INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

CLIMATE

Tempe is in the Sonoran Desert and has a long-term average maximum temperature of 100 °F during the summer months. Due to its location in a semi-arid climate zone, the climate is characterized by hot, dry weather with low humidity and frequent winds. The annual precipitation is relatively low, with most of the rain falling in winter and early spring. The months of May and June are generally the wettest months, with occasional monsoon storms that bring brief periods of heavy rain.

VEGETATION

The Papago Park Pediment, which is rocky and extremely arid, supports a variety of xerophytic vegetation adapted to the harsh desert conditions. The most common plant species include creosote bush (Larrea tridentata), brittlebush (Encelia farinosa), and saguaro cactus (Carnegiea gigantea). These plants are well adapted to the dry environment, with tough leaves and spines that help to conserve water.

REGIONAL GEOLOGY

The Papago Park Pediment is a large alluvial deposit that is part of the Tempe alluvial fan. The alluvial fan is a depositional landform that is commonly associated with river valleys and can be up to 12 in. (30 cm) thick. The alluvial fan is composed of unsorted, poorly sorted, and subrounded to angular clasts of sandstone, siltstone, and breccia.

ENVIRONMENTAL GEOLOGY

The Papago Park Pediment is a site of interest for environmental geology due to its unique geologic features and the variety of plant species that have adapted to the harsh desert conditions. The alluvial fan is a depositional landform that is commonly associated with river valleys and can be up to 12 in. (30 cm) thick. The alluvial fan is composed of unsorted, poorly sorted, and subrounded to angular clasts of sandstone, siltstone, and breccia.

SELECTED REFERENCES


