



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Arizonans Support State Parks Heritage Fund

Arizona Heritage Alliance Lists Shovel-Ready Projects to Benefit Communities

YUMA, AZ – Russ Jones, former state representative from Yuma and current board president of the Arizona Heritage Alliance, a long-time advocacy organization for the Arizona Heritage Fund, urges state legislators to appropriate monies to the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund this year after restoring the Fund in 2019.

Stated Jones, “It’s well time that after 11 years, the Arizona Legislature comes together to restore funding for the State Parks Heritage Fund to maintain and upgrade the growing number of parks, trails, and historic preservation projects that have languished for years or are newly-proposed in numerous municipalities, counties, and tribal areas in our state.”

“SHOVEL-READY” PROJECTS PROPOSED BY COMMUNITY LEADERS

At the request of State Representative Joanne Osborne of Goodyear and State Senator T.J. Shope of Coolidge, prime sponsors of [House Bill 2127](#) and [Senate Bill 1384](#) respectively, the Alliance contacted government, business, and community leaders across Arizona inquiring what projects would benefit from an investment of State Parks Heritage Fund support, combined with local matching dollars. Among the “shovel-ready” projects and estimated costs received to date include:

- **District 1:** Willow Creek Park, Prescott (\$50,000); Black Canyon Heritage Park (\$20,000); Black Canyon National Recreational Trail (\$22,000)
- **District 4:** Goodyear Parks Playground Equipment (\$480,000)
- **District 5:** Beale Theater, Kingman (\$150,000); White Cliffs Trail (\$72,000); Town of Parker Historic Jail Restoration (\$120,000)
- **District 11:** Gladden Farms Park Soccer Fields Project, Marana (\$2.3 million)
- **District 12:** Gilbert Historical Museum Historic Building Renovations (\$200,000); Parks and Trails Signage, Gilbert (\$100,000)
- **District 13:** Gentry Park Improvements, El Mirage (\$230,000)
- **District 14:** 1908 Old Vail Store and Post Office (\$450,000); Safford Theater (\$150,000); Grand Theater, Douglas (\$100,000)
- **District 15:** Town of Cave Creek Trail System (\$244,000); North Mountain Park Improvements (\$2 million)
- **District 16:** Palo Verde Park Playground ADA Access Improvements, Mesa (\$312,591); Federal Building Renovation, Mesa (\$497,289)
- **District 20:** Sahuaro Ranch Park Improvements (\$9,300)
- **District 22:** Mountain Trail Improvements at Sunrise and Westwing Mountains (\$471,300); New River Trail from Happy Valley Road to Jomax (\$1.4 million); Skunk Creek Multi-Use Path (\$2 million)
- **District 23:** Four Peaks Park Upgrades (\$1 million); Scottsdale Parks Citywide (\$3.5 million); Fountain Lighting Replacement (\$150,000)
- **District 24:** Eldorado, Pima, Vista del Camino, and McCormick-Stillman Railroad Parks (\$5.7 million)
- **District 25:** Mesa Neon Alley (\$1.5 million)
- **District 28:** Town of Paradise Valley Gateway Entry Features (\$150,000); Paradise Valley Park (\$2 million)
- **District 30:** Sahuaro Ranch Park Improvements (\$9,300); Phoenix Parks Playground Improvements (\$500,000)

ARIZONANS SUPPORT THE HERITAGE FUND AND OUR PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS

The importance of Arizona’s local, regional, and state parks, trails, and open spaces became more evident as elected officials, businesses, and residents worked to overcome the social and economic hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Public parks and open spaces provided Arizonans the space for socially distanced recreation and respite during these challenging times. In a [recent study](#) conducted by the National Parks and

Recreation Association, three in five U.S. residents – more than 190 million people – visited a park, trail, public open space, or other recreation facility at least once during the first three months of the pandemic.

A [2020 survey](#) by Gallup and the Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA) finds widespread agreement among Arizonans on a broad range of policy objectives for the next decade, including the environment. Arizonans overwhelmingly appreciate the state's natural beauty, with 91% rating it as "excellent" or "good." A similarly high proportion (92%) say it is important for the state to "preserve and protect its rivers, natural areas, and wildlife," one of the highest levels of consensus seen in the Gallup Arizona survey.

[New polling](#) commissioned by the State Innovation Exchange (SiX) shows Arizona voters are concerned about the impact of COVID-19. **Seven in ten Arizonans want funding restored for the Arizona State Heritage Fund** and express agreement (84% agree) that access to parks is vital to health during the pandemic.

BACKGROUND

The State Parks Heritage Fund was restored in the 2019 legislative session via [Senate Bill 1241](#), sponsored by then Senator Kate Brophy McGee of Phoenix, but without dedicated funding until 2029 when Arizona Lottery funds would be utilized. This session, Senator T.J. Shope and Representative Joanne Osborne introduced bills to restore funding that gained strong bipartisan support in both chambers.

Through a matching grant process to be developed by the Arizona State Parks Board in consultation with staff of Arizona State Parks & Trails and the State Historic Preservation Office, the monies in the State Parks Heritage Fund would be allocated as follows:

- 50% on local, regional, and state parks for outdoor recreation and open space development, restoration, or renovation,
- 30% on local, regional, and state historic preservation projects,
- 10% on local, regional, and state non-motorized trails, and
- 10% on outdoor and environmental education

ABOUT THE ARIZONA HERITAGE ALLIANCE

If you hike, boat, ride, hunt, fish, watch wildlife, visit a park, or tour historic sites, then Arizona's Heritage Fund affects your life. The Arizona Heritage Alliance is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created in 1992 to protect Arizona's Heritage Fund and its objectives. The Alliance is guided by a Board of Directors drawn from a broad base of outdoor sports, environmental conservation, and historic preservation groups that helped pass the 1990 statewide voter initiative creating the Heritage Fund.

The Alliance's mission is to preserve and enhance Arizona's historic, cultural, and natural heritage. It accomplishes its mission by actively:

- Protecting the integrity and voter intent of the Arizona Game and Fish Heritage Fund and working to restore funding for the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund,
- Monitoring state legislative and agency activity,
- Pursuing sustainable and dedicated funding sources for Arizona's historic, cultural and natural initiatives, programs, and activities, and
- Educating people of Arizona about the benefits of Arizona's wildlife, open space, parks, and historic and cultural resources

For more information, visit the Alliance's [website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

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