

# Arizona State Trust Lands Conservation Profile: Centennial Forest/Fort Tuthill

## NATURE AS A LABORATORY

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

Northern Arizona University's (NAU) Centennial Forest serves as the University's research, teaching, and demonstration forest, a cooperative venture between NAU and the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). In 1959, the ASLD designated 4,000 acres of forest land as an "outdoor laboratory" for the School of Forestry at Arizona State College in Flagstaff (now NAU). The research and education programs initiated by the designation helped establish the school as one of the top rated forestry institutions in the country. In 2000, an additional 42,000 acres were included for management for research and education. While it is managed by the School of Forestry, it is an asset for the entire University and northern Arizona.

Jim Allen, Executive Director, School of Forestry at NAU says that Centennial Forest supports a variety of educational programs for K-12 and NAU students. The goal is to foster the love of nature in kids and get them out in the woods to demonstrate the wonders of the forest. The successful and long standing environmental summer education camp in Centennial Forest is part of NAU's and Flagstaff's combined identity.

*"Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better. "*

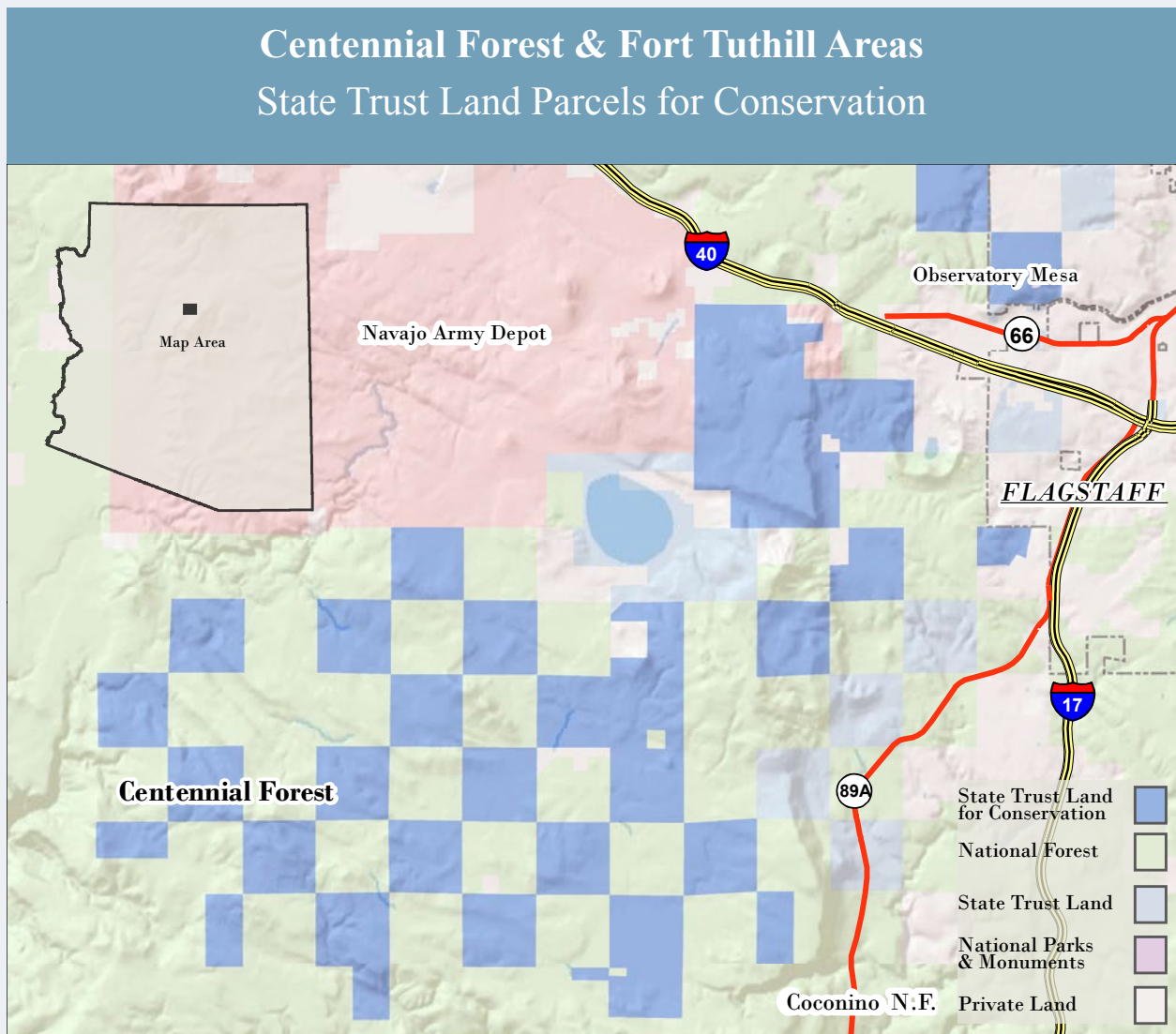
~ Albert Einstein

## LOCATION

### Centennial Forest/Fort Tuthill

Currently, the NAU Centennial Forest consists of approximately 47,000 acres of forest, woodland, and rangeland, located a short distance from Flagstaff. The Centennial Forest sits atop the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau.

Centennial Forest is not a contiguous piece of land but randomly spread parcels throughout northeastern Arizona. The largest parcel is approximately 20,000 acres adjacent to and west of Wupatki National Monument, which lies north and east of Flagstaff. The other 20,000 acres are parcels checker boarded southwest of the City.







## REASON FOR CONSERVATION

### Centennial Forest/Fort Tuthill

Several million years ago lava began to flow over this sedimentary plateau in the vicinity of Williams, Arizona. The zone of active volcanism slowly migrated northeastward to the area around Sunset Crater which erupted during the 11th century. One of the newest and most striking volcanic features on the Centennial Forest is SP Crater which erupted a little over 70,000 years ago and is considered a toddler in crater chronology. If you did not know better, you might think you were on the moon. Although the cinder cone is only about 800 feet from base to top, it is steep and scree-covered, making ascent a bit arduous. The sharp a'a (ah ah) lava flows associated with this cinder cone have been used by NASA to test the robustness of space suits.

The historic Fort Tuthill County Park is nestled in cool Ponderosa pines, three miles south of Flagstaff. The 413-acre regional park is the home of the annual Coconino County Fair, held Labor Day weekend, and the award winning Amphitheater, used extensively throughout the summer. Additionally, the park features a Military Museum, campground, picnic areas, tennis courts and scenic trails all within the Centennial Forest boundaries. In the summer Fort Tuthill is bustling with a variety of special events, camping, and picnicking.



## 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 Grand Canyon Trust has a long history of helping to protect state lands in northern Arizona through collaborative planning efforts and open space initiatives.

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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