



University of Alaska

Land Grant Status Update

House Resources Committee
February 1, 2023

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University Land Grant

- University of Alaska is Alaska's state designated land grant institution
- Historical legacy is the Morrill Act of 1862 which created a mechanism for providing land to support higher education
- However, UA received only portions of lands Congress originally reserved for it
- Recent movement, federally, allows the state (DNR) and the UA to move forward with land selections. This is a positive step, but actual monetization will be many years in the future and will not solve all financial need

UA Lands – Potential Revenue to Help Higher Education



Administration & Finance



Aviation



Construction



Fisheries & Marine Science



Health



Information Technology



Mining



Oil & Gas

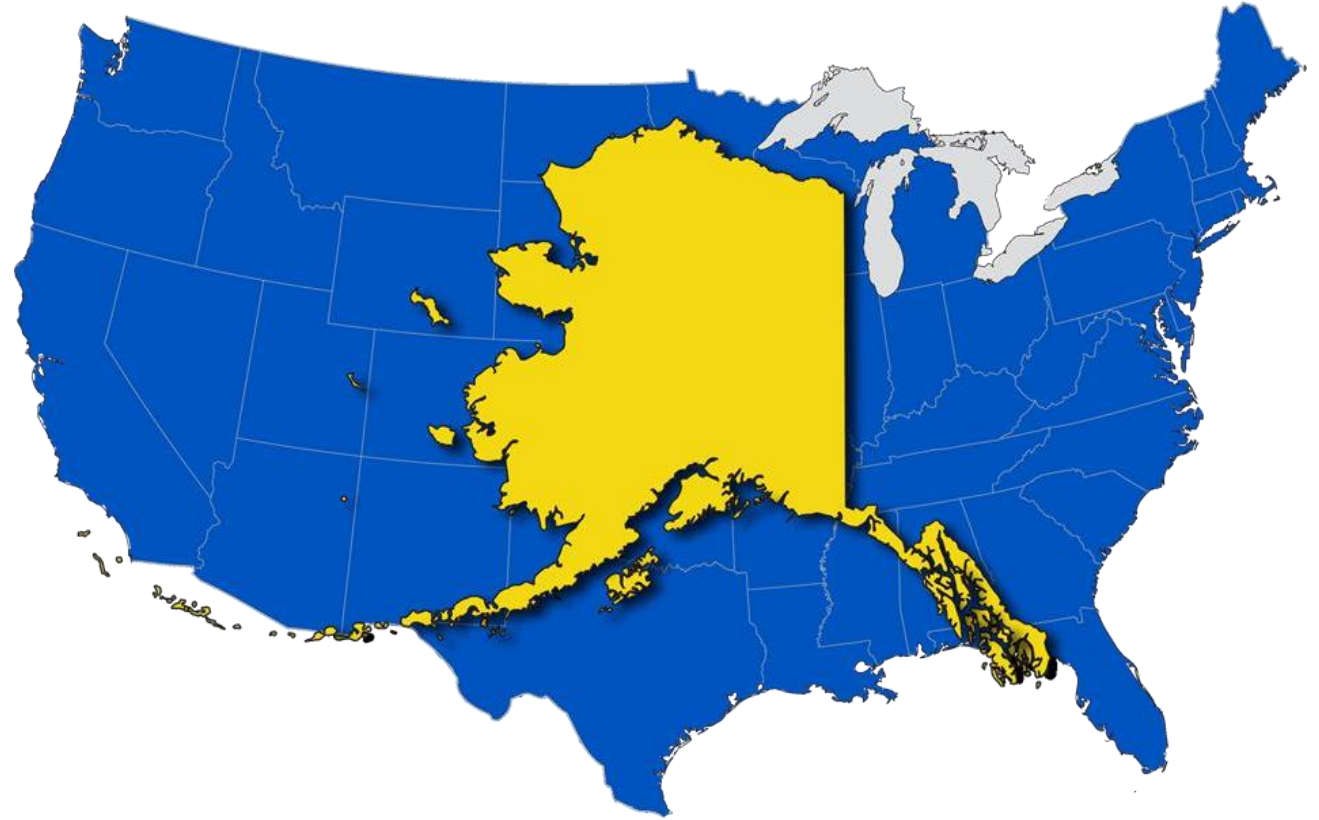


Teacher Education



University Land Grant

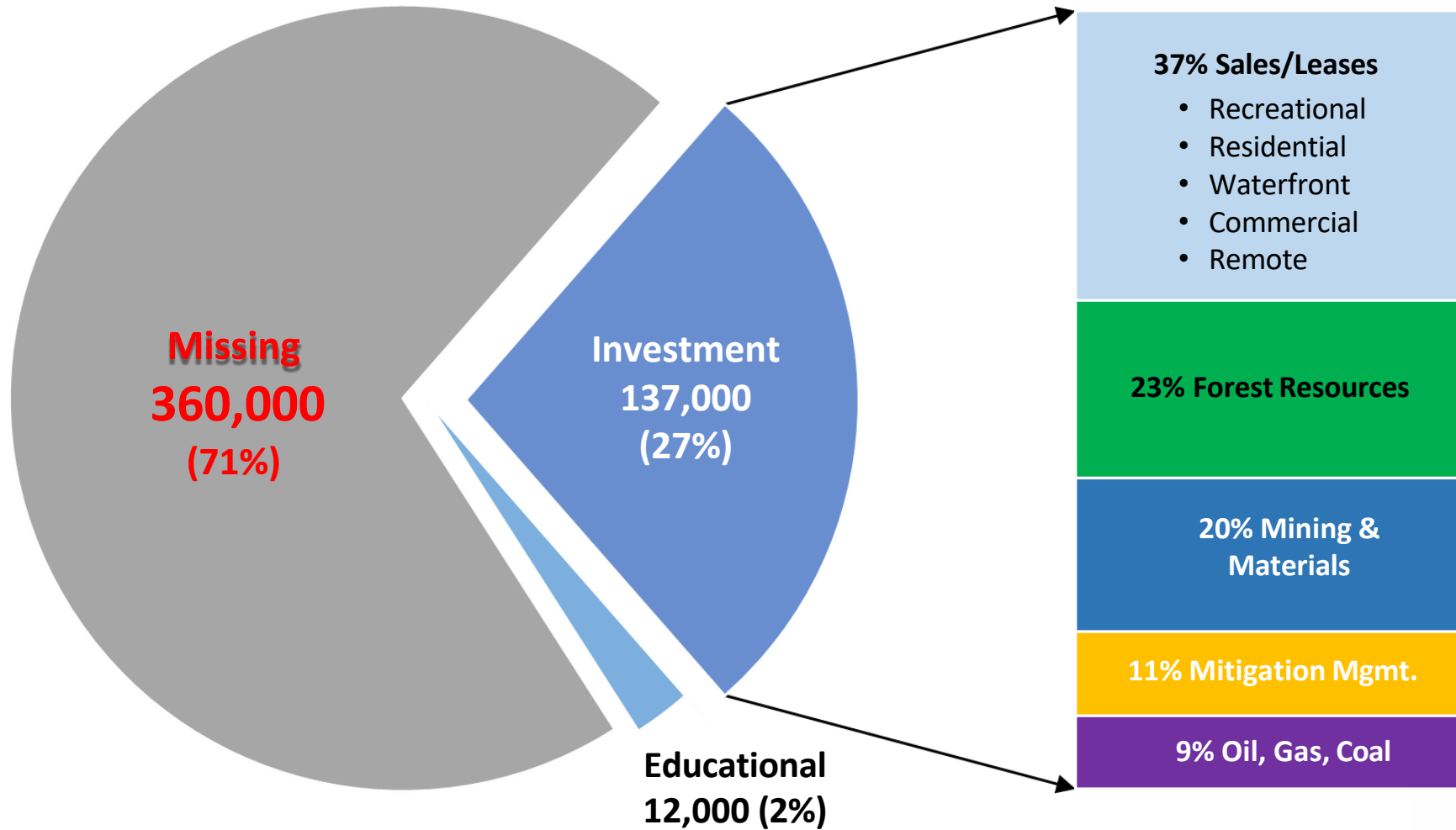
- Only Delaware & Hawaii rank below Alaska in higher education land grants
- UA only received ~111,000 acres of its federal land grant entitlement
- This grant makes up the bulk of UA's current ~149,000 acre holdings
- Remaining land received from state & municipal sources, private gifts and bequests, and UA land acquisitions



***UA's Land Grant deficit is
360,000 acres***

UA Land Holdings

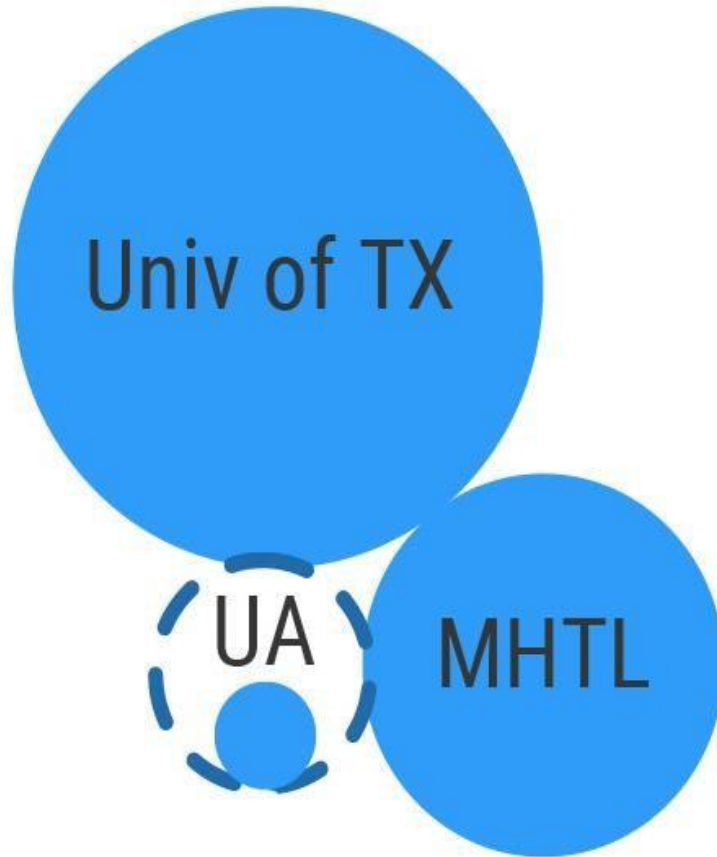
~149,000 acres



Educational: Includes campuses, research sites and other facilities



UA Land Grant Acreage Comparison



Univ. of Texas	Univ. of Alaska	Mental Health Trust
2.1 Million Acres	149,000 Acres <i>(~360,000 missing)</i>	1 Million Acres
Generated \$21.4 billion <i>(cumulative as of 2019)</i>	Generated \$6.8 million <i>(2019)</i>	Generated \$10.6 million <i>(2019)</i>

***Despite an incomplete land endowment
UA has generated more than
\$249 million from its trust land assets
since 1980s***

Land Grant History

Pre-Statehood Federal Laws for UA Lands

- 1862 Morrill Act: Each state upon admission was to receive 30,000 acres per member of Congress (90,000 acres for Alaska) dedicated to higher education. Congress in the Alaska Statehood Act said that the State's large general land selections were to be "in lieu of" Morrill Act lands, so Morrill Act was "declared not to extend" to Alaska.
- 1915 "Wickersham" Land Grant Statute: Reserved an estimated 336,000 acres in Tanana Valley area. Lands remained largely unsurveyed and less than 5% were ever conveyed to UA.
- 1929 "Sutherland" Land Grant Statute: Congress grants 100,000 acres for UA. Left intact at Statehood, and acreage was (eventually) conveyed to UA, where it makes up most of current land holdings.

Land Grant History

- Following Statehood, the Alaska Legislature tries to provide UA's land. In 1959 a bill reserving 1 million acres, passes both Houses, but is vetoed
- Alaska Legislature in 2000 passes bill, and overrides gubernatorial veto, to grant UA 260,000 acres
- In 2004, Alaska Supreme Court rules land conveyance is not an appropriation, but declines to address dedication clause issue

Land Grant History

- 2005: Legislation identifies specific lands for transfer to UA (HB 130)
- 2007: Environmental group sues arguing land transfer violates Constitution's anti-dedication clause (Article 9, Section 7)
- 2009: Alaska Supreme Court agrees and strikes down the 2000/2005 legislation. State can't make a land grant to UA that "would operate in a manner similar to the way that the University's federal land grant has operated since before statehood."
Important: Dedications are constitutionally allowed when required by federal government for state participation in federal programs.
In other words: There was a need for state participation in federal program.
- 2010: UA begins transferring land back to the state

Land Grant History

- 2020: Sen. Murkowski, Sen. Sullivan and Rep. Young introduce bills for the “University of Alaska Fiscal Foundation Act” (UAFFA). Sets up federal program. However, Congress adjourns without passing the bill.
- 2021: Sen. Murkowski, Sen. Sullivan and Rep. Young introduce bills in the Senate and House for the UAFFA. State legislature passes SJR8 supporting the federal delegation’s effort.
- 2022: Newly elected Rep. Peltola announces her support for the UAFFA. The Senate incorporates the provisions of UAFFA into the Omnibus Appropriations bill which passes both chambers and is signed into law.
- Today: UA owns ~149,000 acres, most from 1929 Sutherland Act, private party donations, as well as from local governments.



What did the provisions of the University of Alaska Fiscal Foundation Act (UAFFA) do?

- The bill establishes a program directing the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to identify and convey available federal land in Alaska to the University of Alaska for a land grant to support higher education.
- The bill also permits the BLM or the Department of Agriculture to acquire by purchase or exchange, with the university's consent, university-owned inholdings within conservation system units.
- Any land exchanged shall be of equal value.

What did the provisions of the UAFFA do?

(Continued)

- No later than four years after enactment of the bill, Alaska and the university may jointly identify no more than 500,000 acres of land for inclusion in the program, of which not more than 360,000 acres may be conveyed and patented to the university.
- Upon the request of Alaska and the university, the BLM shall provide technical assistance in the identification of land.
- If Alaska and the university notify the BLM in writing that Alaska and the university jointly concur with the conveyance of all or a portion of the land identified for conveyance, and that Alaska relinquishes its selection rights to the land covered by the notification, the BLM shall convey the land to the university, to be held in trust for the exclusive use and benefit of the university.
- The BLM shall notify Congress of the land conveyed and patented.

What did the provisions of the UAFFA do? (Continued)

- The law establishes a framework for the university to work with the state Dept. of Natural Resources to jointly identify up to 500,000 acres of federal land to be conveyed to the state.
- It would require the Bureau of Land Management to survey the selection and work with UA to transfer up to 360,000 acres of state land to the university.

Where are we now?

- The UA Lands office already has selected approx. 200,000 acres and provided the selection to DNR for review
- The acreage ultimately transferred to UA would be deducted from Alaska's outstanding statehood lands entitlement and managed by the UA for the benefit of our students and to further meet our mission of teaching, research and workforce development for Alaska

Land Batches - UA Land Office

WHO/WHAT/WHEN/WHERE/WHY

- The UA Lands office has already been working with DNR
- Support from Governor's office
- **Timeline**
 - UA began identifying potential lands in 2019
 - DNR provided informal feedback on initial land batches, allowing UA to modify and resubmit ~200,000 acres to DNR
 - DNR and other state agencies are reviewing the revised batches
 - UA and DNR are meeting monthly to review requested lands
 - UA is identifying lands valuable to mineral potential, carbon sequestration potential, and remote land sales, to provide short, medium, and long term revenue streams to the endowment



Thank You