WHY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MATTER The Economics of Arizona's Natural Assets



by Arizona Forward

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ARIZONA FORWARD

Dear Reader:

Arizonans value their parks and open space, ranking them as key quality of life indicators. A new survey of residents statewide shows that 87% visit a park or recreation area at least once a year, with 23% doing so on a weekly basis, according to WestGroup Research. In addition, parks and open spaces create jobs and generate billions of dollars in revenue.

Multiple land ownerships and funding mechanisms produce parks and open space issues that are complex, confusing and sometimes controversial. In fact, the telephone survey further revealed that most residents (80%), rate their knowledge of how state and local parks are funded as very low or in the middle range. Meanwhile, a depressed economy and recession has impacted parks negatively at every jurisdictional level from federal and state to county and municipal governments.

Arizona Forward, a business-based coalition vested in enhancing the state's environmental quality, has developed this parks and open space primer to provide unbiased facts, background information and answers to frequently asked questions on this important topic.

With a mission to promote cooperative efforts to improve the livability, sustainability and economic vitality of cities and towns throughout the state, Arizona Forward was recently launched by Valley Forward, a 42-year-old non-profit public interest organization. Arizona Forward's Charter Members include: Arizona Community Foundation, First Solar, Freeport McMoran Copper and Gold, National Bank of Arizona, Solon Corporation, Sundt Construction, The Nature Conservancy, Total Transit and Wells Fargo.

We believe that to move Arizona forward we must find our common ground rather than faulting our differences. We must work together to protect Arizona's natural assets and ensure our state's long-term economic prosperity. If we don't determine how best to manage our parks and open space, we will lose our most treasured resources.

Please pay attention, learn, get involved and vote.

Kind regards,

Chare ProssasT

Diane Brossart Arizona Forward

GENERAL

Are parks and open space important?

Although Arizona is known worldwide as a golf mecca, that's not what most Arizonans do for recreation. They walk, hike, climb, hunt, fish, sail, raft, ski, canoe and kayak. They take photographs, picnic, camp, skydive, balloon and hang glide. They play baseball, softball, football, soccer and tennis. They ride horses, bikes and off-road vehicles. They visit historic and archaeological sites and track migrant birds.

Arizona residents and visitors alike seek a healthy, active, outdoor lifestyle. Parks and open space make all of this possible – both close to neighborhoods and off the beaten path in Arizona's mountains and deserts. In addition to defining our lifestyle, parks and open space are the foundations of the state's enormous tourist industry.

In the largest public opinion poll ever conducted in Arizona, 3,600 respondents interviewed by <u>Gallup in 2009</u>, picked "beauty or physical setting" of their community and "availability of outdoor parks, playgrounds and trails" ahead of 12 other choices, including transportation, education and affordable housing.

Asked to choose among tax funding options, the first choice of poll respondents was "adopting a water management plan that protects water supplies...," and the second was to "implement policies that balance population growth with preserving open space and recreation opportunities."

In other words, most Arizonans ranked resource management ahead of issues like transportation and high-speed Internet availability. This helps explain why <u>state voters in 2010</u> refused to let the Arizona Legislature redirect \$80 million designated for open space acquisition to help balance the state budget.

A more <u>recent poll</u> of residents statewide conducted this July by WestGroup Research indicates nearly all (93%) categorize parks and open space as essential to Arizona's tourism economy. In addition, three in four Arizonans (74%) rate parks and open space as important to them personally. The statewide telephone survey was commissioned by Valley Forward for Arizona Forward to better understand the impact of parks and open space overall.

Arizona is the <u>sixth largest</u> U.S. state in area and is also one of the most urbanized. Nearly 80% of its population lives in two metropolitan areas and that trend is expected to accelerate. By 2040, Arizona's Sun Corridor, a so-called "megapolitan" area stretching from Prescott to the Mexican border, is expected to house <u>10 million people</u>, double its current population.

This mass of humanity will require more recreation, ranging from local parks where families can fire up a barbecue to semi-isolated locations where they can escape the urban rat race.

How much open space is there and who is responsible for it?

Excluding county and municipal parks, more than 70 million acres of land are managed by state and federal entities and Native American tribes in Arizona. Following is a <u>summary</u> of what they each do.

- National Park Service: The <u>National Parks Service</u> protects and manages federally designated national parks like the Grand Canyon, national monuments like Montezuma Castle, fragile ecosystems like Saguaro National Park and others. All are managed for public use and enjoyment.
- **U.S. Forest Service:** The <u>U.S. Forest Service</u> manages federally designated national forests and grasslands to sustain natural resources and provide for multiple uses such as public recreation, wildlife habitat and grazing.
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM): The U.S. Bureau of Land Management manages a large spectrum of natural resources, including public lands that are designated as wilderness, wildlife preserves and conservation areas, and parcels suitable for development.
- **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation:** This <u>federal entity</u> provides for water management across 17 western states, such as the dams and lakes on the Colorado River in Arizona. Salt River Project's <u>Theodore Roosevelt Dam</u> was one of the agency's first projects.
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:** The <u>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</u> applies and enforces federal regulations to assure sustainable habitats for fish and wildlife populations. The agency manages the 150-million-acre <u>National Wildlife Refuge</u> system.
- Arizona Game and Fish Department: The <u>Arizona Game and Fish Department</u> works to safeguard and manage wildlife resources, administers hunting and fishing regulations and licenses and oversees watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation within the state.
- Arizona State Land Department: When Arizona was admitted to the Union, Congress granted more than 10 million acres to the state to be held in trust for the benefit of several institutions, primarily schools (87%). For the remaining 9.3 million acres, the Land Department's mandate is to achieve the highest and best use of the land in order to maximize revenues to the beneficiaries of the State Land Trust, which includes land leases and sales. The department also issues recreational permits for the use of Trust land.
- Arizona State Parks Department: The <u>Arizona State Parks Department</u> owns and/or operates 30 properties throughout the state, including natural areas like Verde River Greenway, recreation parks like Slide Rock and historic sites like Tombstone Courthouse.

- Bureau of Indian Affairs: In 2000, <u>22 Indian tribes</u> controlled more than <u>20 million acres</u> of land in Arizona. Indian lands are not public, but unique sites like Monument Valley and Canyon de Chelly are accessible to non-tribal members for entry fees. Many tribes also allow outdoor activities by permit in areas that are not closed. Some Indian communities are now designating preserve and heritage areas as significant open spaces.
- **County Parks Departments:** Most of Arizona's 15 counties operate their own parks. Maricopa County operates large regional parks outside of municipal boundaries – 10 of them covering 120,000 acres, including Lake Pleasant. Pima County manages regional parks, like Tucson Mountain Park, dozens of neighborhood parks and conservation lands, encompassing more than 233,000 acres in total. Coconino County operates six county parks and two conservation areas totaling 2,800 acres, including the signature Fort Tuthill County Park, home of the County Fairgrounds. Pinal County operates five neighborhood parks, including the County Fairgrounds, totaling 295 acres.
- **Municipal Parks Departments:** Green spaces in urban and suburban settings offer recreational opportunities and activities for the surrounding community. While they are typically smaller neighborhood spaces for picnics, barbecues and team sports, larger cities like Phoenix and Scottsdale also feature mountain preserves, hiking destinations, a zoo and botanical garden. Tucson's Parks Department is more traditional, except that it boasts a zoo at Reid Park.
- **Private Conservancies:** In addition to publically held open spaces, there are also significant and important areas owned by private conservancies.

What's the economic impact of parks and open space?

Nearly 5.5 million Arizonans participate in active outdoor recreation, generating approximately \$350 million in annual state tax revenue, producing close to \$5 billion in retail services and supporting 82,000 jobs across Arizona, according to the <u>Outdoor Industry Foundation</u>. The <u>2009</u> <u>National Parks Second Century Commission</u> estimated that every \$1 in taxpayer money spent on National Parks returned a \$4 economic benefit through tourism and private sector spending. Meanwhile, a report released by the <u>Interior Department</u> shows that recreational activities on Arizona's public lands (about 40% of the state) supported 21,364 jobs and contributed just under \$2 billion to Arizona's economy.

Why should anyone care about funding parks and open space if they don't use them?

Parks are critical to Arizona's economy. The tourist industry depends on parks and open space which defines the character of this state and its communities, exemplifying the lifestyle that Arizonans want.

Plus, economic development and new jobs rely on lifestyle considerations. Parks, forests, refuges and other open spaces support the quality-of-life factors that can make a difference for communities seeking to attract employers and a strong workforce. Access to open space boosts property values and provides healthy outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and tourists alike.

Who pays for parks?

Virtually all parks and recreation areas are funded by user fees, taxes or a combination of both. Federal, state and private grants can help offset the costs of constructing or maintaining parks and facilities. In most municipalities, constructing new parks and renovating existing parks are funded through capital improvement projects or bonds.

Why can't only the people who use parks pay for them?

The total expense of maintaining a park system is more than users only can afford. Plus, parks don't benefit only their users; these natural areas and recreational amenities create jobs and generate billions of dollars in revenue.



http://www.land.state.az.us/images/maps/state.png

ARIZONA STATE PARKS

The Arizona State Parks Department owns and/or operates 30 properties across the state in 13 of the 15 counties. No state parks are located in Maricopa or Greenlee counties. The Department manages eight of the top 25 most visited natural attractions in Arizona.

Who uses state parks?

According to the <u>2007 Arizona State Parks Visitor's Survey</u>, 49% of state park visitors are Arizona residents, 51% are from out-of-state or country, 54% are female and 46% are male. The average visitor is 56 years old, with 93% of visitors Anglo/White, 3% Hispanic, 1% Native American and 1% Asian.

Are all Arizona state parks open?

Of 30 existing state parks, 27 are currently open. As of August 1, 2011, Picacho Peak State Park, Oracle State Park and San Rafael State Natural Area were closed.

Who pays for state parks and how much do they cost?

It costs about <u>\$34 million</u> to run the Arizona State Parks system. User fees pay about a third and the rest comes from various tax sources.

Does Arizona benefit economically from state parks?

Arizona State Parks have a significant economic impact on the communities in which they are located. According to a <u>2007 Northern Arizona University Study</u>, the total impact of visitors to state parks produced more than \$266 million in economic benefits to the State of Arizona, resulting in 3,347 direct and indirect jobs. State park visitors that same year paid \$22.7 million in state and local government taxes. State parks produce <u>13 times</u> as much economic benefit as it costs taxpayers to support them.

Can state parks operate on entrance fees and the other revenues they bring in?

Gate fees and concessions won't sustain the Arizona State Park system operations as the current model requires. No state park system in the U.S. pays for itself from earned revenue, according to a 2009 Morrison Institute study, which also showed that Arizona spends less than half of all other states on its parks. About half of state parks' 2.3 million yearly visitors are from other states, so raising entrance fees and making our parks uncompetitive with neighboring states would be bad business.

What is the financial outlook for state parks?

State parks' budget for fiscal year 2011 is half what it was in 2009, its staff has been cut 40% and parks now receive no money from the State General Fund. State parks are currently open only on a limited basis and some are operating through local temporary partnerships. State parks have no money for improvements or long-term maintenance. For example, if a waste water facility fails at any park site, that park will likely be forced to close because there are no funds for repairs.

Can state parks be staffed by volunteers?

In some capacities they can, but public safety personnel (law enforcement and emergency medical technicians) and resource management staff are essential at most recreation and open space state parks.

Can state parks be privatized?

According to the <u>2011 PROS Consulting 'Arizona State Parks Privatization and Efficiency Plan</u>,' certain functions of the state parks system can be privatized. Commercial operators are interested in performing park and recreation functions that earn a reasonable profit – typically 6%-25% of annual operational expenses. For-profit operators fail at public parks when visitation, revenue, infrastructure or other factors don't support a viable business.

Can public or non-profit partnerships operate state parks?

Right now half of the state parks in the system (14 of 30 - see table below) are either operated by Arizona State Parks in a partnership or entirely by a partner. Most of these agreements are creative, temporary solutions that have allowed parks to remain open following severe budget cuts in 2009 and 2010.

The key to a successful public-public partnership is when the local public entity has the public support, political will and financial resources to support the functions to which they commit.

Partnerships with private, non-profit entities can be very successful and avoid the public perception that parks have been "given over" to private businesses. Non-profit partners attract donations and grants to support their operations, recruit and retain volunteers, and tend to reinvest in sites and capital assets more often than for-profit operators.

State Parks operated by agency staff	State Parks operated by local partners
through local partnerships	with no agency staff
Ft. Verde State Historic Park	Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park
Homolovi State Historic Park	McFarland State Historic Park
Jerome State Historic Park	Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Park
Lyman Lake State Park	Tubac Presidio State Historic Park
Red Rock State Park	Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park
Riordan Mansion State Historic Park	Yuma Quartermaster Depot State Historic
	Park
Roper Lake State Park	
Tonto Natural Bridge State Park	



http://www.arizonastateparksfoundation.org/mapLarge.html

Arizona's State Park System Includes Three Types of Sites

Recreation Parks	Historic and Cultural Parks	Conservation and Environmental Education Parks
Provide facilities, programs, and services to support outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, and boating.	Tell the story of Arizona's past, from its Native American cultures, to Spanish colonial, territorial, and Western history.	Preserve Arizona's natural landscapes and provide environmental education to K-12 students.
Alamo Lake	Fort Verde	Boyce Thompson Arboretum
Buckskin Mountain	Homolovi	Kartchner Caverns
Catalina	Jerome	Oracle
Cattail Cove	McFarland	Red Rock
Dead Horse Ranch	Riordan Mansion	San Rafael Ranch
Fool Hollow Lake	Tombstone Courthouse	Sonoita Creek
Lake Havasu	Tubac Presidio	Verde River Greenway
Lost Dutchman	Yuma Territorial Prison	
Lyman Lake	Yuma Quartermaster Depot	
Patagonia Lake		
Picacho Peak		man and a second
River Island		A MARY
Roper Lake		Come and in the second
Slide Rock		1 WALARD BA
Tonto Natural Bridge		1 84 11 15 1 4 1 S

Source: Arizona State Parks.

http://morrisoninstitute.asu.edu/publications-reports/AzStateParks_FullReport-ver2_

ARIZONA STATE LAND DEPARTMENT

What does the Arizona State Land Department do?

The Land Department manages land that Arizona received from the federal government at statehood. The land is held in trust for the exclusive benefit of several specific institutions, primarily public schools. The Department is required to achieve the highest and best use of the land in order to maximize revenues to the beneficiaries of the State Land Trust.

How much and what kind of land does it manage?

The State Land Trust includes about 9.3 million acres, accounting for 12.7% of all the land in Arizona. The land ranges from parcels suitable only for livestock grazing to extremely valuable parcels located near urban centers that have sold for more than <u>\$1 million per acre</u>. Trust land is used for ranching, farming, mineral extraction, renewable energy projects (e.g. wind farms), commercial development, and rights-of-way for utilities and vehicular use.

Why doesn't Arizona just sell this land?

In 2007, before the recession began, the Land Department sold <u>4,262 acres</u> for a total of \$453 million. But the market for land development has been almost non-existent during the recession. Plus, the Land Department isn't funded by the Arizona legislature to provide the comprehensive land use planning that would increase the value of its land.

The Department has to obtain fair market value for all transactions and satisfy mandates in the Federal Enabling Act and Arizona Constitution. Before selling or leasing land, the Department weighs the income potential, the proposed use, archaeology/cultural resources, hydrology, geology, impacts on other Trust land, available infrastructure and utilities, proximity to development, parcel size and conformance of the proposed use to local regulations.

Can State Trust Land be designated for conservation and open space?

By law, the Land Department is required to obtain the highest return it can on behalf of the Trust. The Arizona Land Conservation Fund, approved by state voters in 1998, accumulated over \$200 million in tax revenues to be used as matching funds for local governments that want to convert Trust lands to open space. Under that law, the Land Department can sell land at appraised value, without bidding, for approved projects. But that funding mechanism ended last year with about \$80 million remaining in the Trust.

Can State Trust Land laws be changed?

Any significant change in the Land Department's mission or its management authority must be approved by voters as an amendment to the Arizona Constitution. Many different groups have tried to reform the Trust, but none have won voter approval.

COUNTY PARKS

County park systems in Arizona are funded and operate under distinctly different models. While there are 15 counties in Arizona, this primer mainly focuses on the largest – Maricopa, Pima and Coconino.

The state's two largest county park systems, Maricopa (Phoenix Metro) and Pima (Tucson Metro) manage more than 320,000 acres of mountain parks and preserves, trail systems, community recreation-centered parks and conservation lands. Coconino County (Flagstaff) operates just over 2,800 acres of parklands, trails and conservation areas. Pinal County has only five parks, including the County Fairgrounds, three neighborhood parks and two community parks, totaling 295 acres.

Who uses county parks?

In 2010, Maricopa and Pima County Parks accommodated more than 4.2 million total visitors. Pima County does not have a breakdown of visitor demographics. However, Maricopa County reports the following data for park visitors in its 2007-2008 Parks Visitor Study Final Report:

- Local City/Town Residents, 77.3%
- Other In-State Residents, 10.8%
- Out-of-State, 10.4%
- Out-of-Country, 1.5%

Coconino doesn't staff its parks or charge admission, so the Department doesn't monitor total visitation. However, Fort Tuthill County Park, home of the County Fairgrounds, has 106,000 visitors annually according to an <u>NAU Arizona Policy Institute report</u>. The study shows that 22% of the visitors to Fort Tuthill are non-local and spend \$3.5 million in the local economy.

Who pays for county parks and how much do they cost?

In Maricopa County, the Parks and Recreation Department operating budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, was \$8.2 million and is largely non-reliant on the county general fund. User fees and third-party operators account for this income. Maricopa County covers almost all of its parks' operating expenses (85-90%) with revenues from recreation user fees and through concessionaire contracts and agreements. The parks with the highest revenues are Adobe Dam and Lake Pleasant. Operating funds not used in a given year are dedicated to long-term park maintenance and capital improvements.

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors provides some funding for capital development, but not through a dedicated funding source or on a regular, on-going basis. However, the Board has provided approximately \$1 million per year from the General Fund for the past three years to establish the Maricopa Trail which will ultimately ring the county with a multi-use trail system that connects all 10 county parks. The Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department's operating budget is \$14.7 million from the general fund per year. For fiscal year ending 2009, total earned revenues were a bit over 6% of expenditures, but these funds are re-directed to the county's general fund. In 2004, county residents approved \$172 million in county bonds for the purchase of conservation lands, cultural sites and mountain parks.

In 2002, Coconino County residents approved a 1/8 cent sales tax to fund park development and acquisition. This tax will expire when \$33 million is collected. To date, \$15.7 has been spent which recovers about 70% of its expenditures annually. Operating on a \$3.1 million budget, the 30% gap is subsidized by the County General Fund.

For fiscal year 2011, the Pinal County Parks, Recreation, and Fairgrounds Department's expenditure budget was \$548,000, with \$62,000 from the general fund and \$486,000 from the fairgrounds fund.

If county parks are public property that has been paid for by taxpayers, why do I still have to pay an entrance fee?

Pima County and Coconino County parks don't charge admission fees. Pima County charges nominal fees for access to specialized facilities including attraction sites, programs and shooting ranges. Pinal County doesn't charge at its three neighborhood parks and one community park. Its fairgrounds operating expenses are budgeted to match its revenue. Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department charges a calculated price based on the level of individual usage that is beyond what a general taxpayer receives.

With the economy in such tough shape, couldn't county park money be better used elsewhere?

Parks, open space, natural areas, cultural and recreation sites generate great economic benefits and jobs in the areas where they are located.

A 2007-2008 Maricopa County park visitor survey showed that visitors spent more than \$131 million in expenditures related to their visit. Since Maricopa County parks generally don't rely on the county's General Fund, the benefits to the economy and local tax coffers are clearly advantageous.

The Pima County Board of Supervisors decided there is limited opportunity to re-direct what little funding remains without negatively impacting the region's recreational facilities and conservation measures.

Coconino County is undertaking efforts to preserve and conserve open space, wetlands, riparian areas, wildlife corridors and sensitive environmental and ecological areas for the benefit of the public. Without this stewardship and investment, supported by local, state or federal grants, these areas could be lost to future generations.

Why do counties invest in trail development even though not everyone hikes?

Park systems offer many opportunities and different experiences to meet the needs of a diverse culture and population.

Trail development is a component of the Maricopa, Pima and Coconino counties' mission. Pinal County has adopted an aggressive <u>open space master plan</u>, identifying nearly 1.4 million acres of existing, planned and proposed regional parks and open space. The plan encourages appropriate long range growth planning opportunities, provides for a wide range of recreational activities for residents and visitors while preserving the county's rural and natural open space character.

Can county parks be turned over to private operators to manage?

Maricopa County already partners with private and non-profit providers. Scorpion Bay Marina invested \$20 million in private funds to build the Lake Pleasant marina and a portion of all marina revenues are returned for on-going park management. In 2008, Village Roadshow Corp. invested more than \$20 million in Adobe Dam Regional Park for the Wet-n-Wild Water Park. A portion of those revenues also are returned to park operations. Smaller commercial vendors in the parks operate everything from horseback riding, to kayak rentals to mountain bike, equestrian and marathon events.

With large tracts of open land grazing leases, mineral and water rights to manage, camping sites and snow amenities, Coconino County believes it is not best practice to privatize these functions. However, the county has adopted a model whereby it builds a park facility and then lets the local government operate and maintain the facility once it is complete.

Examples of county-owned parks and attractions Pima County is presently operating through private for-profit and not-for-profit partners include: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Pima Air and Space Museum, Titan Missile Museum, Crooked Tree Golf Course, Kino Sports Complex, Mike Jacob Sports Park and Old Tucson Studios.

In May, the Pinal County Board of Supervisors, by ordinance, reestablished the Pinal County Fair Commission to take over the daily operation of the fairgrounds property and facilities. Pinal County will be entering into a long term lease in September 2011 with the Commission, which has formed the nonprofit Central Arizona Fair Association to manage and operate the day to day activities of the Pinal County Fairgrounds. The county has agreed to assist the Commission and nonprofit organization with start-up operating funds. Future funding for county fair and other events will come through the organization's operation of the facility as a business entity, with minimal county assistance. The transition to property management and operation is slated to be complete by the end of September 2011.

Can volunteers operate county parks?

Volunteers are certainly important, but usually can't be the primary operators of a parks system. Some sites and tasks may be suited for volunteers, but other services – especially those that require intense maintenance or certification for specialized equipment – are difficult to coordinate, and finding qualified operators is challenging. Liability often becomes an issue.

The responsible day-to-day operation of a multi-million dollar agency and the management and protection of hundreds of thousands of acres of public property statewide must rely on the expertise of a professional staff. Volunteer activities also require oversight, coordination and scheduling. A volunteer program doesn't manage itself.

However, Maricopa, Pima, Coconino and Pinal Counties all have volunteer programs and utilize such resources where appropriate.

MAP OF PIMA COUNTY PARKS



http://www.pima.gov/nrpr/parks/maps.htm

Maricopa County's Regional Parks Ring Greater Phoenix



Source: Maricopa County Parks and Recreation.

http://morrisoninstitute.asu.edu/publications-reports/AzStateParks_FullReport-ver2



MAP OF COCONINO COUNTY PARKS

http://www.valleyforward.org/pdf/ParksPrimer/Coconino County Parks.pdf



http://www.valleyforward.org/pdf/ParksPrimer/Pinal-County-Parks-&-Trails-Oct2007.pdf

MUNICIPAL PARKS & PRESERVES

City, community and neighborhood parks differ vastly from county and regional parks and state and federal parklands in design, users and benefits. These green spaces address the needs of diverse populations with activities that engage the surrounding community. Pools, sports facilities, recreation and senior centers, playgrounds and urban trails with paths through cities and neighborhoods are vital to a healthy lifestyle and bring together different ethnic and age groups. Parks, in these settings, *are* community.

This primer focuses on the largest metropolitan centers in Arizona (<u>Phoenix</u>, <u>Tucson</u>, <u>Scottsdale</u> and <u>Flagstaff</u>) that boast parks and trails that enhance quality of life and cater to a broad spectrum of residents.

Phoenix and Scottsdale are unique in conserving vast amounts of open space for public use. Scottsdale created the 17,000-acre McDowell Sonoran Preserve and converted the Indian Bend Wash floodway to a 1,200-acre greenbelt. In Phoenix, the 16,000-acre South Mountain Park is America's largest municipal park and part of the city's Mountain Preserves system. This system spans 37,000 acres and includes North Mountain, Camelback Mountain, Piestewa Peak and the Phoenix Sonoran Preserve. Phoenix also boasts two hiking destinations in Piestewa Peak and 2,700-foot-high Camelback Mountain, both in the center of the urban population.

Flagstaff residents benefit from 26 regional, community, neighborhood and pocket parks (more than 735 acres in total) offering playgrounds, tennis, racquetball, volleyball and basketball courts, softball and soccer fields, BMX track, dog parks and picnic ramadas. In addition, 53 miles of trails in Flagstaff are used by bicyclists, walkers, hikers and runners for both recreation and transportation. Flagstaff partners with five local schools to help address the shortage of soccer fields and other amenities.

The City of Tucson maintains 128 parks for a total of 4,000 acres, including 17 recreation centers and Reid Park Zoo.

Are city parks really as important to residents as public safety, trash pickup and other city services?

Yes, city parks and trail systems are considered as important to a community's quality of life as water, sewer, fire protection and police/public safety. Three values make them essential services to communities – *health and environmental benefits, economic return on investment and social importance*.

Studies show that <u>parks and recreation contribute to improved physical and mental health</u>. Recreation is an essential component of human biology and psychology and is critical <u>to</u> <u>childhood development and learning</u>. Park Department recreation programs for children are particularly valuable at a time when schools are eliminating physical education programs due to budget constraints. Cities have found that active use and community involvement in neighborhood parks typically result in lower levels of crime and vandalism. Parks also help clean the air and water, reduce the urban heat island, spur economic development and cultivate stronger neighborhoods.

Who pays for city parks and how much do they cost?

In most cities, constructing new parks and renovating existing parks are funded through capital improvement projects or bonds. Maintenance and upkeep are funded through cities' operating budgets, which comes from the general fund. Sometimes federal, state and private grants help offset those costs.

The City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department receives monies from the general fund, Phoenix Parks and Preserves Initiative, impact fees, bonds, grants (private, state and federal) and private donations. For the 2010/2011 Fiscal Year, the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department had an \$88.7 million general fund operating budget. Over the years, Phoenix residents have approved 10 major bond issues to support parks and recreation. In 2009, 83% of voters renewed the Phoenix Parks and Preserve Initiative for 30 more years. One cent of sales tax for every \$10 of purchases is set aside to improve and renovate existing parks and to expand and improve the desert preserve system. Sixty percent of the proceeds are dedicated to existing and future city parks; 40% is dedicated to the city's desert preserves including trails, trailheads and signage.

In 2010, the City of Scottsdale allocated \$21.8 million from its general fund for operating and maintaining parks and another \$266,000 for local mountain preserves. In the last bond election in 2000, voters approved proposals for 15 parks and open space-related projects including the Scottsdale Sports Complex and renovation of a number of existing parks.

The City of Tucson Parks and Recreation Department services have historically been financed by the city's General Fund with an annual operating budget of \$38 million. The parks generate approximately \$6 million in revenue. The capital improvement budget is generally derived from bonds, certificates of participation and more recently impact fees.

The City of Flagstaff has a \$2.7 million operating budget through the general fund to maintain and operate its parks and trails system. The parks generate approximately \$50,000 to \$80,000 in revenue from user fees, which are returned to the general fund.

Why do we need so many city parks?

<u>According to the American Planning Association</u>, city parks are an important element of smart growth, addressing both the public's need for green space and reducing density.

Local parks increase <u>property values</u> – the closer a property is to a park, the higher the property value. Additionally, parks and recreation services are often cited as among the most important factors in enhancing a community's livability and social fabric. The City of Tucson has outlined a goal of securing 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents in its <u>ten-year strategic service plan</u>, along with a local park within a mile of each resident. State and federal parklands are often not within that proximity and often don't offer the active recreation amenities that are so important to the local community.

Phoenix residents continually rank the Mountain Preserves as the city's top asset in <u>public</u> <u>opinion surveys</u>. Phoenix residents also rated three core parks and recreation duties – preserving mountains and deserts, keeping parks clean and providing recreation programs – among the top rated services in the city.

Most Flagstaff residents are satisfied or very satisfied with the city parks they use, according to a <u>recent study</u>. All respondents believe it is important that the city maintains existing facilities; recreation programming and cultural arts facilities are the most important functions for the Parks Department after preserving open space and providing trails.

Why can't people just use county or state or federal parks?

Larger regional parks offer a different scale of services and activities, while city parks are typically intended to serve their residents. City parks provide value, a sense of public pride and cohesion to the community. They are designed to be accessible by foot or bike, reflect the quality of life in a community and provide gathering places for families and people of all ages and economic status.

Phoenix Park's Reach 11 Sports Complex is one of the most coveted in the nation for soccer, lacrosse, flag football, little league baseball and field hockey tournaments. Phoenix has secured multi-year agreements with national governing bodies of USA Field Hockey, USA Lacrosse, US Soccer and the National Intramural Recreation Sports Association to bring a variety of tournaments and events to Reach 11. This generated an estimated <u>\$120 million in sales and</u> <u>almost \$2.9 million in tax revenue</u> to the City of Phoenix in 2010, on just 75 acres of Phoenix's 41,967 acres open space network.

Who uses city parks?

More than 1.1 million Phoenix residents visited a city park or preserve in the last year, which is 75% of the city's total population. In the last count in 2008, there were an estimated <u>5.8 million</u> visits to the City of Phoenix's mountain and desert preserves. During the fiscal year 2010/2011, the City of Scottsdale parks had more than 5.1 million total visitors. Almost all Flagstaff city parks are used at least weekly by residents, according to a <u>recent Flagstaff survey</u>.

I don't use the parks, why do I have to pay for them?

Parks provide more than just a recreation space – they are multipliers that provide a significant return on investment by improving the local tax base and increasing property values. The value of privately-owned land increases the closer that land is to a park.

Green open space provides environmental benefit whether it's used or not in the form of water quality, local flood protection, better air quality (CO2 exchange) and reduction of urban heat island effects.

And parks are good business. Corporations often cite employee quality of life as one of the three most important factors in locating a new business. University studies have demonstrated that investment in parks and park-related activities generate jobs at a much higher rate than most other sectors.

Is there some other way to pay for city parks?

Federal, state and private grants often help offset the costs of constructing or maintaining a city park.

Parks and recreation programs produce a significant portion of their operating costs from revenue generated from rentals, sports tournaments, special events and festivals.

Nearly all of the parks operated by the City of Phoenix were acquired and developed with bonds that were approved by the city's voters, although continuing operations are subject to annual budgeting decisions.

Tucson residents have previously paid for their parks, programs and facilities primarily through taxation. However, the growing population has increased demand for new, expanded and even more diversified facilities and services. Costs for land and capital projects also have increased, as have operational expenses. These trends, coupled with increased competition for city tax dollars by other departments, have resulted in a greater emphasis on generating alternative non-tax revenues. Present day economic reality and limited funding make it necessary to recover at least a portion of the costs through user fees. The department attempts to balance the cost-to-benefit ratio by providing both free and fee-based services.



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HERITAGE FUND

What is the Arizona Heritage Fund?

On November 6, 1990, Arizona voters, by a nearly two-thirds majority, passed the <u>Heritage</u> <u>Initiative, Proposition 200</u>, to protect our natural and cultural heritage. This Initiative allocated \$10 million per year from State Lottery monies to the Arizona Game and Fish Department and another \$10 million to Arizona State Parks to hold in trust for Arizona citizens. This type of program seldom had received significant funding before the <u>Heritage Fund</u> came into existence.

In March 2010, the \$10 million Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund was swept by the Arizona legislature and eliminated with Budget Reconciliation Bill HB2012 that repealed distributions to the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund and redirected the money to the state General Fund.

What did it do and why is it important?

Since the Heritage Fund's inception – more than \$350 million of lottery monies have been directed towards saving and expanding Arizona's environmental, cultural, recreational and historical resources. Millions of dollars in matching grant money have brought economic and environmental benefits into every community in Arizona. Anyone who hikes, boats, rides, hunts, fishes, watches wildlife, visits a park or tours historic sites in Arizona has likely been affected by the Arizona Heritage Fund.

With the legislative elimination of the State Parks Heritage Fund, programs like these are threatened:

- Historic Preservation Heritage Grant Fund Program: Arizona State Parks benefitted from the State Parks Heritage Fund (up to \$1.7 million annually) to fund historic preservation projects. The State Parks Development Section and State Historic Preservation Office also received portions of these funds annually.
- Local, Regional and State Parks Heritage Fund: 35% of State Parks Heritage Fund revenues (up to \$3.5 million annually) helped municipalities, counties and tribes create outdoor recreation and open space opportunities like playgrounds, ball fields and picnic areas.
- **Trails Heritage Fund:** 5% of the State Parks Heritage Fund revenues (up to \$500,000 annually) supported acquisition and trail improvements for Arizona's non-motorized trail system. Arizona State Parks received 5% of this amount to support trail recreation within the State Parks system; the remainder was awarded through the Trails Heritage Fund grant program.

Are there other ways to do what the Heritage Fund does?

There is no dedicated funding source for these programs. In addition, the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, State Lake Improvement Fund, Environmental and Conservation grant funds and Historic Preservation programs recently have been lost or diminished, and may soon vanish. The cumulative effect is a devastating blow for the preservation and conservation of Arizona's rich cultural, natural and recreational resources.

Where did the money come from?

Money for the Heritage Fund came from the Arizona Lottery — up to \$20 million in annual lottery revenue was divided evenly between the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund. (The Game and Fish Heritage Fund has remained intact).

FEDERAL PARKS & OPEN SPACE

While parks and open space are important at the federal level and have a huge impact on our state, Arizonans have less control of national politics and policy issues.

Why are so many different federal agencies managing these places in Arizona? Can the system be simplified?

The federal public lands management system was established by Congress and can't be easily simplified because federal lands fall in several categories...and since each has a different purpose, each is governed by a different agency.

Major categories of public land include: national parks and monuments, governed by the National Park Service; natural resources or rangelands, governed by the Bureau of Land Management; national forests and grasslands, administered by the U.S. Forest Service; national wildlife refuges, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; wild and scenic rivers, administered by each of the agencies; wilderness areas designated within other public lands; and military lands, administered by the Department of Defense.

What's the difference between a National Park, National Monument, National Recreation Area, National Scenic Area, Wild and Scenic River, Land Trust, Federal Wilderness Area, National Historic Landmark, National Trail, etc? Why so many designations? Federal public lands are designated either by Congress or Presidential Proclamation. Within the Bureau of Land Management alone, these include:

- **National Monuments:** Designated by Presidential or Congressional proclamation to protect objects of scientific and historic interest on public lands and to provide for the management of those features.
- National Conservation Areas: Public land congressionally designated for conservation, protection, enhancement and management of their resources for the enjoyment of present and future generations. These areas hold special natural, recreational, cultural, wildlife, aquatic, archaeological, paleontological, historical and/or scientific values.
- **National Historic Trails:** The purpose of this designation is to identify and protect historic routes and their remnants and artifacts.
- **National Scenic Trails:** Provide for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, natural or cultural qualities of the areas through which trails pass.
- Wilderness Areas: Undeveloped federal lands are managed to preserve their natural conditions. They offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and may contain ecological, geological or other scientific, scenic or historical values.

• **National Wild and Scenic Rivers:** A river, or section, designated to protect outstanding scenic, recreational and other values, as well as to preserve its free-flowing condition.

Note: The U.S. Department of the Interior includes the Bureau of Land Management; Bureau of Reclamation; the National Park Service that manages the National Parks system; the U.S. Geological Survey; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The U.S. Department of Agriculture includes the U.S. Forest Service.

How many of these areas are in Arizona?

The Bureau of Land Management in Arizona manages five national monuments, three national conservation areas, two national historic trails, a portion of one national scenic trail, 47 wilderness areas and two wilderness study areas.

What is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, how is it funded and how does Arizona benefit?

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program was established by Congress in 1965 to designate a portion of receipts from offshore and gas leases for state and local conservation and for the protection of parks, forests and wildlife areas. The LWCF is specifically authorized for conservation spending.

In Arizona, the LWCF has built popular bicycle trails and parks in Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tucson, Flagstaff and many other communities. Arizona state parks have also benefitted from LWCF funding. The LWCF has helped preserve the Grand Canyon, provided more than <u>\$58 million</u> in revenue and created thousands of jobs in Arizona.

The LWCF is divided into the "state side" program that provides matching grants to state and local governments for public outdoor recreation areas and facilities, and the "federal side" program that buys land in new forests, parks, wildlife refuges and other recreation areas designated for protection.

"State side" funds are distributed based on population and other factors. State park directors ask communities to apply for project funding and distribute funds based on a scoring process. "Federal side" funding makes acquisitions, and each year the President recommends funding for specific LWCF projects to Congress.

All LWCF projects MUST be recreation-related. Distributions cannot be used to just buy land and put a fence around it for a wilderness project. The whole point is to preserve areas for hiking, hunting, fishing, etc.

<u>Click here</u> to view a small sample of parks, recreation facilities, etc., funded in Arizona since the LWCF was set up in 1965.

What is the Federal Land Policy Management Act (1976)?

The <u>Federal Land Policy Management Act</u> recognizes the value of our nation's public lands and provides a framework to manage it now and for future generations. It defined the Bureau of Land Management's mission as one of multiple uses to meet the demands of the changing West.

What is the Wild Lands policy? (Applies to the Bureau of Land Management)

In December 2010, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar issued a <u>Secretarial Order</u> that describes how the BLM will enable local communities, states, tribes, the public and stakeholders to determine how to manage public lands with wilderness characteristics.

This guidance will ensure that public lands with wilderness characteristics are inventoried and managed, and directs the Bureau to consider "<u>wild lands</u>" as part of its existing land-use planning process, and to manage them to protect their wilderness values.

This policy was rendered unenforceable by Congress in April 2011, so the Secretary revised the order to direct the BLM to work with Congress, local officials, tribes and federal land managers to identify candidate lands.

Note: Public lands with **wilderness characteristics** are <u>not</u> the same as **wilderness areas**.

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ARIZONA FORWARD

A Vision for Collaboration, A Vision for Our Future

Environmental and Quality of Life Issues Facing Arizona

As Arizona approaches its centennial, our state is at a critical juncture related to its environment and quality of life. The livability and vitality of Arizona's cities and towns will be impacted by upcoming pivotal decisions related to:

- Land use planning and open space,
- A balanced multi-modal transportation system,
- Improving and maintaining healthy air quality,
- Arizona leadership in solar and renewable energy technology,
- Managing our precious water resources, and
- Protecting wilderness, parks, national monuments and other natural areas for Arizona's tourism economy.

Wise decisions will require collaboration among public, business and civic leaders across the state. To move Arizona forward economically, environmentally and socially, Valley Forward Association believes we must find our commonalities, not fault our differences.

A Statewide Coalition to Move Arizona Forward

Valley Forward Association is a 42-year-old marquee nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that brings together diverse interests to enhance the environment and quality of life in Maricopa County and the expanding metropolitan area.

Valley Forward's focus – land use and open space, transportation, air quality, water and energy – extend well beyond its past geographic focus. Recognizing that Arizona communities are facing many common issues that must be addressed holistically and statewide, Valley Forward is undertaking efforts to help initiate Arizona Forward, a public interest coalition that will influence environmental and quality of life decisions in the state of Arizona.

Arizona Forward will bring together business, community and civic leaders from throughout Arizona to convene thoughtful public dialogue and advocacy on statewide sustainability issues.

Initially, we expect Arizona Forward to focus on the Sun Corridor, the mega-region stretching from Tucson to Phoenix that contains 80 percent of the state's population.

The Arizona Forward Coalition

As envisioned, Arizona Forward will promote cooperative efforts to improve the livability and vitality of cities and towns throughout the state, advocating a balance between economic growth and environmental quality.

Arizona Forward will support the excellent work of other local, regional and statewide organizations, foster relationships, build consensus and maximize resources toward a more sustainable future. It will not duplicate existing efforts already underway or undermine existing civic structures.

A diverse statewide membership mix will include large and small businesses and jurisdictions of government, including Arizona's largest employers and smallest, industrial and manufacturing sectors, entrepreneurial enterprises, municipalities, tribes and other government agencies, educators, nonprofit organizations and inspired citizens. While Arizona Forward's long-term organizational structure forms, the coalition will initially be administered by Valley Forward staff in partnership with leading members and supporters.

The initial goals of Arizona Forward are to:

- **Establish cooperative relationships** with like-minded Arizona conservation organizations and facilitate collaboration on sustainability initiatives;
- Bring business and civic leaders together to *convene thoughtful public dialogue* on regional issues and to *improve the environmental health and sustainability of Arizona*;
- Increase awareness of and interest in environmental issues initially in the Sun Corridor and then beyond, statewide, building on an agenda of land use and open space planning, transportation, air quality, water and energy;
- Support efforts to *promote the Sun Corridor* as an economic development area incorporating sustainability and smart growth principles; and
- Serve as a technical resource on environmental issues through Arizona Forward's and Valley Forward's diverse membership of large corporations, small businesses, municipal governments, state agencies, educational institutions and non-profit organizations.

Benefits of Engaging and Supporting Arizona Forward

The benefits to the state of Arizona will be profound. Our collective influence will make a difference to ensure smart growth and development, efficient transportation, improved air quality, responsible water management, energy alternatives and meaningful education throughout Arizona.

Arizona Forward will bring together environmental stewards who are vested in Arizona. As a committed, non-partisan public/private sector partnership, Arizona Forward's voice will help to create a healthier environment and a more vibrant economy in our state.

In addition to a founding status of an important new statewide organization, members and sponsors of Arizona Forward will receive recognition at varying levels of commitment. Participation will demonstrate leadership on a statewide scale. More importantly, members will know they have increased awareness of critical growth issues facing our region and ensured a balance between economic prosperity and environmental quality by elevating a sustainability agenda across Arizona.

ARIZONA FORWARD

CHARTER MEMBERS

Arizona Community Foundation First Solar Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold National Bank of Arizona Solon Sundt Construction The Nature Conservancy Total Transit Wells Fargo

FOUNDING MEMBERS

Adolfson & Peterson APS Arizona Heritage Alliance Arizona Investment Council Arizona State University, Global Institute of Sustainability Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona Fennemore Craig Gabor Lorant Architects Gammage & Burnham Godec Randall & Associates Jones Studio Intellectual Energy, LLC RSP Architects SRP University of Phoenix

For membership information or to join Arizona Forward call Diane Brossart (602) 240-2408 or email dbrossart@arizonaforward.org



Arizona Forward

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