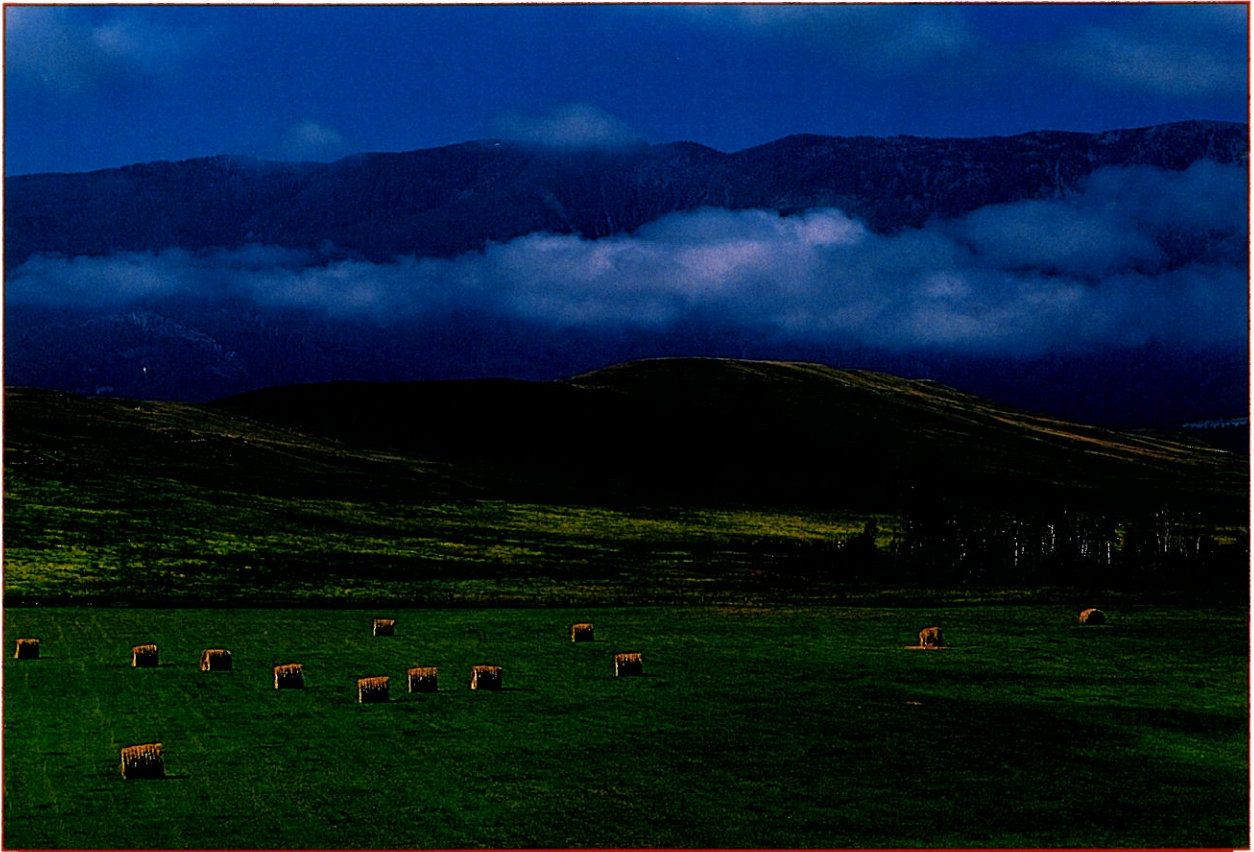


THE SONORAN INSTITUTE



1993 ANNUAL REPORT



A message from the Chairman and Executive Director

The mission of the Sonoran Institute is to promote community-based conservation strategies that preserve the ecological integrity of protected lands, and at the same time meet the economic aspirations of adjoining landowners and communities. Underlying the Institute's mission is the conviction that community-driven and inclusive approaches to conservation produce the most effective results.

The Sonoran Institute was created to fill a growing gap in the conservation movement: a need to build locally driven partnerships that preserve ecosystems and protect community values. Our work is based on the premise that creative, inclusive, and community-supported partnerships produce the most effective and enduring conservation results.

The community-based partnerships that we've helped create prove that citizens, landowners, and resource managers can find their own solutions to land-use challenges in ways that preserve the integrity of natural ecosystems, fulfill local economic and social objectives, and protect community character.

In the three years since the Sonoran Institute was founded, we have developed four complementary program areas to advance this approach.

First, only with a clear sense of direction can an individual, business, or community take effective steps to plan for the future. Throughout the West, the

Sonoran Institute has helped organize local forums — we call them Successful Communities workshops — that help residents identify what they value about their community, create a shared vision for their future, and outline the steps and priorities for realizing this vision.

Second, the Sonoran Institute helps communities create innovative approaches for realizing their conservation and economic objectives. Our first project was to establish the Rincon Institute to protect the sensitive desert ecosystems of

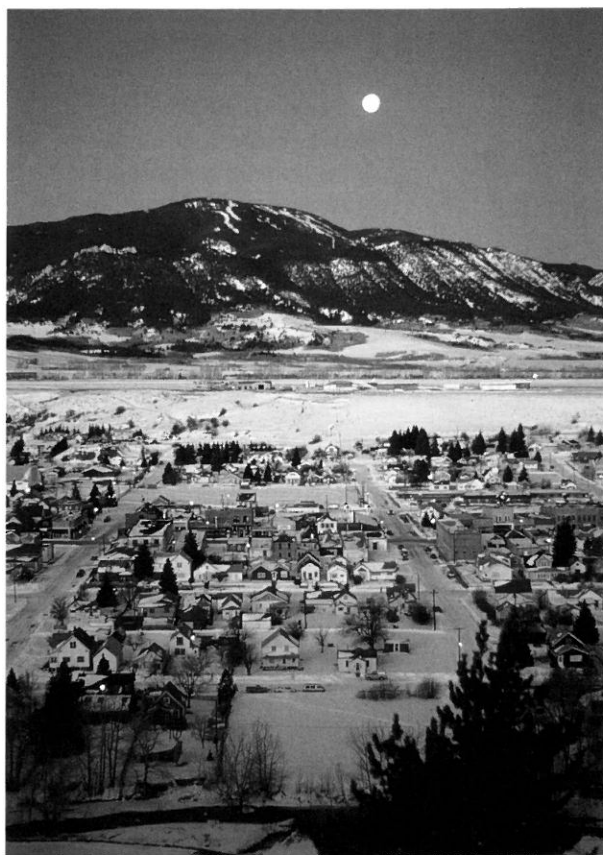
Saguaro National Monument, Arizona, from Tucson's continued urban expansion. Long-term funding for the Rincon Institute comes from a precedent-setting source: fees assessed to builders and future residents of development adjacent to the Monument. With the Rincon Institute as a model, the Sonoran Institute has helped establish similar conservation ventures at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, California, and the Methow Valley of central

Cover photo: Hayfields on the outskirts of Red Lodge, Montana, just north of Yellowstone National Park. A Successful Communities workshop hosted by the Sonoran Institute in Red Lodge helped residents prepare for future growth and prompted gifts of conservation easements on a number of ranches outside the town. Photograph by Merv Coleman.

Washington State. As another way of creating models, our Innovation Grants program provides financial support to the nation's most promising locally based conservation and sustainable development initiatives.

Third, effective local conservation strategies require grassroots leadership, community involvement, and technical assistance. We have helped create grassroots organizations in three of the most

An early morning moonset over Red Lodge, Montana. Photograph by Merv Coleman.



ecologically significant and threatened regions in North America: the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the Sierra Madre of northern Mexico, and the U.S.-Mexico border region of the Sonoran Desert. Each of these efforts is designed to empower citizens to attain their own goals for conservation and community development.

Finally, Sonoran Institute staff members actively share their unique experiences with others facing similar challenges. In 1993, we presented our results to audiences throughout the continent, from the Upper Gulf of California to the Catskill Mountains of New York State, and from Canmore, Alberta, to Palm Beach, Florida. The Institute also has begun research on an illustrated guidebook that will demonstrate the importance of managing growth in communities that serve as gateways to protected landscapes.

Human activities need not always desecrate the landscape and undermine community well-being. Likewise, protecting the ecological integrity and scenic beauty of wild lands does not require sacrificing economic vitality, community values, or private property rights. We invite all who share this conviction to join us.

Frank Gregg
Chairman of the Board

Luther Propst
Executive Director

Helping communities envision a sustainable future

"Good [land use] cannot be 'invented' by self-styled smart people in offices and laboratories and then sold at the highest profit to the supposedly dumb country people. That is not the way good land use comes about."

—Wendell Berry

Successful Communities Workshops

Conservation cannot be imposed from above. It has to have the support of the people who live and work on the land. The Sonoran Institute's Successful Communities workshops help people identify what they value about their communities, create a shared vision for their future,

and, most importantly, implement specific projects to realize their objectives. The Sonoran Institute also provides the technical assistance that is often required to carry out local priorities.

Successful Communities workshops have been conducted in more than a dozen communities adjacent to protected lands. Both the community and the landscape benefit from the ideas and the vision that emerge. A workshop we hosted in Red Lodge, Montana, for example, prompted gifts of conservation easements on several thousand acres on the outskirts of town. These easements will preserve not only important grizzly bear and elk habitat, but also the ranching economy and heritage identified by Red Lodge residents as important to their sense of community.

The Sonoran Institute's Successful Communities workshops have taken place in more than a dozen communities throughout the West.



Washington

Ashford
Elbe
Greenwater

Idaho

Driggs
Victor

Montana

Cooke City
Gardiner
Livingston
Red Lodge

Wyoming

Dubois
Jackson
Lander

Colorado

Crested Butte
Gunnison

Arizona

Patagonia

Creating models of local conservation and sustainable development

"Financial and technical assistance for grassroots conservation is harder to secure in the United States than it is in the developing world."

Innovation Grants

Conservation and sustainable development projects require more than just commitment — they need *funding*. Over the last three years, the Sonoran Institute's Innovation Grants program has distributed half a million dollars in seed money to more than 75 organizations across the country. With generous support from S.C. Johnson & Son, the makers of Johnson Wax, the program points the way toward strategies that create livable and more distinctive communities.

In 1993, the Innovation Grants program — administered in cooperation with World Wildlife Fund — awarded more than \$175,000 to 28 groups. Some of the projects funded in 1993 include:

- Trinity Alps Botanicals in northern California is establishing a certification process to recognize sustainably harvested lumber.
- Montana's Flathead Economic Development Corporation is helping landowners preserve the ranching traditions and ecological integrity of private lands adjoining Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area.

— Dennis Glick, *Innovation Grants reviewer*

- The Hill Country Foundation is developing a system to link conservation-minded real estate

buyers with ecologically significant properties around Austin, Texas.

- The Conservation Trust of North Carolina is creating a statewide network of local and regional land trusts that will acquire land and conservation easements.

The Black Bear Conservation Committee is using an Innovation Grant to restore habitat and educate Louisianans about the ecological needs of the Louisiana black bear, a threatened species.



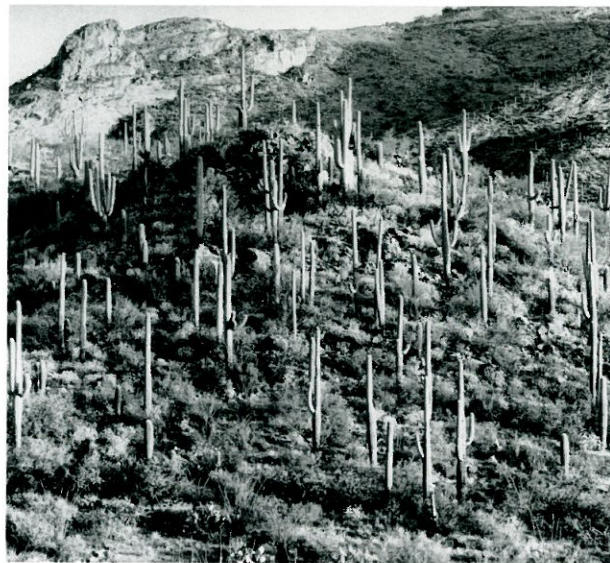
Integrating conservation and development

Increasing numbers of people are choosing to live in the small towns and open spaces surrounding our parks, wildlife refuges, and other protected lands. Although development of private land adjacent to these areas often encroaches upon native ecosystems, it also represents an opportunity to harness development for conservation gain.

The Rincon Institute

The Sonoran Institute established the Rincon Institute to protect the sensitive desert ecosystems of Saguaro National Monument, Arizona, from Tucson's urban expansion. The Rincon Institute meets its mission by conducting ecological research, offering environmental education programs, and assisting with critical land acquisitions to expand the Monument. Rincon's activities are funded in part through a precedent-setting arrangement: deed restrictions that assess fees to builders and homeowners at the Rocking K Ranch, a major development adjacent to the Monument.

In 1993, the Rincon Institute launched a series of field seminars that help local residents not only



© 1994 Robert Glenn Ketchum

Once far from Tucson, Saguaro National Monument is now in the path of a wave of urban expansion that threatens to transform the once remote wilderness into a suburban preserve. Photograph by Robert Glenn Ketchum.

appreciate the desert environment, but lessen their impacts on it. Institute ecologists also continue to monitor the diverse wildlife and vegetation in the area. Their insights will help improve our understanding of how urban growth affects native ecosystems. The Institute also is publishing a guidebook to help resource managers restore degraded riparian areas.

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PROGRAM RESULTS FOR 1993

With the Rincon Institute as a model, the Sonoran Institute in 1993 helped establish similar conservation programs at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, California, and the Methow Valley of central Washington State.

The Las Virgenes Institute

Near the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in metropolitan Los Angeles, the Sonoran Institute is helping create the Las Virgenes Institute to restore native grasslands and provide environmental education at the Ahmanson Ranch, a former sheep ranch in Ventura County. More than 85 percent of the 13,000-acre project will be protected as natural open space. Moreover, landscaping at the development will feature native drought-resistant plants rather than the thirsty grasses and exotic species utilized at most developments in southern California.

The Methow Valley Environmental Center

For the last 20 years, residents of Washington State's Methow Valley have battled a downhill ski resort proposed adjacent to a wilderness area on the Okanogan National Forest. In 1993, a new owner acquired the property — which is 10 miles from North Cascades National Park — and pledged to work with the com-



The Sonoran Institute helped environmentalists and landowners reach an innovative solution that ends the threat of a downhill ski resort in the pristine Methow Valley.

munity to find a locally acceptable use for the land. At the request of both local environmentalists and the landowner, the Sonoran Institute helped work out a solution that permits construction of a small-scale cross-country ski center rather than a destination downhill resort.

Most important, the landowner also agreed to assess a one percent transfer fee on all real estate transactions in the project; the revenue will fund acquisition of conservation easements throughout the valley. Separate fees will be used to finance a new organization — the Methow Valley Environmental Center — that will restore habitat, offer environmental education programs, and monitor environmental conditions in the valley.

Building local and regional capacity

"The International Sonoran Desert Alliance — with participation by citizens of the U.S., Mexico, and Tohono O'odham Nation — is a model for cross-border cooperation and international problem-solving. It represents the kind of long-range, community-based planning necessary for protecting ... the border region."

—U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini

Effective local conservation strategies require grassroots leadership, community involvement, and technical assistance. In three of the most ecologically significant regions of North America, we have helped create grassroots organizations that empower citizens to attain their own goals for conservation and community development.

U.S.-Mexico Borderlands Program

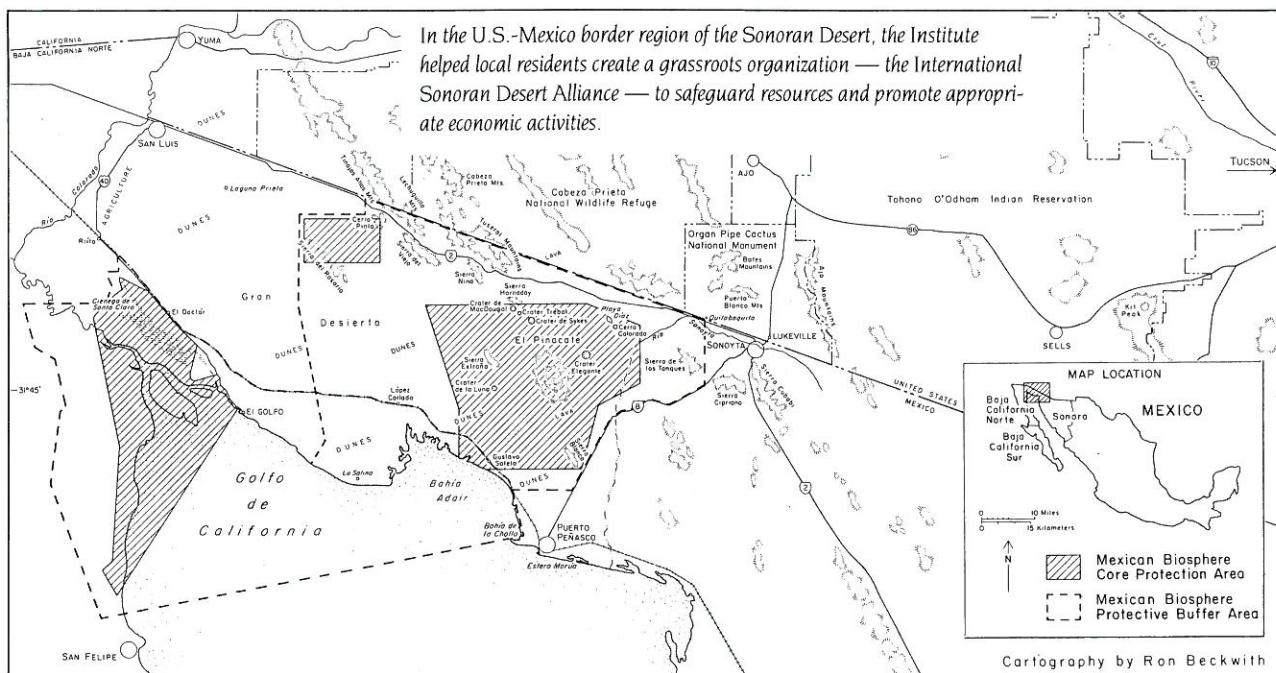
Our Borderlands program is helping to fashion community-based conservation and economic development efforts in the U.S.-Mexico border region of the Sonoran Desert, an area rich in natural resources and cultural heritage. While much of the region's land is protected by public and tribal ownership, as a whole it lacks a unified management strategy, mainly due to language barriers, the international border, and the diverse cul-

tural perspectives of three nations: the U.S., Mexico, and the Tohono O'odham Nation, whose tribal homelands comprise a substantial portion of the region.

To develop a comprehensive approach to resource management along the border, the Sonoran Institute in 1993 helped organize the International Sonoran Desert Alliance, a coalition of local residents, business leaders, and government officials. The Alliance is a unique, tri-national partnership

working to coordinate management of the area's resources and promote appropriate economic activities. The Alliance has elected a board of directors and formally incorporated itself as a nonprofit organization.

The Sonoran Institute recently organized a two-day conference in Puerto Peñasco, Sonora, where more than 300 participants identified their conservation



and economic priorities, as well as tangible steps for realizing them. The ideas that grow from the conference will be the stepping stone to resource management and community development plans for the region.

The Corporation for Northern Rockies Sustainable Communities

In the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the Sonoran Institute is helping residents create a new organization to develop new approaches to land use and economic development. The Corporation for Northern Rockies Sustainable Communities will provide technical assistance, disseminate research findings, make catalytic grants and loans, and carry out model partnership projects that create sustainable communities. At a series of Successful Communities workshops held in the Yellowstone region, residents identified such an organization as critical to their effort to find strategies for preserving the region's communities and resources.

So often in the West our public issues are bipolar, industry against environmentalists. Although both groups have honest concerns about jobs and community, . . . the public interest also encompasses community and social needs not always served by these kinds of organizations.

— Charles F. Wilkinson

Proyecto de Recursos Tarahumara

In northern Mexico, the Sonoran Institute is helping indigenous cultures of the Sierra Madre Occidental realize their priorities for conservation and community development. To expand economic options for the native Tarahumara Indians, we are eval-

uating the region's eco-tourism potential and creating markets for locally produced wild crops and arts and crafts.

The Institute also is helping the Tarahumara protect their natural resources by inventorying the Sierra Madre's forests so that remaining old-growth stands can be protected. We've also helped the Tarahumara locate materials and funding to plant gardens and orchards, construct drinking water and irrigation systems, and restore badly eroded and deforested areas. This project is a partnership with Native Seeds/SEARCH.



The Sonoran Institute provides administrative support to Environmental Flying Services, an aviation service that flies researchers to, from, and over biodiversity conservation projects in Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexico border. The aerial photograph above was taken during a 1993 survey of old-growth forests in the Sierra Madre. The Institute is inventorying the region's forests so that remaining old-growth stands can be protected.

PROGRAM RESULTS FOR 1993

Communicating our results

The Sonoran Institute strongly believes in sharing its experiences and lessons with other organizations and communities. In 1993, Institute staff members were frequently on the road, presenting speeches and slide shows and helping communities plan for their future. Articles describing our innovative and results-oriented approach have appeared in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, and professional journals.

In 1993, we also began research on a book and audiovisual presentation that will describe successful and unsuccessful efforts to protect local character in

the "gateway" communities adjacent to America's national parks and other protected natural areas. Illustrated by award-winning landscape photographer Robert Glenn Ketchum, the book will outline actions that communities can take to effectively manage growth and to protect the resources around them.

The award-winning photography of Robert Glenn Ketchum will illustrate the Institute's upcoming book on how gateway communities can protect resources and character without jeopardizing economic vitality. Below, rapid development of private lands in Estes Park, Colorado — the gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park — is threatening wildlife and marring vistas from within the park.



© 1994 Robert Glenn Ketchum

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The board and staff of the Sonoran Institute and Rincon Institute extend heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all our generous donors, supporters, and partners. The following foundations, individuals, and organizations enable us to implement community-based conservation strategies throughout the nation.

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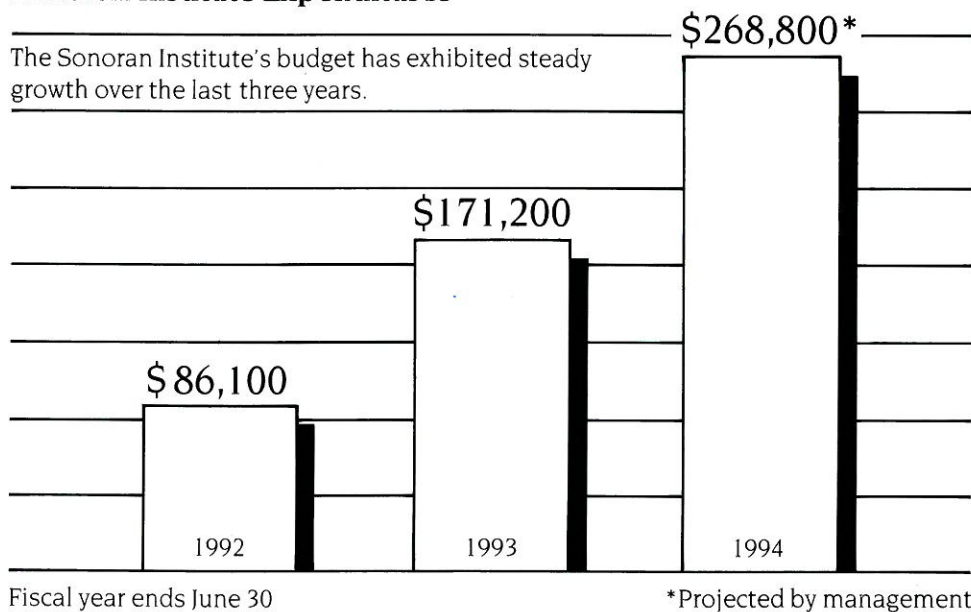
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In fiscal year 1993, the Sonoran Institute had revenues of \$169,200 and expenses of \$172,600. Most of the Institute's fiscal 1993 revenue was derived from foundation grants; nearly 20 different foundations contributed to our programs. The Institute's budget for fiscal year 1994 is \$268,800.

The affiliated Rincon Institute had fiscal 1993 revenues of roughly \$129,100 and expenses of \$128,200. The Rincon Institute's projected fiscal 1994 budget is \$156,400.

Sonoran Institute Expenditures

The Sonoran Institute's budget has exhibited steady growth over the last three years.



The Sonoran Institute is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is a publicly supported organization as defined by Section 170(b)(1) and 509(a). Donations to the Institute are tax deductible.

These figures were compiled by the accounting firm Peachin & Peto, CPAs, Ltd., for submission to the Internal Revenue Service.

THE SONORAN INSTITUTE

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