

Photos of Note

By Gerald R Noonan

Farming by the San Pedro House

People often wonder why the countryside between the San Pedro House and the cottonwoods lining the river looks so different from other areas near the river. It has relatively few clumps of native grasses, has many plants found in disturbed areas, and has a number of invasive or nonnative species. The reason is that these fields were intensively farmed. The Tenneco Corporation that owned most of the land now in SPRNCA began intensively cultivating a number of crops near the river, including cotton, alfalfa, the drought resistant grain milo. Eventually approximately 3000 acres near the river were under cultivation. The fields immediately east of the San Pedro House were part of the farming endeavors. The efforts by the Corporation to remove trees and other riverside habitat sparked anger among local citizens and ultimately led to the formation of SPRNCA to protect the trees, riverside and other habitats, and the animals and plants found near the river.



The photo at the upper left shows cultivation of the fields. Notice the irrigation pipes visible in the foreground. The photo immediately above shows the irrigation system in operation. The bottom left photo shows the powerful pump used to supply water to the irrigation system. The pump is still in place to the south of the San Pedro house. Large amounts of water were used with the irrigation system.