



ARIZONA STATE PARKS HERITAGE FUND: YES ON HB2551 & SB1350

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For many of us, our most treasured childhood memories are romping in a neighborhood park or taking a hike in Arizona's wide-open spaces. Almost every community in our state, regardless of size, has a place where parents and their children picnic; throw, kick, hit, and dunk a ball; or stare in wonderment at Arizona's unique flora and fauna. These special places provide wholesome outdoor recreation.

Historic downtowns and neighborhoods, where Arizonans of a previous era grew up, went to school, and conducted business, have been stabilized and restored to their original beauty enabling natives and newcomers to continue to live near their jobs, schools, and local services. Their restoration helps us better understand and appreciate the architecture and craftsmanship of a particular era. Their reuse makes economic sense.

Unfortunately, urban sprawl and destructive fires have impacted our open spaces, and historic buildings and cultural sites have faced possible destruction as time, the elements, or neglect have taken their toll.

Fortunately, Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund grants, from the time citizens voted overwhelmingly for this unique initiative in 1990 to the Great Recession, provided key funding through a competitive, matching grant process, for communities, tribes, and agencies to enhance and create parks and trails, and restore, repair, and reuse historic properties. Funding the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund will again make significant, positive impacts, especially in our rural communities where those matching grants helped towns find ways to fund critical tourism-related economic development projects such as painting San Xavier Del Bac and renovating main streets in Cottonwood, Prescott, Winslow, and Tombstone. Hundreds of trails in the Phoenix Mountain Park systems, the Arizona Trail, the Great Western Trail, and Black Canyon Trail also received grants for maintenance in years past.

The abundance and beauty of life abound in Arizona's parks, trails, and historic places. This is Arizona's heritage. Please appropriate the necessary funds to restore the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund.

Sincerely,

GRADY GAMMAGE JR.

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Past Member, Governor's Sustainable State Parks Task Force

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Board President
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BACKGROUND



ARIZONA STATE PARKS HERITAGE FUND

The Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund was created in 1990 as a ballot initiative, Proposition 200, which passed with 62% of the vote. **The law directed \$10 million annually from state lottery revenues** – revenues remaining after paying out prizes and covering administrative costs – to the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund to be used for local, regional, and state parks; trails and open spaces; and cultural heritage sites.

The text of the statute specified that these funds were to be spent only by the State Parks Board and were not to revert to the general fund under any circumstances. (Proposition 200 also created a separate Arizona Game & Fish Heritage Fund, with its own \$10 million annually from state lottery revenues. The Game & Fish Heritage Fund uses its money to protect and manage habitat for Arizona’s wildlife.)

Since the creation of the State Parks Heritage Fund, over \$89 million in grants has been reinvested in parks, trails, open spaces, and cultural sites in communities across Arizona. With local matching funds added in \$223 million has been invested in projects statewide.

64% of Arizonans consider themselves to be outdoor recreation enthusiasts. 84% believe the outdoor recreation economy is important to Arizona’s future

(Colorado College’s 2019 Conservation in the West Poll)



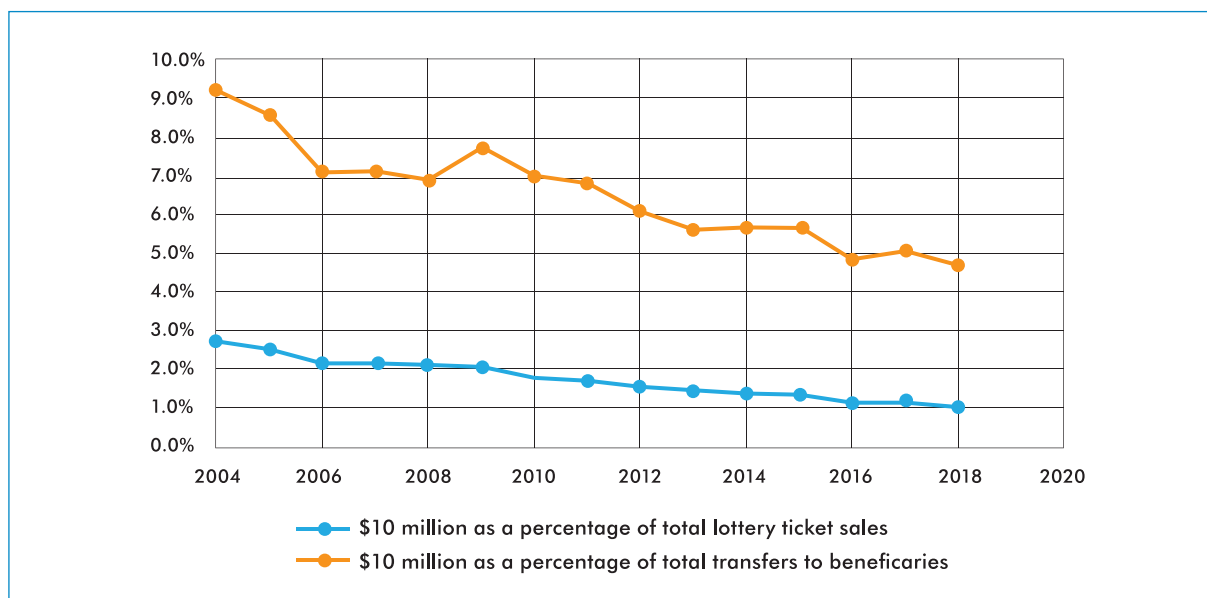
FUNDING CHALLENGES

Unfortunately, the ballot initiative that created the State Parks Heritage Fund was passed before the Arizona Voter Protection Act was passed, as an initiated constitutional amendment, Proposition 105, in 1998. The Voter Protection Act makes it more difficult for the state legislature to amend or repeal legislation that was passed as a ballot initiative. Since the Voter Protection Act only applies to initiatives passed at or after the November 1998 general election, initiatives passed earlier, including the State Parks Heritage Fund, remain vulnerable to easier amendment by the legislature.

This is exactly what happened in 2010, when the state legislature passed, and Governor Jan Brewer signed into law, HB 2012 to help address budget shortfalls due in part to the Great Recession. HB 2012 repealed the State Parks Heritage Fund and directed that any money remaining in the fund revert to the general fund, directly contradicting the language of the original ballot initiative.

Starting in 2010, the \$10 million annually that should have gone into the State Parks Heritage Fund was redirected to other priorities. **Over the ten years since the State Parks Heritage Fund was swept by the legislature, the Fund has missed out on \$100 million that should have been used for parks, trails, and cultural sites in accordance with the wishes of the voters.** (The Game & Fish Heritage Fund was not impacted by this legislative action and continues to receive \$10 million annually for wildlife habitat protection and management.)

Meanwhile, **state lottery revenues continue to grow, and the \$10 million dedication to the State Parks Heritage Fund is an ever-decreasing percentage of the lottery revenues that are transferred to beneficiaries.** In 2004, \$10 million was 2.7% of lottery ticket sales, and 9.3% of transfers to beneficiaries. In 2018, had \$10 million been transferred to the State Parks Heritage Fund, it would have been only 1% of lottery ticket sales, and 4.7% of transfers to beneficiaries.





LEGISLATIVE SESSION ACTION AND NEXT STEPS

In the 2019 legislative session, SB 1241 was passed by the state legislature and signed into law by Governor Doug Ducey. SB 1241 restored the State Parks Heritage Fund, but with two important differences. **First, while the law restored the State Parks Heritage Fund, it did not restore the annual deposit of \$10 million from state lottery revenues. Second, SB 1241 specified that money in the State Parks Heritage Fund may not be used for acquisitions, a change from the ballot initiative that was passed by voters in 1990.**

Today, money in the State Parks Heritage Fund as reestablished by SB 1241 is allocated across parks local, regional and state parks, (50%), historic preservation (30%), non-motorized trails (10%) and education (10%).

Restoring the State Parks Heritage Fund was an important first step. Now the legislature must respect the will of the voters and restore the \$10 million in annual funding that voters originally dedicated to the State Parks Heritage Fund. Vote YES on [HB2551](#) & [SB1350](#) to restore the Fund.

According to a recent statewide survey

77% of respondents believe the Arizona Legislature should permanently restore funding for the Fund during the 2020 session

For more information, please contact:

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