

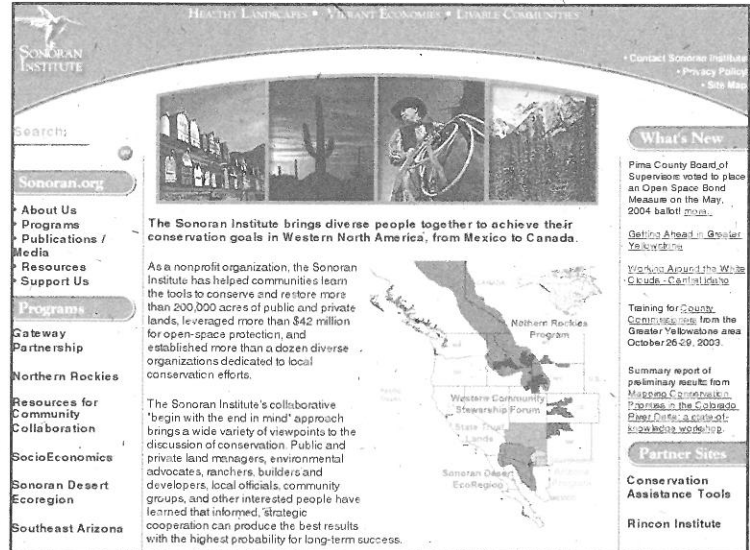
# New, Better, Different – Our Web Site is Redesigned

By Wendy Erica Werden, Director of Strategic Communications

If you've looked us up on the Web recently, you may have been pleasantly surprised. We've changed—and for the better!

Our new site, [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org), is easier to navigate, contains more information on each of our programs and projects, includes photos and maps of where we work, “what's new,” and direct links to Sonoran Institute staff. The site is designed as a resource for conservation advocates, elected officials, private and public land managers, developers, ranchers, and community groups looking for information on the Sonoran Institute's approach to collaborative conservation.

We have seen a steady increase in the number of people visiting our new site since its May first opening. An average of 300



unique visitors are coming to the site every day, and we've even had several days that exceeded 475 visits.

A new feature also allows supporters to make contributions

directly to the Sonoran Institute on our site. Feel free to test out this new service! We invite you to visit the site and let us know what you think: [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org).

## Protecting Our Land, Air, and Water:

Pima County, Arizona, Places Open Space Bond Issue on May 2004 Ballot

By Diana Freshwater and Roseann Hanson: Co-Chairs, Friends of the Sonoran Desert

In June the Pima County Board of Supervisors did more than adopt the recommendations of the 75-member citizen steering committee of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (including placing an open space bond initiative on the May 2004 ballot). They also symbolically voted for a new dawn in Pima County.

For the first time ever, the citizens of Pima County have mapped out the future of our home, showing a unified desire to preserve the values that make our desert attractive to tourism as well as economic growth: beautiful views, clean air and water, saguaro forests, desert rivers, and amazing wildlife diversity. Pima County's growth rate of 27 percent over the last decade is more than double the national average, and the County's population is projected to climb to more than one million in the next 10 years. Unplanned growth means losing those unique Sonoran Desert values, as well as gaining more traffic congestion and related problems.

In response to diverse, local interests that support this investment in our future, Supervisors took the first steps toward planned growth, healthy desert lands, and quality of life now and for future generations. By jump-starting the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, each Supervisor showed great vision and leadership by putting this important issue on the May 2004 ballot. They deserve our thanks.

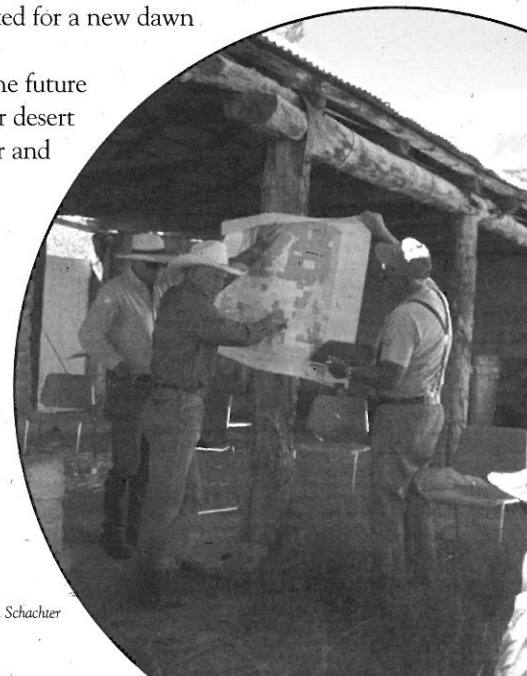


photo by Josh Schachter

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## Board Updates

The Sonoran Institute Board of Directors met in late June in Bozeman, Montana. In addition to approving next year's budget, the Board authorized staff to update the strategic plan. We welcome board members, Kathy Borgen, Amy Crown, Bill Jack, Denny Minano, Mary Peachin, Anna Price, and

returning board member Fred Bosselman. The board also accepted Walt Coward's resignation. A special Board meeting is scheduled in November 2003 in Tucson to review the draft strategic plan. The winter Board meeting will take place in Tubac, Arizona, in February 2004.

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7650 E. Broadway Blvd., Suite 203  
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520.290.0828

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Emily Brott ..... Program Associate, Landscape Protection

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Nina Chambers ..... Project Manager, Landscape Conservation

Cheryl Lord-Hernandez ..... Program Associate  
Francisco Zamora-Arroyo ..... Project Manager, Colorado River Delta

#### SocioEconomics Program

Rebecca Carter ..... Project Manager, NLCS

#### State Trust Lands Program

Andy Laurenzi ..... Director

#### Bozeman, Montana

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Sam Henze ..... Admin. Assistant  
Amy Liposky-Vincent ..... Office Manager

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#### SocioEconomics Program

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Ben Alexander ..... Associate Director  
Jeff van den Noort ..... Manager, Product Development

#### Western Community Stewardship Forum

Randy Carpenter ..... Land Use Planner

#### Resources for Community Collaboration

Whitney Tilt ..... Project Manager

#### Chinook Institute

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Carole Stark ..... Director

**Rincon Institute**  
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Tucson, Arizona 85710  
520.290.0828

Michelle Zimmerman ..... Program Director

#### Moving on....

We thank and wish the best of success to Holly Henning Foster, Reggie Romo, Jenny McCune, and Lee Nellis who have left the Sonoran Institute to pursue other work. We also sincerely thank Walt Coward for his years of service on the Board of Directors.



# Opportunities and Challenges

By Luther Propst, Executive Director

More than ever, these are exciting times for the Sonoran Institute, with both unsurpassed opportunities and challenges. In this issue of *Vision* we describe new programs, new staff, and successes with our continuing work.

In response to new conservation challenges, we are updating our five-year strategic plan, which we adopted in 2000. This plan serves as a key document to guide our work and inform all those interested in the Institute's work—board members, partners, funders, and the communities we work with across the West. Defining a clear set of institutional and program objectives is essential to the Sonoran Institute's success. It will help us set priorities, communicate clearly what we do, measure our progress, and assess our effectiveness as a conservation organization.

We are beginning an accelerated planning process to be completed by February 2004 that will result in:

- a better definition of our niche within the conservation community;
- a new set of measurable organization and conservation objectives;
- a process for evaluating our progress; and
- a resource development plan to implement our strategic plan.

In response to many of the same challenges, the Institute has established a new position, Associate Director for Development and Communications, to oversee fundraising, development, communications, board-related activities,



Luther Propst

and finance. We conducted a wide search for this position, and were fortunate to receive many outstanding applicants. Don Chatfield, however, quickly demonstrated that his expertise best matches the needs of the Sonoran Institute. Don's background at the Primavera Foundation in Tucson, and his experience as Community Development Director for the Town of Oro Valley has prepared him to help us fulfill the next phase of our strategic plan. For Don's full bio, visit [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org) site under "About Us." This new structure also will allow John Shepard, our current Associate Director, to focus on program development and management.

Along with Don Chatfield, we have added the following staff who will be key to our success. Recent additions to our staff in Bozeman are Sam Henze, Administrative Assistant; Jeff van den Noort, Manager of Product Development; and Whitney Tilt, Project Manager - Resources for Community Collaboration. Joining us in Arizona are Emily Brott, Program Associate Landscape Protection; Rebecca Carter, NLCS Project Manager - SocioEconomics Program; and Andy Laurenzi, State Trust Lands Program Director. Welcome all!

We will continue to update you on our activities, and appreciate your interest and support.

*Luther Propst*



Don Chatfield

## thank you Institutional Funders

TO THE SONORAN INSTITUTE  
(continued)

July 2002- April 2003

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# Sonoran Institute Launches Campaign for the Northern Rockies

By Dennis Glick,  
Northwest Office Director

Folks living in the Northern Rockies hold a deep affection for the wild lands, open spaces, and small-town character of this spectacular region. But the pace and magnitude of changing land use has many people concerned. Natural and cultural values that we hold so dear are disappearing before our eyes. People are seeking ways for the region to meet its development needs without sacrificing these assets, and that's where the Sonoran Institute comes in.

As a part of the local community, we know the impact that rapid, poorly planned growth is having on the region's environment, economy, and community well-being. The conservation efforts of the Sonoran Institute over the past 12 years have yielded impressive results, but we want to do more.

To better protect the region's open spaces, diverse wildlife, and rural communities, we have launched our Campaign for the Northern Rockies.

The Campaign's goals are to:

- Conserve private lands in ten areas in the Northern Rockies that serve as critically important habitat linkages between national parks and forests;
- Provide local officials, community leaders, and rural landowners with the tools, training, and assistance they need to protect open lands and effectively manage growth in 20 counties in the Northern Rockies; and
- Improve the effectiveness of local residents who are working to protect important private lands.

The Institute is working with some of

the West's most important decision makers (community leaders, county officials, rural landowners, and public land managers) to make sure these special places are protected for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Campaign will better integrate the Institute's programs: the Western Community Stewardship Forum, Northern Rockies, SocioEconomics, and Working Landscapes, as well as the talents of our entire staff. Our approach remains steadfastly community-based, working closely with partners and assisting them in creating the local resources and capacity to independently continue their work into the future. When we reach our goals, Northern Rockies residents will have the skills and—just as important, the commitment—to work collaboratively to conserve their landscapes and community character that is so essential for maintaining their quality of life. For more details on our Northern Rockies Program and Campaign, visit our Web site [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org) and click on Northern Rockies.

Red Lodge, Montana  
Photo by Dennis Glick

## SOCIOECONOMICS PROGRAM HITS THE ROAD

If you see a cloud of smoke across the West it may be the Sonoran Institute's Ray Rasker and Ben Alexander zipping all over like wildfire to train people to use the Economic Profile System and to follow up on the two reports they just issued: *Working Around the White Clouds* and *Getting Ahead in Greater Yellowstone*.

The training and the reports have been extremely successful. We have conducted nearly 15 workshops and generated thousands of dollars worth of media coverage on the reports. Both have given the Sonoran Institute wider recognition across the intermountain West. The free, automated system for creating socioeconomic profiles; additional information on the EPS; and the complete White Cloud and Yellowstone reports can all be found at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org). Click on Socio Economics under programs.



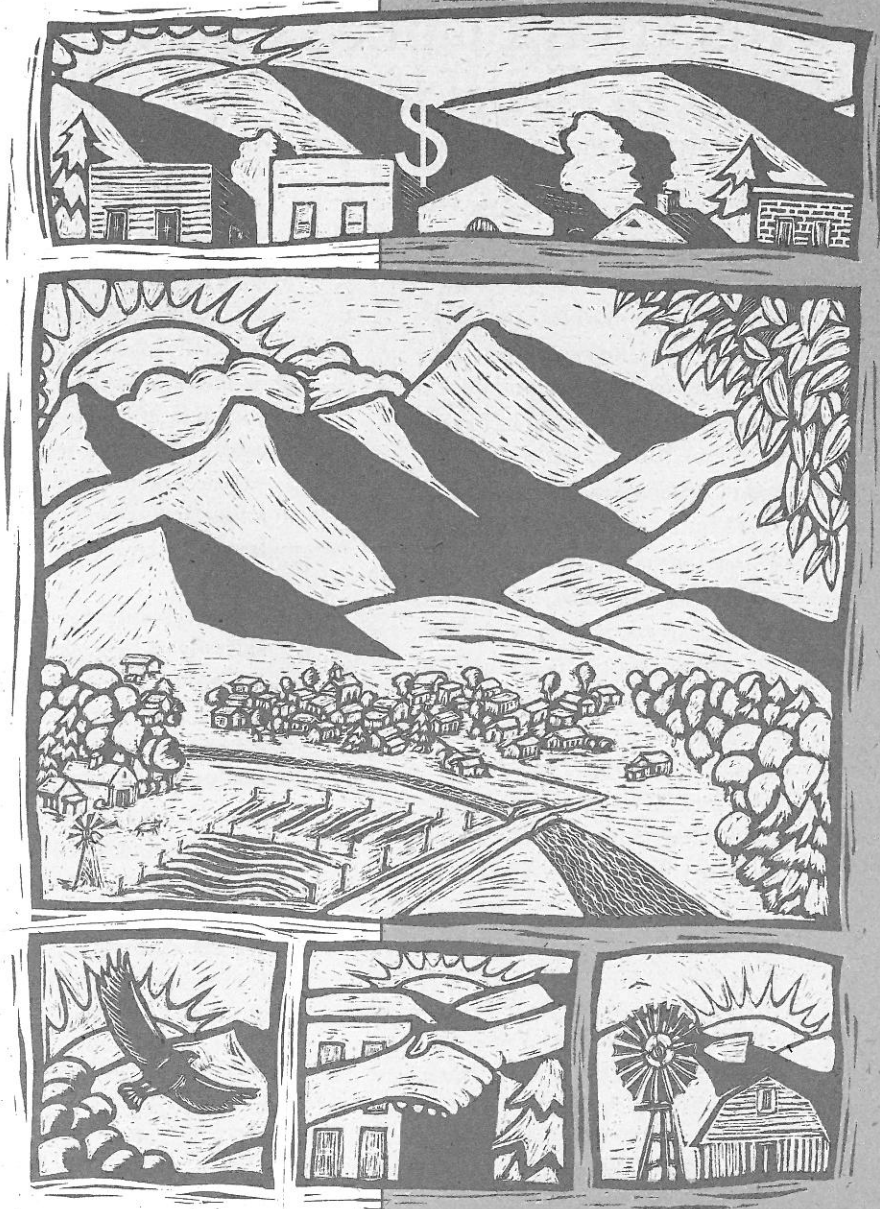
## **Planning for Results Guidebook Premieres in November**

This "hands-on" guidebook is written by Sonoran Institute planner Lee Nellis, a noted Western land use planner with more than 25 years of practical, applicable experience in creating an inclusive process for rural communities to follow for success. County and other local government officials, planning commissioners, staff who do not have formal training in planning, and interested citizens can use this book as a starting point in designing and conducting a local planning process. Professional planners and students will find that it reminds them of basic principles, while offering new examples for study.

The *Planning for Results Guidebook* includes sections on helping people:

- Develop a broadly shared vision of the future based on an accurate understanding of their local economy and resources;
- Understand their own economy within the context of regional, national, and global economies;
- Learn about their natural and cultural assets, and about the impacts development can have on those resources;
- Understand how local natural and cultural assets influence (and are affected by) population growth and development; and
- Effectively manage growth and change by using a wide variety of both regulatory and non-regulatory tools to protect or enhance local assets.

The *Planning for Results Guidebook* is a product of the Western Community Stewardship Forum, a project of the National Association of Counties and the Sonoran Institute. Funding is provided by the Henry M. Jackson, Doris Duke Charitable, and the David and Lucile Packard foundations. Order your copy today by calling Stacey Kennedy at NACo (202) 942-4256 or [skennedy@naco.org](mailto:skennedy@naco.org).



### **Western Community Stewardship Forum Planned for Northern Rockies this October**

The Western Community Stewardship Forum is the Sonoran Institute's training and assistance program designed to provide rural Western county officials the resources to effectively manage growth. The next training session will take place October 26-29, 2003 in Red Lodge, Montana. WCSF is a partnership of the Sonoran Institute and the National Association of Counties. This session will focus on training for county commissioners from the Greater Yellowstone area. Contact Dennis Glick for additional information at [dennis@sonoran.org](mailto:dennis@sonoran.org) or (406) 587-7331.

# NO LONGER THE "MISSING LINK" Protection Planned for the Cienega Corridor

By Roseann Hanson, Southeast Arizona Program Director

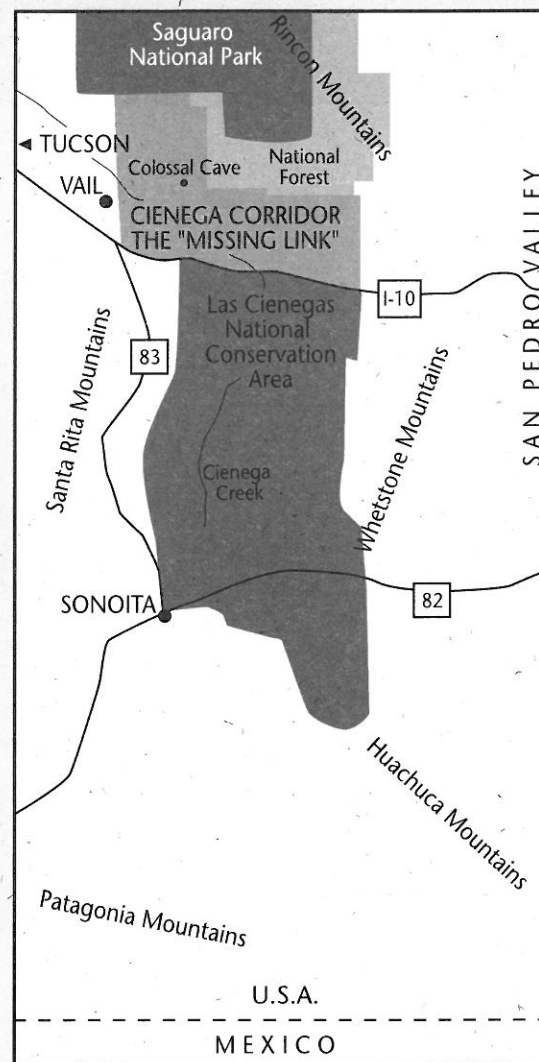
The bears know it. The desert tortoises and mule deer know it. And now we understand it, too: this past winter, the Sonoran Institute completed its two-year assessment of the land in southeastern Arizona that links Saguaro National Park East to Las Cienegas National Conservation Area—land that was left out of the legislation that created Las Cienegas and was thus dubbed the "Missing Link." Not surprisingly, our research showed that the 50,000 acres of open desert and grasslands are of vital importance to local wildlife, the region's ecological health, and the people of this largely rural area located on Tucson's rapidly growing eastern edge.

Highlights of our research indicate that the region:

- Provides, in combination with Las Cienegas NCA and the Cienega Creek watershed, up to 20 percent of Tucson's groundwater recharge system, needed for drinking water in the Tucson basin;

- Is an important movement corridor for "sky island" mountain mammals, especially black bears, mountain lions, coatimundis, and mule deer, according to data gathered in field studies conducted for our report by Sonoran Institute partner Sky Island Alliance;
- Provides habitat for six federally endangered plant and animal species, and 12 species of special concern;
- Is listed at the highest-level priority for protection in Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan;
- Has numerous archaeological sites up to 10,000 years old; and
- Can retain its rich ranching heritage.

However, these valuable cultural and natural resources are in danger from rapid development in the Tucson basin. Since 1990, Pima County has grown by more than 27 percent. Projections are for annual growth of two percent through 2020, adding an additional 416,000 new residents—many of whom will be moving to new developments southeast of Tucson. To act quickly on protecting this important landscape and its rural communities, the Sonoran Institute helped form the Cienega Corridor Conservation Council (also known as the 4C), an ad hoc coalition of more than 40 landowners, local business leaders, land managers, and environmental advocates.



The first order of business for the 4C was to rename the "Missing Link" the Cienega Corridor to make it more recognizable. With the assistance of the Sonoran Institute, the 4C has met monthly since December, and is developing a protection plan. We continue to give presentations throughout the region, develop brochures, and sponsor media events to spread the word about this special place. If you would like to know more about the Cienega Corridor and the 4C, visit our Web site at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org) and click on Southeast Arizona, or contact Emily Brott or Roseann Hanson at (520) 290-0828.

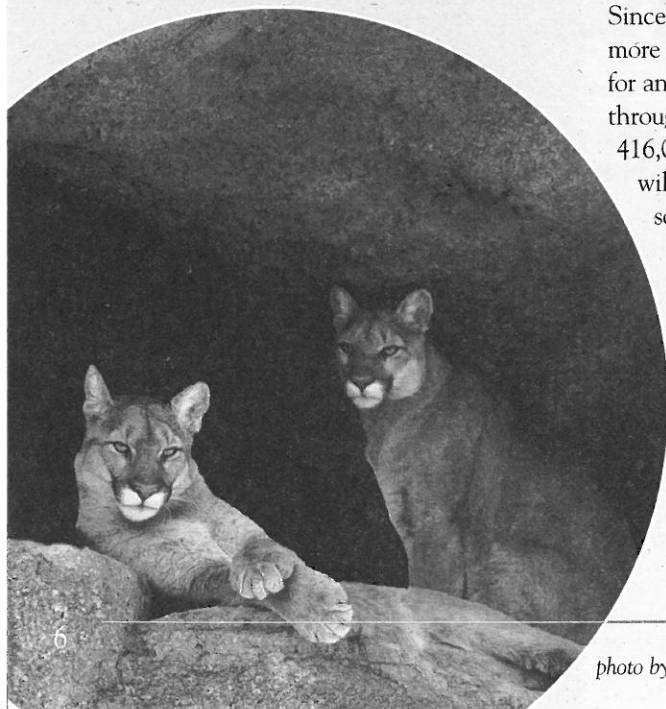
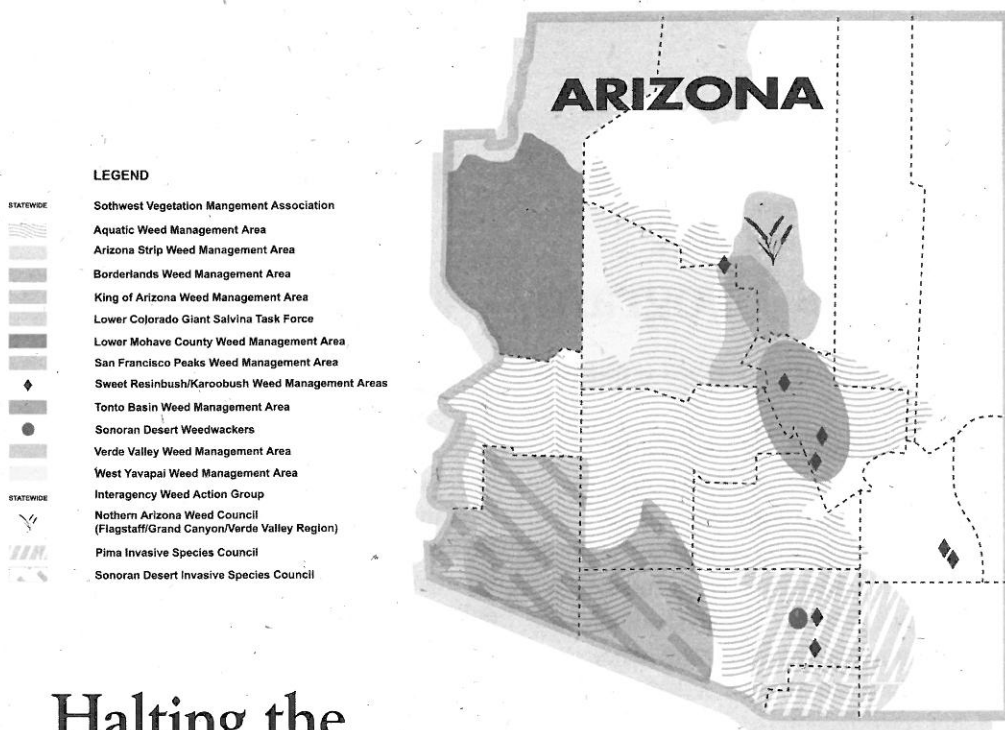


photo by Gregory DeNinno





# Halting the Sonoran Desert Invasion

By Nina Chambers, Sonoran Desert EcoRegion Project Manager

Some exotic plants have adapted quite well to the Sonoran Desert—in fact, too well. Exotic invasive plants are one of the main threats to Sonoran Desert ecosystems because they compete with native plants for water and nutrients, create fuel for fire, and can change desert habitat from mixed-cactus to grassland.

The Sonoran Institute works with people to address landscape-scale issues—such as the spread of invasive exotic plants. Our approach is to:

- Bring together different groups that have a common interest;
- Help provide an organizational structure for them to address the problem together;
- Provide technical and educational tools; and
- Look for ways to expand the effectiveness of their efforts.

More than a year ago, the Sonoran Institute helped create the Sonoran Desert Invasive Species Council and two cooperative weed management areas, which together cover nearly seven million acres of the western Sonoran Desert. The groups include federal and state agencies, nonprofit organizations, natural resource conservation districts, and university

agricultural extension offices. Together, we are making a difference to control invasive plants.

A computer-based data management tool created by our partners, the U.S. Geological Survey and The Nature Conservancy, will allow these weed management groups to collect and share data on invasive plants in a compatible way. We are looking at policies and other tools that will support our efforts to better control and manage these plants.

The Sonoran Institute is providing education and outreach to stop the exotic plant invasion. We have produced several publications that help the public understand the impacts invasive plants have on the Sonoran Desert and what they can do. Educational materials have been distributed throughout the region—in both Mexico and the United States—to land managers, landscapers and nurseries, the media, and the public. This collaboration produces the most tangible results in addressing conservation issues across the Sonoran Desert landscape. For more information, and examples of invasive plants, go to [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org), click on Sonoran Desert Ecoregion, then landscape conservation.

## SONORAN INSTITUTE'S RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AWARDS \$103,000 IN GRANTS

Resources for Community Collaboration (RCC) supports community-based collaborative groups working to resolve conflicts over use of natural resources in the rural West. RCC was launched in 1998 with a founding grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. In 2003, the Sonoran Institute assumed management of the RCC program, and hired Whitney Tilt to manage the project.

RCC works to:

- Manage a competitive grant-making program to support local, community-based collaborations;
- Gather information and evaluate the progress of its grantees, and related community-based collaborative efforts in the West; and
- Communicate the lessons learned to the foundation, natural resource managers, and grantee communities as well as other interested parties.

RCC recently completed its 2003 competitive grant program, awarding a total of more than \$103,000 to 22 nonprofit conservation groups all over the West. More information on upcoming grant cycles, and specific grant recipients is available at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org) under Resources for Community Collaboration.

## SONORAN INSTITUTE'S CANADIAN CONNECTION— Chinook Institute for Community Stewardship

Ever since the Sonoran Institute's earliest days in the 1990s, conservation and community advocates in Western Canada have frequently asked us to help them adapt our community-based and inclusive approach to protecting open space, wildlife habitat, and quality of life to their unique situation.

Approval will soon be finalized for an Alberta-based non-profit, Chinook Institute for Community Stewardship (formerly a Sonoran Institute project), which will maintain its affiliation with the Sonoran Institute. This organization will promote the protection of open space and advance sustainable management of Western Canada's natural landscapes. Activities will take into consideration the natural and cultural values of Canadian lands, and will include research, education, and support of community-based stewardship and conservation projects.

Carole Stark, the Sonoran Institute staff person in Canada, will become Executive Director of the Chinook Institute. For more information on Canadian activities, contact Carole Stark at [Carole@sonoran.org](mailto:Carole@sonoran.org) or call (403) 678-4040.

## State Trust Lands Program

By Andy Laurenzi,  
State Trust Lands Program Director

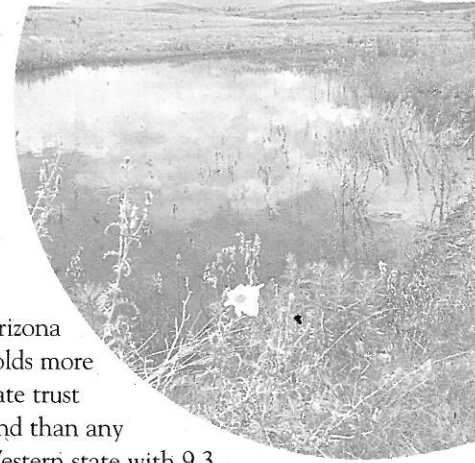
More than 146 million acres in the United States are state trust lands. While management of these lands varies from state to state, the purpose of these lands is to generate revenue, primarily for public schools. Unfortunately, under current policy the conservation value of these lands is not considered in their management.

Some state trust lands have significant biological and cultural values—wildlife habitat, open space for outdoor recreation, and archeological sites. The Sonoran Institute has partnered with the Lincoln Foundation, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and the LaSalle Adams Fund to promote better conservation and management of these lands.

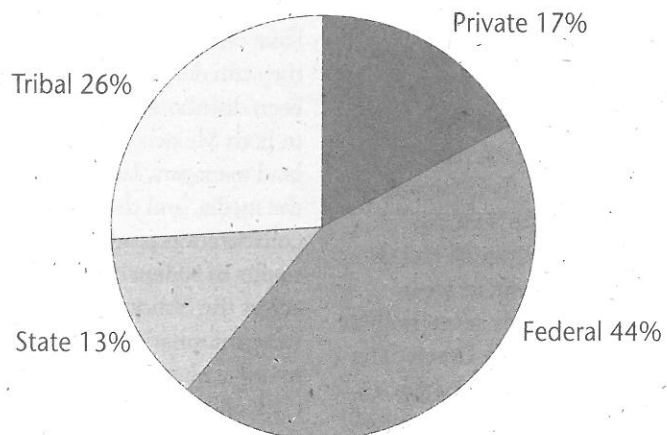
The new State Trust Lands Program will open a new Sonoran Institute office in Phoenix. The initial focus of this program is to educate the public about management of state trust lands in Arizona, in anticipation of a ballot initiative to reform these policies.

Arizona holds more state trust land than any Western state with 9.3 million acres, or more than 12 percent of the total land in the state. With key support from Governor Janet Napolitano, the time is now right for comprehensive policy reform.

The longer-term goal is to educate and raise the awareness of state trust lands with decision makers, stakeholders, and the general public across the West. This includes working collaboratively with representatives from public education, development, ranching, and conservation communities. The State Trust Lands Program will develop demonstration projects on innovative and effective ways to better manage and recognize the conservation values of these lands, so that the lessons learned can be implemented across the West.



### LAND OWNERSHIP IN ARIZONA





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The Sonoran Institute wishes  
 to thank the following people  
 for hosting open houses  
 through June 2003:

Louise Benz Plank  
 Andrew Gordon  
 Nan Stockholm Walden  
 & Richard Walden  
 Arne & Stephanie Siegel  
 Ed & Wendy Lewis  
 Whitney and Stuart Tilt

\*\*\*

Thanks to Timothy Crawford  
 for his aerial photography in  
 the last newsletter.

\*\*\*

Special thanks to Bushnell  
 Performance Optics for the  
 donation of six pairs of  
 binoculars to Los Halcones  
 youth birding club in San  
 Lazaro, Sonora, Mexico. This  
 club of enthusiastic teenagers  
 (profiled in the Spring 2002  
 Vision newsletter) is part of  
 Sonoran Institute's community  
 conservation work in the  
 Santa Cruz Project.



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# An Investment in the Citizens of the West

Don Chatfield, Associate Director, Development and Communications

The taxi ride into Bozeman provided a panoramic view of the spectacular mountain ranges surrounding the city. The cab driver began a spirited discussion about the importance of wildlife connections and the importance of Bozeman Pass. The other passenger, a retired architecture professor, spoke about the need for more zoning tools and better architectural guidance to preserve local character.

It was a brief encounter with two citizens who care deeply about their community. They talked about the importance of pulling together, about the need to find a strategy to change the way conservation takes place. There are citizens like these all across the American West. They are people who care deeply about the landscapes and communities that are undergoing rapid growth pressures and a strain on natural resources.

While riding in the taxi, I realized that donors to the Sonoran Institute are investing in the future of these citizens. We often talk about the number of acres that have been preserved, or the important wildlife connections that are being revitalized.

Another result of the Sonoran Institute's work is increased

capacity on the part of everyday citizens to make a difference in future conservation and land use decisions.

Your contribution to the Sonoran Institute is an investment in the ability of citizens across the West to make wise decisions about conservation, the environment, and healthy communities. The investment lasts much longer than a single decision on a pressing issue. The information, resources, and training provided by the Sonoran Institute are designed to serve communities now and well into the future.

By donating to the Sonoran Institute, you join with others who believe in bringing people together to define what they value about their community. Then, we help them to develop workable strategies to protect what they've identified as conservation priorities.

Of course, I couldn't help but share the good work of the Sonoran Institute with those in the taxi that day. I hope you'll help us to spread the word even further by making an investment in those citizens who want to have a voice in the future of their communities.