

Institute Grows to Meet Demand

by John Shepard, Associate Director for Programs

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

Requests from communities for the Sonoran Institute's assistance with local conservation and land-use planning sometimes exceed the Institute's capacity to respond. So the organization's new strategic plan calls for developing a broader geographic presence in the West, along with exerting a deeper impact on policy and creating a higher profile for collaborative conservation.

With these priorities, the Institute will dramatically expand and further diversify its conservation resources over the next few months. The Institute has hired a director for a new Central Rockies regional office, and soon a new field office will open in Nevada.

Western Colorado native Jim Spehar will open the Central Rockies regional office this fall in Grand Junction, Colorado. Jim has experience as an elected official, plus a background in media and government relations and in smart growth policy work. He served as a gubernatorial appointee to the Colorado Economic Development Commission and coordinated a collaborative effort by Colorado's major resort communities to address social and economic issues.

The Central Rockies office will allow us to deepen our existing work in western Colorado, northern New Mexico and south-central Wyoming. For seven years, the Institute has assisted rural counties, ranchers and public-land managers in this region with managing growth and preserving natural resources. Some of the

Institute's most successful partnerships have been in the Central Rockies, including Custer County, Colorado, and Rio Arriba County, New Mexico.

"We will have the ability to be more responsive to requests for local assistance once we have established our Central Rockies office," says Luther Propst, the Institute's executive director.

Bruce Arkell, the new Sonoran Institute field representative in Nevada, will assist local communities with such issues as:

- County-by-county public-lands bills that designate wilderness and new conservation areas;
- The disposal of public lands based on local priorities;
- Funding local programs to stimulate economic prosperity.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to further explore the economic role of public lands in the West that is consistent with conservation," says Ben Alexander, director of the Institute's SocioEconomics Program.

Also in the pipeline are:

- new leadership training and development for rural community leaders to support county officials considering progressive land-use policies,
- a program to research and evaluate emerging legal issues around managing growth in the West.

"This is an exciting time at the Sonoran Institute," Luther says. "It's gratifying to be able to expand with programs that have a consistent demand and proven track record."

Custer County, Colorado



The Institute's Board of Directors met recently in Banff, Alberta, along with members of our Canadian affiliate, the Chinook Institute. In addition to conducting their summer business meeting, board members viewed wildlife overpasses in Banff National Park and enjoyed a raft trip on the Bow River.

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Welcome new Sonoran Institute staff:

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Helena: Tim Davis
Tucson: Michelle Berry, Victoria Collier,
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Moving on

We thank and wish the best of success to
Terry Picurro and Mark Haggerty who left the
Sonoran Institute to pursue other work.

The *Sonoran Institute Vision* is published twice a year by the Sonoran Institute, 7650 E. Broadway Blvd., Suite 203, Tucson, Arizona 85710. It is available in print or at www.sonoran.org.

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The Difference between Conversation and Conservation

By Luther Propst, Executive Director

George Hartzog, the great director of the National Park Service between 1964 and 1972, is quoted having said that the difference between conversation and conservation is funding.

While there are certainly other factors at work, Hartzog's pithy truism captures the essential importance of our donors. With no endowment, the Sonoran Institute depends entirely on a network of people who have confidence in our approach to conservation and our effectiveness. This past year has shown the importance of both our major donors and the hundreds of people who contribute \$100 or \$500 annually to our organization.

Supporters like the Wyss Foundation, whose generosity has made so much possible, including many projects in Southeast Arizona and the Western Community Stewardship Forum and SocioEconomics Programs.

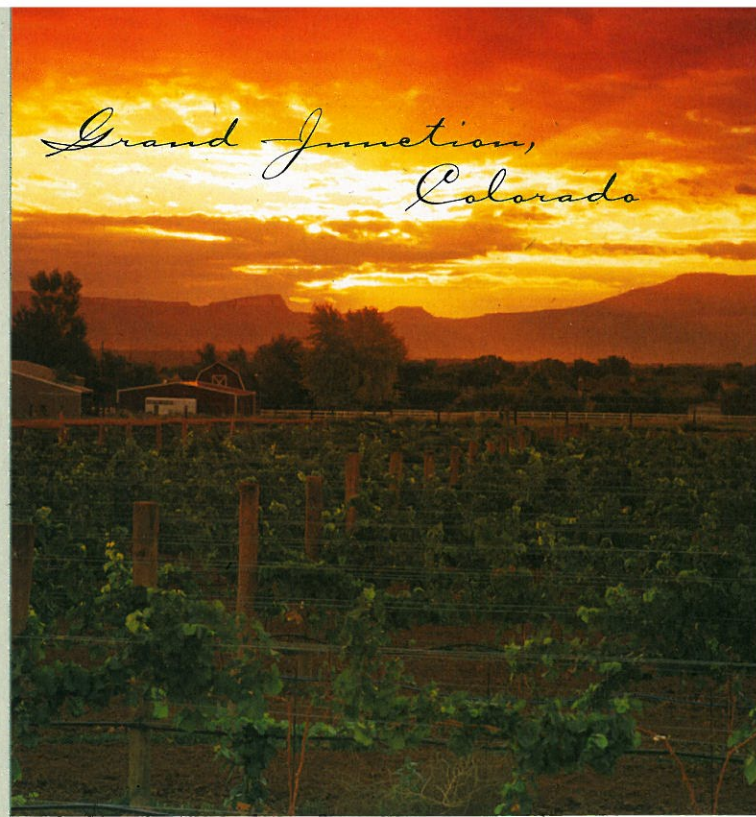
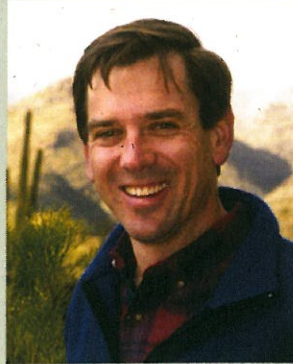
Our partnership with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy has had a profound impact. This joint venture demonstrates a long-term commitment of both financial support and partnership on specific issues, such as the management of state trust lands, that benefits both organizations' goals.

I would like to acknowledge the Kendeda Fund for two contributions: a significant challenge grant and multi-year support for the Northern Rockies program that allowed us to make some major new initiatives, such as bringing aboard the Montana Smart Growth Coalition.

The Kendeda challenge grant is so critical because it provides an incentive for matching funds from new donors. Our hundreds of annual gifts are always important, but this year even more so — we need to raise at least \$130,000 in donations from new donors before April 2006 to receive matching funds. So, we are going to ask you to not only give, but to urge your friends to give for the first time this year. With your generous support, whether your donation is \$100 or six figures, the Institute will receive a matching gift.

Thank you for 15 years of continued support. We look forward to many more years of healthy landscapes, vibrant economies and livable communities in the West.

Luther Propst



In this issue:



UPDATE:
 THE COALITION
 HAS WORKED
 SUCCESSFULLY TO PASS
 REFORM LEGISLATION
 IN MONTANA.
 SEE PAGE 7.

Montana Smart Growth Coalition Joins the Sonoran Institute

By Dennis Glick, Director Northwest Office

Hundreds of Montanans converge on Helena, Montana, for the semi-annual “Big Sky or Big Sprawl Conference” to explore options for community development and conservation.

The diversity of attendees — ranchers, developers, planners, conservationists, affordable-housing advocates, residents, and elected officials — attests to growing concern about the impacts of rapid growth on the communities and landscapes of the Northern Rockies. It is also a testament to the event’s sponsor, the Montana Smart Growth Coalition.

Because the Coalition’s collaborative approach and goals so closely mirror the Sonoran Institute’s, the two organizations have officially joined forces.

Tim Davis, the Coalition’s director, joined the Institute’s staff, and the Coalition is now a Sonoran Institute project. This union will allow Tim to focus his energy on improving policies on land use, transportation and state trust lands. And the Institute will have more direct involvement with decision-making at the state level.

“Both groups focus on empowering local people to have more choices as their communities grow and improve,” said Luther Propst, Sonoran Institute’s executive director. “The Institute is working effectively on the ground with communities across the West, and the Coalition has a stellar reputation with the state legislature, so combining our efforts was a natural.”

Local planning and conservation can be helped or hobbled by state policies and laws. In its short history,



The Coalition and the Sonoran Institute promote good community planning that defines smart growth as:

- protecting natural areas and farmland to ensure clean water and air;
- planning future development that uses existing resources like roads, schools, fire stations, and police;
- providing a wide range of housing choices and prices;
- reducing traffic and encouraging more transportation options;
- reviving and creating traditional neighborhoods and community bonds.

the Coalition has gained a West-wide reputation as a respected proponent of growth policies that protect the environment, conserve rural land, and help communities improve their quality of life. With nearly 40 member organizations, the Coalition has elevated statewide understanding of the benefits of well-planned and managed development.

At the 2005 legislature, Coalition staff played a leadership role in passing

three land-use-related bills and cultivated bipartisan support and partnerships with organizations as diverse as the Montana Homebuilders Association and the Montana Association of Counties.

The Sonoran Institute has also played an important role in supporting local planning and rural conservation in Montana. In the early 90s the Institute facilitated “Successful Community Workshops” in several rural towns, helping them craft citizen-generated visions for their future.

Eight years ago the Institute opened its office in Bozeman. It has assisted local communities with land-use planning efforts, helped pass two \$10 million open-space bonds, and provided growth-management training for community leaders in dozens of counties in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

In the next few months Tim will explore ways he can tap into the expertise of the Institute and the breadth of its programs. Sonoran staff will utilize Tim’s knowledge of state government and his relationships with county commissioners, the building industry and others involved in growth issues. The Coalition will maintain its Helena office, its newsletter and, most importantly, its membership.



Sonoran Institute and Public Land Agencies Collaborate for Conservation

Monitoring Recreational Impacts at Saguaro National Park in Tucson, Arizona

By Nina Chambers, Sonoran Desert Program Associate Director

Recreation is one of the primary ways we are able to experience and enjoy our public lands. How do land managers know when “too much” recreation is occurring? Or when the recreational use is inappropriate to maintain other management objectives?

The Sonoran Institute and the National Park Service Inventory and Monitoring Program are working together to explore monitoring techniques for understanding recreation impacts. To field test these techniques, we are conducting a study of trail impacts in the Cactus Forest area of Saguaro National Park East.

The results of this study will be two-fold: (1) we will have sound information to provide to the park about the impacts trails have on Sonoran Desert natural communities so that the park can make decisions about its management, and (2) we will have tested protocols that can be used by other agencies and organizations monitoring recreation impacts in the Sonoran Desert.

The results will provide a quantitative assessment of the impacts of trails on the land based on a large number of indicators. The study will sample an area of 17 square miles and 37 miles of trails. Sonoran Institute Research Assistants Emily Dellinger and



Research Assistant Cheryl McIntyre collects soil samples to study erodability at Saguaro National Park.

Cheryl McIntyre are leading the study in coordination with National Park Service staff and with assistance from interns in our joint internship program. We anticipate preliminary findings in December and the final report in April of 2006.

This study is just one aspect of our regional ecosystem monitoring project. Graduate student interns and research associates will be field testing monitoring protocols for water quality and quantity, native and non-native vegetation, soils, climate, and human impacts associated with recreation or illegal border crossing in all 11 National Park System units that make up the Sonoran Desert network. Through this experience we hope to provide better information to public land managers to improve conservation throughout the Sonoran Desert region.

West-wide Partnership with the BLM Fosters Collaborative Approach

By Nina Chambers, Sonoran Desert Program Associate Director

Federal land management agencies are often challenged to balance a multitude of land-use issues. These range from recreation to endangered species protection to growth and development. The decision-making process has become increasingly complex. To understand these issues within a regional context now involves public discourse amongst diverse stakeholders, collaboration with adjacent landowners, and the accumulation of the best science and information available.

To foster that approach, the Sonoran Institute and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are expanding our partnership West-wide in a long-term collaborative conservation project. Together we will develop tools and provide training to field offices across the West to build capacity for cooperative conservation and local stewardship on BLM lands.

To assure success, the Department of Interior is providing the Sonoran Institute with \$100,000 each of the next five years, which we will match with private funding. Initial demonstration sites will serve as models for other BLM field offices. Five areas are currently under consideration in Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, and Oregon. Potential sites will be evaluated this summer and narrowed down to two or three locations where we will initially focus our efforts. The projects will be regional in nature, building partnerships between the BLM and adjacent federal land-management agencies, nonprofit organizations, other community groups, and various stakeholders. Working with these partners, the BLM will better ensure lasting local stewardship and sound management of BLM lands.

Conserving Arizona's Future

Broad-Based Coalition Supports State Trust Land Reform Initiative



Arizona's future depends upon a healthy environment, responsible growth and a strong public education system. That is why over the last two years the *Lincoln Institute of Land Policy* and the *Sonoran Institute Joint Venture on State Trust Lands* has had wide-ranging discussions with diverse stakeholders about modernizing the management of state trust lands in Arizona. As a result, two proposals for state trust land reform were submitted to the state legislature, which failed to act on them.

Now a broad-base of Arizonans including conservationists, educators and business leaders are working to place the "Conserving Arizona's Future" state trust land reform initiative on the 2006 general election ballot. To achieve that, a minimum of 183,917 valid signatures of registered Arizona voters must be submitted to the Secretary of State by July 6, 2006.

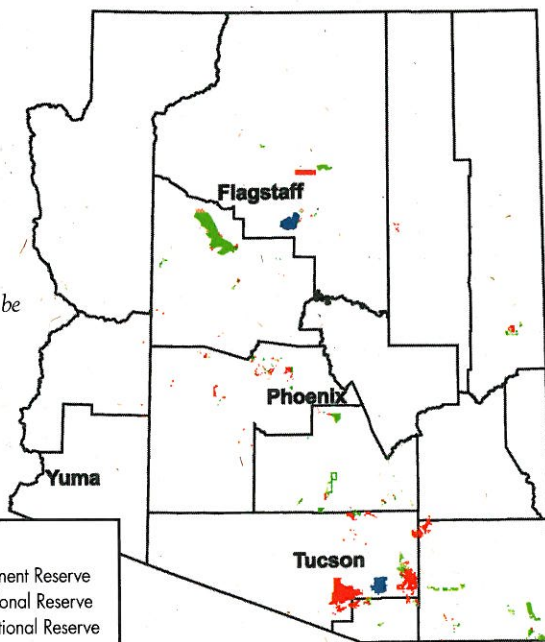
The initiative is a landmark reform package that, if passed by voters, would do three primary things:

- Conserve and protect nearly 694,000 acres of some of the most environmentally important areas in Arizona and protect them from development for generations of Arizonans to enjoy;
- Require state and local communities to cooperate in planning for the development of trust lands and provide local authorities the power to limit and control development;
- Protect and guarantee an essential classroom-funding stream ensuring better schools for Arizona.

Conserving Arizona's Future would establish a board of trustees to oversee the transactions and provide funding for the Arizona State Land Department from a percentage of land-sales proceeds, making the agency more self-sufficient and less dependent on the taxpayer-funded state general fund.

For complete information, including maps and descriptions of what lands will be protected, and how you can help, visit www.sonoran.org.

STATE TRUST LANDS IN REFORM INITIATIVE



Fifty-nine locations would be protected by the initiative, with the opportunity to protect more through local planning. See a detailed, interactive map at www.sonoran.org

LEGEND:

- Permanent Reserve
- Provisional Reserve
- Educational Reserve

What you can do!

First and foremost, if you are registered to vote in Arizona, simply sign the petition to get this reform initiative on the ballot! Stop by our offices in Tucson or Phoenix, or visit the Web site (www.sonoran.org) for signing locations and events. If are willing to collect petition signatures from your family and friends, contact Diana Rhoades at the Sonoran Institute, (520)290-0828 or at diana@sonoran.org.

New Policy Brightens Future of Montana Trust Lands

The Big Sky state is also a big land state, and five million acres of that land will benefit from a ground-breaking new policy the Montana State Land Board unanimously approved in July.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Sonoran Institute State Trust Land Joint Venture played a key role working with the Montana Trust Land Management Division to develop the new guidelines for the conservation and management of the state's school trust lands. The new policy directs trust-land management to:

- engage the public in planning for any future development on trust lands to ensure that quality of life is considered in communities;
- limit future real estate development to carefully identified urban growth areas to prevent leap-frog or strip-mall development;
- pay heed to ecological values and natural areas;
- require developers to pay for impacts of new development;
- create a process where a 60-day notice of proposed development allows for potential conservation alternatives.

Our work was spearheaded by Diane Conradi, Peter Culp and, recently, Tim Davis, Director of the Montana Smart Growth Coalition, a project of the Sonoran Institute. The Joint Venture works to broaden the policy options available to state trust land managers, including increasing lands under conservation management and improving the pattern and character of real estate development associated with state trust lands.

Under the new policy, Montana's Trust Land Management Division is now directed to engage in comprehensive local land use planning efforts and to create criteria limiting where state lands are sold for development.

Our work will continue as Montana's Trust Land Management Division implements the new policy, ensuring more money for schools and preservation of our natural heritage.



Gov. Schweitzer's effort benefits Montana's schoolchildren

Governor Brian Schweitzer Leads Reform Effort

We are gratified that our work has played a crucial role in Montana. Much credit also belongs to Governor Brian Schweitzer, who provided leadership in promoting innovative reform with the Montana State Land Board. We commend Governor Schweitzer for his commitment to Montana's school children, quality growth and open lands.

State Trust Lands Joint Venture Launches Web Site: www.trustland.org

A new Web site, www.trustland.org, is the "go to" source for information on state trust lands.

Visitors to the site can find:

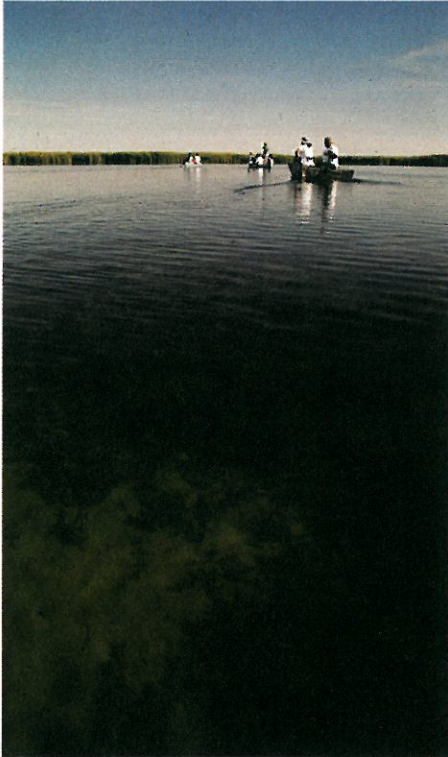
- Information and contacts for state trust land management agencies across the country;
- GIS maps documenting the location of state trust lands;
- Information about state trust land history, the legal theories of trusts and trust responsibilities, and the management of state trust lands;
- Resource and training materials for trust land managers;
- A download of our new report – *Trust Lands in the American West: A Legal Overview and Policy Assessment* (<http://www.trustland.org/resources/pub-trustlands.cfm>).

The new site is a result of the State Trust Land Joint Venture, a partnership between the Sonoran Institute and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. The Joint Venture has several goals:

- To assist diverse communities in improving state trust land administration in the American West;
- To broaden the range of available information and policy options to state trust land managers;
- To increase state trust land under conservation management;
- To improve the character and pattern of residential and commercial development across the West.

15 Priority Conservation Areas Identified for the Colorado River Delta

By Francisco Zamora, Colorado Delta Project Manager



Locals and visitors enjoy the Ciénega de Santa Clara, the largest marsh wetland in the Colorado River Delta.

In partnership with colleagues from Mexico and the United States, the Sonoran Institute has released the report, *Conservation Priorities in the Colorado River Delta, Mexico and the United States*, the result of a workshop held in October 2002.

It serves as a blueprint for conservation and restoration of the Colorado River Delta by identifying 15 priority conservation areas in the riparian corridor, Río Hardy, off-channel wetlands, and intertidal, coastal, and marine areas. For each of these areas, the primary species and ecological communities targeted for protection or restoration are described, along with the existing and potential threats, water needs, and specific recommendations for action.

Together with other environmental organizations, we are using this analysis as the foundation for a collaborative and comprehensive conservation approach to the Delta and as a tool to reach policy and decision makers in the U.S. and Mexico.

We are currently implementing initiatives that will secure a base flow for the river, establish the Colorado River riparian corridor in Mexico as a federally designated restoration zone, re-establish native vegetation, and encourage proper functioning of the river.

Our partners, the Environmental Defense Fund and Pronatura, as well as the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, have been instrumental in the preparation of the report and implementation of policy and restoration actions.

Locally in the Delta, the Institute partners with the Ecological Association of Users of Río Hardy-Colorado (AEURHYC), a key player in the conservation and restoration of the Delta. With support from the Institute and Pronatura, AEURHYC constructed a dike to help maintain the level of the Río Hardy during summer months. This El Tapón project represents a great success for local residents, not only because of improved river conditions and newly restored wetlands, but also because it increased their collective stewardship and long-term commitment for the conservation of the Río Hardy and the Delta ecosystem.

For more information on the Delta or to download the report, visit www.sonoran.org.

LA RUTA
TOURS

See back page
for details.

Colorado River Delta

FACE OF CONSERVATION:

Allyson Siwik, Executive Director of the Gila Conservation Coalition in Silver City, New Mexico



Allyson Siwik, executive director of the Gila Conservation Coalition in Silver City, New Mexico, is interested in how her southern New Mexico community can maintain its local character and small-town quality of life, while also fostering a strong economy.

Silver City enjoys clean air, lots of open space, beautiful vistas and small town character. It serves as a gateway to the Gila National Forest, the Aldo Leopold Wilderness and Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument. The community also faces challenges: the unemployment rate is one of the highest in the state, and the community is searching for ways to promote economic development and create better paying jobs.

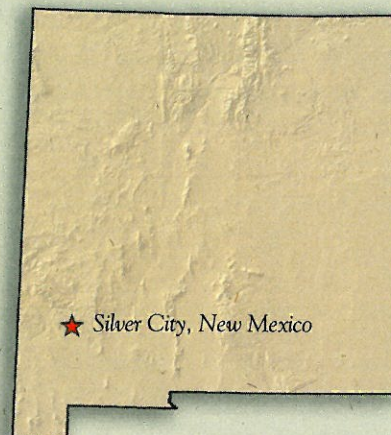
The Sonoran Institute's Rebecca Carter visited Silver City for the kick-off presentation of the Gila Resources Information Project's public forum series. Rebecca presented data specific to Silver City, and also discussed regional trends and findings in the *Prosperity in the 21st Century West* report. About 50 participants, representing a cross section of the Silver City community, discussed strategies to link economic prosperity with effective conservation planning.

Siwik is enthusiastic about the response from Silver City participants. "This work provides us with ideas for tools and strategies to bring people together for a common goal," she said. "We believe that we can create jobs in the area while preserving the character of Grant County."

Since the public forum series began, citizens are making progress. A few examples include:

- forming subgroups to address specific issues, such as the Local Energy Sustainability Group, which is creating a resource center for sustainable energy design and practices;
- the Community Cleanup Group, which is researching how Silver City might become an official "Keep America Beautiful" city;
- the Organic Food/Garden Initiative, which hosted a solstice fundraiser.

The Sonoran Institute has made similar local presentations in more than 45 communities over the past three years. We are committed to providing Western communities with up-to-date economic information that supports a well-informed and balanced approach to local economic prosperity and sound conservation.



Sonoran's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Lab Puts Conservation on the Map

By Erin Quinn, GIS Coordinator

Maps are a powerful way to involve people who are working to protect some of the West's most precious resources. Our maps helped citizens of the Bozeman Pass area, which includes important wildlife habitat north of Yellowstone National Park, who are trying to create a zoning district to plan for continued development.

The Bozeman Pass Citizens Group asked the Sonoran Institute for its land-use planning assistance, and with it came our mapping resources. We were able to create maps showing various scenarios of growth in the Bozeman Pass area, which helped citizens visualize the way the area could look in the future based on the decisions they make now.

The Sonoran Institute's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Lab has been a valuable resource for two years. GIS is a technology that gathers, analyzes, and views geographic data and can create a database, a map, or a model. The Sonoran Institute has added a new concept to GIS: mapping and analyzing *economic* data. We are now able to view geographic and economic data together to help people understand the relationships between community well-being and land-use.

The Sonoran Institute GIS Lab has two full time staff, Erin Quinn and Patty Gude, who offer mapping and spatial-analysis services. Patty also specializes in modeling rural development. The GIS Lab is an important component of the SocioEconomics program, which supports all programs within the Sonoran Institute. In addition the lab offers GIS services to our community partners and federal and state agencies.

Converting a Passion for Place into a Community Vision

By Whitney Tilt, Program Director, Resource for Community Collaboration

Moose, elk, and deer gently nibble the lush, sweeping grass in Western Canada's Upper Columbia River valley. Broad mountains rise on each side: the Purcell Mountains to the west and the Rocky Mountains to the east. An amazing 250-plus species of birds use this snow-capped flyway on their migratory journey, and the sound of their calls echoes from the icy ridges.

Nearly 6,000 people also call the Upper Columbia River area home, and even more pass through on their way to Kootenay National Park or one of the other nearby national parks and wilderness areas. Seeing the growing popularity of their region, residents decided to take action and preserve the beautiful open spaces around their community.

"Dream big and see what happens."

They invited the Sonoran Institute to facilitate the Columbia River Successful Communities Forum where the groundwork was started to "dream big and see what happens." One notion was to create a citizens' guide to planning, and another was the development of the Columbia River Greenways Alliance to protect open space. Over the course of five years, local governments and citizens began to support and encourage these ideas and actively participated in their successful development. Today there is an official publication called Community Guide to Citizen Involvement, and residents, tourists and wildlife enjoy beautiful open greenways.

Resources for Community Collaboration (RCC) is a small grants and support program of the Sonoran Institute that has funded the critical work of the Columbia River Greenways Alliance and other community-based collaborations across the West.

The vast experiences of community-based collaborations are now gathered in the electronic publication, "Collaboration in Our Backyard, Lessons from Community-Based Collaboration in the West." Visit www.sonoran.org to see this set of lessons based on project reports, workshops, personal interviews with partners and practitioners, and the Sonoran Institute's 10-plus years of field experience.



LESSONS

The first chair of the Columbia River Greenways Alliance, Gerri Brightwell, thinks of these lessons when it comes to community collaboration and greenways:

- the idea of community and ecological green space is a positive thing that a diverse group of people can support;
- long-term sustainability of land and conservation projects requires long-term partners – creating those partnerships through local community government has been the cornerstone to Greenway's success;
- best practices use local residents' knowledge and passion about various sites to provide the input and buy-in for selection of greenways projects;
- the best projects are those where the community as a whole takes the lead while specific organizations provide support.

Gerri and other community-based collaborators' messages can be found throughout the West — areas where Resources for Community Collaboration, the Sonoran Institute and their partners will continue to work to forge passion for place into a vision for the future.

New Donors Make a Double Impact

by Don Chatfield, Associate Director, Development and Communications

If you are considering making a donation to the important work of the Sonoran Institute, now is the time to double the impact of your contribution.

Gifts from first-time donors to the Sonoran Institute will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$130,000 through a generous gift from an anonymous donor. Gifts from friends or partners of the Institute — or any others who have not previously donated to our work — are eligible for this match.

The grant came from the donor through the Kendeda Fund for Sustainability, administered by the Tides Foundation, which has

worked with donors committed to positive social change since 1976. The Foundation puts resources and people together, strengthening community-based nonprofit organizations through innovative grant-making.

We would love to add your name to our new donor list. Visit our Web site at www.sonoran.org to make an online contribution, or use the enclosed envelope to send your gift. Take your tax deduction, and take extra pleasure in knowing that as a new donor, your gift will be doubled thanks to this exciting matching grant.

Tucson Donor Values Local Effort

New donors like Valerie Feuer directly impact the Sonoran Institute's on-the-ground conservation successes each year. Valerie, a Tucson, Arizona, resident for nearly 30 years, has been a professional planner for most of that time, as well as a supporter of a variety of conservation organizations.

Valerie's work as the land planning program manager at MMLA Psomas, an engineering firm in Tucson, sometimes intersects with areas of Sonoran Institute involvement, such as land planning efforts in the Vail Valley. Valerie chose to become a new donor to the Sonoran Institute because she values its local work in enhancing environmental progress.

"It's important for development to respect environmentally sensitive areas, and it's a balancing act to work around the areas that are sensitive," Valerie said. "An increasing number of developers understand that this type of protection also advances their projects. The Institute's work helps to increase this awareness."



Valerie Feuer of Tucson is a new donor to the Sonoran Institute.



The Sonoran Institute gratefully acknowledges support from these organizations and agencies from March through July 2005.

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City of Tucson
Environmental Fund for Arizona
Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Las Virgenes Institute
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
The Nature Conservancy
Pronatura Sonora
Santa Lucia Conservancy
United Way of Mesa
U.S. Air Force Legacy Fund
U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U.S. National Park Service

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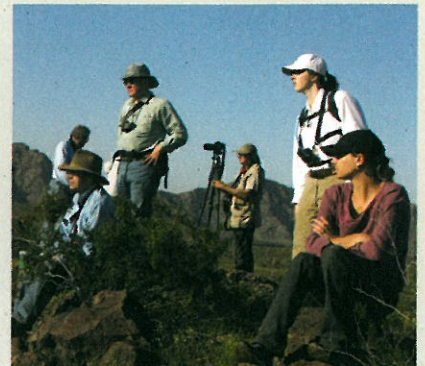


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LA RUTA DE SONORA ECOTOURISM ASSOCIATION Announcing Two Exciting New Tours!

In addition to our popular existing tours of the Sonoran Desert, La Ruta de Sonora Ecotourism Association has added two new tours, including day trips!

- **The Tohono O'Odham Himdag tour** is a mystical journey into the culture, traditions and way of life of the Desert People. This tour was developed in conjunction with the Sonoran Institute through funds granted by the Christensen Foundation.
- New this season, La Ruta will be offering one-day tours to the **Santa Cruz River Heritage Area**, featuring the cultural and natural treasures along this vibrant waterway and the community efforts for protection and restoration.



La Ruta is your gateway to the unique Sonoran Desert ecosystem that encompasses the shores of the Sea of Cortez, the verdant wetlands of the Colorado River Delta, stark vistas of the Pinacate volcanoes, and a multitude of cultural sites such as ancient Hohokam petroglyphs and the missions established by Father Kino. As your tour host, La Ruta transports you to these rare and unique sites in small groups with specialized attention, leaving guests with their own unique understanding of the Sonoran Desert.

Tours begin in September 2005 and continue through May 2006. For a calendar and tour schedule, contact Monica Durand at (520) 886-6555 or monica@laruta.org. Visit www.laruta.org to see a full offering of tour adventures.