
Press Release: The Hopi Tribe

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Arizona State Parks Board votes to Preserve Spur Cross Ranch

Kykotsmovi, Arizona-- The Arizona State Parks Board voted to commit \$3.75 million in the next years from the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund to preserve Spur Cross Ranch. "We believe the partnership between the county legislature, Arizona State Parks and the Town of Cave Creek to protect this historically-rich landmark is a strong statement about the importance of preserving our cultural heritage," said Board President Sheri Graham.

This hilly terrain with saguaros on the upper ridges and willows and cottonwoods lining the creeks, incorporates 2,154 acres of land just north of the town of Cave Creek. The parcel is tucked neatly along the border of the Tonto National Forest. The land includes the well-known landmark called Elephant Mountain and portions of two major drainages, Cave Creek and Cottonwood Creek.

"Spur Cross Ranch will be protected as a cultural preserve, rather than a recreational State Park," said Executive Director Ken Travous. "It is significant as a historic, prehistoric and natural area so these two different sections of the Heritage Fund were recommended for funding this project. Our current appraisal came in at \$15 million and the state cannot pay more than that amount. Now, the two owners are questioning the validity of that appraisal, so we still have a way to go."

Governor Jane Hull has been an ardent supporter of protecting Spur Cross Ranch. "I look at it as an opportunity for the 44th Legislature to take a stand to preserve our cultural heritage and leave a legacy for future generations," says Hull. "This property will only be saved by a group working together to purchase, manage and protect it forever."

On April 7th, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors led by District 2 Supervisor Don Stapley, approved a resolution to support the purchase and management of Spur Cross Ranch. "We believe this partnership with State Parks is the only solution for protecting the abundant cultural and natural resources on this property," says Stapley. "We're committed to pursuing this option of joint ownership and have tentatively set \$7.5 million aside to match the state's portion."

There are four historic mine sites and a ranch house on a lower portion of the property. It also contains 98 archaeological sites that date from the pre-classic periods to the early classic periods (300-1450 AD). Archaeologists have identified 20 prehistorical agricultural sites where the area is composed of rock piles, fortified hill sites and easily seen masonry walls.

To partially fund the project, \$800,000 per year would come from the Natural Areas of the Heritage fund, which would have \$450,000 per year for three years allocated for this purchase. Maricopa county's only perennial creek runs through this property and the habitat for fish and wildlife species is excellent. The area has been biologically surveyed and found to have neotropical migratory songbirds,

raptors, amphibians, javalinas, mule deer, and coyotes.

In the 1940's, Spur Cross Ranch was operated as cattle ranch and later a dude ranch. It was purchased by the Dreiseszun family in 1958 and today, Great American Insurance owns 70% and the Dreiseszun family owns 30%. When the purchase plan is completed, a master plan will be implemented to study the land and determine how it will be offered to the public for use. For more information, please call the Arizona State Parks Department at (602) 542-1996.



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