

Ironwood Forest National Monument

A Summary of Economic Performance in the Surrounding Communities



Ironwood Forest National Monument

BACKGROUND

The 129,000 acre Ironwood Forest National Monument was designated in 2000 as a showcase of Sonoran Desert beauty, and the region takes its name from one of the longest living trees in the surrounding desert. Located in Pima County, Arizona the monument is managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

PUBLIC ACCESS AND USE OF THE MONUMENT

The national monument protects hunting, fishing, rights-of-way, and access to inholdings. Camping, hiking, mountain biking, and wildlife viewing are some of the major activities at Ironwood Forest, and each year the monument attracts thousands of visitors to this unique area.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM

Travel and tourism are important to communities in Pima County, representing about 20% of total private wage and salary employment, or 62,539 jobs, in 2015. In Arizona, the Outdoor Industry Association reports that recreation contributes more than \$10 billion annually to the state's economy.⁶

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Research shows that conserving public lands like the Ironwood Forest National Monument helps to safeguard and highlight amenities that draw new residents, tourists, and businesses to surrounding communities.¹

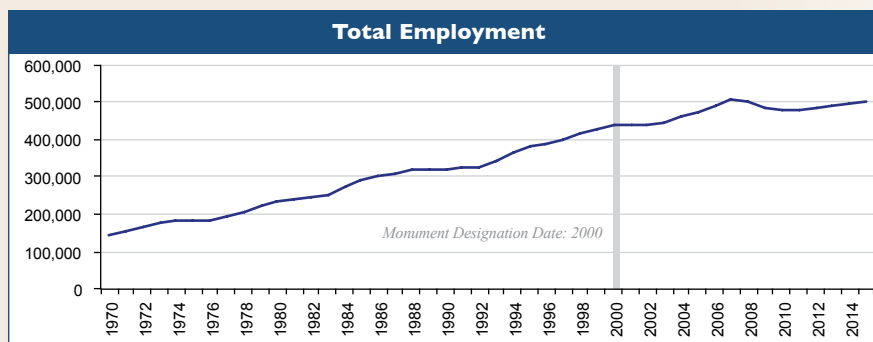
Western counties with protected public lands, like national monuments, have been more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and as a result grow more quickly, on average, than counties without protected public lands.² In addition, protected natural amenities—such as the pristine scenery found at Ironwood Forest—also help sustain property values and attract new investment.³

ECONOMY GROWS AFTER DESIGNATION

The communities in Pima County, Arizona neighboring the Ironwood Forest National Monument experienced strong growth after its designation, continuing previous growth trends.

From 2001 to 2015, in Pima County:⁴

- Population grew by 18%
- Real personal income grew by 28%
- Jobs grew by 15%
- Real per capita income grew by 9%

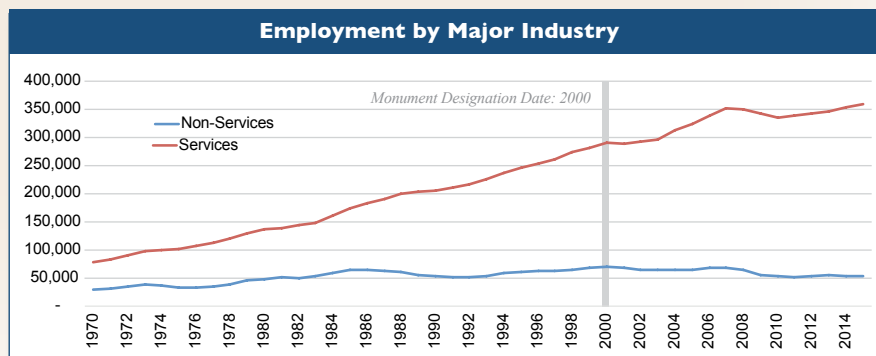


SERVICES JOBS INCREASING ACROSS THE BOARD

Services jobs—such as doctors, engineers, and teachers—account for the majority of employment growth in Pima County, Arizona in recent decades. These jobs are increasingly mobile, and many entrepreneurs locate their businesses in areas with a high quality of life.

From 2001 to 2015, in Pima County:⁵

- Services grew from 288,813 to 389,631 jobs, a 25% increase
- Non-Services shrank from 67,286 to 53,094 jobs, a 21% decrease





Ironwood Forest National Monument,
Photo: BLM

THE COMMUNITIES IN PIMA COUNTY NEIGHBORING THE NATIONAL MONUMENT EXPERIENCED STRONG GROWTH SINCE ITS DESIGNATION IN 2000.

THE INCREASES IN POPULATION, JOBS, PERSONAL INCOME, AND PER CAPITA INCOME ALSO MIRROR OTHER WESTERN COUNTIES WITH NATIONAL MONUMENTS OR OTHER PROTECTED LANDS.

METHODOLOGY

This fact sheet is part of a series that assesses the economic performance of local communities that are adjacent to national monuments. The series examines national monuments in the eleven western continental states that are larger than 10,000 acres and were created in 1982 or later.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Series: [The Economic Importance of National Monuments to Local Communities](#)

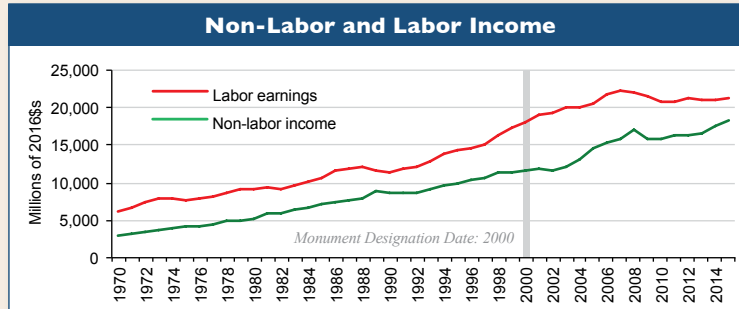
NON-LABOR INCOME GROWS FASTEST

One of the largest and fastest growing sources of new personal income in Pima County is non-labor income, which is made up of investment income such as dividends, interest and rent, and government transfer payments such as Social Security and Medicare.

For people with investment income and many retirees, protected public lands and recreation provide important aspects of a high quality of life. Non-labor income already represents more than a third of all personal income in the West—and will grow as the Baby Boomer generation retires.⁷

From 2001 to 2015, in Pima County:

- Non-Labor income grew from \$11.8 billion to \$18.2 billion, a 54% increase
- As a result, in 2015 non-labor income made up 46% of total personal income



TRADITIONAL JOBS HOLD STEADY

Long before the monument's creation, commodity industries (agriculture, mining, timber) in Pima County were small relative to the overall economy. These industries remain part of the county's economy today.

In 2015, in Pima County:

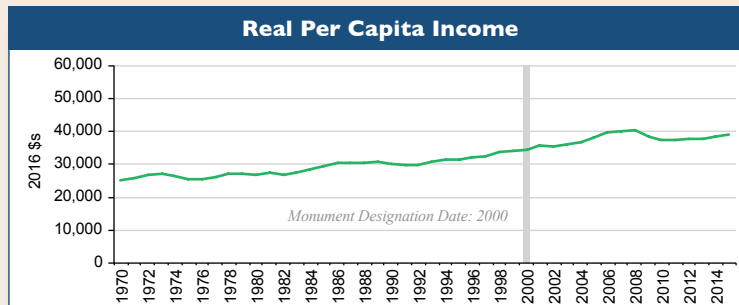
- Agriculture accounted for 0.3% of total employment
- Mining accounted for 0.8% of total private employment
- Timber accounted for 0.1% of total private employment

PROSPERITY ON THE RISE

As the economy has grown since designation of the Ironwood Forest National Monument, per capita income has risen as well. This indicates growing prosperity in the region.

From 2001 to 2015, in Pima County:

- Real per capita income grew from \$35,887 to \$39,037, a 9% increase



1 Headwaters Economics. [The Value of Public Lands](#); Lorah, P. and R. Southwick. 2003. Environmental Protection, Population Change, and Economic Development in the Rural Western United States. *Population and Environment* 24(3): 255-272; McGranahan, D.A. 1999. Natural Amenities Drive Rural Population Change. ERS, Agric. Econ. Rep. No. 781. USDA: Washington, DC; Haas, W.H. and W.J. Serow. 2002. The Baby Boom, Amenity Retirement Migration, and Retirement Communities: Will the Golden Age of Retirement Continue? *Research on Aging* 24(1): 150-164.

2 Rasker, R., P.H. Gude, and M. Delorey. 2013. The Effect of Protected Federal Lands on Economic Prosperity in the Non-Metropolitan West. *Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy* 43(2): 110-122.

3 Deller, S.C., T.H. Tsai, D.W. Macrouiller, and D.B.K. English. 2001. The Role of Amenities and Quality of Life in Rural Economic Growth. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 83(2): 352-365.

4 All economic data come from U.S. Department of Commerce. 2016. Bureau of Economic Analysis, *Regional Economic Accounts*, Washington, DC; U.S. Department of Commerce. 2017. Census Bureau, *County Business Patterns*, Washington, DC.

5 The U.S. Department of Commerce changed the way it classifies industries between 2000 and 2001. To show a continuous timeline for services and non-services employment, we subtracted non-services jobs from total private employment to derive services jobs.

6 Outdoor Industry Association. 2012. [The Outdoor Recreation Economy](#).

7 Headwaters Economics. [Non-Labor Income: Large and Growing in Importance Across the West](#); Frey, W.H. 2006. America's Regional Demographics in the '00s Decade: The Role of Seniors, Boomers, and New Minorities. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.