

## Santa Rosa Boarding School Dorms Demolished, But Saguaros Survive



*Old dorms at Santa Rosa Boarding School are demolished.*

***Asbestos and other hazardous wastes removed from the Tohono O’odham Nation site, while two saguaro cacti remain standing.***

With tribally funded dorms recently constructed at the Santa Rosa Boarding School, located near Sells, Ariz., OFMC funded a demolition project to remove nearly 27,000 square feet of old dormitory space from the K-8 BIE school campus.

Included in the demolition was the clean-up and proper disposal of asbestos and other hazardous materials that were used in the construction of the old dorm buildings.

Two on-site saguaro cacti, each more than 10 feet tall, were preserved in accordance with the “spirit” of the State of Arizona’s Department of Agriculture requirement for removing saguaros, a protected species. (Federal law does not require any permits or notifications of intent to remove a saguaro cactus.)

In preparing the Statement of Work for the demolition, OFMC’s Western Regional Office consulted with the Tohono O’odham Nation Natural Resource Office in hopes that the saguaro cacti could remain undisturbed. The cacti have cultural significance to the O’odham, who consider the species integral to their traditional rain ceremony.

As a result, OFMC’s Western Regional Office added this statement to the Statement of Work: “Work nearby or around protected native plants must comply with regulations with leading authority (Tribe). Contractor shall notify and obtain required permits, if any, regarding the right to donate, remove or transport protected native plants. If feasible, Saguaro cactus (*Carnegiea gigantea*) shall be left intact and undisturbed.”



*Several old Santa Rosa dorm buildings needed to be abated prior to demolition.*