

Tanque Verde Creek

From Sandy Wash to River in 60 Seconds

by Alexis Mills, Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School, Tucson, AZ,
Earth Camp for Educators 2012



The
Power of
Perspective

Artist's view of a U.S. Landsat satellite. Credits: NASA.



January 2009



January 2010

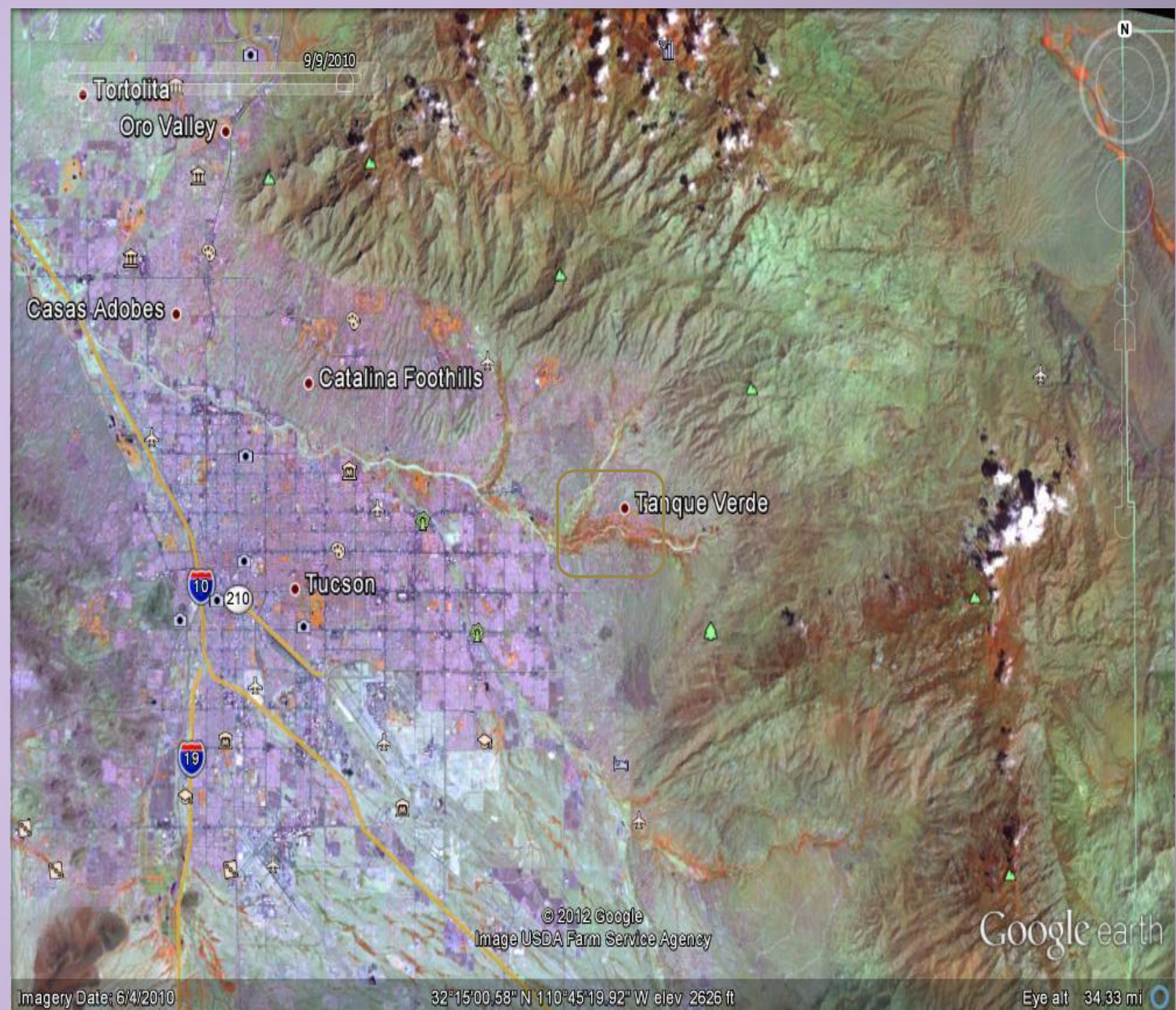
Photos by Alexis Mills

Tanque Verde Falls (below) are a great hiking destination, but dangerous, especially during flash floods.

On July 26, 1981, an unseen thunderstorm upstream produced a 15 foot wall of water that swept eight people to their deaths. In just one minute, the water level rose 4 feet and streamflow increased from 50 to 1,500 cfs (cubic feet per second). That is only a fraction of the highest streamflow ever recorded: 22,000 cfs.



Chantelle Edgewater, March 2010



Although satellite imagery cannot record flash floods, in this false-color Landsat image, red hues indicate the higher moisture content of soil and vegetation in the Santa Catalina and Rincon Mountains (*top and right*) after the record-breaking July 30-31, 2010, monsoon storm. Flooding was widespread along Tanque Verde Creek and other major drainages of the northeast Tucson Basin. As in the photo above, storm clouds linger on the peaks, the highest of which are over 9,000 feet in elevation.

Tanque Verde Creek's water, spectacular scenery, and abundant wildlife have attracted humans for thousands of years. One of the area's oldest recorded archaeological sites has been dated to AD 1-500, which predates use by the prehistoric Hohokam and historic Tohono O'odham.