



Arizona State Trust Lands Conservation Profile:

State Trust Land in Yavapai County

TREASURED PLACES

Sonoran Institute, in collaboration with conservation groups across Arizona and with funding from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, has assembled state trust lands suitable for conservation into a single database. The resulting profiles focus on conservation values. Political values are left for another day.

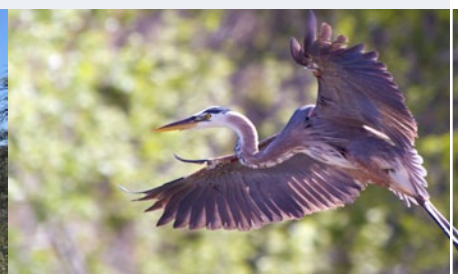
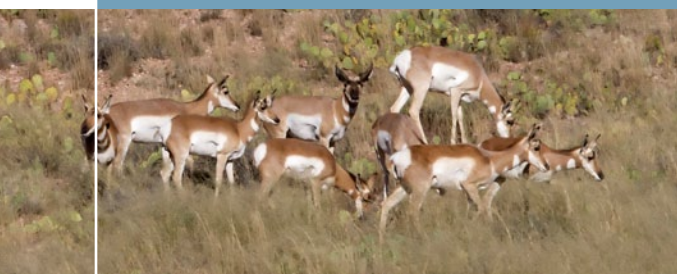


Shaping the Future of the West

Yavapai County counts itself extremely lucky in the nature department. This area is blessed with a rich and diverse topography that includes outstanding natural, cultural, and recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of present and future generations. There are four distinct areas held in trust by the state that are dispersed throughout the county and are consistently recognized as areas that are worthy of conservation.

Residents in Yavapai County are fiercely independent and strong in their opinions that certain land should be conserved for the long term. They deem the following four areas as special places worthy of permanent conservation: Badger Peak, Burro Creek, Glassford Hill and the Middle Verde. These areas currently sit under the management and care of the Arizona State Land Department.

In 1999, Yavapai County was the fastest growing rural county in the United States. Its population, listed as 132,000 in 2000, is expected to more than double over the next 50 years. Of concern is the continued depletion of aquifers through groundwater pumping to support this growth. It threatens the flow of numerous springs, and consequently the flow of the Verde River as well as the remote nature of Burro Creek in far west portion of the county.

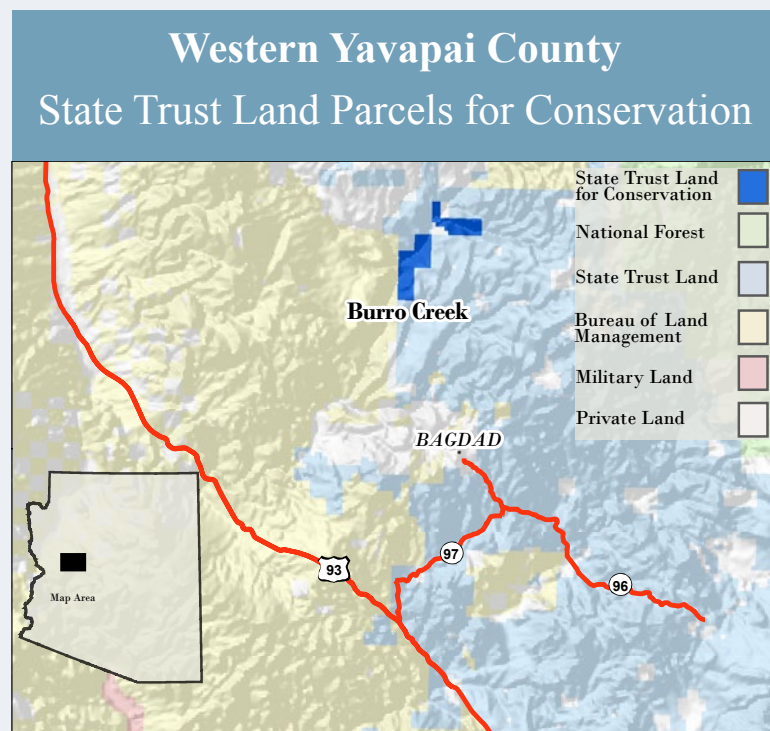
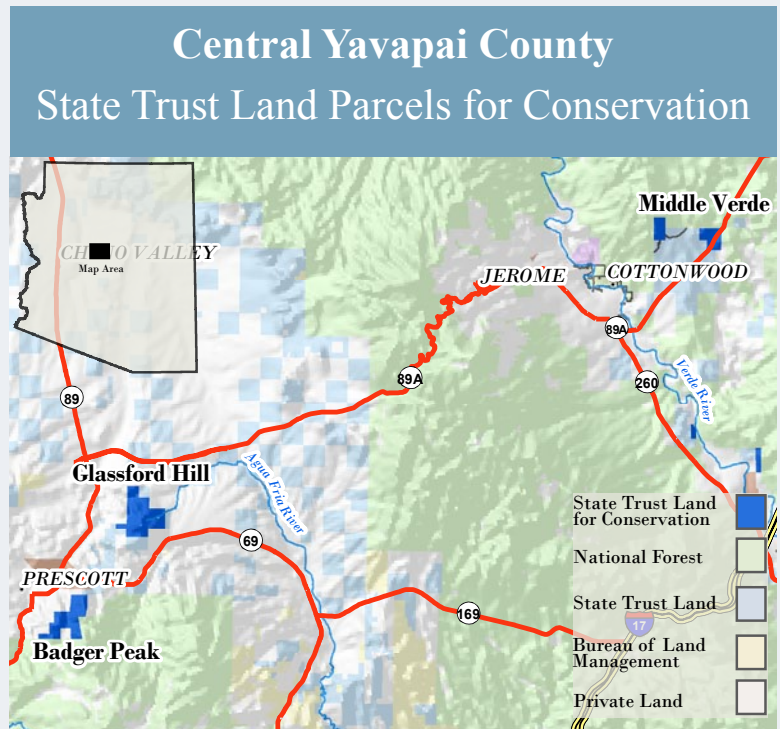


REASON FOR CONSERVATION

Yavapai County

The 5,059 acres of the Burro Creek area are very remote; the closest town, Bagdad, only has a population of 1,876. The Burro Creek area is special due to the wildlife that lives there.

The 4,400 acres of state trust land closer to population centers are near Badger Peak, Glassford Hill, and noncontiguous parcels known as the Middle Verde. Here, too, the abundant flora and fauna are under the ongoing pressure of urban edge development and would also benefit from conservation.





Since the late 1800's, civilization has affected the county's various ecosystems. The introduction of non-native aquatic and vegetative species, timber harvest, grazing, fire suppression, mining, agriculture, development, groundwater pumping, and surface diversions have significantly impacted the river and consequently the land near and around the Verde River. Agricultural irrigation, domestic, municipal, and industrial water uses for the Verde Valley and the county currently place heavy demands upon the various natural resources. Conservation of 9,459 acres of state trust land throughout the county would provide a substantial buffer to minimize these demands and protect the crucial water source.

Moreover, the areas near Cottonwood, Clarkdale and Sedona have beautiful riparian habitat and native fish diversity. Tavaschi Marsh has been designated as an Important Bird Area by the Audubon Society and the National Park Service manages several national monuments within the watershed, including the pre-historic Tuzigoot and Montezuma Castle sites. Each deserves the protection of surrounding land and their watershed so future generations can enjoy the beauty, history, and culture of Yavapai County.



ARIZONA STATE TRUST LAND

In 1912, the federal government gave 10.5 million acres of state trust lands to the new state of Arizona. These lands are not owned by the state, but are held in trust for the benefit of the state's school system and several other beneficiaries.

Proceeds from the sale or lease of these lands generated about \$50 million for the beneficiaries in 2010. The Arizona State Land Department, in its role as trustee for the beneficiaries, is constitutionally obligated to seek maximum financial return for trust lands.

This requirement has complicated efforts to preserve state trust land for recreational use and environmental protection. The state cannot simply turn a parcel of trust land into a park or nature preserve since it is required to receive full market value for the land. All state trust land is subject to sale or lease to the highest bidder. Preservation of trust land requires sustained community input coupled with legislative action.



STATE TRUST LAND CONSERVATION

Collaborating Partners

The Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust seeks to help people in need, especially women, children and families; to protect animals and nature; and to enrich community life in the metropolitan areas of Indianapolis and Phoenix.

The Sonoran Institute inspires and enables community decisions and public policies that respect the land and people of western North America. Facing rapid change, communities in the West value their natural and cultural resources, which support resilient environmental and economic systems. Founded in 1990, the Sonoran Institute helps communities conserve and restore those resources and manage growth and change through collaboration, civil dialogue, sound information, practical solutions and big-picture thinking. The Sonoran Institute is a nonprofit organization with offices in Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona; Bozeman, Montana; Glenwood Springs, Colorado; Sheridan, Wyoming; Twentynine Palms, California; and Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico.



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