

Tonto Natural Bridge State Park

Tucked away in a tiny valley surrounded by a forest of pine trees, **Tonto Natural Bridge State Park** has been in the making for thousands of years. It is believed to be the largest natural travertine bridge in the world. The bridge stands 183 feet high over a 400-foot long tunnel that measures 150 feet at its widest point.

The discovery of the small and beautiful valley between Pine and Payson was documented in 1877 by David Gowan, a prospector who stumbled across the bridge as he was chased by Apaches. Gowan hid for two nights and three days in one of several caves that dot the inside of the bridge. On the third day, he left the cave to explore the tunnel and green valley surrounding it. Gowan then claimed squatter's rights. In 1898 he persuaded his nephew, David Gowan Goodfellow, to bring his family over from Scotland and settle the land permanently. After a week of difficult travel from Flagstaff, the Goodfellows arrived at the edge of the mountain and lowered their possessions down the 500 foot slopes into the valley by ropes and burros.

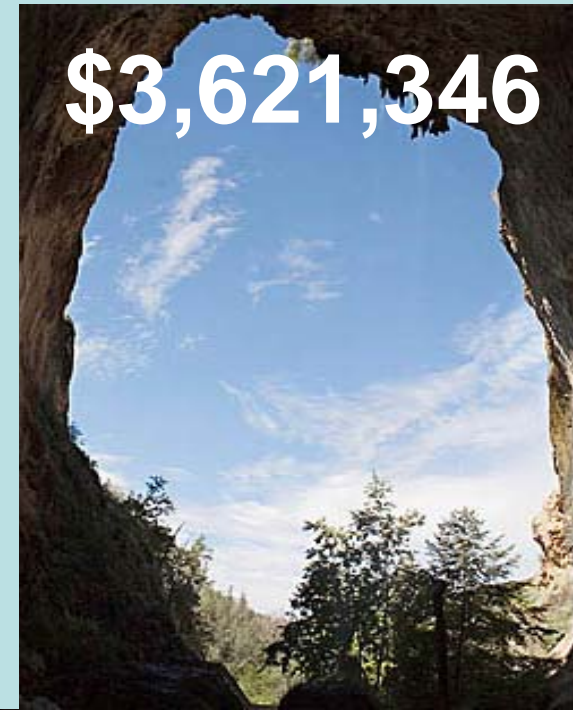
Today, visitors can stand on top of the bridge or hike down below to capture the true size and beauty of this geologic wonder.

[Link to Tonto Natural Bridge SP](#)



Arizona State Parks Foundation is an Arizona 501c3 non-profit organization that supports Arizona State Parks through advocacy, friend building and fund raising.
www.arizonastateparksfoundation.org

**2006-2007
Site Facts
Visitation:
94,026
Economic
Impact:
\$3,621,346
Local Jobs
Supported:
38**



Tonto Natural Bridge State Park attracted 94,026 visitors in fiscal year 2007. The total economic impact of expenditures made by these guests, directly and indirectly, is estimated to be \$3.6 million, making the park a critical component of the local economy. In addition, tourism spending at this level supports an estimated 38 jobs in Gila County.

Arizona State Parks and historic sites make up a significant portion of Arizona's tourism industry. Over 2 million people visited Arizona's diverse state parks in fiscal year 2007 generating \$266 million in economic impact, \$22.7 million in state and local taxes and supporting more than 3,300 Arizona jobs.