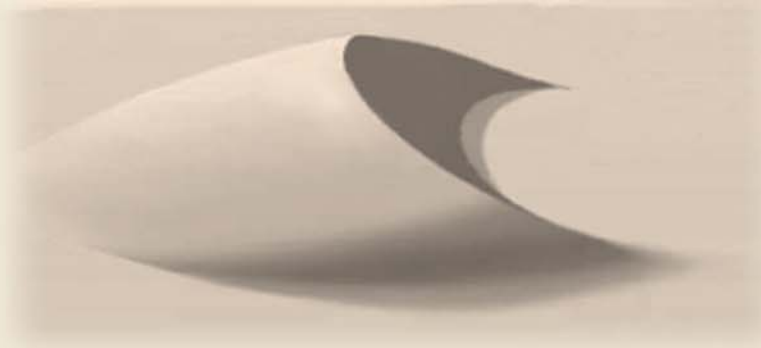


Sunset Regional Park

Sunset Park Dunes The Last Dune Field in Paradise Valley

Dunes like those in Sunset Park once covered much of Paradise Valley. They formed when wind-blown sand fell at the base of mesquite trees. Wind direction creates dunes of particular shapes. The half-moon shaped dunes, like those in Sunset Park are called “barchans.” The two “horns” of the half-moon point away from the prevailing wind.

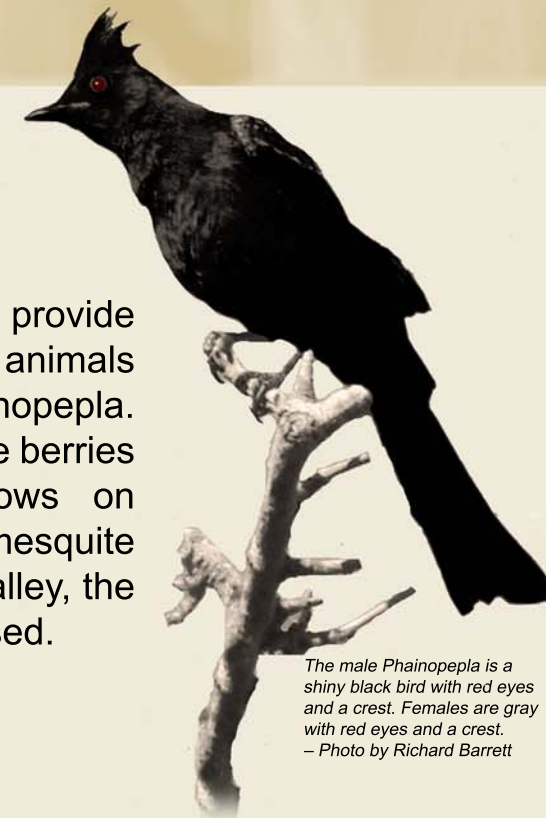
Wind direction ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨



The dunes of Sunset Park are barchans, wind-formed, crescent-shaped dunes.

Over thousands of years, wind, sand and mesquites created the dune landscape of Paradise Valley. With the coming of the railroad in the early 1930s, the dunes were leveled and sand was used for landscaping and construction. The only remaining dune field in Paradise Valley is here in Sunset Park.

The dunes in Sunset Park provide essential habitat for various animals and birds, such as the Phainopepla. This bird eats insects and the berries of the mistletoe that grows on mesquite branches. As mesquite has disappeared from the valley, the birds numbers have decreased.



*The male Phainopepla is a shiny black bird with red eyes and a crest. Females are gray with red eyes and a crest.
– Photo by Richard Barrett*



*A troop of adventurous Boy Scouts planted this flag on a Paradise Valley dune in spring 1919.
– Special Collections, Lied Library, UNLV*



*Las Vegas Boy Scout Troop # 1 explores the dunes of Paradise Valley in 1919.
– Special Collections, Lied Library, UNLV*



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