

Key Terms

Rio de Flag - Flagstaff's river that flows from the San Francisco Peaks south through Flagstaff, leaving town east via Doney Park.

Southside Neighborhood-

Located South of Downtown and North of NAU. Historically, a segregated neighborhood that was home to many Black, Latinx, Basque, Asian, and Native Peoples who worked at the lumber yards, railroads, and owned businesses.²

Floodplain- An area prone to flooding that is low-lying and adjacent to a river. Structures in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) federally-designated floodplain require-flood insurance.

100 Year Flood - A flood that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year.



The historic Murdoch Center is a place for bringing together community in the Southside Neighborhood.²

Gentrification- The rapid change of low income neighborhood and working-class areas of the central city into affluent middle-class residential use.³

Environmental Justice- The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.⁴

Watershed- A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that falls in it and drains off of it goes to a common outlet (or river); the Rio de Flag watershed is 200-square miles in size.

The Rio de Flag is Flagstaff's river. The Rio flows through the Southside Neighborhood, a historic area home to many underprivileged minority peoples, many of which came to Flagstaff to be apart of the booming lumber industry. The Southside has faced the dangers of flooding since the late 1800s and remains in a floodplain today.



Children in the 1960's play next to the Rio de Flag in the Southside.⁵

Why is this Important?⁶

1. The community is at risk of catastrophic flood, which is a threat to life, health, and safety.
2. Estimated \$916M in flood damage and over 1,500 structures impacted.
3. The floodplain regulations and mandatory flood insurance make the area expensive to renovate and to own a home.



Residential flooding in the Southside, Flagstaff, 1993.⁷

“The flood zone makes it more expensive to purchase home insurance, to make repairs, and to build affordable housing—but once the river is re-channeled to protect against floods, the land and housing in Southside will increase in value, and possibly lead to gentrification and removal of longtime residents who have doggedly held onto homes built by their parents and grandparents, but which are now in need of repair and renovation.”

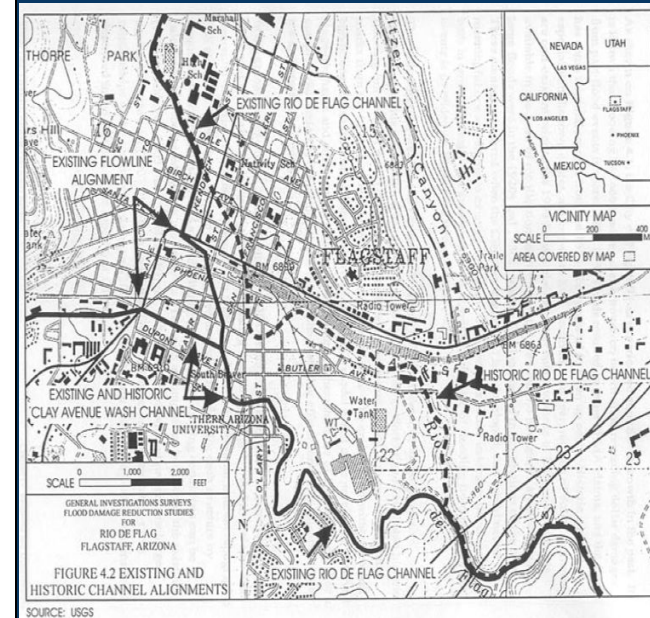
- Dr. Ricardo Guthrie

Citations

1. United States Army Corps of Engineers. 2000. *Rio de Flag Flagstaff, Arizona*
2. Guthrie, R. (2013). "The Historic Southside Mural Project: Pedagogical Art and Community Empowerment in Desegregated Neighborhoods." *International Journal of Social, Political, and Community Agendas in the Arts*, 7(2)
3. Zukin, Sharon. 1987. "Gentrification: Culture And Capital in the Urban Core." *Annual Review of Sociology* 13:129–47
4. EPA, 2018. Retrieved from www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice
5. Museum of Northern Arizona Library and Archives, Pollock Collection, 2018.
6. Duval, James (2017). Flagstaff City Council Meeting, January 16th, 2018. Retrieved from flagstaffaz.svagit.com/play/01162018-2454/#0
7. Rio de Flag. Retrieved from www2.nau.edu/~gaud/RiodeFlag/rdf.htm
8. Map on reverse created and designed by Chelsea Silva, 2018.

Rio de Flag in the Southside Neighborhood

The history of Flagstaff's river, a segregated neighborhood, and flood management



The map above¹ shows the historic Rio de Flag river channel (dashed lines) and the existing, rerouted channel (solid line) winding through the Southside Neighborhood





1888-1993 - The Rio de Flag floods every 1-15 years

1903 - A major flood inundated downtown Flagstaff and the Southside with 3-5 feet of water

1952 - Flagstaff schools desegregated 2 years before the landmark case *Brown vs. the Board of Education*

2000 - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) feasibility report for the Rio de Flag is completed; Rio de Flag Flood Control Project authorized

2010 - South Beaver Elementary closes. It was historically segregated for Hispanic students and later African American students after the Dunbar School closed.

1890s - the Rio de Flag was rerouted to prevent flooding north of the railroad tracks

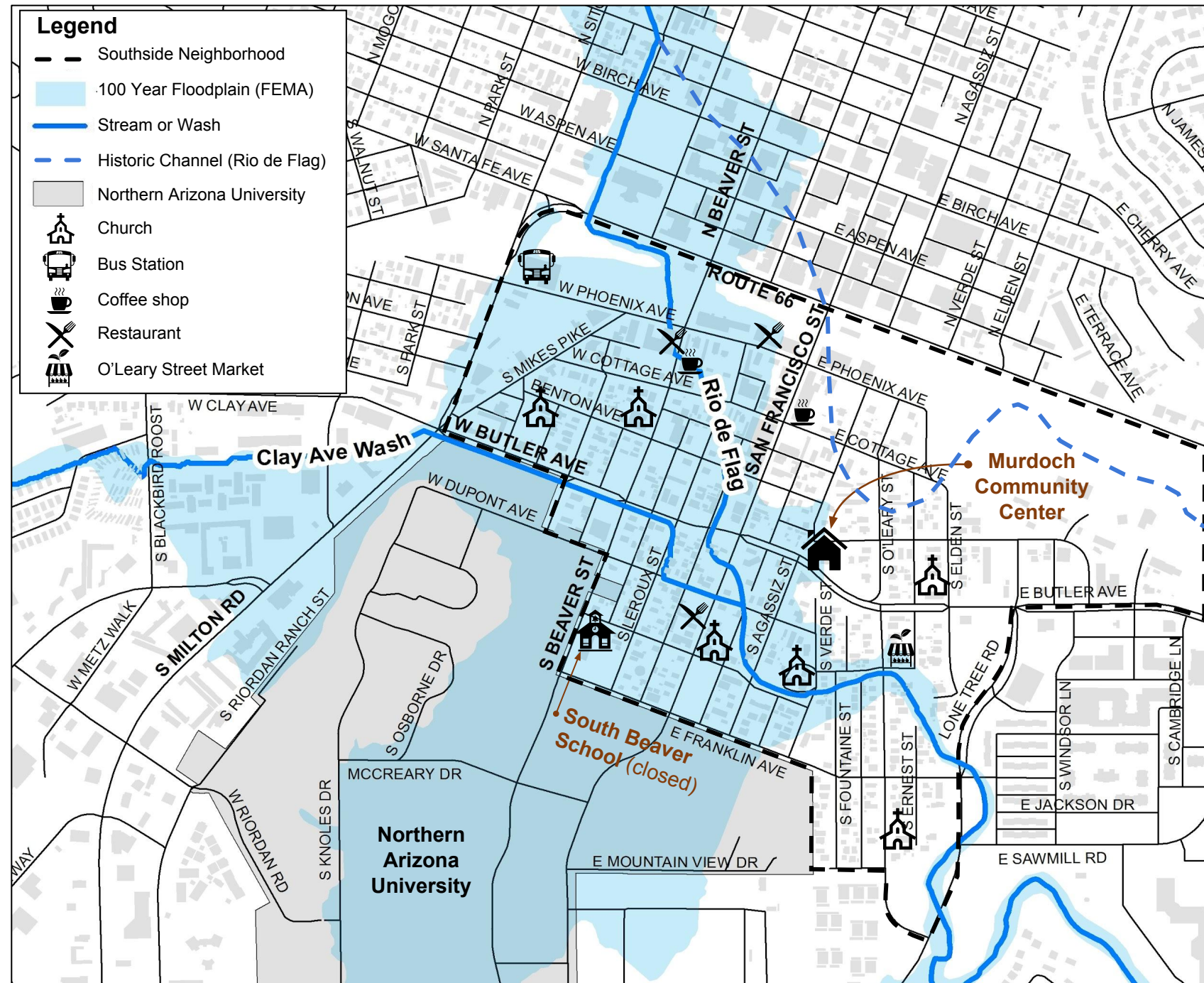
1927 - The South Dunbar School opens as a segregated school for African Americans

1983 - FEMA declares that the Southside lies in a federal floodplain

2007 - Home to the Dunbar School until it closed in 1952, the Murdoch "School" reopens as a community center

2017 - City of Flag received \$1 million to complete Flood Control Project design

The Rio de Flag is a part of the greater 200 square mile watershed!



Additional maps and resources at friendsoftheriodeflag.org