



DIRECT to: Lake Havasu

Why one western town
(without any trees) owes
so much to chainsaws

By Jody Ann Cody



With 300 days of sunshine and 400 miles of coastline, what's not to like about Lake Havasu, Ariz.? The lake, a meandering wide spot in the Colorado River, which can hold 648,000 acre feet of water, was created by Parker Dam in the mid-1930s. Now, 75 years later, this growing community not only functions as a base camp for exploring the surrounding 1.4 million acres of public land, but Havasu is nothing short of a legendary destination for almost anything that floats.

Each year, between 2.5 and 3.5 million people visit Lake Havasu, many of them dragging their watercraft with them. The lake's coves and inlets make fishing for bass and stripers a must-do for any able angler. There are a number of major bass competitions throughout the year. The long open stretches of lake are, perhaps, more perfect, however, for the plethora of national outboard championships, sailing competitions, water skiing and international jet-ski championships.

Scaled reproductions of famous lighthouses aid navigation along Lake Havasu after dark. In addition to the famous London Bridge (bottom center), the area provides the opportunity to do just about anything - as long as you don't mind getting wet.

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Arriving by airplane does not mean you go without. If you're one of those people who lives by the old saw that if it flies, floats or bucks, it's cheaper to rent, then Havasu is still for you. There are dozens of companies who are happy to rent you almost any kind of watercraft you can image, from jet skis to kayaks to bass boats.

But the real reason all those watercraft are there is the absolute beauty along the banks of Lake Havasu. There are endless coves and quiet beaches. Greenish-blue water licks against the red rocks where an occasional Native American petroglyph suggests you are not the first visitor.... The sky is blue and the sunsets are red. Stay a little late and you can guide yourself home by the collection of miniature lighthouses placed on the lake's shores by the Lake Havasu Lighthouse Club.

Take a few days away from the lake and visit Havasu's best kept secret – the backcountry. There are hundreds of miles of quiet, unmolested trails and roads through six wilderness areas. Expect to see historic mines, abandoned town sites, unique wildlife and lots of beautiful country.

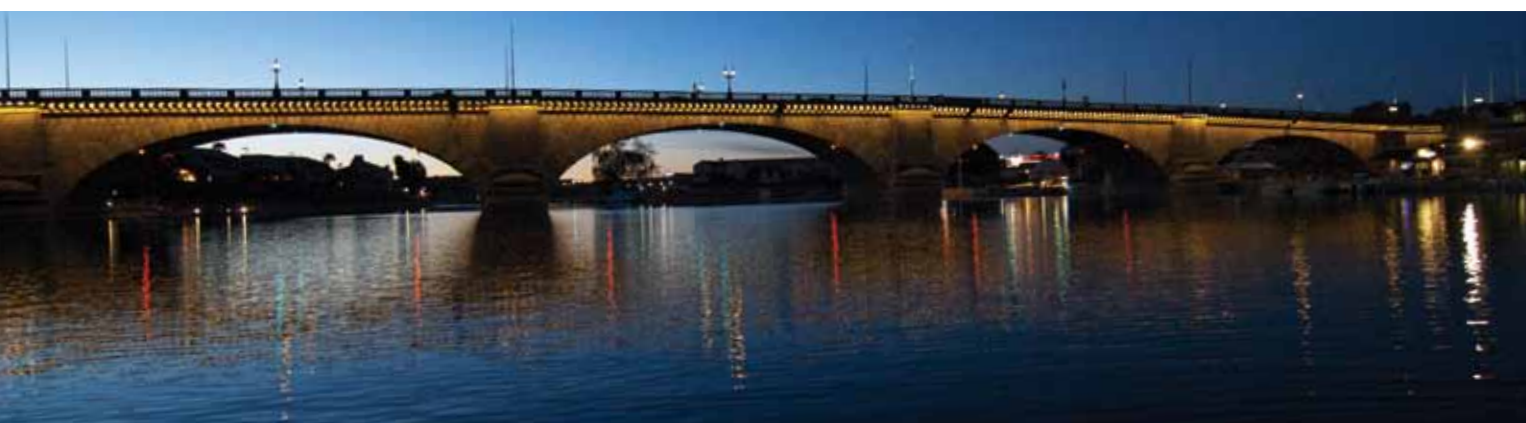
The Havasu backcountry ranges from sand dunes and rugged canyons to mountains and basins. Adding to the textures and shapes of the region are the diverse flora and fauna. Towering Saguaro Cactus stand like statues along the hillsides, along with Ocotillo, barrel and prickly pear cactus. Bighorn sheep, coyotes, reptiles, over 200 species of birds and wildlife can be viewed throughout the region. The Bill Williams National Wildlife Refuge is located at the south end of the lake and offers great wildlife watching.

If you're not feeling that adventuresome, get a tea time from any number of local restaurants, or a tee time from any of four public golf courses at Lake Havasu. The area also has great shopping, square dance lessons, horseback riding and Segway touring of the English Village built underneath the bridge, which brings us around to the part of this story about the chainsaws.

In the 1950s, the McCulloch Aircraft Corporation (a division of the McCulloch Motors Corporation) developed two innovative helicopter designs. When the aircraft failed to bring immediate financial reward, McCulloch turned his attention to building boat motors. The long, uninterrupted stretches of Lake Havasu would be the perfect rest track and he purchased land on the eastern shore.

A couple of years later, McCulloch imagined an entire city growing from the desert lands he had bought a sampling of. He purchased 26 square miles of desert and designed a "planned" American community called Lake Havasu City. At the time, it was the largest single tract of state land ever sold in Arizona. McCulloch was committed (some would say obsessed) to seeing the town grow and prosper.

So committed in fact, that in 1968, McCulloch learned that the London Bridge – yes, the London Bridge spanning the Thames in London, England – was, indeed, falling down. McCulloch paid the British city fathers \$2,460,000 in 1968, and the world's largest antique – a 10,000-ton granite bridge – was boxed up and shipped to Lake Havasu.




Lake Havasu, created by damming the Colorado River on the border between Arizona and California, has a climate that supports hundreds of great outdoor activities, enough to draw more than a million visitors a year.

Golfing, gliding and hiking the craggy terrain are just a few of the many past times at Lake Havasu.

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Putting the bridge back together was accomplished in much the same way as the Egyptians built pyramids. Rounded sand mounds were packed beneath each of the original bridge arches, and the pieces were carefully assembled. When the arch was successful reconstructed, the sand was washed out and the work moved on to the next section. The “new” London Bridge was dedicated in Lake Havasu City on October 10, 1971, with many British and Arizona officials participating in this event that drew 50,000 spectators.

While McCulloch’s dream for building boat motors failed, the London Bridge sealed the success of McCulloch’s Lake Havasu City. He dedicated his life to making the community prosperous. In fact, McCulloch even opened three factories in his town, employing as many as 400 people at a time. The technology that dimmed the hopes of making motors for watercraft shined when added to a saw. The town owes much of its very existence to the local manufacturing of the now-famous McCulloch Chainsaw.

For more information on visiting Lake Havasu: Lake Havasu Convention & Visitors Bureau, 928.453.3444, GoLakeHavasu.com 



There are plenty of fishing and family fun to be had in the water-lover’s paradise community of Lake Havasu.

For more Flying Adventures, go to FlyingAdventures.com/destinations

Lake Havasu City Municipal Airport (KHII), Lake Havasu City, Arizona

AIRPORT DATA

Elevation:	783’
Runways:	14/32 8,001’
APPROACHES:	VOR/DME, GPS, RNAV
ATIS/ASOS:	928.764.2317
Website	AZDOT.gov

FIXED BASE OPERATIONS/FUEL/SERVICES

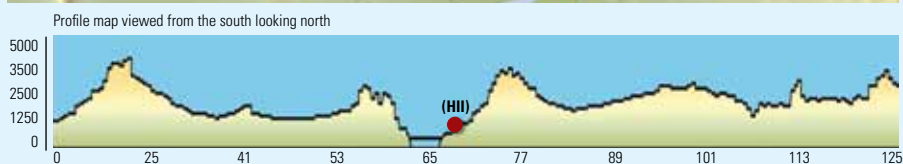
D2Aero (D2Aero.com)	928.764.1000
Desert Skies	928.764.8000
Havasu Air Center	928.764.1999

ACCOMMODATIONS

London Bridge Resort LondonBridgeResort.com	800.238.8808
HEAT Hotel + Bar heathotel.com	888.898.HEAT
Nautical Inn Beachfront Resort NauticalInn.com	800.892.2141

TRANSPORTATION

Avis Rent a Car	800.831.2847
Amore Shuttle	928.854.7744
Steppin’ Out Limousine Service	928.505.4541



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