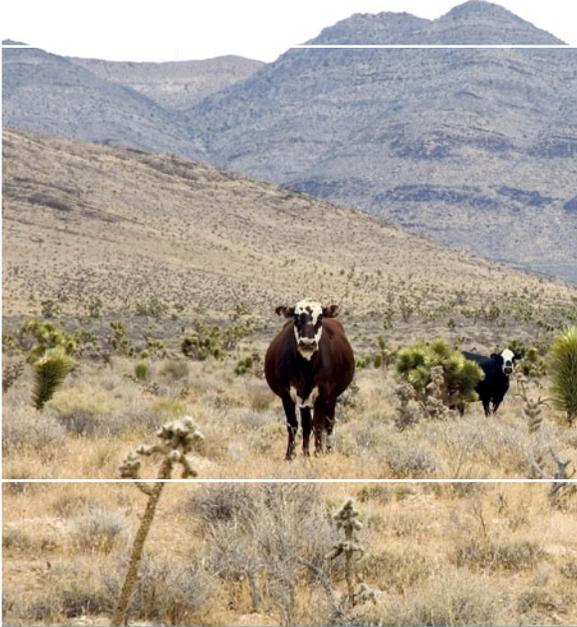


# Arizona State Trust Lands Conservation Profile: State Trust Land Working Landscapes



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

## PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

Working farms and ranches are an integral part of Arizona history, but are rarely viewed as possible sites for permanent preservation of state trust land. Their role in resource stewardship is often overlooked, yet should be considered in any meaningful discussions about potential state trust land lands for conservation. There is little doubt that farmers and ranchers find it increasingly difficult to make a living off the land. As the number of farms and ranches lost to demographic, economic, and political shifts around land and water use, food production, and recreation escalate, Arizona loses vital pieces of its natural and cultural heritage. It is imperative to collaborate with farmers and ranchers to creatively integrate traditional goals for working lands with conservation goals for healthy landscapes throughout our state.

State trust lands currently being leased as working farms and ranches provide a viable methodology for conservation. This concept is rooted in sound principles. These lands increase economic and ecological resilience; enhancing capacity to readily recover from stress or change. They foster a culture of stewardship among working landowners throughout Arizona. They empower the political voice of working landowner communities. Local, state and regional policy can substantially influence the capacity of individuals and communities to make a living off the land and to adopt stewardship practices.

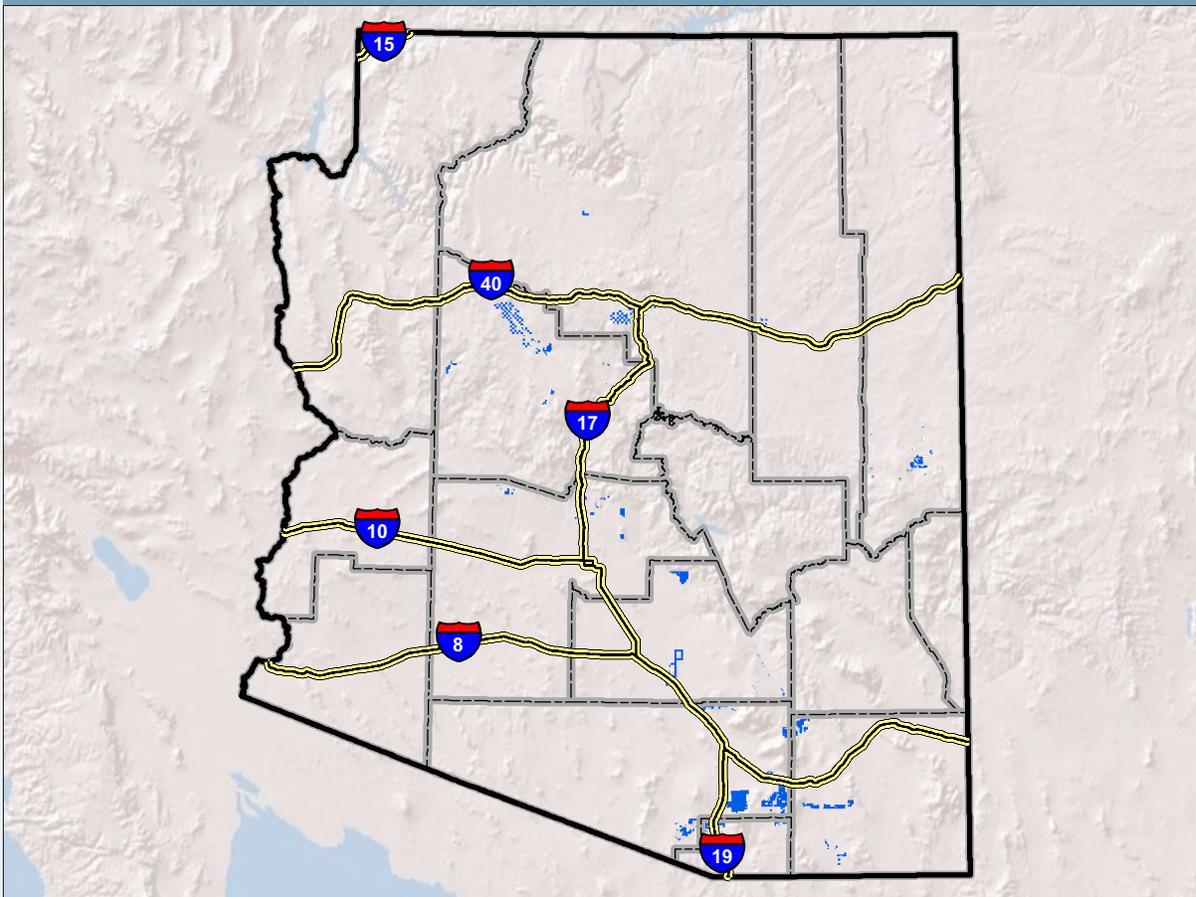


## REASON FOR CONSERVATION

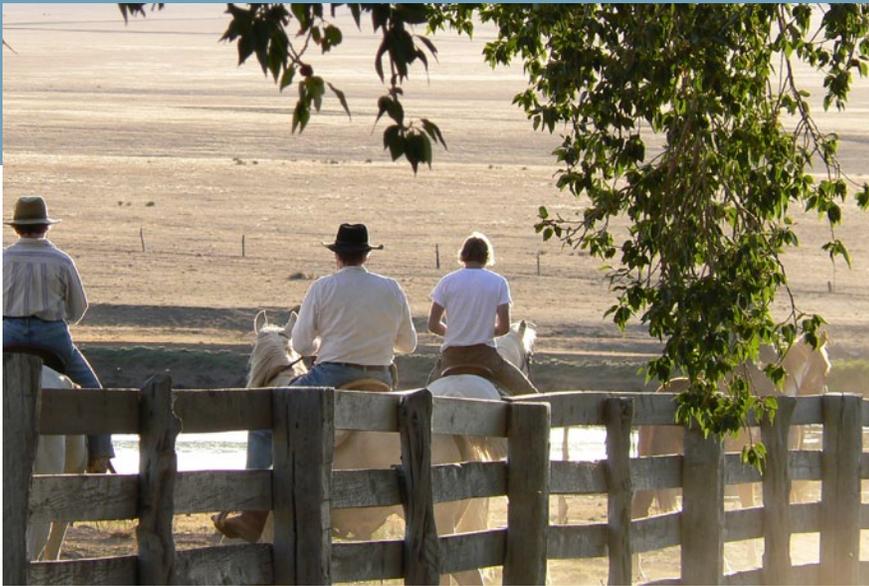
### Working Landscapes on State Trust Land

Recognition of the interconnection between human economies and natural systems will enable Arizonans to commit to a standard of resilience in both areas to accomplish effective and enduring conservation. The stewards of these lands honor the cultural, historic, and natural heritage of working landscapes by encouraging responsible land-use practices and by working to sustain the vital connection between land and people that contribute to the distinctive character.

#### Arizona State Trust Land



Parcels of working landscapes on state trust land across Arizona are too numerous and on too small a scale to depict on a map this size. The map above shows all state trust lands recommended for conservation in Arizona.



Ranchers and farmers are truly stewards, actively practicing the integration of people and nature, which highlights the fundamental role that humans play in natural systems –as agents of change and as consumers of natural resources. These special stewards nurture the connections between people and wildlife, community and land, culture and nature. They are innovative in their business practices and illustrate the capacity for working lands to be financially viable while simultaneously conserving the natural, human, and wild aspects of whole landscapes. With nine million acres of land to manage, the Arizona State Land Department lacks the resources to manage these vital resources.

The role of traditional private working lands in natural resource management is frequently overlooked. There is a need to acknowledge that ranch and farmlands are an important component of the ecological landscape, valuable to wild and human communities alike. Farmers and ranchers hold generations of knowledge about their lands and the environment, and exemplify cultural values that are a substantial resource for conservation.



## 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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