Texas ranger and respected Arizona lawman, was guarding the safe that day, and their well-planned raid was foiled. One robber was killed by Milton, one fled to Mexico and three were captured. Milton's arm

was shattered in the gunfight and he was taken by rail to San Francisco for surgery. Milton threatened to kill any surgeon who amputated his arm, not surprisingly, the arm was spared and he regained partial use of it.

The town still had people living there well into the 1950's but the town was slowly dying and by the 1970's only a roadside store with a gas pump remained. By the mid-1970's the last few of its residents closed the store and moved away. The remaining buildings ~ the large adobe mercantile store, the board and batten-style store and house, the schoolhouse, the frame house, the outhouse, and the garage fell into disrepair. The old train depot for the New Mexico and Arizona Railroad was moved to Tombstone.



Photo courtesy of the Tombstone Courthouse

## FAIRBANK SCHOOLHOUSE

The gypsum block schoolhouse was built in the 1920's, after the original wooden structure burned down. The schoolhouse consisted of one large room with a partition separating it into 2 classrooms; then in the 1930's, an additional room was added to the building. The school was closed in 1944, and the students were transferred to the Tombstone Unified School District.



Photo courtesy of Bureau of Land Management

Over the years the schoolhouse fell into a state of disrepair, until the Bureau of Land Management was awarded a Federal Highway Administration Enhancement Grant for a complete restoration. The BLM has painstakingly restored this building to its original beauty. The foundation has been stabilized, the entire roof was removed, rebuilt and the original corrugated tin roof was replaced. Doors and windows were repaired or replicated. The replica classroom is as close to the original as possible.

## SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM HOURS

Friday, Saturday & Sunday\*

\*Seasonal, subject to change.

9:30am - 4:30pm

Admission is free. Donations welcome.

(520) 457-3062

[schoolhouse@sanpedroriver.org](mailto:schoolhouse@sanpedroriver.org)

The Schoolhouse is managed and operated by the Friends of the San Pedro River, a non-profit organization supporting the BLM in their stewardship of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.