

# OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

## What is the Central Arizona Conservation Alliance (CAZCA)?

Comprised of more than 50 partnering organizations, CAZCA is a collaborative initiative to develop, align, and elevate efforts to conserve and enhance open space for ecological, economic, and social benefits to our region.

## What is Open Space?

Open Space is an inclusive term for a broad array of lands that create the natural and built green infrastructure on which we depend. Open Space includes lands such as national forests and monuments, wilderness areas, public parks and preserves, local and regional trail systems, waterways, agricultural lands, as well as urban green spaces.

## What are the benefits of Open Space?

More than the sum of its parts, an interconnected system of Open Space is a *working landscape* which provides extraordinary ecological, recreational, economic, health, and community benefits and services to our region. Here are just a few:



Clean Air



Clean Water



Jobs



Recreation



Sense of Place



Health & Wellness



Aesthetic Value



Hazard Mitigation



Educational Opportunities



Flora & Fauna



Photo by Osha Gray Davidson

## Why A Regional Open Space Strategy? Why now?

From 2015 to 2040, Maricopa County will grow from 4.3 million to 7.1 million people – a nearly 40% increase in population. Of the 5 million acres of undeveloped land in Maricopa County, *more than two million acres are planned for development.*

**Planning at the scale where central cities, suburbs, and rural areas can be considered together is critical to influence environmental impacts associated with development.**

Recognizing the urgency to conserve natural areas amidst rapid growth, the Central Arizona Conservation Alliance has convened a process to develop a Regional Open Space Strategy. With a foundation in *Desert Spaces* (Maricopa Association of Governments, 1995) and through integration of existing plans, CAZCA's Regional Open Space Strategy will put forward smart, comprehensive, and implementable strategies for open space conservation in Maricopa County.

# GOALS

1

## PROTECT & CONNECT

Creating a robust and resilient network of natural infrastructure.

2

## SUSTAIN & RESTORE

Using best practices and building capacity to take care of what we already have.

3

## LOVE & SUPPORT

Promoting stewardship and advocacy for Sonoran Desert conservation.

4

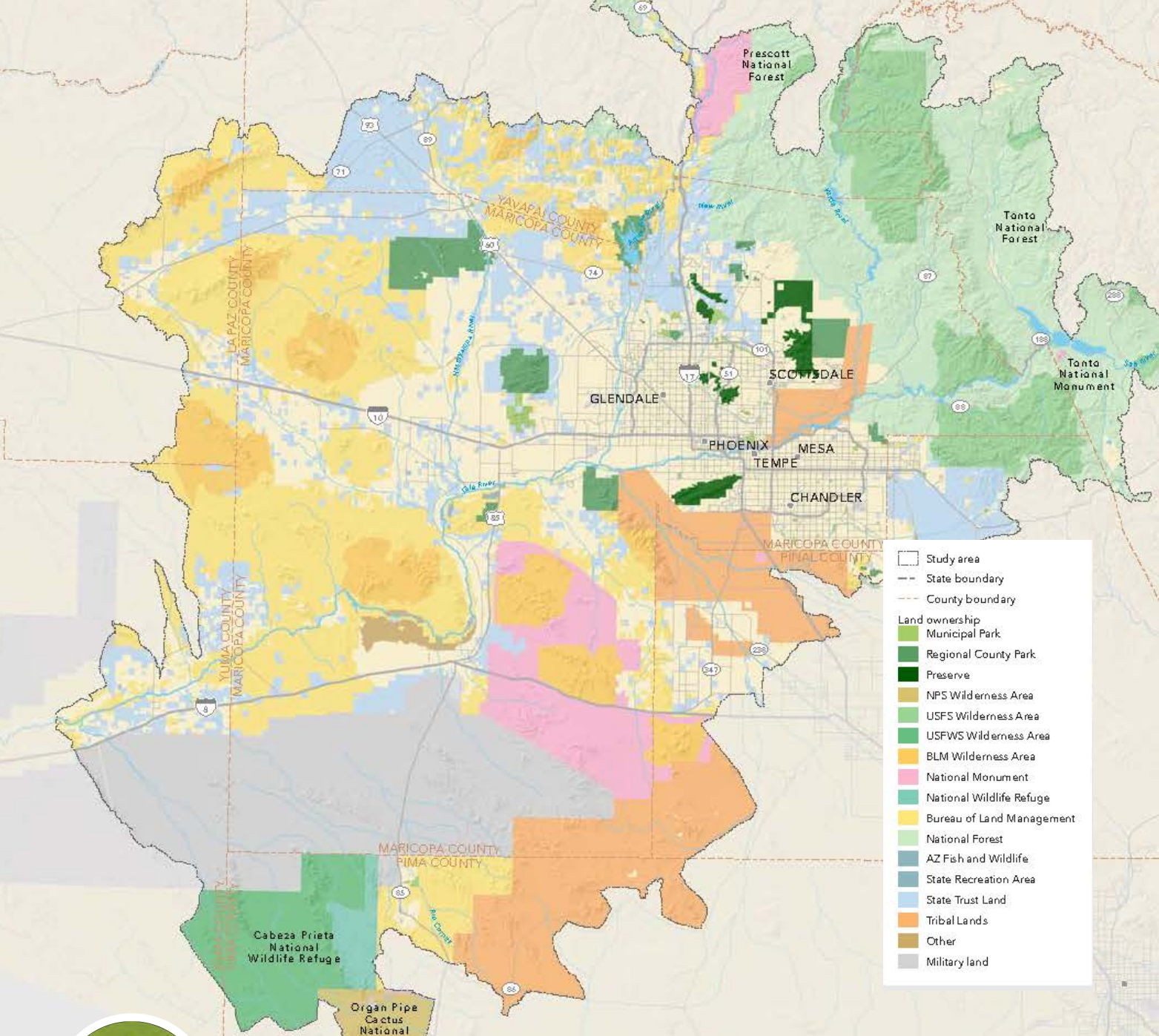
## COORDINATE & ELEVATE

Laying the foundation for sustained regional open space planning, management, and collaboration.



Places left in their native state comfort us, and not just through their aesthetic appeal, but through what they offer in the way of breathing room, habitat preservation, recreation, reflection and solitude, perhaps the most urgent pursuit of all in the urban world.

-Maria Baier, *The Arizona We Want 2.0: The Case for Action*



**#1** Arizonans rank the state's natural beauty, outdoor parks and trails as its greatest asset

The Sonoran Desert is the wettest & most biodiverse desert on earth and is home to:

**350** -----> bird species

**100+** -----> reptile species

**2,000**  2,000  
1,400  
plant species in the Sonoran Desert  
1,400 plant species in the Pacific northwest Olympic rainforest

Maricopa County has the **2** largest municipal parks in the country &

**1,000+** miles of designated trails in parks & preserves

**\$12.7 BILLION**  
in total direct spending in Maricopa County, generated by the travel and tourism industry

**93 PERCENT**  
of respondents categorized parks and open space as essential to Arizona's tourism economy

**2 MILLION +**  
acres of Maricopa County land is planned for future development

*sources provided upon request | printed on FSC® Certified paper*



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT [CAZCA.ORG](http://CAZCA.ORG) OR CONTACT:  
Aireona Raschke PhD, Conservation Alliance Program Director, Desert Botanical Garden, [araschke@dbg.org](mailto:araschke@dbg.org)  
Annia Quiroz, Conservation Alliance Engagement Coordinator, Desert Botanical Garden, [aquiroz@dbg.org](mailto:aquiroz@dbg.org)