

Arizona State Trust Lands Conservation Profile: State Trust Lands and Archeology



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.

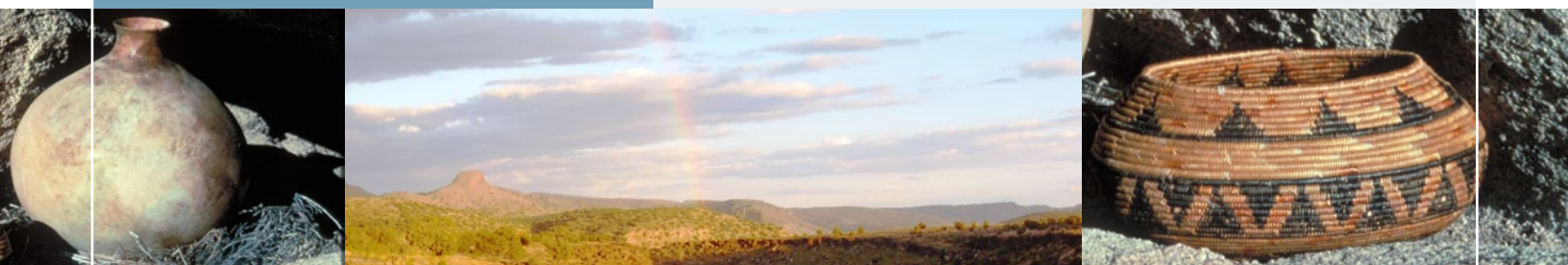


Shaping the Future of the West

ARIZONA'S HERITAGE

It should come as no surprise that significant archeological sites exist on state trust lands in Arizona. An estimated 10,000 archaeological sites and historic structures have been documented, including well known examples such as the platform mound and ballcourt at Adamsville and the extensive petroglyph assemblages around the Picacho Mountains. Countless others are little known except to archaeologists, outdoor enthusiasts, and unfortunately looters and vandals. With 9.2 million acres of land to manage, the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) lacks the resources to protect these windows into Arizona's past.

The importance of the archaeological records on state trust lands cannot be overstated. Evidence of human habitation from 12,000 years ago to the modern day, can be found throughout the state. Because much of the land is remote and has remained as open space, many areas provide a complete record of Native American settlements, including pre-European contact. Villages, hamlets, field houses, agricultural terraces, prehistoric trails, and rock art assemblages are often be found in one setting, which suggests a relatively intact archaeological record of a cultural landscape.



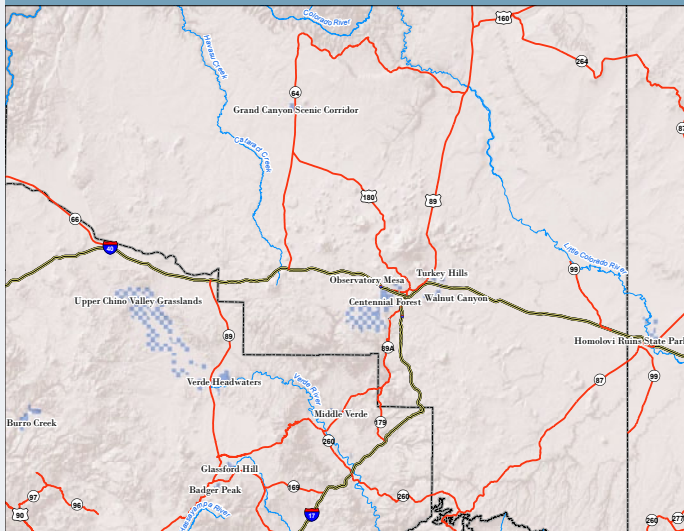
“Our natural and cultural heritage remains one of Arizona’s most valued assets. The best use of select state trust land is conservation in perpetuity. The case is solid, the time to act is now, our children and our children’s children demand it.”
– Andy Laurenzi, *Archeology Southwest*

LOCATION

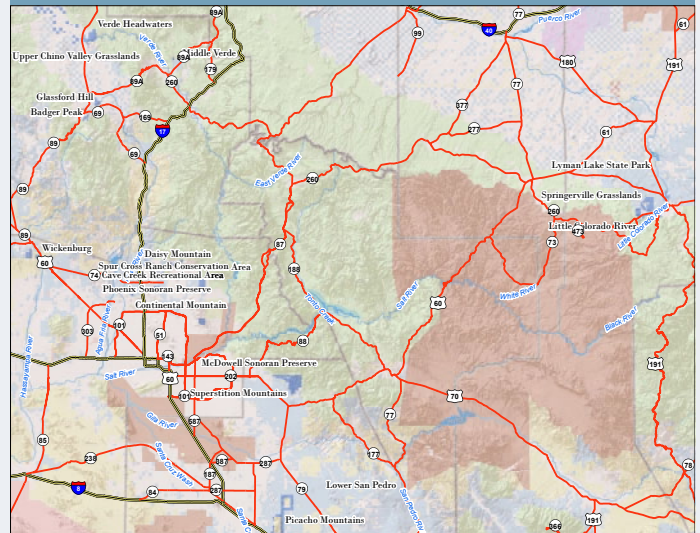
Archeological Sites on State Trust Land

The sensitivity of the locations of archeological sites on state trust land prevents disclosure of exact locations. Many sites have ancestral ties to modern day Native American tribes in Arizona; sites that retain cultural importance to Arizona tribes today. The maps on this page show all state trust land proposed for conservation.

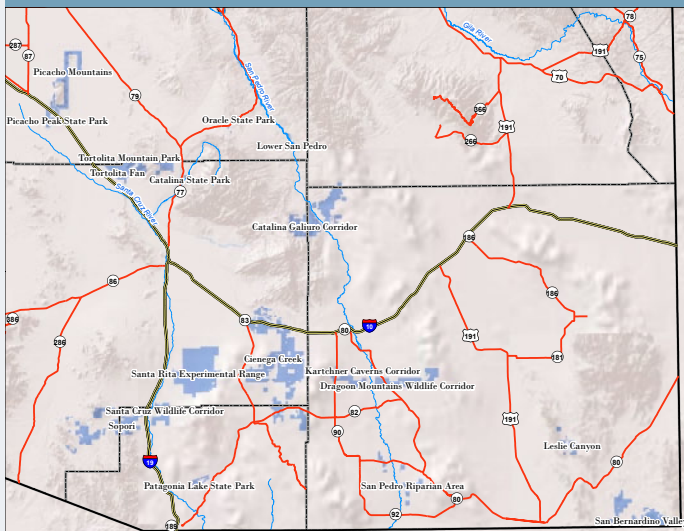
Northern Arizona State Trust Land Parcels for Conservation



Central Arizona State Trust Land Parcels for Conservation



Southern Arizona State Trust Land Parcels for Conservation





REASON FOR CONSERVATION

Archeological Sites on State Trust Land

The decision to protect our cultural resources is complicated. Local communities, state and federal agencies, tribal entities, and other stakeholders have to come together to develop a plan and vision for protecting these assets. Organizations such as Archaeology Southwest work to “develop a comprehensive vision for how to identify, describe, evaluate, locate and protect the places of our past.”

Many of these places are located on state trust land. From the Grand Canyon to Las Cienegas and from Yuma to Springerville, these cultural assets must be preserved through evaluation of objective criteria. The State Historic Preservation Act requires that any action on state trust land evaluate impacts to cultural resources and to avoid, minimize or mitigate these impacts. However, this preservation law allows for the destruction of sites provided that proper documentation is in order. Long-term preservation is best accomplished by avoiding development on sensitive lands, yet the fiduciary responsibility of the trust thwarts any decision by the ASLD to not develop a piece of land due to the proximity or location of cultural assets. Long overdue reform of the trust rules must acknowledge the value of these assets to the people of Arizona.



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

Archaeology Southwest is a private nonprofit organization that explores and protects the places of our past across the American Southwest and Mexican Northwest. We have developed an integrated, conservation-based approach known as Preservation Archaeology.

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.

“...identify the highest-priority places to protect, as well as strategies to protect them. The result is something special: a vision for how to successfully protect our cultural heritage on the land for future generations.”
- *Archeology Southwest*



NINA MASON PULLIAM
CHARITABLE TRUST

Building a Legacy of Community
Grantmaking since 1998



Archaeology Southwest

Exploring and protecting the places of our past

CONTACT:

Dave Richins, Director
Sun Corridor Legacy Program
11010 N. Tatum Blvd, Ste D101
Phoenix, AZ 85028
(602) 393-4310 x 309
drichins@sonoraninstitute.org



Shaping the Future of the West