

THE WEST'S MOST WESTERN TOWN GOES SOLAR

Kevin J. Burke, Desert Mountain High School, Scottsdale, AZ Earth Camp for Educators 2012



The Power of Perspective

Artist's view of a U.S. Landsat satellite. Credits: NASA.

In 1990, in Scottsdale, AZ, the area around 124th Street and Via Linda was mostly open space with just a few homes and Mountainside Middle School. There were beautiful arroyos, natural ground cover, saguaros and lots of wildlife.

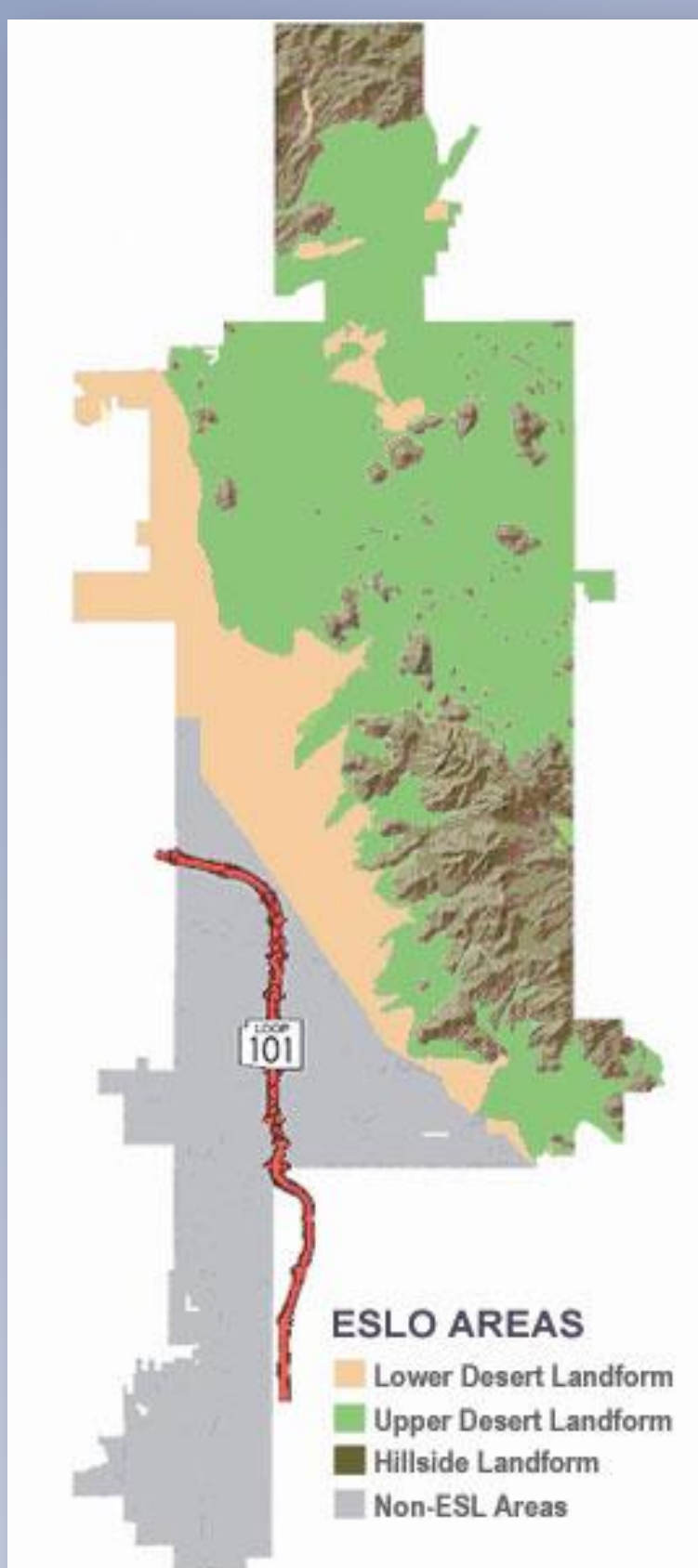
By 1995 this pristine area was covered with four new subdivisions, two churches and Desert Mountain High School. In 2007 another swath of desert was taken over for teacher parking. What is being done to maintain or restore the natural environment?



124th and Via Linda Google Earth 1997



124th and Via Linda, Scottsdale, AZ Google Earth 3/31/2011



Two major projects are under way. The Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance (ESLO 1991) is an effort to preserve pristine upper Sonoran desert and mountain areas in Scottsdale. The ordinance requires private development to permanently preserve a percentage of natural area open space ensuring that environmental features, including native vegetation, washes, boulders and mountain peaks are protected. Since its establishment, over 9,000 acres of native desert have been preserved.

The City of Scottsdale also produces energy through photovoltaic panels on multiple city facilities. They produce enough energy to power 68 homes, reducing nearly 1 million pounds of CO₂ emissions. Desert Mountain High School installed photovoltaic cells on its roofs in and parking lots.



Desert Mountain High School with solar panels installed.