The stormwater system mimics the function of natural desert riparian corridors. Stormwater collects in the upper portions of the watershed and moves slowly across the landscape in a series of vegetated arroyo bioswales, acequia bioswales, and detention basins. The arroyo system also manages stormwater from the mountainous region to the north as well as parking lots and rooftops located outside of the project area.

The stormwater drainage system can handle up to 565,370 gallons per day, or 75,579 cubic feet. This project is one of the first examples of green infrastructure and the use of soils and vegetation to manage stormwater within the El Paso area, which provides new insight into how stormwater can be used as a sustainable resource to increase green space and provide habitat in a desert ecoregion.

Diverse Palette of Native Plants and Regional Materials

The CTP encompasses an assorted array of native plants and local stone to create campus malls, courtyards, promontories and desert gardens that invite students and the community to embrace and enjoy nature. Before construction, the project area was comprised of campus parking, roads and turf grass lawns with limited trees. Now, the vegetated area of the site has increased by 60% and features 571 trees, 1,831 shrubs and 4,089 perennials that are either native or adapted to the local ecoregion.

About 39% of the material costs qualified as regional materials. The project utilizes rocks, soils and composts harvested and manufactured within the local region, and much of the stone was gathered on site during construction. The stone is also used as mulch for the plants.

Social Spaces and Mental Respite

The CTP created 1,884 seats for social interaction where students, faculty and staff can connect with peers and experience the benefits of nature. Areas such as the Centennial and Geology greens have become impromptu classrooms or recreational areas, while the Centennial amphitheater and Centennial Plaza became hosts to events such as campus-wide celebrations or student-driven activities.

A total of 641 quiet outdoor spaces for mental restoration can be found throughout the project area. Each location provides visible and physical access to a diverse array of native and adapted vegetation, and visitors can choose between sun and shade locations, depending on their preference or current weather conditions. Some spaces are located on the edge or outside of major pedestrian corridors to create a peaceful environment free from distraction and noise.