



# Arizona State Trust Lands Conservation Profile: State Trust Lands and Military Bases

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

## AN ECONOMIC ENGINE

The 2008 report, *Economic Impact of Arizona's Principal Military Operations* prepared by The Maguire Company and E.S.I. Corporation, states that military related employment in Arizona provides 96,000 jobs and a total economic impact of over \$9 billion dollars. Luke Air Force Base has been selected as the training site for America's next generation fighter jet, the F-35. Close proximity to the Barry M. Goldwater Training Range keeps bases in Tucson, Phoenix, and Yuma at the forefront of the United States Air Force training program. However, development encroaches upon these bases. State trust land adjacent to these bases presents a problem: how can state trust land be developed for maximum return to the trust with fighter jets screaming over head?

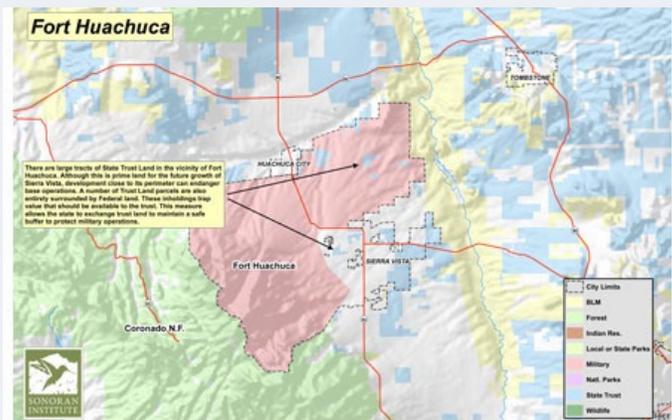
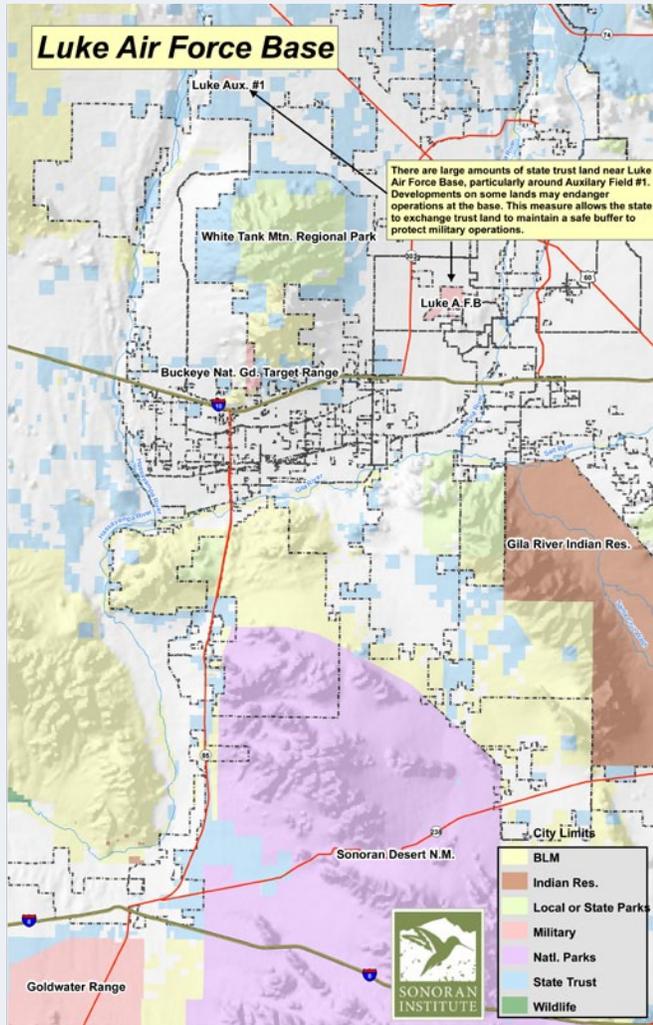
Protection of the training mission of Arizona's military bases has been a top priority at all levels of government. In 2012, Arizona voters passed Proposition 119, which authorizes exchanges of state trust land for land owned by the federal government in order to preserve military base mission compatibility, avoid encroachment issues, and create the opportunity for better management of state and federal lands across Arizona. This new tool will allow the state land department and the Department of Defense to work together to preserve the mission compatibility of military bases and maintain all training routes and ranges.



# LOCATION

## State Trust Land near Military Bases

Maps on this page show state trust land near Arizona military bases and training facilities.





## 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.

## REASON FOR CONSERVATION

### State Trust Land near Military Bases

It is critical that the military have adequate clear fly zones and unrestricted access to testing and training grounds. Several pieces of legislation have been previously introduced to solve the issue of base encroachment by development; all were unsuccessful. The military is an economic engine that must be protected and using lands adjacent to bases as a buffer is the best method to do so. It is imperative to ensure that nearby off-base areas are compatible with ongoing military activities.

The maps illustrate the scale of this problem. For example, state trust land at the end of the runway at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base could be traded for federal land elsewhere in the state, thus preventing encroachment while increasing conserved land. Under current regulations, the ASLD cannot determine the best use for the land prior to selling it at auction.

Is the land best for development, a public use such as a state park, or other conservation designation? Without the option to trade the land, the state is stuck with land within or near federal military installations and training areas that can provide little to no value to the beneficiaries of the trust: Arizona's school children.





# 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.

“Reforming state trust land rules is one of the most important things we can do to support military operations and avoiding potential base closures. It will protect jobs and economic activity in Arizona.”

- *Dave Richins - Sonoran Institute*



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