ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Fifty-seventh Legislature - Second Regular Session

# COMMITTEE ON RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Report of Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 5, 2026
House Hearing Room 4 -- 9:00 A.M.

RECEIVED
CHIEF CLERKS OFFICE

MAR 11 2026

**Convened** 9:05 A.M.
**Recessed**
**Reconvened**
**Adjourned** 9:52 A.M.

**Members Present**
Representative Biasiucci
Representative Blackman
Representative Peshlakai
Representative Volk
Representative Lopez, Vice-Chairman

**Members Not Present**
Representative Hernandez
Representative Martinez, Chairman

**Agenda**
Original Agenda – Attachment 1

**Request to Speak**
Report – Attachment 2

**Committee Attendance**
Report – Attachment 3

**Presentations**

| Name | Organization | Attachments (Handouts) |
|---|---|---|
| Stinknet to Skynet | Representative Kevin Volk | 4 |
| Space Defense | Prof. Vishnu Reddy Space4 Center, Office of Research and Partnership University of Arizona | 5 |

**Committee Action**

| Bill | Action | Vote | Attachments |
|---|---|---|---|

Veronica Graham, Committee Secretary
March 11, 2026

(Original attachments on file in the Office of the Chief Clerk; video archives available at http://www.azleg.gov)

**REVISED #2 - 3/04/26** **REVISED #2 - 3/04/26** **REVISED #2 - 3/04/26**

Convened 9:05
Adjourned 9:52

ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Fifty-seventh Legislature - Second Regular Session

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

## COMMITTEE ON RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

DATE Thursday, March 5, 2026 ROOM HHR 4 TIME 9:00 A.M.

Members of the public may access a livestream of the meeting here:
https://www.azleg.gov/videoplayer/?clientID=6361162879&eventID=2026031019

Members:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Representative Blackman | Representative Peshlakai | Representative Lopez, Vice-Chairman |
| Representative Hernandez C | Representative Volk | Representative Biasiucci, Chairman |
| | | ~~Representative Martinez, Chairman~~ |

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- Presentations:
  - *Space Defense: An Economic Enabler in Arizona* - Dr. Vishnu Reddy
  - *Biosphere, Southern Arizona* - Representative Kevin Volk

RA
~~02/27/2026~~
03/04/2026

**People with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations such as interpreters, alternative formats, or assistance with physical accessibility. If you require accommodations, please contact the Chief Clerk's Office at (602) 926-3032 or through Arizona Relay Service 7-1-1.**



Attachment 1

# Information Registered on the Request to Speak System

*House Rural Economic Development (3/5/2026)*



Attachment 2

# ARIZONA STATE LEGISLATURE

Fifty-seventh Legislature - Second Regular Session

# COMMITTEE ATTENDANCE RECORD

COMMITTEE ON **RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

CHAIRMAN: Leo Biasiucci VICE-CHAIRMAN: Chris Lopez

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| DATE | 03/05/26 | |
| CONVENED | 9:05 | |
| RECESSED | | |
| RECONVENED | | |
| ADJOURNED | 9:52 | |
| MEMBERS | PRESENT | NOT PRESENT |
| Blackman | ✓ | |
| Hernandez C | | 1 |
| Peshlakai | ✓ | |
| Volk | ✓ | |
| Lopez, Vice-Chairman | ✓ | |
| Biasiucci, Chairman | ✓ | |
| TOTAL | 5 | 1 |

Attachment 3

# From STINKNET to SKYNET:

## Invasive Plants, Fire Risk, and Potential for Technology



**Presented by:**

**KEVIN VOLK, Legislative District 17**

Attachment 4

## The Sonoran Desert

is the most biodiverse desert in the world



## Historically, the Sonoran Desert does not have many fires

Bare desert ground
acts as a fire break

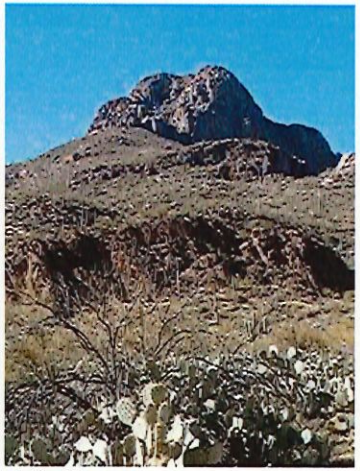


# Legislative District 17

## is the most beautiful district in the world

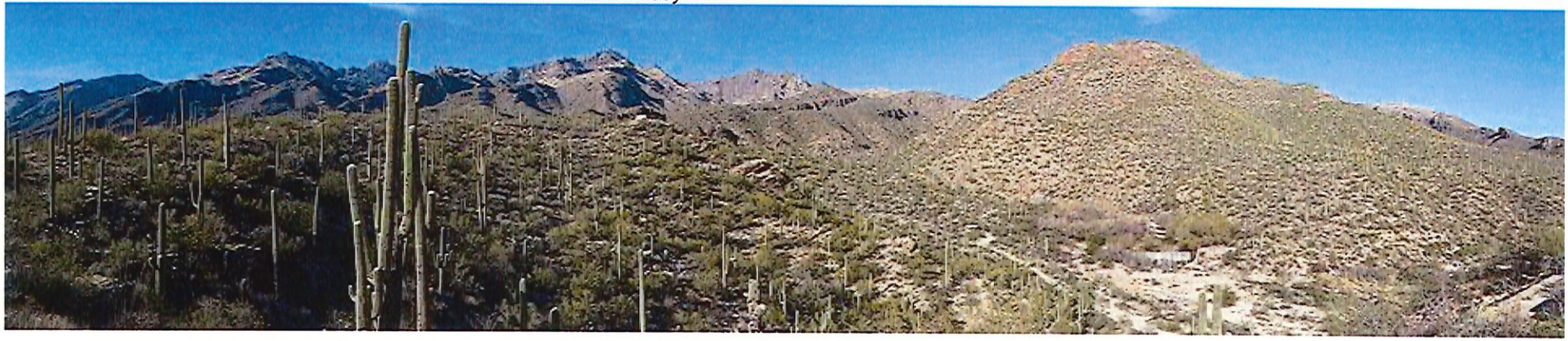


*Lorie Shaull*



*E.S. Kraay*





## The Sonoran Desert

is the most biodiverse desert in the world



## Historically, the Sonoran Desert does not have many fires

Bare desert ground
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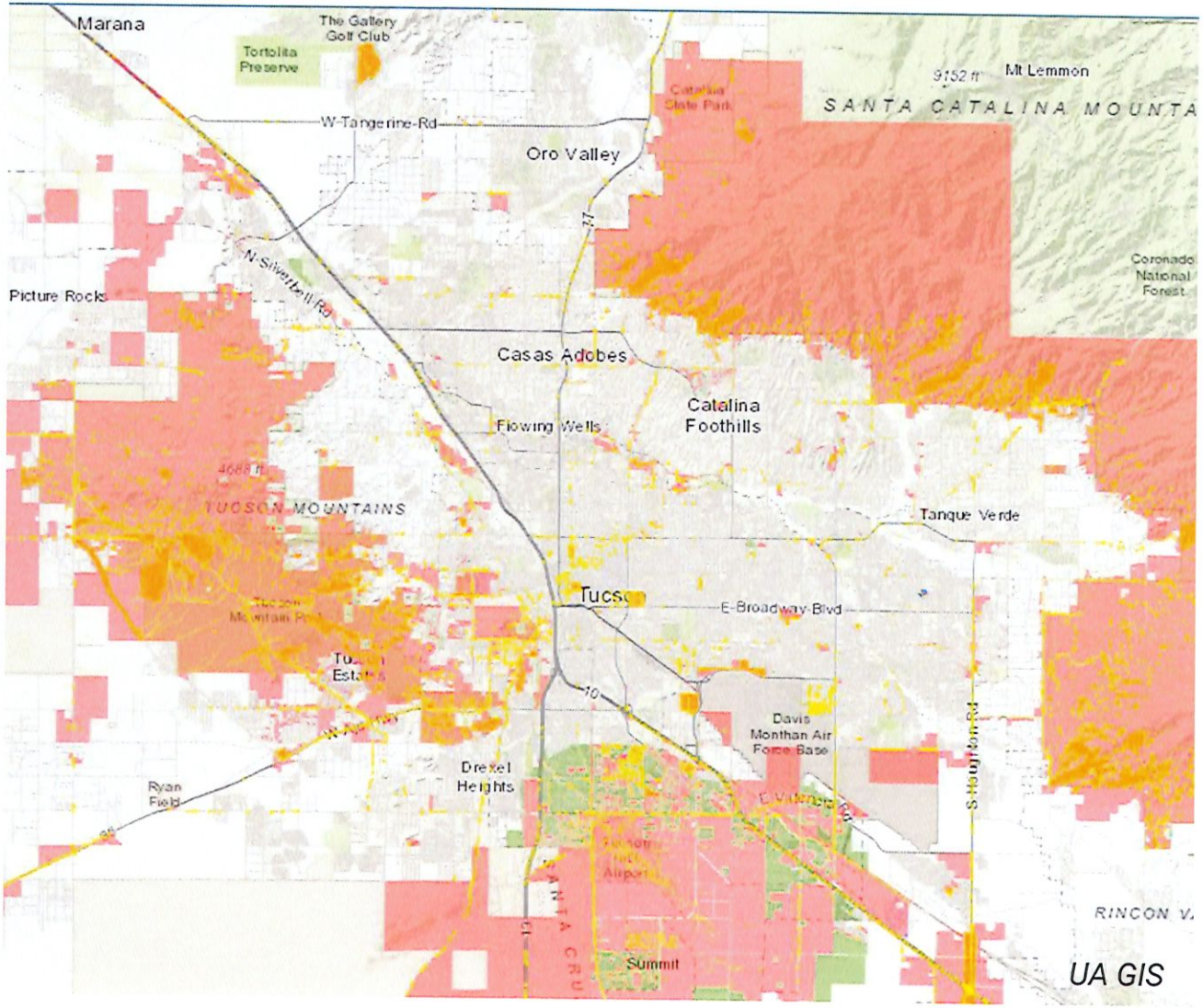


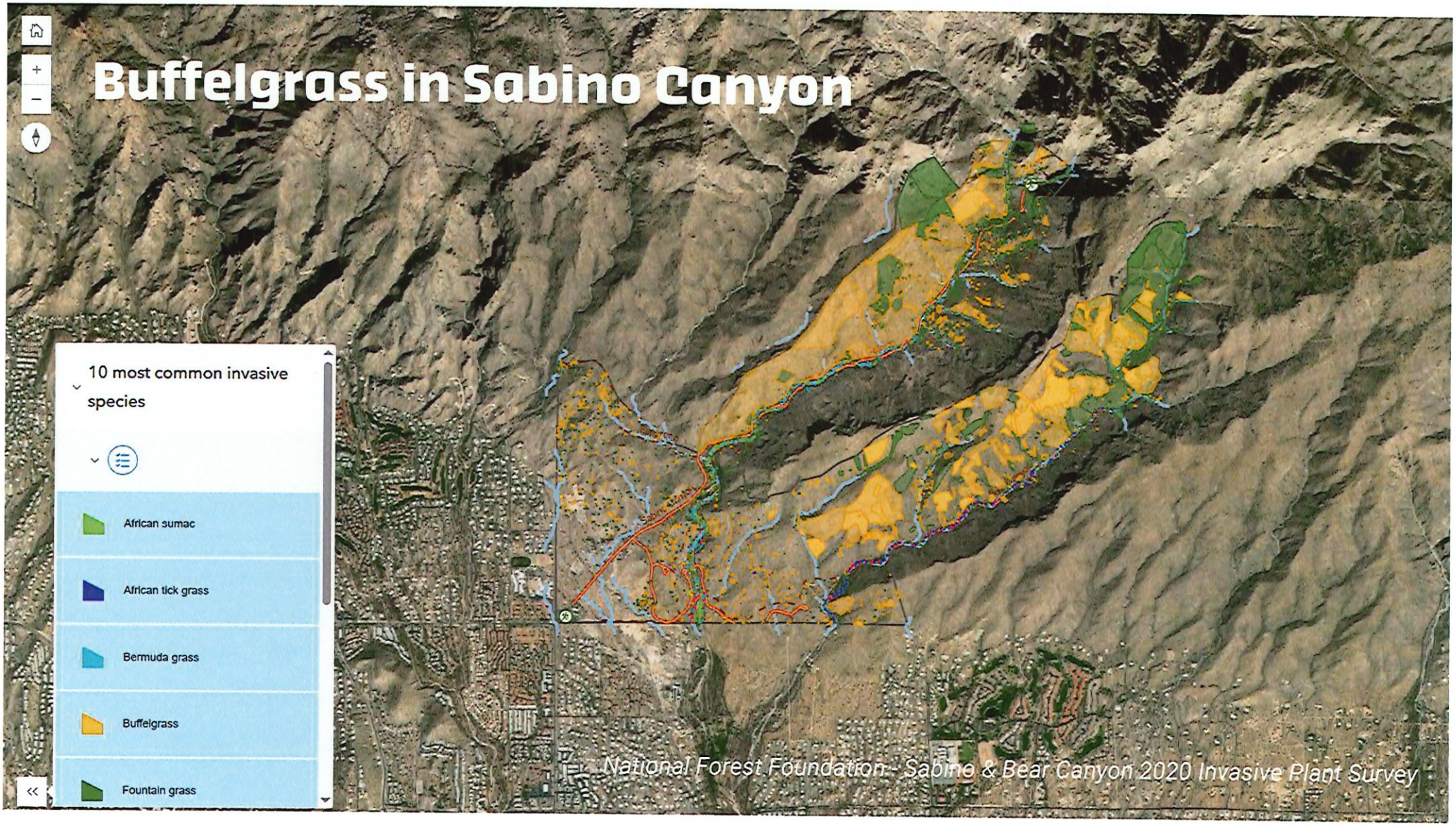
# FUEL

# Buffelgrass

- Persistent issue
- Burns hot, fast, and for a long time
- Destroys soil nutrients



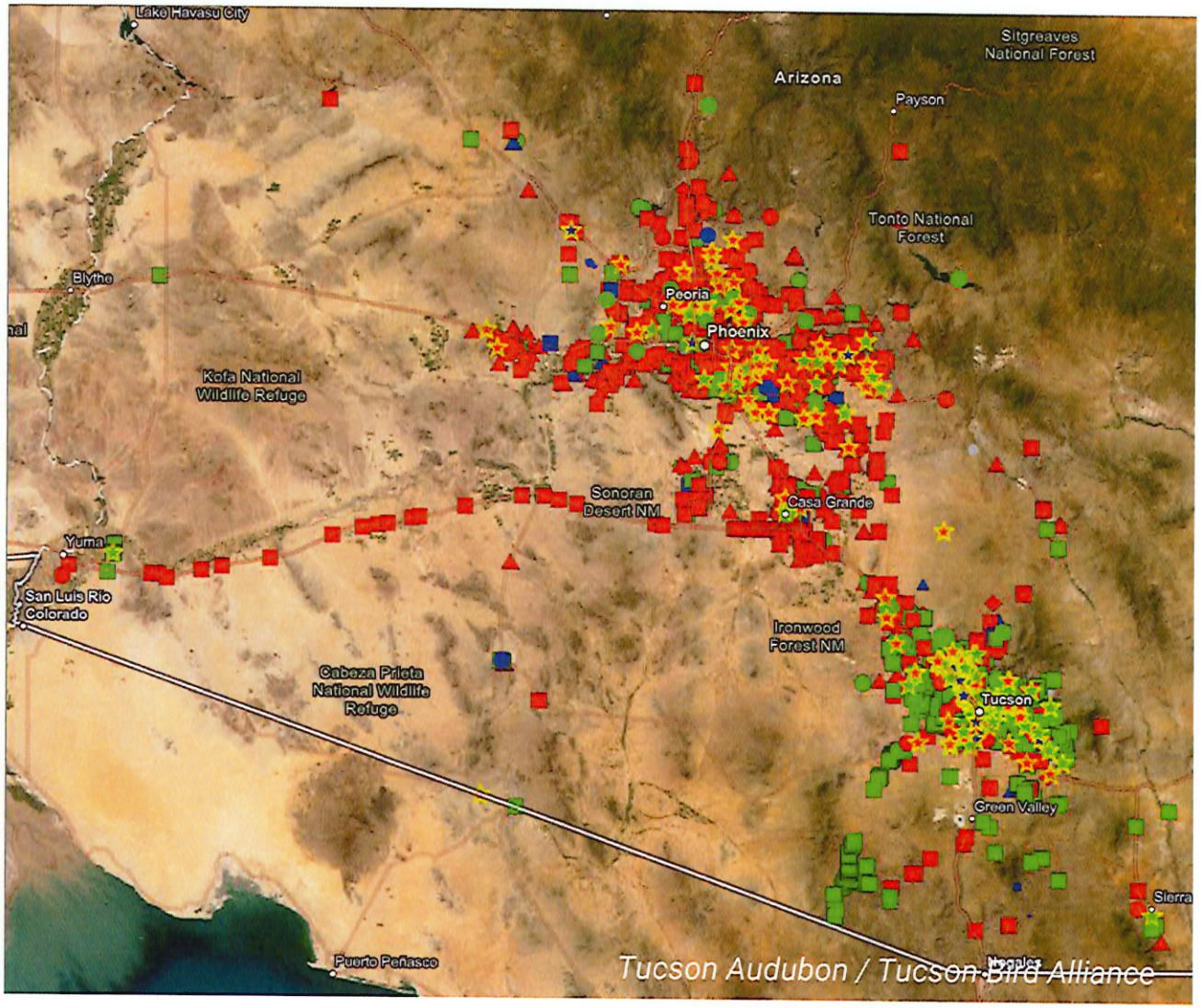



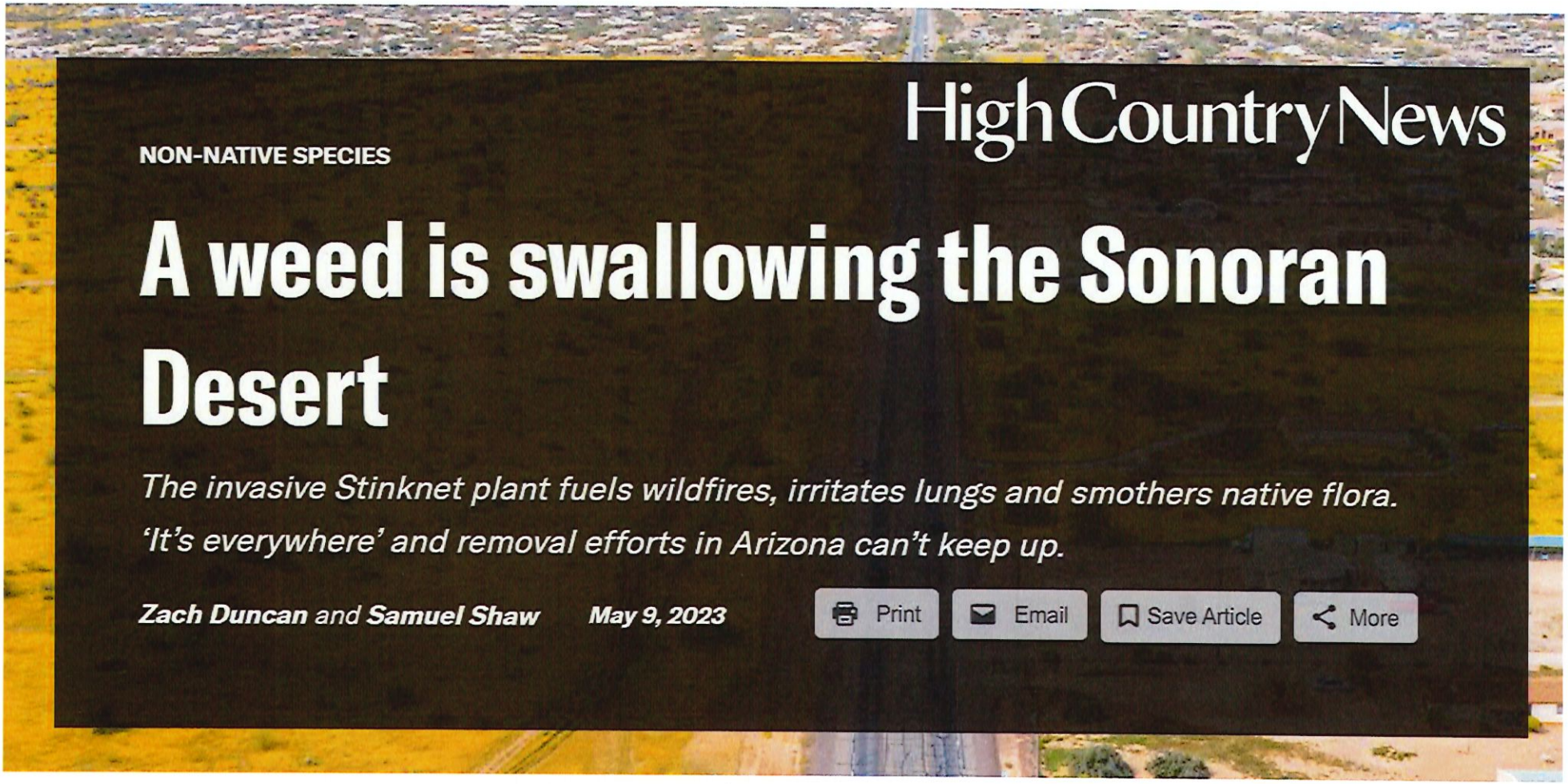

Buffelgrass in Sabino Canyon
10 most common invasive species
African sumac
African tick grass
Bermuda grass
Buffelgrass
Fountain grass
National Forest Foundation - Sabino & Bear Canyon 2020 Invasive Plant Survey

# Stinknet

- Dense, contains oils that are accelerants
- Irritant - causes respiratory issues
- Came from CA, PHX





High Country News

NON-NATIVE SPECIES

# A weed is swallowing the Sonoran Desert

*The invasive Stinknet plant fuels wildfires, irritates lungs and smothers native flora. 'It's everywhere' and removal efforts in Arizona can't keep up.*

***Zach Duncan*** *and* ***Samuel Shaw***

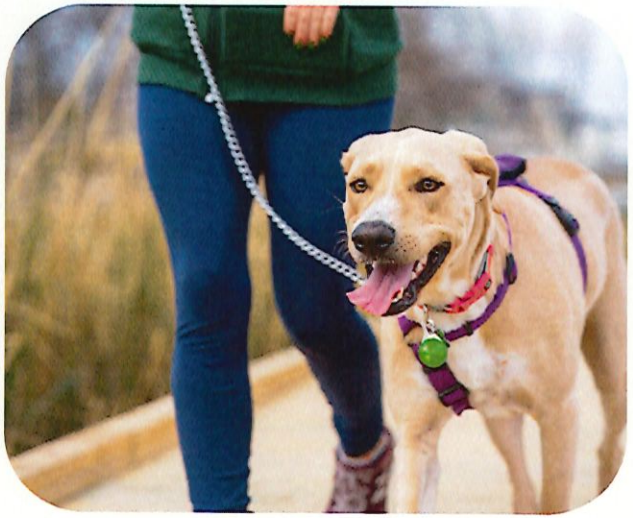
***May 9, 2023***

Print Email Save Article More

# IMPACTS OF STINKNET



Results in the loss of native wildlife

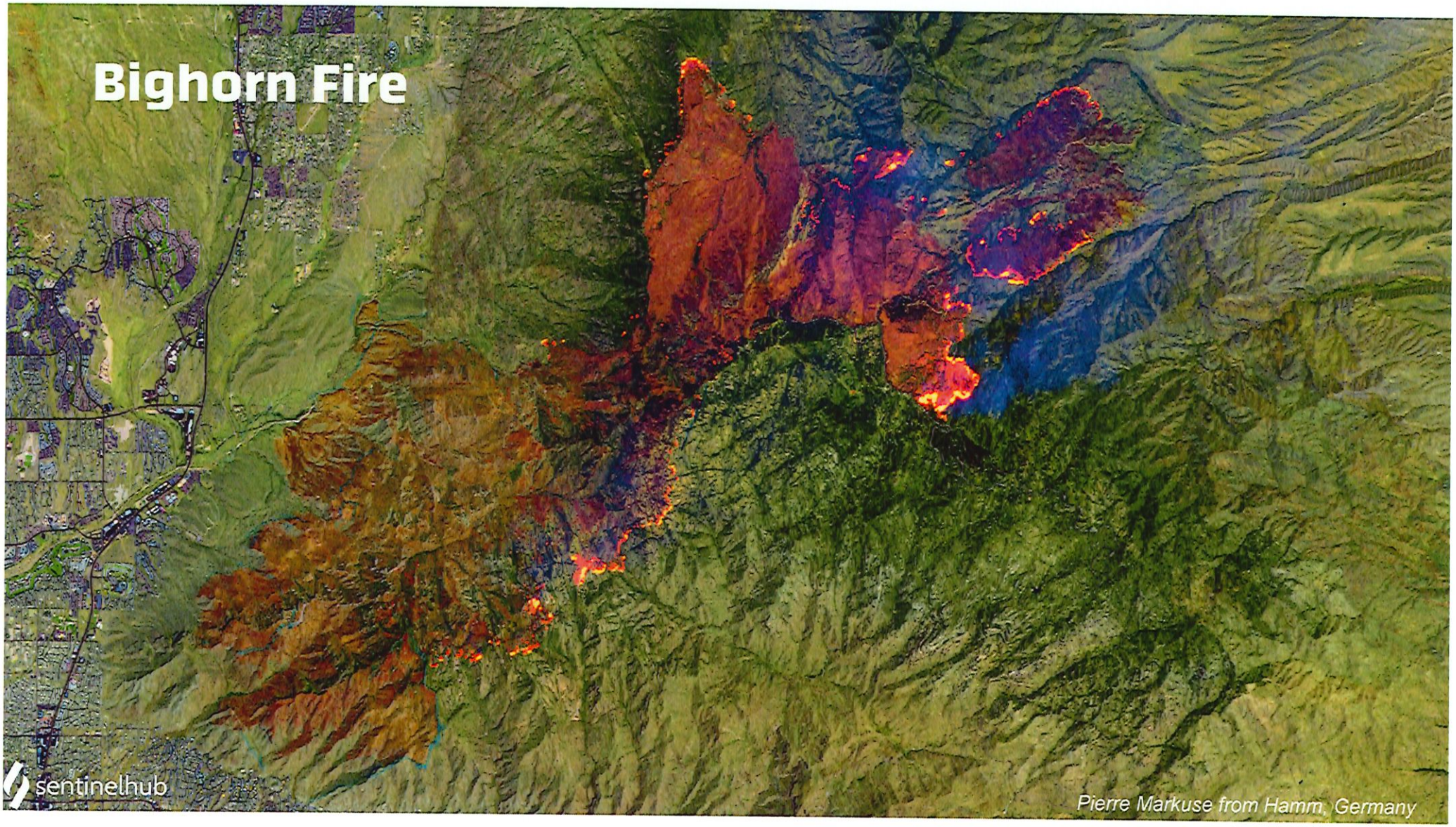


Stinknet is an irritant, causing respiratory issues



Dry stinknet and buffelgrass act as fuel for fire


FIRE


Bighorn Fire
sentinelhub
Pierre Markuse from Hamm, Germany


Bighorn Fire
Wendy Witzig from Honeybee Canyon

13 NEWS

KCRA 3 Maui Video Clip

# Tucson and the devastating fire in Maui have a common thread - invasive grass



Politics

# As wildfire risk rises across Arizona, insurance companies are raising rates, dropping coverage

KJZZ | By Camryn Sanchez
Published February 5, 2025 at 4:30 AM MST

# THE SOLUTION

**Extraction by hand...**

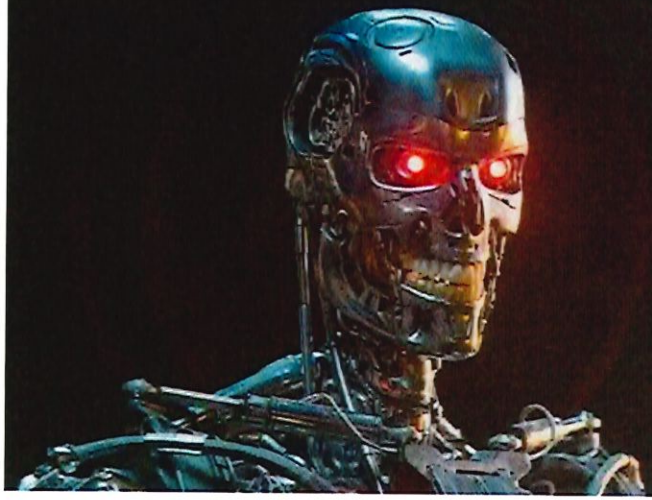


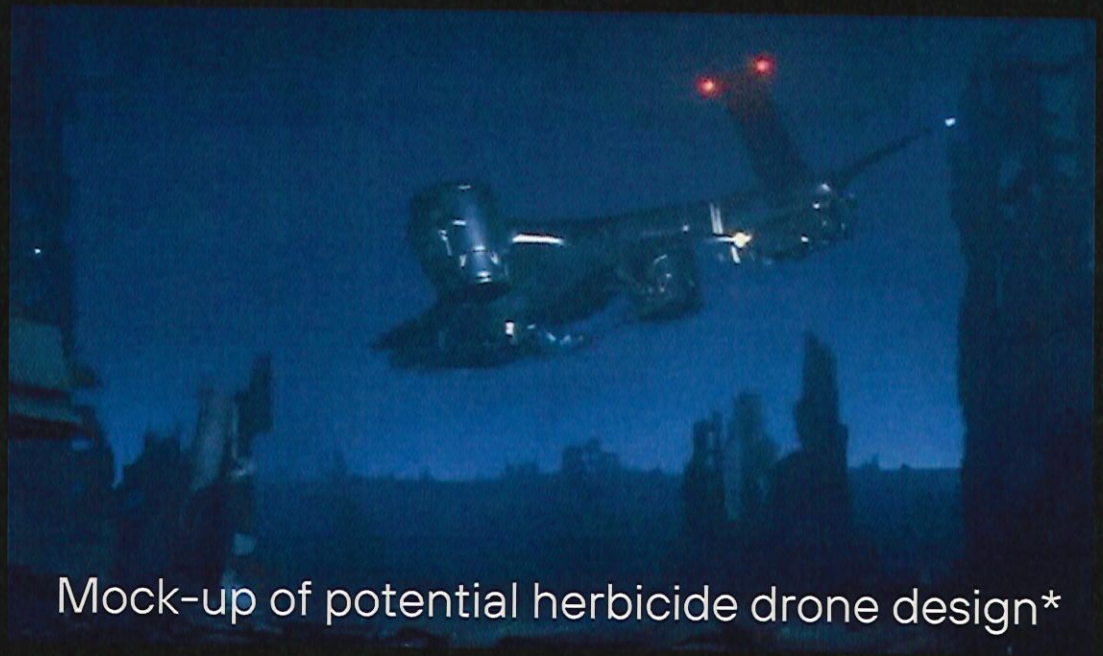
**Or...**

# EXTERMINATOR

A cybernetic organism with a metal endoskeleton that is dedicated to eradicating invasive buffelgrass and stinknet.*

SKYNET





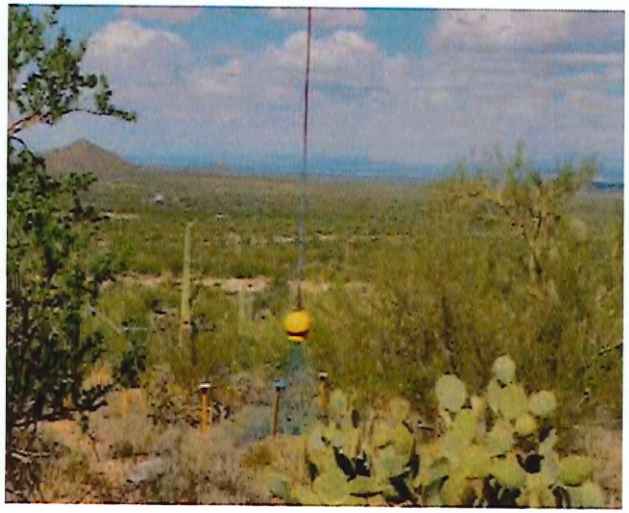
Mock-up of potential herbicide drone design*

*not really

## But really...







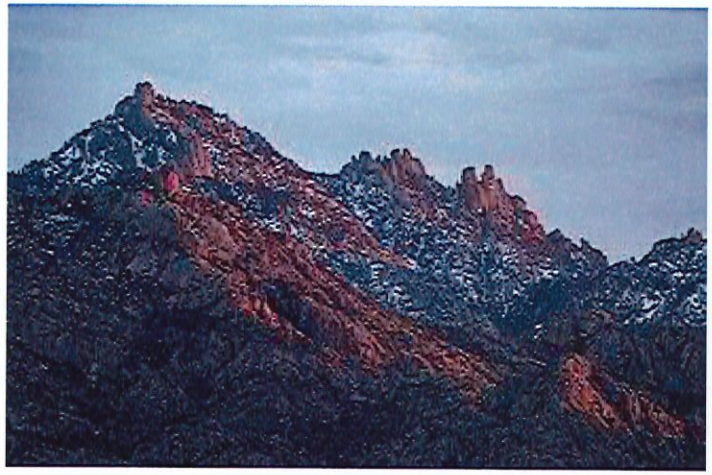


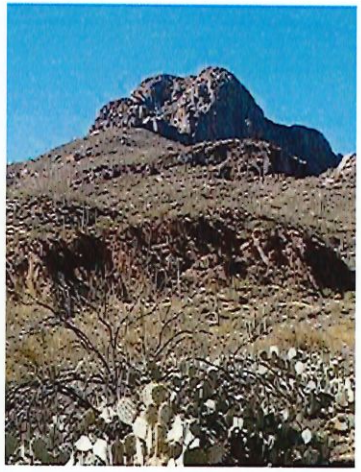
# Potential for drone-based herbicide delivery

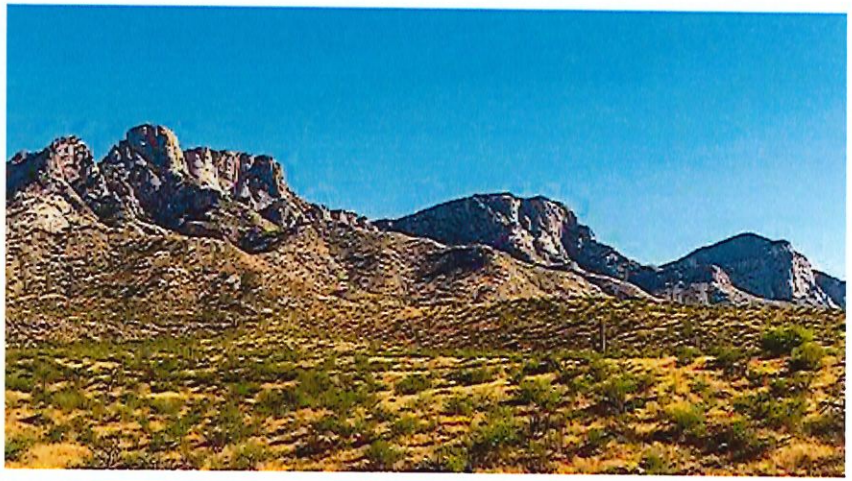


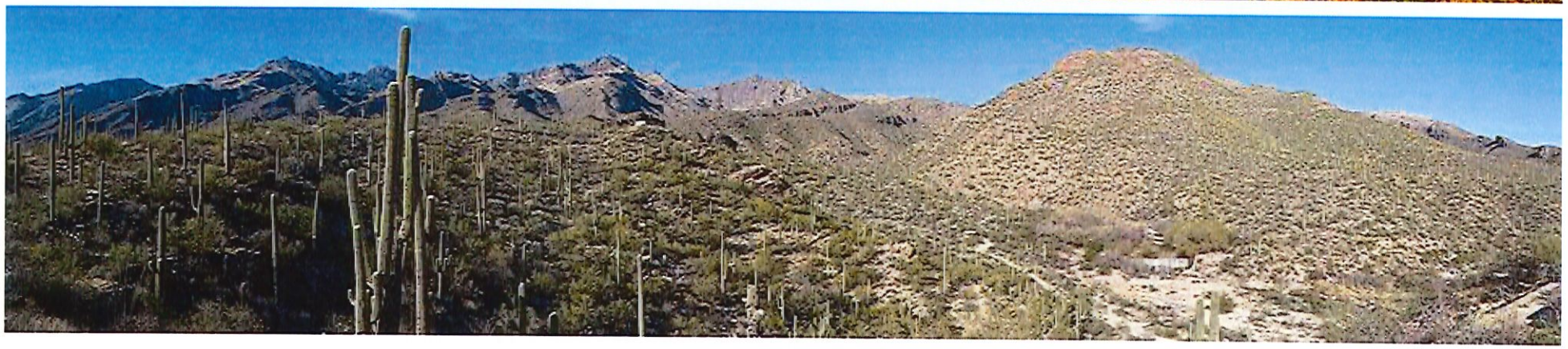
# Legislative District 17

is the most beautiful district in the world









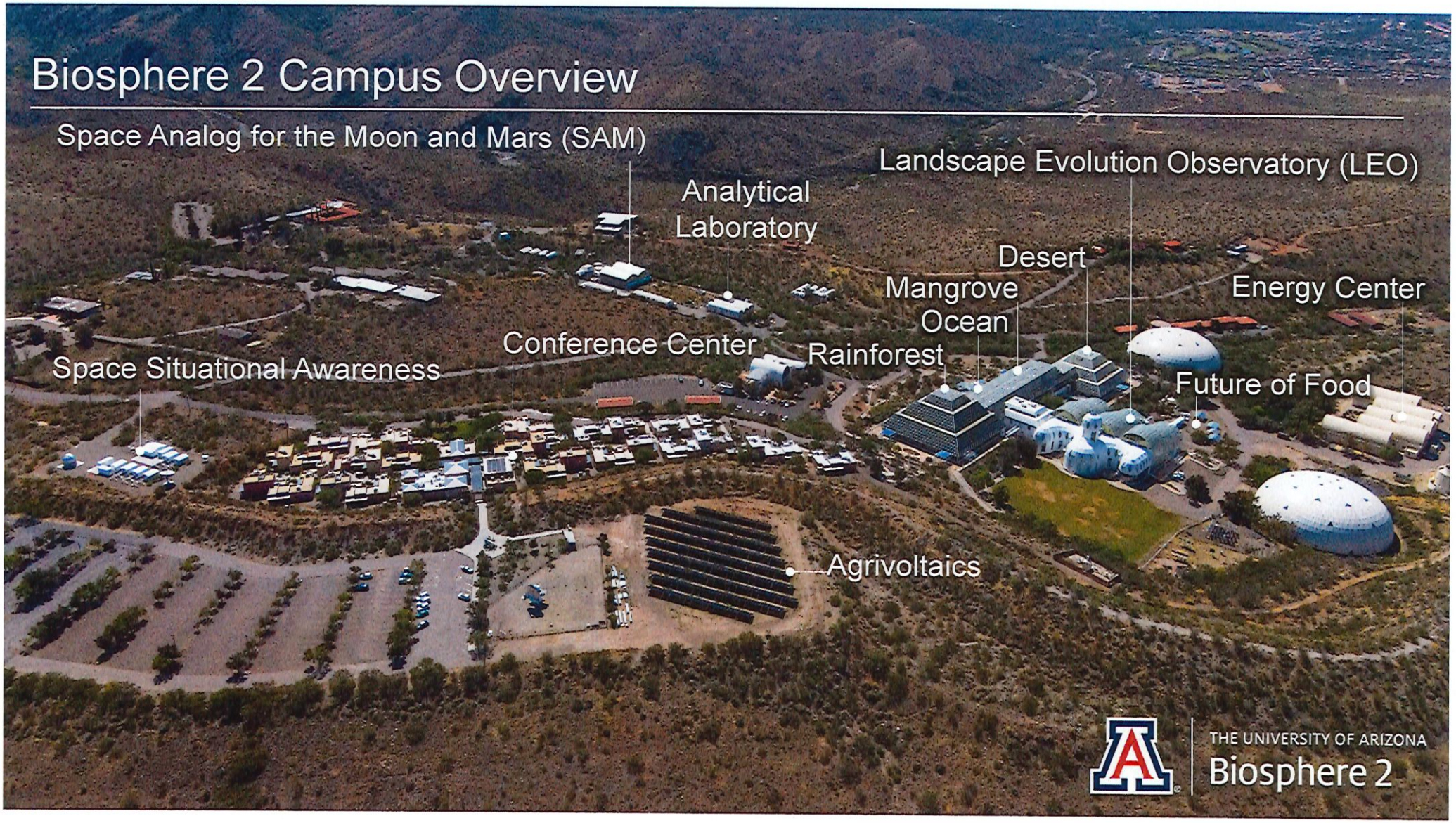
# Space Defense: An Economic Enabler in Arizona District 17

Prof. Vishnu Reddy, Director
Space4 Center, Office of Research and Partnerships
University of Arizona

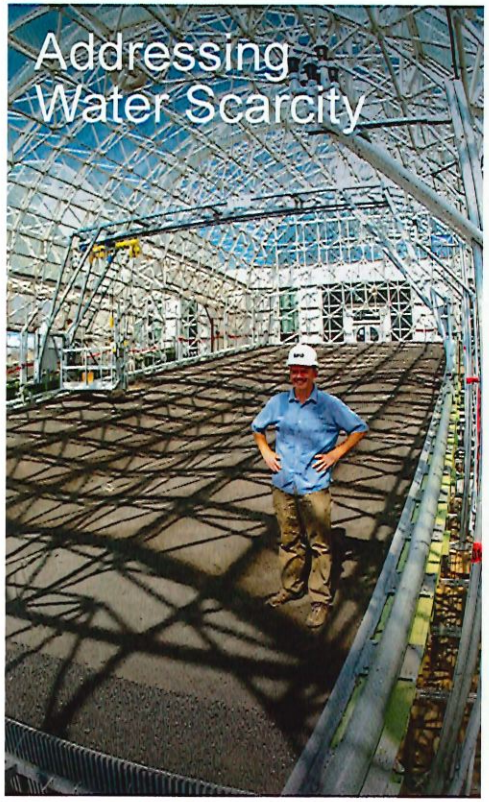
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Attachment 5

# Biosphere 2

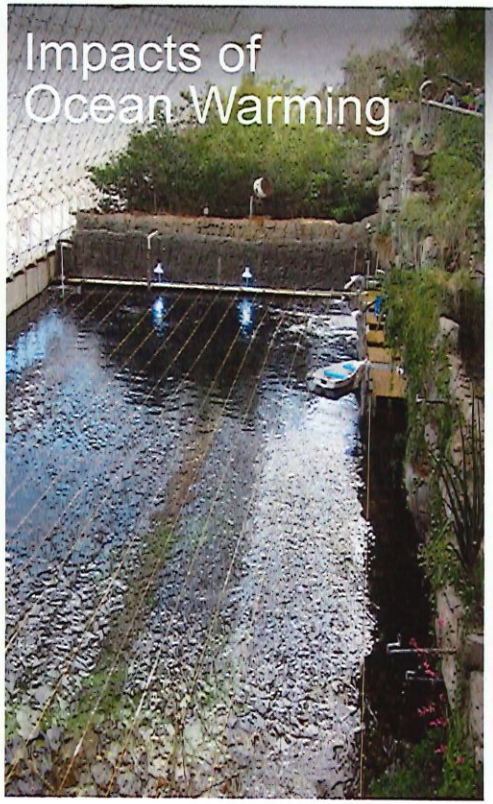

Biosphere 2 Campus Overview
Space Analog for the Moon and Mars (SAM)
Analytical Laboratory
Landscape Evolution Observatory (LEO)
Desert
Mangrove
Ocean
Rainforest
Energy Center
Conference Center
Space Situational Awareness
Future of Food
Agrivoltaics
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Biosphere 2

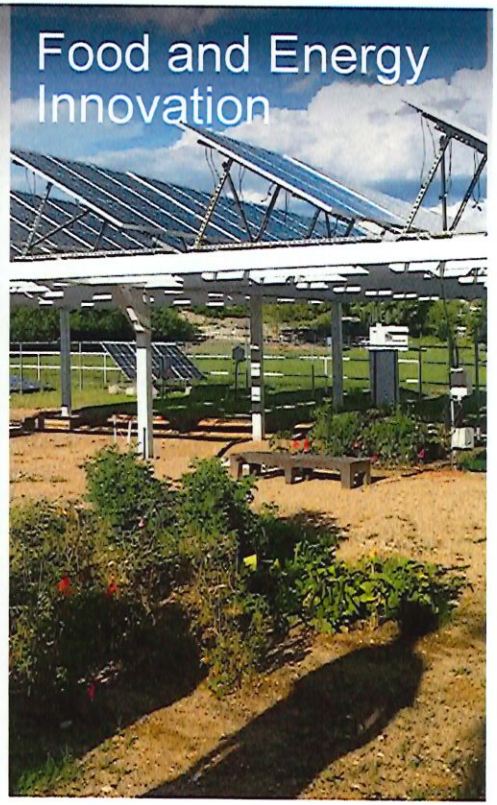
# Biosphere 2: Addressing Multiple Grand Challenges







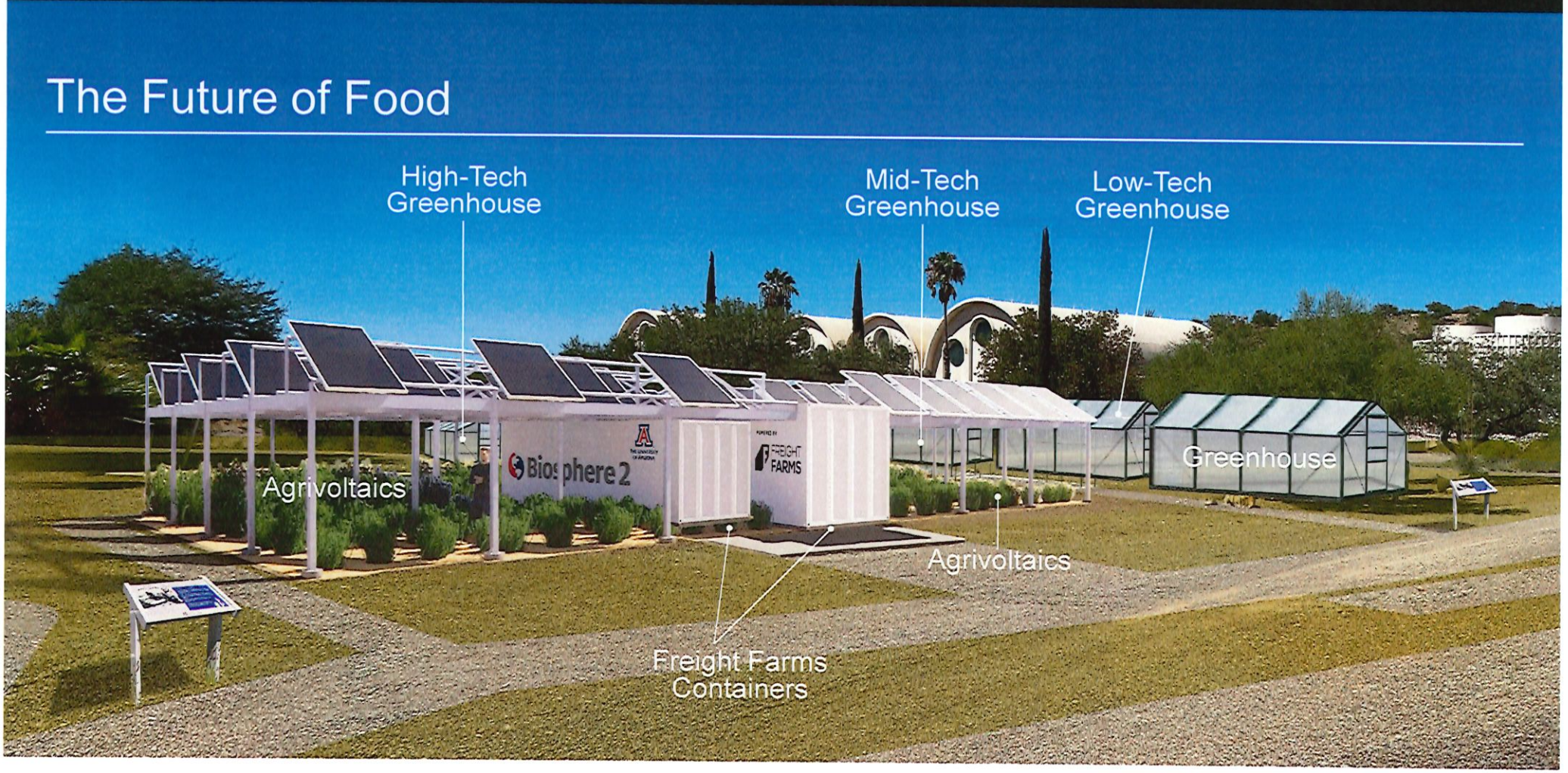


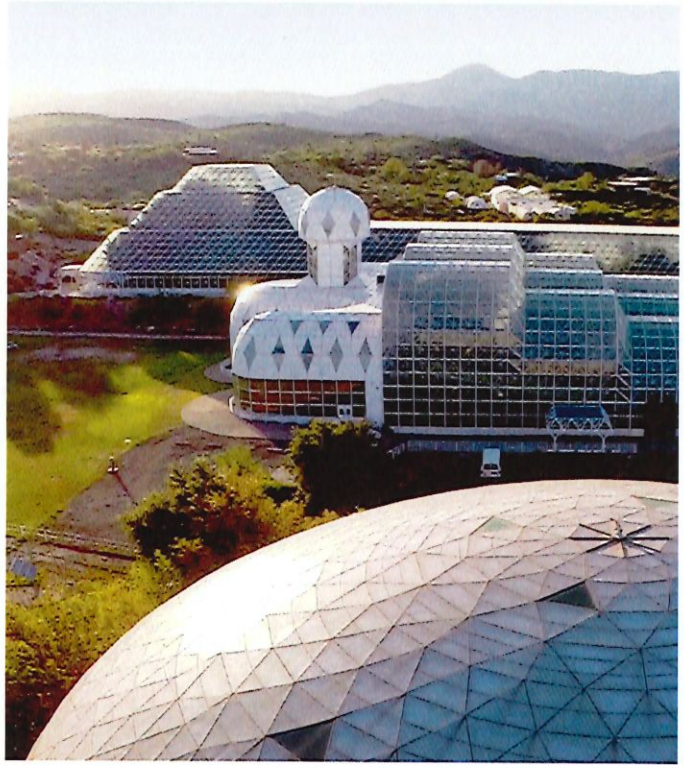
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Biosphere 2

Biosphere2.org

# The Future of Food



# Biosphere 2 in Numbers



## *Economic Impact*

*75,000 paid visitors per year ($2.1 M)*

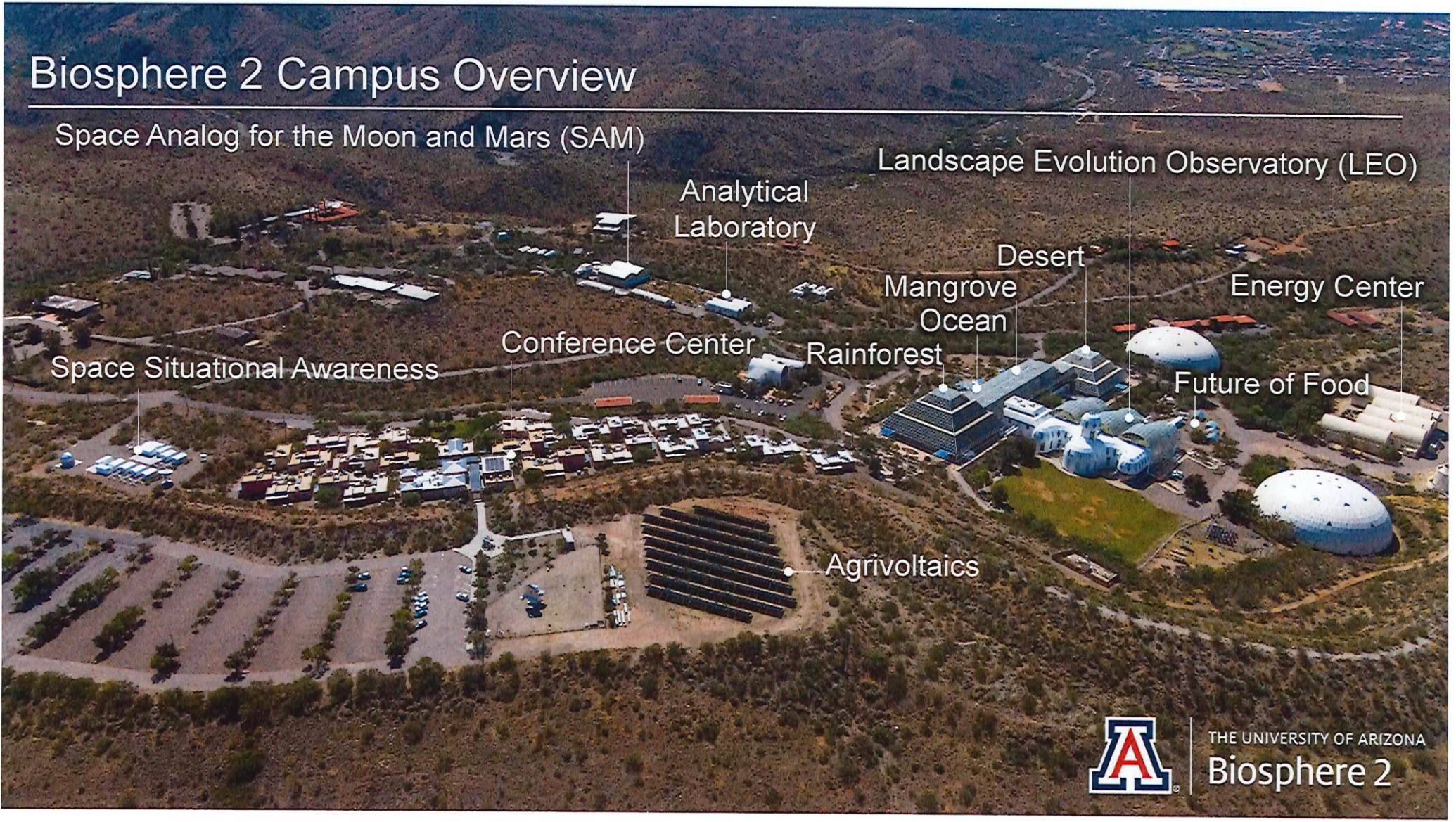
*$7 million Expenditure per year*

*>$68 million in philanthropic funding*

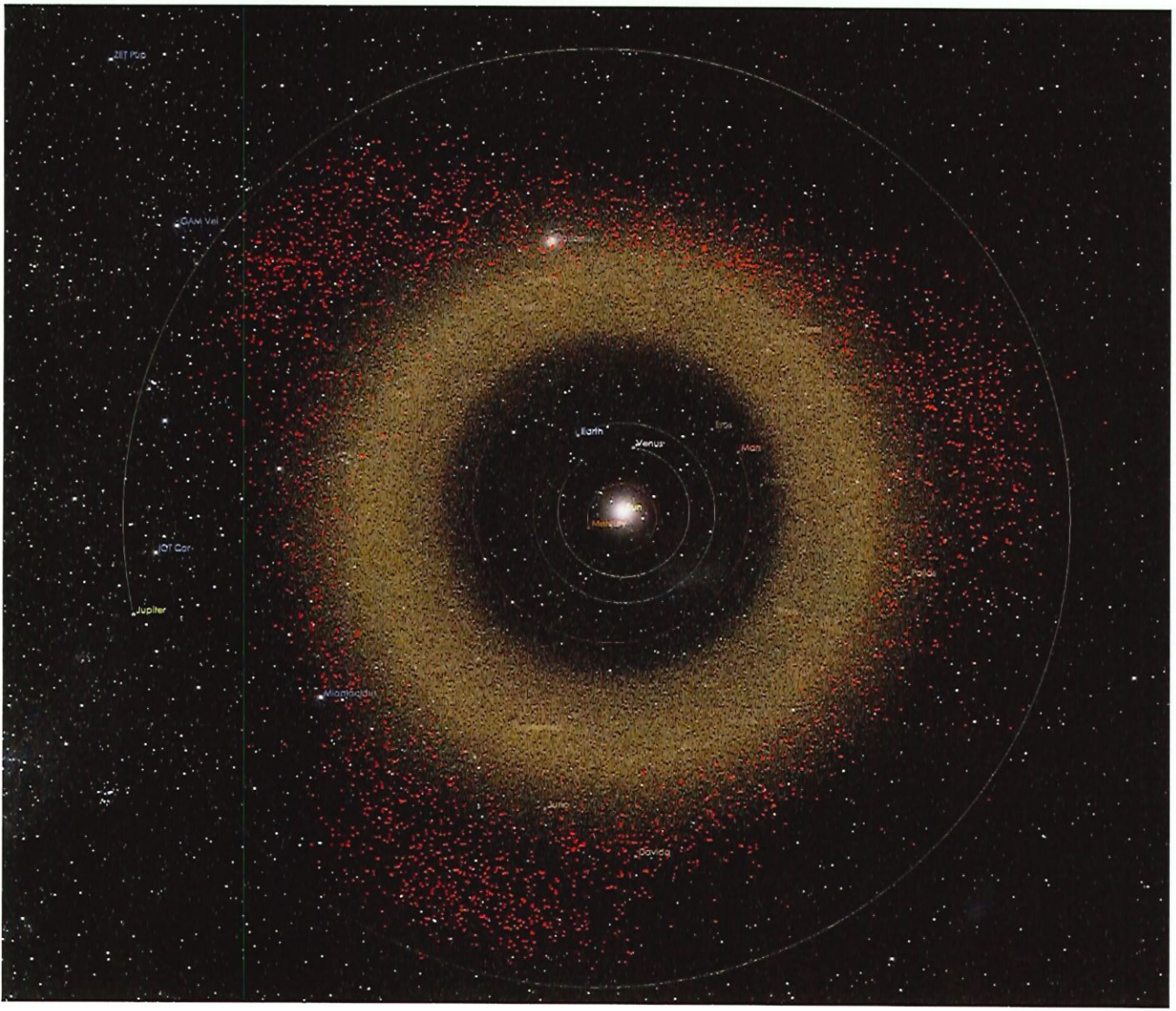
*>$25 million in Space Defense funding*

*100-person Conference Center and Retreat*

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Biosphere 2 Campus Overview
Space Analog for the Moon and Mars (SAM)
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Landscape Evolution Observatory (LEO)
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Mangrove
Ocean
Rainforest
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Conference Center
Space Situational Awareness
Future of Food
Agrivoltaics
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Biosphere 2

STARIZONA




## *Planetary Defense*

*1521325 known asteroids*

*41231 Near-Earth Asteroids*

*882 >0.6 miles*

*11574 >460 feet*

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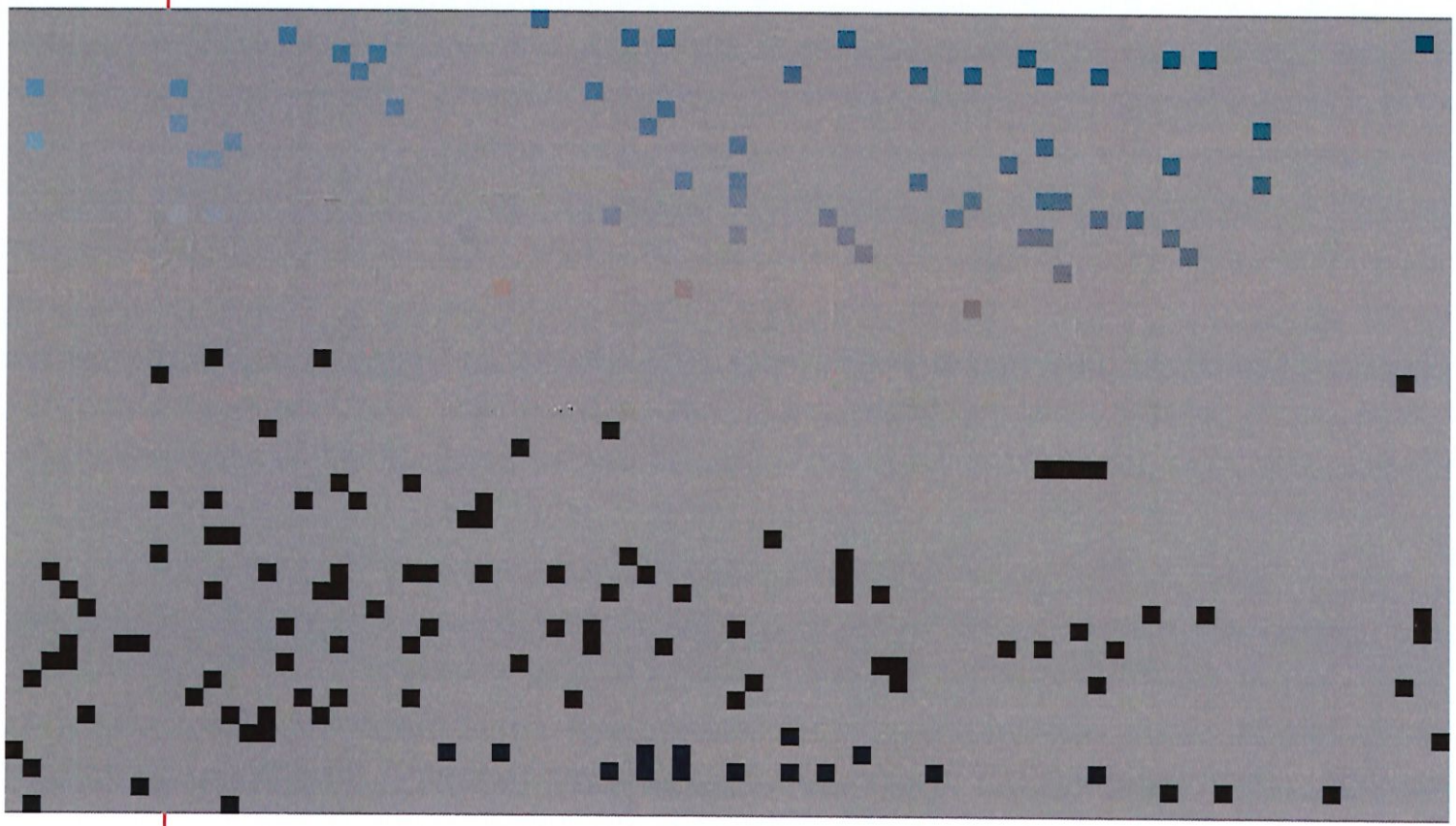
## *Meteor Crater*

*1 mile across*

*~600 feet deep*

*~160 feet asteroid*

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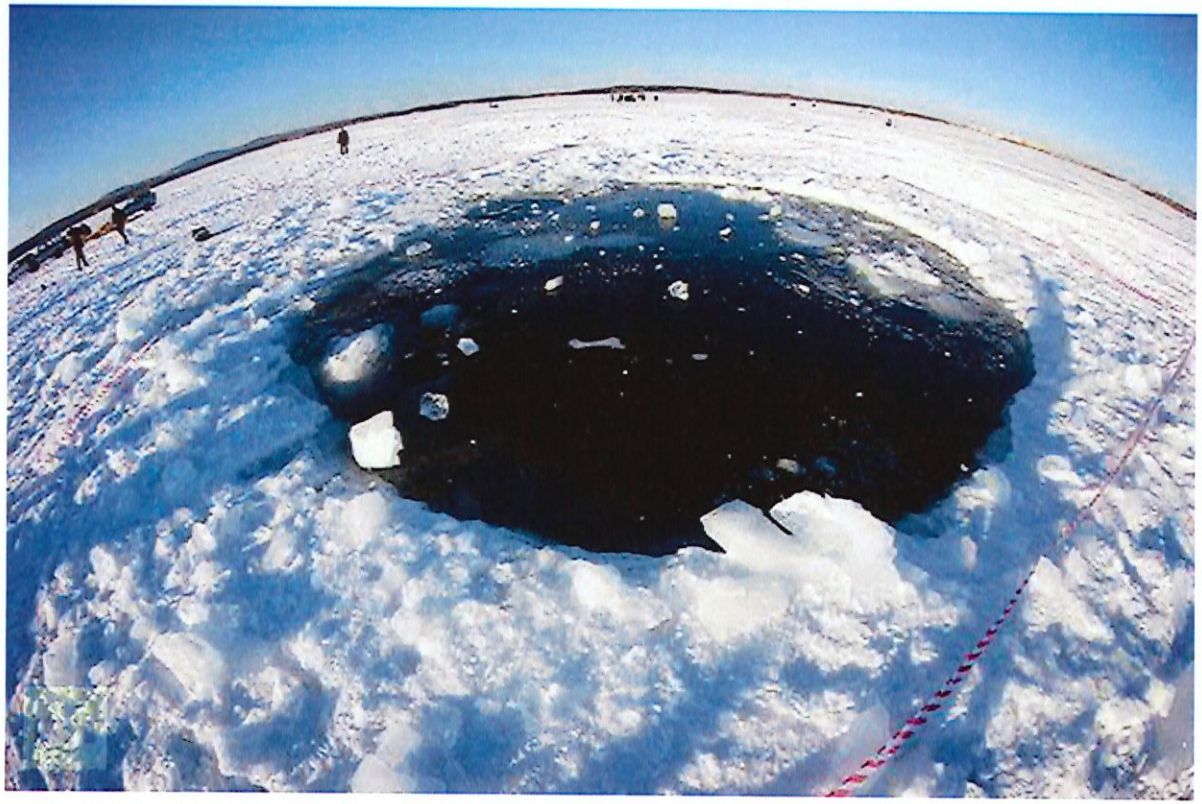


***Chelyabinsk***

*65-foot asteroid*

*Feb. 13, 2013*

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***Chelyabinsk***

*65-foot asteroid*

*Feb. 13, 2013*

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