

# 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 is important to communities in Pima County, representing about 19% of total private wage and salary employment, or 62,159 jobs, in 2008. In Arizona, the Outdoor Industry Foundation reports that recreation contributes more than \$5 billion annually to the state's economy.<sup>6</sup>

### 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.<sup>1</sup>

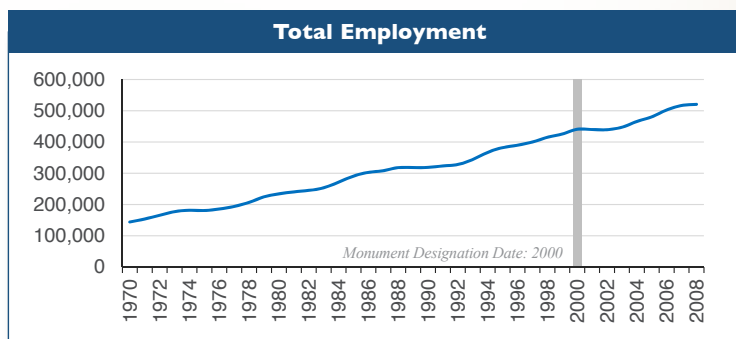
Western counties with protected public lands, like national monuments, have been more successful at attracting fast-growing economic sectors and as a result grow more quickly, on average, than counties without protected public lands.<sup>2</sup> In addition, protected natural amenities—such as the pristine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

### ECONOMY GROWS AFTER DESIGNATION

The communities in Pima County, Arizona neighboring the Ironwood Forest National Monument experienced strong growth after its designation in 2000, continuing previous growth trends.

#### From 2000 to 2008, in Pima County:<sup>4</sup>

- Population grew by 19%
- Real personal income grew by 31%
- Jobs grew by 18%
- Real per capita income grew by 10%

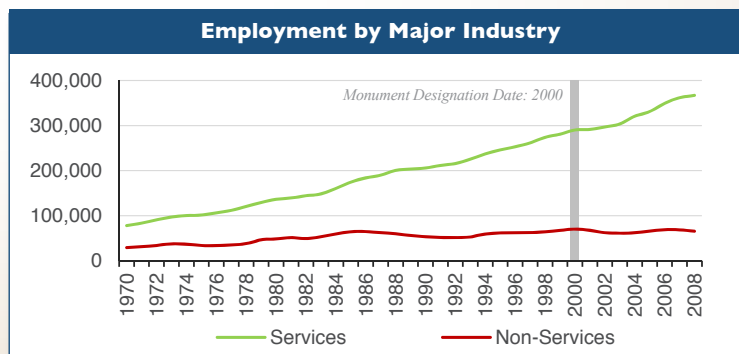


### SERVICES JOBS INCREASING ACROSS THE BOARD

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

#### From 2000 to 2008, in Pima County:<sup>5</sup>

- Services grew from 290,182 to 366,967 jobs, a 26% increase
- Non-Services shrank from 70,382 to 65,705 jobs, a 7% 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*

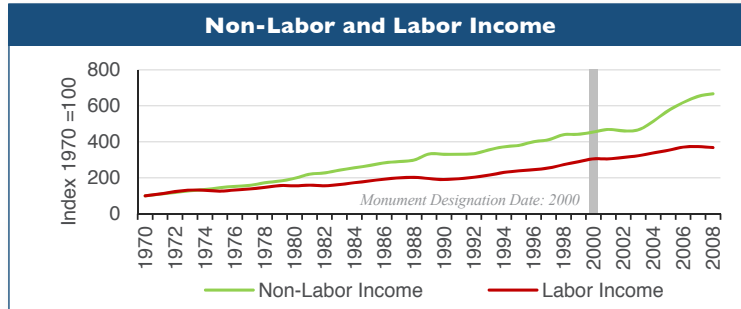
## NON-LABOR INCOME GROWS FASTEST

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.<sup>7</sup>

#### From 2000 to 2008, in Pima County:

- Non-Labor income grew from \$10.2 billion to \$14.9 billion, a 47% increase
- As a result, in 2008 non-labor income made up 43% 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 2008, in Pima County:

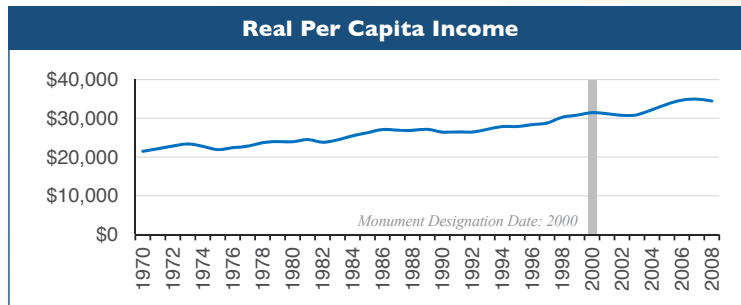
- Agriculture accounted for 0.2% of total employment
- Mining accounted for 0.7% of total private employment
- Timber accounted for 0.3% of total private employment

## 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 2000 to 2008, in Pima County:

- Real per capita income grew from \$31,461 to \$34,494, a 10% increase



<sup>1</sup> Lorah, P., R. Southwick, et al. 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. E. R. S. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Washington, D.C. Haas, W. H., W. J. Serow, et al. 2002. The Baby Boom, Amenity Retirement Migration, and Retirement Communities: Will the Golden Age of Retirement Continue? *Research on Aging* 24(1): 150-164.

<sup>2</sup> Rasker, R. 2006. An Exploration into the Economic Impact of Industrial Development Versus Conservation on Western Public Lands. *Society & Natural Resources*, 19(3): 191-207.

<sup>3</sup> Deller, S. C., T. H. Tsai, et al. 2001. The Role of Amenities and Quality of Life in Rural Economic Growth. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 83(2): 352-365.

<sup>4</sup> All economic data comes from U.S. Department of Commerce. 2010. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Department of Commerce. 2010. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns, Washington, D.C.

<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Department of Commerce changed with 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. The national recession from March-November 2001 also may account for short-term employment volatility around 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Outdoor Industry Foundation. 2006. *The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy: A \$730 Billion Annual Contribution to the U.S. Economy.*

<sup>7</sup> Frey, W.H. 2006. *America's Regional Demographics in the '00 Decade: The Role of Seniors, Boomers and New Minorities.* The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.