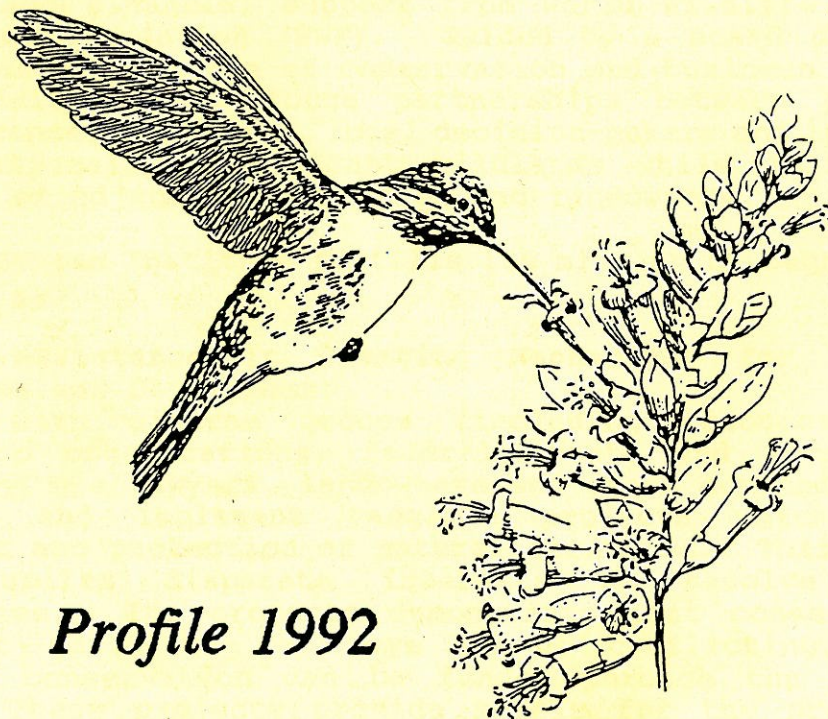




SONORAN INSTITUTE Archive Copy

# SONORAN INSTITUTE

*Committed to protecting national parks and other protected and critical areas by encouraging special consideration for the values of these areas in adjacent land uses.*



*Profile 1992*



# SONORAN INSTITUTE

Devoted to collecting and publishing information on the Sonoran Desert and its people, and to the study of the desert in general.



Public 1932

# THE SONORAN INSTITUTE

## *BACKGROUND AND MISSION*

The Sonoran Institute is a non-profit organization based in Tucson, Arizona and working nationwide to preserve the integrity of national parks and other protected areas by cooperatively resolving potential conflicts between preserving these areas and realizing the needs and aspirations of adjacent communities and landowners. The Institute also works to ensure that development occurring adjacent to protected areas adheres to the highest level of environmental compatibility and sensitivity.

Underlying the Sonoran Institute's mission is our conviction that creative, cooperative approaches to local land use planning and decision-making can produce better, more enduring results, and can reduce the confrontation and polarization that often occur when dealing with land use conflicts.

The Sonoran Institute (SI) was created in November, 1990 with technical and financial support from World Wildlife Fund & The Conservation Foundation (WWF). Guided by a board of directors which includes a balance of conservation and business leaders, SI is well-positioned to forge partnerships between public land managers, conservationists, local decision-makers and landowners to protect nationally significant wildlands while fulfilling the objectives of adjacent communities and landowners.

The Sonoran Institute fulfills its mission through five types of activities:

### **Technical Assistance in Creating Mechanisms for Reconciling Conservation and Development**

SI works with diverse groups (including resource managers, conservation organizations, federal, state and local decision makers, land use lawyers, landowners and other community members) to create and implement tangible projects which reconcile development and protection of natural resources. This innovative approach unites disparate interests to resolve land use controversies. The projects demonstrate that conservation and development goals do not have to be conflicting, and that meaningful conservation can be funded through the development process. These projects provide models for the protection of natural areas from incompatible development on adjacent land. Two such models are the Rincon Institute and the Las Virgenes Institute, which are described on page four.

### **Successful Communities Dialogue**

SI assists local land use and community development workshops in communities adjacent to national parks and other protected areas. These workshops bring together diverse groups of citizens, organizations, and government agencies to identify local assets, develop a vision for the future of the community, and decide on practical and tangible steps to realize this vision. Successful Communities Dialogue provides a process for informed communication and consensus-building that transcends the limits of single-value advocacy and special interest politics. Communities can identify sustainable development and conservation alternatives and thereby meet local aspirations while protecting the values of adjacent natural areas.

### **Research and Analysis**

SI undertakes scientific and policy research to determine the impacts of various conservation and development approaches on protected areas and adjacent communities. We disseminate the results and lessons of these activities to improve sensitivity toward natural and cultural values in land use policy and decision-making.

### **Training and Education**

SI provides training in land use and community development policy to resource managers, conservationists, and federal, state and local officials through publications, workshops, training courses and public speaking.

### **Grants**

SI works with WWF to administer the Innovation Grants Program. This program--with generous support from S.C. Johnson and Son, Inc.--has provided approximately \$450,000 to local nonprofit organizations to help implement innovative local strategies for the conservation of nature. SI evaluates grant proposals, provides technical assistance to applicants, monitors project progress, and evaluates progress reports to assess the effectiveness of different projects and techniques. The grants program gives preference to proposals designed to spur local activities that aid in protecting nationally significant resources, particularly in communities adjacent to national parks and other protected natural areas. The program provides SI with a unique opportunity to understand and promote the specific approaches that most effectively reconcile resource protection needs and local objectives.

## **SONORAN INSTITUTE PROJECTS**

### **U.S. - MEXICO BORDERLANDS PROGRAM**

The Sonoran Institute has been successful in demonstrating the benefits of federal, state, local and private "partnerships" that promote conservation and sustainable development throughout the United States. SI has a special interest in arid and semi-arid regions, and in September, 1991 launched an effort to promote better conservation and management of natural resources along the U.S. - Mexico border.

As natural resources do not recognize international boundaries, a regional approach is necessary for effective protection of borderland resources. Providing mechanisms for communication that transcend borders is the first step in developing such an approach. SI is therefore working with other conservation groups, business interests, academic leaders, and public resource managers on both sides of the international border to identify critical areas and better protect the integrity of natural resources in this fragile and rapidly-changing region.

In October, SI will hold a regional, multinational forum entitled "Land Use Changes in the Western Sonoran Desert Border Area." The forum will focus on past and projected land use changes in the region, and their associated impacts on natural and cultural resources. Participants will be informed about the economic, social and political changes rapidly occurring in this section of the border area. Determining and resolving community development needs and implications of the North American Free Trade Agreement will be considered. Natural resource protection and the potential for designating this area as an international park will be discussed. We also hope the forum will provide a catalyst for development of a long-term, comprehensive approach to regional land use planning and resource management in the area.

### **INNOVATION GRANTS**

This year, SI evaluated 265 Innovation Grants applications from across the country, and awarded \$225,000 in grants to between 32 conservation projects.



## THE RINCON INSTITUTE

The Sonoran Institute's first project demonstrating a mechanism for reconciling conservation and development is the Rincon Institute (RI), a non-profit corporation based in Tucson, Arizona. RI was created in November, 1990, in cooperation with WWF, Saguaro National Monument, Pima County Parks and Recreation Department, Rocking K Development Company, SWCA Environmental Consultants, National Parks and Conservation Association, Pima Trails Association, and faculty from the School of Renewable Natural Resources at the University of Arizona. RI's mission is to protect the ecological integrity of Saguaro National Monument by ensuring that development occurring adjacent to the Monument adheres to the highest ecological and social standards. This is accomplished through open space planning and management, riparian restoration, environmental education, and ecological research.

What is unique about this project is that it was created as a condition of development for the Rocking K Ranch. The Rincon Institute is financed through an agreement which commits Rocking K Development Company to provide start-up funds and long-term funding by imposing deed restrictions and fees that bind all future builders and landowners on the Ranch. This concept has attracted considerable outside interest and financial support. RI has received grants or financial commitments from WWF, the National Park Foundation, Apple Computer Company, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

As of 1992, the Rincon Institute has completed or made progress on several critical projects: the addition of 3,540 acres of prime wildlife habitat to Saguaro National Monument; publication of the Proceedings of the Symposium on Research in Saguaro National Monument; development of a guidebook for riparian revegetation; developing a scientific foundation for the restoration of Rincon Creek; and starting a multimedia environmental education project that will be used to train naturalists and to educate school children, residents, and visitors to the area.

## VIRGENES INSTITUTE

The Sonoran Institute is currently working in southern California to establish a non-profit organization similar to the Rincon Institute. Creation and long-term financial support of the Las Virgenes Institute for Natural Resource Protection and Restoration (LVI) will be one result of the Ahmanson Ranch development proposal, upon approval by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors. The proposal also includes the dedication of over 10,000 acres of natural land owned by Bob Hope to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The proposed LVI will manage 915 acres of open space between Ahmanson Ranch and the 2,633 acres of the Ranch which will be dedicated as public open space to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. LVI will also guide ecological research and restoration activities on the Ranch and throughout the Malibu Creek watershed, and provide environmental education programs designed to instill a conservation ethic in the area.

### **SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES DIALOGUE**

SI is particularly active within the Greater Yellowstone region. Workshops have been held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming; Teton County (Driggs and Victor), Idaho; Livingston, Montana; Gardiner, Montana; and Red Lodge, Montana. Financial support from the Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation enables SI's activities in Greater Yellowstone. Successful Communities workshops have been held in Gunnison Basin (Gunnison and Crested Butte), Colorado, and Patagonia, Arizona.

### **RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS**

#### **Report on Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Local Land Use Planning**

With financial support from the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, SI is reviewing and analyzing the literature available on the effects of various land use planning strategies on economic and fiscal conditions, and evaluating this information for applicability to communities in the Greater Yellowstone area.

#### **Wildlife Habitat Mapping Project**

Under a contract with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Sonoran Institute, and the School of Renewable Natural Resources, University of Arizona, are working together to develop and test a methodology for mapping wildlife habitat in eastern Pima County. The project will define land cover categories based upon vegetation inventories conducted at several representative study sites. Recommendations for interpreting land cover information in terms of wildlife habitat values will be provided, and approaches for conducting a comprehensive inventory of land covers in metropolitan Tucson will be evaluated. This project will provide the methodology for incorporating wildlife conservation measures into long-term planning for eastern Pima County. Wildlife biologist Lisa Harris is working with SI as project manager.

## **PLANNING AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE**

### **Lower Rappahanock River, Virginia**

SI provides assistance on land use ordinances to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Rappahanock River Valley Association, and the town of Kilmarnock, Virginia, in a watershed-based project to improve land use planning, in order to better protect a seven-county area along the river.

## **EDUCATION, TRAINING AND OUTREACH**

### **National Park Service Resource Management Trainee Program**

SI organized and led a one-week Natural Resources Law Course for National Park Service resource management trainees at Clemson University, S.C.

### **Other Outreach**

SI staff are regularly invited to address conferences and training programs on land use topics. Recent outreach includes:

National Park Service Denver Service Center Park Planning Workshop, June 4, 1992;

National Park Service Special Resource Studies course in Santa Fe, April 14, 1992;

Keynote address at the Shenandoah National Park 13th Biennial Research and Resource Management Symposium, May 6, 1992.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Frank Gregg (Chairman)** is a professor in the School of Renewable Natural Resources at the University of Arizona. He formerly directed the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the New England Rivers Basin Commission, and is a former vice-president of The Conservation Foundation. Mr. Gregg has also served as staff assistant to former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall.

**Fred Bosselman** is a prominent land use and environmental lawyer. He is counsel to the law firm of Burke, Bosselman & Weaver, with offices in Chicago and Boca Raton. Mr. Bosselman teaches land use and environmental law at IIT Chicago Kent Law School. He has authored several books on land use and has served as a consultant to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality, and to many private companies, state agencies, local governments, and conservation organizations on land use and environmental matters.



**Donald R. Diamond** is a principal of Rocking K Development Company and is active in land development, business, and public affairs. He is a founder of the Phoenix Suns professional basketball team and has served on the board of directors of United Bank of Arizona and as general chairman of Tucson United Way. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Greater Tucson Economic Development Council, Arizona Economic Council, Kids Voting, and other business, education, and community organizations.

**Jan Gingold (Vice Chair)** is President of Pima Trails Association, a non-profit conservation and trails advocacy group. She serves on the Board of the Arizona-New Mexico Parks and Conservation Council. Ms. Gingold was instrumental in producing the Eastern Pima County Trail System Master Plan. She will also coordinate the environmental education programs for the Rincon Institute.

**Donald Shropshire** is president and chief executive officer of Tucson Medical Center and is active in public affairs. Among many civic and charitable activities, Mr. Shropshire serves on the Board of Directors of the Museum of Northern Arizona, and is a past member of the University of Arizona Board of Regents.

**Ervin H. Zube** is Professor, Renewable Natural Resources in the School of Renewable Natural Resources at the University of Arizona. He has taught in Yugoslavia, England, and at the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Dr. Zube is past Chairman of the Board of Directors of Southwest Parks and Monuments Association and is an international authority on national parks and protected areas.

*In addition, Jack Davis, retired Vice President of Valley National Bank, served as Board member from November 1990 to November 1991.*

#### **PRINCIPAL STAFF**

**Luther Propst** is Executive Director of the Sonoran Institute and the affiliated Rincon Institute. Previously, he directed World Wildlife Fund's Successful Communities program in Washington, D.C. He has contributed to many efforts to manage development and protect natural areas nationwide, and has co-authored *Creating Successful Communities: A Guidebook to Growth Management Strategies* (1989) and *Managing Development in Small Towns* (1984). Formerly, Mr. Propst was an attorney in the Land Use Group with the Hartford, Connecticut law firm of Robinson & Cole. He also taught land use law as an adjunct professor at the Western New England College School of Law. Mr. Propst received his law degree and Master's degree in regional planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Wendy Laird** is Director of the U.S.- Mexico Borderlands Program. Formerly, she was a research fellow at the World Wildlife Fund where she was staff to The National Commission on the Environment. Ms. Laird was a graduate research assistant for Dr. H. Brinton Milward, Director of the School of Public Administration and Policy, University of Arizona, while working on her Master's degree in Public Administration. She was Program Coordinator for a family-owned architectural historic preservation consulting firm, Linda Laird & Associates. She is co-author of "Where Does Policy Come From?" in *The Discipline of Public Administration: A Festschrift in Memory of Charles H. Levine* (forthcoming).

**Dawn Willman** is the office manager for the Sonoran Institute. Previously, she worked at the University of Alaska as Administrative Assistant for the Distance Education Department, where she developed a program that provided education to inmates in correctional facilities.

**Mary Schmid** is a volunteer and part-time research and editorial assistant at the Institute. She received her B.A. in environmental conservation and management from Barnard College, New York, and her Master's degree in geography from Columbia University. She has worked for the U.S. Geological Survey and as a firefighter in the backcountry of Saguaro National Monument.

**Paul Willman** is a legal intern for the Institute. He has also assisted in the organization of the U.S.- Mexico Borderlands conference. Mr. Willman received his Bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and is currently attending law school at the University of Arizona.

**Ron Steffens** provides special writing and editorial assistance. He has written for several newspapers, with a concentration in environmental issues, and is currently writing environmental essays for a number of regional and national publications. Mr. Steffens received an MFA in creative writing from the University of Arizona and has taught writing at the University and as a writer-in-residence at schools throughout Arizona and Wyoming. In 1990, he received a fiction fellowship from the Arizona Commission on the Arts. Mr. Steffens has worked as a seasonal ranger, firefighter and biological technician with the National Park Service, and is currently a prescribed fire monitor at Grand Teton National Park.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

*The Sonoran Institute gratefully acknowledges World Wildlife Fund,  
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6842 E. Tanque Verde, Suite D  
Tucson, AZ 85719  
tel: (602) 290-0828 fax: (602) 290-0969





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THE SONORAN INSTITUTE OF BOTANY AND ZOOLOGY  
P.O. BOX 10000, TUCSON, ARIZONA 85724  
TELEPHONE (520) 622-1000 FAX (520) 622-1001

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