

**Sonoran Institute Vision**  
 THE SONORAN INSTITUTE WORKS WITH PEOPLE TO PROTECT HEALTHY LANDSCAPES, SUPPORT VIBRANT ECONOMIES, AND PROMOTE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES.

## Successful Open Space Purchases Encourage More Bonds in Big Sky Country

Gallatin County, Montana, Places Second Open Space Bond on the November 2004 Ballot

This November, voters will again have the opportunity to protect more open space in Gallatin County, Montana. In just four short years, the outstanding accomplishments from the first successful bond measure have demonstrated what can be achieved through an effective and well-managed open space program. In November 2000, voters in Gallatin County made history by approving the first county-wide open space bond in the state. The Sonoran Institute played a lead role in the campaign to pass the \$10 million measure, working in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, Gallatin Valley Land Trust, the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, and numerous local citizens. As dozens of hard working volunteers celebrated this conservation victory, no one thought we'd be doing it again so soon!

Thanks to the passage of the 2000 bond, Gallatin County's Open Space Program has teamed up with local land trusts and long-time agricultural families to conserve over 21,000 acres (that's 33 square miles!) of the area's best agricultural land, scenic open space, wildlife habitat, and river corridors.

Because of public dollars spent to buy conservation easements from willing landowners, lands along the East Fork of the Gallatin River will remain free of development, protecting clean water, productive agriculture, and fish and wildlife habitat. Protection of this and other special places has succeeded in bringing many diverse interests together, making Gallatin County's Open Space Program a model of collaborative land conservation.

Local investment of bond money has successfully attracted additional state, federal, and private matching funds to purchase conservation easements at a rate of four new dollars for every one county dollar. Thanks to low interest rates, the 2000 bond has cost taxpayers half of what was originally projected when the measure passed. Close to \$6.5 million of the first bond has been committed or spent to purchase land or conservation easements. With several new projects coming into the County Open Lands Board, the 2000 bond is likely to be completely committed by mid-2005.

Based upon the success of this popular and well-managed program, Gallatin County residents are coming together again to pass another measure. In July, the Gallatin County Commission voted unanimously to put a second \$10 million bond on the November 2004 ballot, citing the success of the first measure. Once again, the



TPL/Alex Dickmann

A conservation easement of 956 acres on this property owned by Joe Skinner was purchased with money from the first Gallatin County open space bond.



Sonoran Institute is excited to play a lead role in the 2004 campaign.

Many who testified in favor of placing a second measure on the ballot noted the importance of open space protection to economic development. As new companies and entrepreneurs choose to locate their businesses in this booming community, the beauty of the county's landscape and the outdoor recreation that open space affords top the list of reasons for locating in this area. With rising land prices and rapid growth, residents know they must act now to protect these qualities from development. Passing a second open space bond will continue the success of Gallatin County's Open Space Program and will be another significant victory for collaborative land conservation.

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## June 2004 Board Meeting

The Sonoran Institute Board of Directors held its June meeting in historic Livingston, Montana. Discussion topics included the 2004-2005 budget and consolidation of the Sonoran Desert and Southeast Arizona programs. New Board members Bryan Morgan and Karen Wade joined the Board and staff in a reception for local friends and partners at the Livingston Depot. The following day Board members and guests enjoyed a float down the Yellowstone River to see restoration efforts along this national treasure. The next Board meeting will be held in Tucson, Arizona, November 4 and 5.



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Emily Stevens  
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# Aspirations for the West's Open Spaces

By Luther Propst, Executive Director



“Nothing would gratify me more than to see [the West], in all its sub-regions and sub-cultures, both prosperous and environmentally healthy, with a civilization to match its scenery,” wrote Wallace Stegner.

We still have a long way to go to fulfill Stegner’s aspirations for the West and often it seems that we are still moving in the wrong direction. There is good news, however. An increasingly robust body of research demonstrates that protecting the scenery and open spaces of the West—wilderness areas, national parks and monuments, and working landscapes—contributes mightily to the economic prosperity of this region.

The Sonoran Institute recently released a comprehensive economic study of all 414 Western counties (see story on page 5 of this edition). The results are already reshaping the way people view the relationship between open space conservation and economic prosperity. The lesson is increasingly clear: protecting open space is critical not only for ensuring the long-term health of our wildlife and landscapes, but

also for continuing the viability of our local economies and the livability of our cities and towns. These undeveloped landscapes—ranging from wilderness areas and national parks to working ranches—give Western North America a distinction unique in the world as a great place to both work and play.

The Sonoran Institute’s goal is to *protect healthy landscapes, support vibrant economies, and promote livable communities*. In this edition of *Vision*, we are proud to report on several conservation successes—demonstrating that Western communities are increasingly aware of the economic advantages of protecting our landscapes, and are actively working to do so. We are proud to be helping dozens of communities around the West understand their economy, develop a vision for protecting what they value, and enact effective local measures to protect those assets.

Please join us, so that our children inherit a civilization in the West that indeed matches its scenery.

*Luther Propst*

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**Institutional Funders**  
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(continued)

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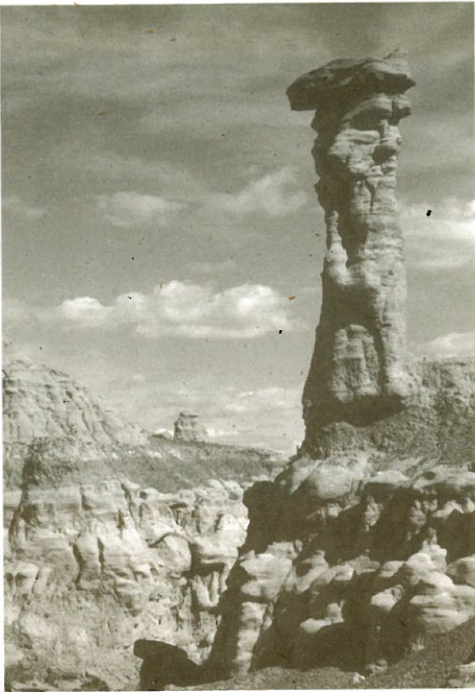




# Sonoran Institute Promotes Expansion of Petrified Forest National Park

Expansion Protects Geology and Significant Ancient Native American Treasures

Fred Hirschmann, National Park Service



The expansion of Petrified Forest National Park will protect important fossil-bearing formations and scenic vistas within the Painted Desert.

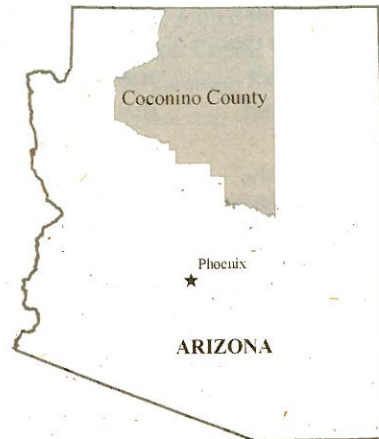
Since January 2004, the Sonoran Institute has played a critical role in coordinating and elevating the voice of public support behind the proposal to double the size of Petrified Forest National Park. The proposed park expansion will protect over 120,000 acres of highly scenic and scientifically important lands adjoining the park in northeastern Arizona outside of Winslow and Holbrook, Arizona.

Working closely with our partner, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), the Institute is backing a bill introduced by Senator John McCain and Congressman Rick Renzi that would expand the boundaries of the park in order to protect a large portion of the Chile escarpment, which holds the world's best fossil record of late-Triassic (250 million years b.p.) terrestrial ecosystems. The park expansion also would protect the park's stunning Painted Desert vistas and significant archaeological sites including extensive pueblo ruins and some of the most unusual rock art galleries in the Southwest.

The proposal to expand Petrified Forest National Park is important to the economy of northeastern Arizona, particularly given the important role that tourism to the park, with its 575,650 annual visitors, represents to local communities. The proposal has

received overwhelming support from elected officials in the cities of Holbrook and Winslow, the Holbrook Chamber of Commerce, the Navajo County Board of Supervisors, and from a broad segment of the scientific and academic community, including the Museum of Northern Arizona and faculty from Northern Arizona University's anthropology and geology departments.

The proposal also has the strong backing of the landowners whose lands would be added to the park. These entities include the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the Arizona State Land Department (with strong support voiced recently by Governor Janet Napolitano), and four ranchers whose



holdings comprise over half the lands included within the proposal.

Passage of the bill to expand the boundary of Petrified Forest National Park would protect nationally significant resources currently located outside the park for today and for future generations. The Sonoran Institute (with support from the Wyss Foundation and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy) is working to accomplish the conservation goal of protecting and enhancing northeastern Arizona's Painted Desert landscape while simultaneously strengthening its local economy.



# The West's Economic Advantage: Protected Open Space

*Prosperity in the 21st Century West Report Dispels Old Myths*

A new report issued by the Sonoran Institute is reshaping the way many people think about the economy of the West. The report, *Prosperity in the 21st Century West: the Role of Protected Public Lands*, finds that in today's competitive global economy, the distinguishing characteristic of the West—and our ace in the hole—is our protected public lands. The report demonstrates that congressionally-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, and other protected public lands attract people and businesses. The traditional staples of the West's economy—mining, energy development, logging—generally create few new jobs.

This means that the principal economic value of public lands is more than supplying commodities like timber and minerals. Instead, the most important economic value of public lands today is to create the setting that makes rural communities in the West attractive places for entrepreneurs to live and raise their families. For this reason, communities adjacent to protected wild lands are growing much faster than communities surrounded by land heavily used for logging and mining.

The Sonoran Institute is using this recent report as one among many tools to educate the public, policy makers, and land managers about the changing economy of the West, and to show opportunities that exist for both a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

Other tools are:

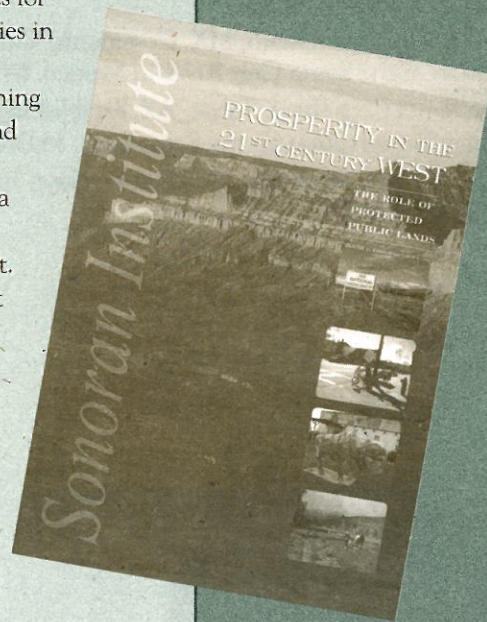
- a free, automated Economic Profile System for producing detailed socioeconomic profiles for over 92,000 geographies in the entire country;
- community-level training economics courses; and
- custom research and public discussions on a variety of topics important to the West.

More information about the *Prosperity in the 21st Century West* report and the Economic Profile System is available at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org).

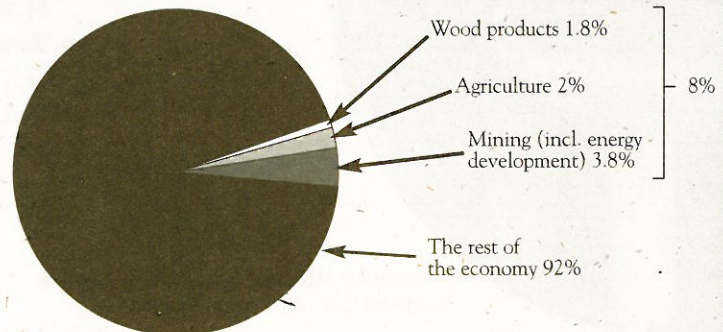


Irida Vaughan

*Wilderness, national parks and monuments, and other protected public lands set aside for their wild land characteristics can and do play an important role in stimulating economic growth—and the more protected, the better. An educated workforce, newcomers, airports, and a number of other factors allow some areas to flourish and to take advantage of protected lands as part of an economic development strategy.*



## The Rural Economy of the West 2000



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Regional Economic Information System, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Washington, D.C., 2001





# Sonoran Institute Announces Awards for \$84,500 in Small Grants

Resources for Community Collaboration Assists 19 Communities in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico

Nineteen community-based collaborative groups were awarded a total of \$84,500 as part of Sonoran Institute's Resources for Community Collaboration program. This year's grantee organizations were selected from a competitive pool of over 125 hopefuls, and ranged in geography from Mexico to Canada. Since 1998, this program has supported grassroots organizations working to resolve conflicts over natural resource issues.

The following 2004 award winners are:

- AEURHYC A.C., Mexicali, MX, Community Participation in Colorado River Delta Restoration, \$4,500
- Coalition for the Valle Vidal, Taos, NM, Coalition for the Valle Vidal, New Mexico, \$4,500
- Columbia River Greenways Alliance, Invermere, BC, Columbia River Greenway, \$4,500
- Ejido Miguel Hidalgo, San Lázaro, MX, Community Center for Conservation of the Santa Cruz River in Mexico, \$4,000
- Friends of the Santa Cruz River, Tubac, AZ, Establishing Viable Riparian Conservation on the Santa Cruz, \$4,000
- Georgia Strait Alliance, Nanaimo, BC, Best Practices In and On the Water, \$4,500
- Gifford Pinchot Task Force, Vancouver, WA, Community and Ancient Forests Initiative, Stage II, \$4,500
- Grasslands Conservation Council of B.C., Kamloops, BC, Mitigating the Fragmentation and Development of BC's Grasslands, \$4,500
- Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership, Flagstaff, AZ, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, \$4,500
- Northeastern Nevada Stewardship Group, Inc., Elko, NV, Elko County Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation Strategy, \$4,500
- Quivira Coalition, Santa Fe, NM, The New Ranch Network, \$5,000
- Rincon Institute, Tucson, AZ, Cienega Corridor Conservation Council, \$4,500
- San Juan Citizens Alliance, Durango, CO, Dolores River Flows by Consensus, \$4,500
- South Yuba River Citizens League, Nevada City, CA, Collaborative Decision-Making on the Upper Yuba River, \$4,000
- Swan Ecosystem Center, Condon, MT, Conservation Strategy for the Swan Valley, Montana-II, \$4,500
- Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Assn., Douglas, WY, Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association-II, \$4,500
- Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council, Milton-Freewater, OR, Walla Walla Habitat Conservation Collaboration-II, \$4,500
- Western Slope Environmental Resource Council, Paonia, CO, WSERC Coal and Gas Collaborations, \$4,500
- Yaak Valley Forest Council, Troy, MT, Community Forestry and Wildlife Protection Project, \$4,500



2004 Resources for Community Collaboration Grants



Meredith Hamstead and Bill Swan from the Columbia River Greenway Alliance



# Custer County, Colorado Protects 10,000 Acres

Ranchland Preserved Through Voluntary Conservation Easements

This summer marked the fifth anniversary of the Sonoran Institute's assistance to residents of Custer County, Colorado. This partnership has focused on protecting what makes the county unique, most notably the spectacular ranchlands and open space of the Wet Mountain Valley.

Custer County had been insulated from the growth in much of Colorado until the 1990s when the county population grew by over 80 percent. Spurred by the rapid pace of growth, landowners and local officials invited the Sonoran Institute to help identify community values and bring resources to protect those values for this and future generations.

At an initial community forum, residents identified protecting agricultural lands and open space as their top priority. Working in concert with area ranchers, the local land trust, Trust for Public Land, and Colorado Conservation Trust, the Institute has made significant conservation progress, including the voluntary protection of nearly 10,000 acres of ranchland through conservation easements.

The Sonoran Institute's work in Custer County is founded on the premise that well facilitated public discussions informed by sound information can improve public policy and create opportunities for creative private initiatives that benefit everyone.

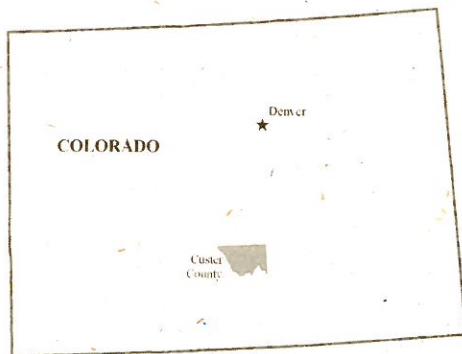
The Institute has held six public forums on topics ranging from the fiscal impacts of growth to build out scenarios modeling future growth. These exercises led to the adoption of the county's first master plan, a significant revision of the zoning ordinance, and a study to determine the capacity of local groundwater supplies.

Just as importantly, the Institute supports the local community in their



Ben Alexander

*Sara Shields exemplifies today's generation of ranchers in Custer County, Colorado. Sarah continued the tradition of more than 100 years of ranching on her family's San Isabel Ranch and is helping protect the heritage of working landscapes in the West.*



desire to take a more active role in determining their future. Five years down the road, we can see the results in protected open space, better county land use policies, and the belief that future growth need not come at the expense of what matters most to the community.

*Editor's Note: Custer County, Colorado, is profiled in a new Sonoran Institute publication: A Pilgrimage to Community available on our Web site: [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org).*

*This publication highlights, in photos and words, the extraordinary people and places that make Custer County so special.*

## WHAT'S A CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

A conservation easement is a voluntary contract that permanently limits the type and intensity of future land use, while allowing landowners to retain ownership and control of their property. Conservation easements are tailored to the needs of each landowner and may qualify for tax benefits in compliance with Internal Revenue Service rules.

Conservation easements involve the purchase or donation of a property's development rights. In general, conservation easements limit the amount and location of future structures and define the type of land uses that can occur. With a conservation easement, a landowner can reserve the right to carry out specified activities, such as limited development and commercial use of part or all of the land, so long as these activities do not unduly affect the land's conservation value.

Easements can be placed on an entire tract of land or only part of it. Easement restrictions are typically permanent and "run with the land," binding the original landowner and all future landowners.



# LA RUTA DE SONORA

## Fall Eco-Tour Specials

La Ruta de Sonora is a unique non-profit ecotourism affiliate of the Sonoran Institute. Themed itineraries in Arizona and Sonora, Mexico, are developed in partnership with local communities to give visitors a perspective and understanding of local ecosystems, cultures, and trans-border issues.

Offering guests the opportunity to experience an authentic eco-adventure at affordable prices, La Ruta works exclusively with local service providers and tour guides to ensure the region's sustainable economic development. A portion of each tour also supports conservation efforts through La Ruta's conservation fund.

### HERITAGE TOUR Oct. 30-Nov. 2, 2004

- Join the "Day of the Dead" special cultural celebrations
- Visit Father Kino's missions and learn of his legacy
- Discover the archeological treasures of northern Sonora (Trincheras & Petrolgyphs)

### COLORADO RIVER DELTA TOUR Nov. 11-14, 2004

- Learn about water policy issues and efforts to protected this critical area
- Canoe through through the region's most important wetland
- Enjoy birding and wildlife observation

### DESERT AND SEA TOUR Nov. 26-28, 2004

- Visit three of the worlds most protected and pristine desert habitats
- Enjoy a volcanic experience at the Pinacate Biosphere Reserve
- Explore the Sea of Cortez marine life and biodiversity

For costs and additional information, please visit [www.laruta.org](http://www.laruta.org), or call 520-886-6555.

## YOU CAN HELP WITH PLANNED GIVING

Through a planned gift, you can become a critical partner in the important work of the Sonoran Institute. Your gift can ensure a natural, lasting legacy for generations to come while meeting your own financial objectives. Planned giving can be arranged through the Sonoran Institute's Development Program staff, or through your own financial professional. Contact Associate Director Don Chatfield at 520-290-0828 ext. 210 for more information.

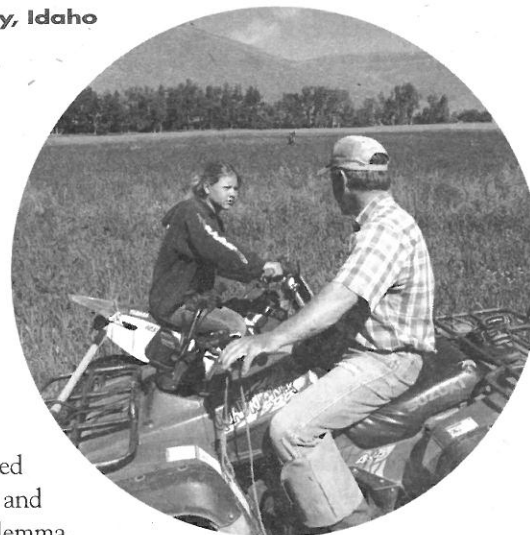
## Ranchers Lead Grassroots Community Organizing

**Salmon Valley Stewardship Created to Assist Residents in Lemhi County, Idaho**

Ranchers such as Tom McFarland in Lemhi County, Idaho, increasingly feel the pressures of growth and development on their way of life. As ranches around him subdivide, McFarland's desire to leave the family ranch to his children motivates him to find a way to maintain open, working landscapes into the future. He is not alone. Most of the small, family owned and operated ranches in the Salmon and Lemhi valleys are facing the same dilemma, as second-home builders and retiring baby boomers discover the beauty and magic of living in this part of the rural Intermountain West.

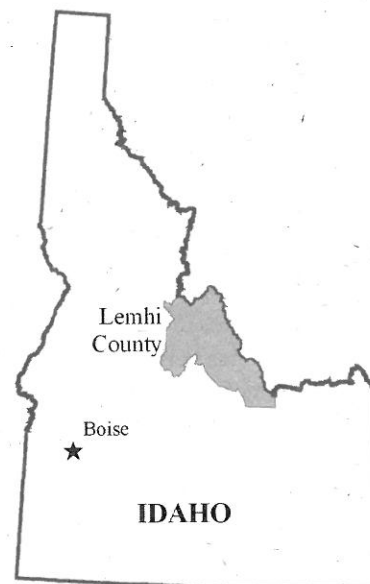
In 2002, Lemhi County residents invited the Sonoran Institute to bring together ranchers, local government officials, and other concerned individuals to build a tangible organization that would mobilize their effort. The result is Salmon Valley Stewardship, the first community organization of its kind in this part of Idaho. The stewardship group is currently developing programs to better manage local growth, promote more sustainable use of natural resources, and diversify local economic opportunities.

Through a grant from the Brainerd Foundation, the Sonoran Institute hired Salmon Valley Stewardship's first staff person, Adrienne Blausen, a resident of the Salmon Valley, and has opened an office on Main Street in Salmon. For more information on Salmon Valley Stewardship, call 208-940-0977 or E-mail Adrienne at [adrienne@sonoran.org](mailto:adrienne@sonoran.org).



Adrienne Blausen

Tom McFarland and his family work the land in Lemhi County.

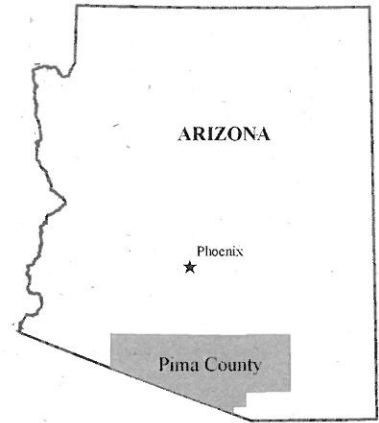






Brian Anderson

Passage of the open space bond for Pima County will protect important wildlife corridors like this area near Colossal Cave Mountain Park just 12 miles to the Southeast of Tucson.



## \$174 Million Secured for Open Space in Pima County, Arizona

Foundation for Sonoran Institute's Conservation Blueprint is Put Into Place

On May 18, 2004, Pima County voters overwhelmingly approved \$174 million in county bonds to fund the protection of wildlife habitat and open space. The Sonoran Institute worked closely with a broad-based group called *Friends of the Sonoran Desert* to pass the bond measure by a comfortable 67 percent approval rate. The Sonoran Institute also led the effort for broad support from business and real estate interests in order to secure a successful campaign. We were encouraged by the support of Tucson Association of Realtors, DM-50 (Davis-Monthan), and the Metro Pima Alliance who endorsed the measure, along with dozens of local business leaders.

"We were very happy, not only with the passing of the open space proposal, but by the number of positive votes," said Peter Backus, a local real estate developer and trails advocate who co-chaired the bond effort. "It shows that most of the people understand the reason we live in Tucson and they do not want that beauty taken away."

The open space bond was part of a comprehensive bond package that met a

wide range of community needs, including law enforcement, hospital improvements, and water and sewer investments.

The package also ensures:

- property tax rates will not increase to pay off these bonds;
- tough accountability measures, with annual audits; and
- a citizen oversight committee to monitor that funds are being spent as promised.

The Sonoran Institute believes that rapidly growing eastern Pima County requires a multi-faceted program to balance growth and conservation, including the bond measure; completion of Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan; comprehensive reform of state trust land management in

Arizona; and the Institute's *Building from the Best of Tucson* program to promote downtown revitalization, infill, and high-quality design.

Passage of the open space bond is one essential piece of this puzzle. These four critical conservation and economic initiatives constitute the Institute's *Blueprint* to guide Pima County's growth (visit our Web site at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org) for a copy of the complete *Blueprint*).

"It shows that most of the people understand the reason we live in Tucson and they do not want that beauty taken away."

- Peter Backus  
Developer and bond co-chair

Together, we can keep Tucson one of the nation's most attractive and livable communities, with connected wildlife habitat, open space, clean air, clean water, and a healthy lifestyle for residents far into the future.



