



Residents rally for rural life & wildlife on Montana pass

It's not unusual to see deer, elk, or an occasional moose or black bear bound across Interstate 90 between Bozeman and Livingston, Montana. The Bozeman Pass area is a vital wildlife corridor connecting Yellowstone Park and wild lands to the north.

When an energy company announced plans to explore for coalbed methane five years ago, area residents were shocked. However, "instead of paralyzing our community, the threat galvanized us," said Gray Davidson, a Bozeman Pass landowner. "We stuck with it for four years. We didn't agree on everything, but we forged a compromise that will protect our rural way of life and the wildlife."

Sonoran Institute staff helped bring together diverse residents – old-timers, newcomers, owners of small properties and those with large holdings – for neighborhood meetings, two petition drives and thousands of volunteer hours. The Institute facilitated the planning process and gathered technical and scientific information.

"We learned that our own homes, roads, fences and dogs are already creating a bottleneck for wildlife," said landowner Tina Visscher. "To protect wildlife,



water supplies and open space, we couldn't focus solely on coalbed methane development; we also had to limit subdividing of our own property. I'm extremely proud that my neighbors came together and did this."

"Such citizen stewardship gives hope that we can live in this precious landscape and provide room for nature to thrive," said Dr. Gary Tabor, director of the North American Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The Gallatin County Commission did its part in May by approving the 26,000-acre Bozeman Pass Zoning District with safeguards from coalbed

methane development and poorly planned growth. The new zoning limits average density in future subdivisions to one house per 40 or 80 acres, depending on the area. Energy companies now must study water supplies and other sensitive resources, submit plans for local approval before drilling, use the best available technology, and post a bond to pay for any needed cleanup.

The Sonoran Institute's Northern Rockies Director Dennis Glick credits area residents. "If wildlife is able to move through this landscape a generation from now, it will be because of the efforts of these people."

UPDATE

Building on the momentum of the Bozeman Pass effort, Gallatin County may become one of the few Montana counties to have countywide zoning. Dennis Glick, director of the Sonoran Institute's Northern Rockies office, reports that the county's commissioners are presenting a countywide zoning initiative at public forums this fall. The commissioners' final decision on the proposed initiative is expected before the end of the year.

Sonoran Institute Programs

Central Rockies
Conservation & Land Development
Energy Impacts & Policy
Land & Water Policy
Northern Rockies
Socioeconomics
Sonoran Desert

Board of Directors

Fred Borchardt *Wilcox, Arizona*
Kathy Borgen *Denver, Colorado*
Fred Bosselman *Evanston, Illinois*
Exequiel Ezcurra *La Mesa, California*
Louise Glasser *Lake Forest, Illinois*
Andy Gordon *Phoenix, Arizona*
Susan Heyneman *Fishtail, Montana*
Martha Hunter *Phoenix, Arizona*
Bill Jack *Westcliffe, Colorado*
Nyda Jones-Church *San Diego, California*
Darlene Lavender *Calgary, Alberta*
Gretchen Long *Wilson, Wyoming*
Dennis Minano *Tucson, Arizona*
Bryan Morgan *Boulder, Colorado*
David Parsons *Tucson, Arizona*
Louise Benz Plank *Banner, Wyoming*
Anna Hill Price *Tucson, Arizona*
Jane Ragle *Tucson, Arizona*
Karen Wade *Fortine, Montana*

Leadership Team

Luther Propst *Executive Director*
Don Chatfield *Associate Director,
Development & Communications*
John Shepard *Associate Director, Programs*
Ginny Zaccheo *Associate Director,
Finance & Administration*

Offices

7650 E. Broadway Blvd., Suite #203
TUCSON, AZ 85710
520-290-0828 Fax: 520-290-0969

201 S. Wallace Ave., Suite #B3C
BOZEMAN, MT 59715
406-587-7331 Fax: 406-587-2027

4835 E. Cactus Rd., Suite #270
PHOENIX, AZ 85254
602-393-4310 Fax: 602-393-4319

101 S. Third St., Suite #350
GRAND JUNCTION, CO 81501
970-263-9635 Fax: 970-263-9639

Magisterio #627, Col. Profesores Federales,
Mexicali, Baja California, C.P. 21370
MEXICO
Tel: 011-52-686-580-1701

P.O. Box 543
HELENA, MT 59624
Tel/Fax: 406-449-6086

Editor: Victoria Collier (vcollier@sonoran.org)
Design: Teri Reindl Bingham

Photo Credits: Page 1: Sonoran Institute. Page 2: Luther Propst by Liz Storer. Page 3: White Tank Mountains, Ariz., by Jason Meininger, Sonoran Institute. Page 4: courtesy of Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation. Page 5: Colorado River Delta by Francisco Zamora, Sonoran Institute. Page 6: Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, New Mexico, by Jeff Balmat, Theresa Mau-Crimmins, National Park Service and Sarah Studd, Sonoran Institute. Page 8: courtesy of Sonoran Office of Tourism.

CELEBRATING OUR PARTNERS

Dear Friends,

Among the Sonoran Institute's greatest strengths are the strong, collaborative relationships we have with others who share our passion for the West and respect for the people who live here. Our work with several fine partners is featured in this issue.

One of our most outstanding partners is the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Through our joint State Trust Lands Project, we assist state trust land managers in a West that's changing at breakneck speed. Our training programs, demonstration projects and research publications offer practical, innovative "best practices" and recommendations for trust-land management. An excellent example is the recent report, *Building Trust: Lessons from Collaborative Planning on State Trust Lands*, which highlights challenges and opportunities in eight case studies from Arizona to Washington state.

We greatly value our friendship with the folks at the Lincoln Institute – they are absolutely the best in the field of land-policy research and education. Find out more about their work at www.lincolninst.edu.

As you look through this newsletter, you will see the results of some of our other partnerships. We believe working together – with organizations, government agencies, communities, grassroots groups and engaged citizens – is the best way to protect the West's natural and cultural assets, its prosperity and its quality of life.



Luther Propst
Executive Director



Index

Page 1.....Montanans Rally

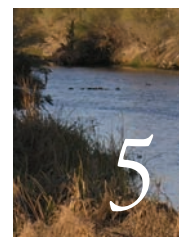
Page 3.....Trust Lands in Demand

Page 4.....Foundation Means Business

Page 5.....Restoring the Delta

Page 6.....Monitoring the Gila

Page 8.....New Geotours



Old laws, new demands spark changes in trust land management

While many state trust lands have passed into private ownership, much of the remaining 46 million acres is in nine Western states, making up a significant part of the region's landscape.

Congress granted these lands to states when they entered the Union to support essential public institutions, principally schools. State trust land managers lease and sell the lands for a range of uses to generate revenue for the designated beneficiaries.

With the West's booming population and changing economy, these managers are facing new, sometimes conflicting, demands on the use of state trust lands. These lands offer opportunities for commercial, residential and industrial uses to accommodate the explosive growth. At the same time, cultural, environmental and recreational amenities are increasingly important, and people want to protect qualities that attracted them to the region. Some of the West's prime areas for natural beauty and recreation are on state trust land.

Trust-land managers are responding to new demographic and economic realities with strategies that:

- balance short-term revenue generation with longer-term values;
- use collaborative approaches to better meet the needs and interests of communities;
- encourage sustainable and large-scale development to accommodate rapid growth;
- support conservation projects given the increased demand to preserve natural areas.

Laws establishing the trust-land system date to the time of statehood, so some Western states are introducing reforms to create more flexible, accountable trust-land management and to protect the quality of life now and in the future (see sidebar, *Conserving Arizona's Future*).

The State Trust Lands Project, a partnership of the Sonoran Institute and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, helps trust land managers better plan for growth and change. *Building Trust: Lessons from Collaborative Planning on State Trust Lands*, a publication released this summer, is one example of the research, information, tools and training the Project offers. See trustland.org for more information.

PROP 106: Conserving Arizona's Future

The Sonoran Institute is part of *Conserving Arizona's Future*, a broad coalition of conservationists, educators and business leaders working for passage of Proposition 106 in November's election. The measure will protect 694,000 acres in special natural areas from development, including lands surrounding state and national parks, and it will require the state land department to cooperate with local governments for planning on state trust lands. At the same time, Prop 106 will protect and guarantee funding for Arizona's schools.



Backcountry Bounty: *Hunters, Anglers and Prosperity in the American West*

Roadless lands reel in revenue

Conservation of public lands is key to attracting hunting and fishing revenues. That message received robust attention in the media and elsewhere with the June release of *Backcountry Bounty: Hunters, Anglers and Prosperity in the American West* by the Sonoran Institute and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. The report's central themes are:

- Business related to hunting and fishing adds billions of dollars to the West's economy each year and is a foundation for prosperity in many rural communities.
- Wildlife and, therefore, hunters and anglers depend on public lands, including roadless backcountry accessed by trails.

A new federal rule calls on governors to submit petitions regarding how roadless areas on National Forest lands in their states are managed. The U. S. Forest Service is accepting petitions until November. The *Backcountry Bounty* report was presented at the Western Governors' Association conference in June to encourage the petitioners to factor in the importance of roadless areas to sportsmen and women and to state and local economies.

More than 56 million acres, or 97 percent, of the country's inventoried roadless areas are in 12 Western states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The report can be read or downloaded at sonoran.org.



SONORAN INSTITUTE
THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP



Conservation Foundation Means Business

As Rick Flory changed his focus from pizza to wildlife for his second career, he kept an entrepreneurial approach to his work.

Prior to selling his successful pizza franchise organization, Flory founded Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation in 1994 to provide financial support for conservation and wildlife protection. The Foundation now offers challenge grants to more than 100 groups including the Sonoran Institute.

Grantees are selected not only for the type of work they do but also for their approach to fundraising. "We're business people," Flory says of himself and his wife and partner Lee Robert. "We want to put our money on the performers who make the most efficient use of it and are strong fundraisers. They need to understand marketing and that getting paid is important."

Earth Friends prefers ongoing, long-term partnerships and considers increasing funding each year to groups that meet or exceed the requirements of its challenge grants.

Flory refers to Earth Friends as "conservation's community foundation," something like a clearinghouse for receiving and distributing funds as

well as providing information to other funders. "We're a great source of knowledge about conservation groups and which ones are the most effective to partner with," Flory said.

In its current "Partnership for Economics and Wildlife" agreement with the Sonoran Institute, the Foundation is offering a grant based on the Institute raising four times that amount in matching monies. These funds are supporting socioeconomic projects, such as a study of economic, environmental and social impacts of spillover growth between counties in the northern Rockies.

For more information about this Sonoran Institute partner, visit earthfriends.com.



**EARTH FRIENDS
WILDLIFE FOUNDATION**



Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation President Rick Flory and Executive Director Lee Robert enjoy the wilds they help protect, here visiting Yellowstone National Park.

KENDEDA FUND DOUBLES GIFTS FROM NEW DONORS

The Kendeda Fund for Sustainability of the Tides Foundation matches – dollar for dollar – gifts to the Sonoran Institute from first-time donors.

Join the growing list of those who support community decisions that respect the land and people of the West with a gift to the Sonoran Institute.

The Sonoran Institute is a Charity Navigator Four-Star Charity (see p. 7).

SONORAN INSTITUTE'S CORPORATE, FOUNDATION, GOVERNMENT & NONPROFIT SUPPORT May Through August 2006

CORPORATE & ORGANIZATIONAL

Altria Group, Inc.
American Conservation Real Estate
Blake Nursery
Carondelet Health Network
Chelan Land Trust
Conservation Properties, Inc.
Island Press
Leon-Taylor Management, Inc.
Lyle Anderson Company
Porteen & Associates
Sweetgrass Development
Tejon Ranch
Twin Buttes Properties, Inc.

FOUNDATION & GRANT

Brainerd Foundation
Bullitt Foundation
Camp-Younts Foundation
Cabot Foundation

The Christensen Fund
Compton Foundation
David Rockefeller Fund
Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation
George Binney Conservation Foundation
Gates Family Foundation
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
J. M. Kaplan Fund
Henry P. Kendall Foundation
Kendeda Sustainability
Fund of the Tides Foundation
L. P. Brown Foundation
LaSalle Adams Fund
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Maki Foundation
Mountain Sky Guest Ranch Fund
M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust
New York Community Trust
Northern Environmental Support Trust
National Forest Foundation

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust
Steele-Reese Foundation
Tinker Foundation Incorporated
Turner Foundation
V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation
Wallace Global Fund
Weeden Foundation
The Wyss Foundation

GOVERNMENT & NONPROFIT

Campaign for America's Wilderness
CICESE
City of Tucson
The Conservation Fund
Environmental Defense
Greater Yellowstone Coalition
The MBA-Nonprofit Connection
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
National Parks Conservation Association

National Wildlife Federation
The Nature Conservancy
Pronatura
Santa Lucia Conservancy
Sonoran Office of Tourism
Sublette County, Wyoming
Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Town of Apache Junction
Town of Sahuarita
University of Colorado
University of Sonora
U. S. Air Force Legacy Program
U. S. Army Yuma Proving Ground
U. S. Bureau of Land Management
U. S. National Park Service
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
U. S. Agency for International Development
The Wilderness Land Trust





Colorado River Delta Restoration Gets New Binational Support

The once free and mighty Colorado River collected silt along its path, creating the 1,930,000-acre Colorado River Delta before disappearing into the Gulf of California. Plants, fish, animals and some native peoples flourished there.

Diversion and dam building changed much of that by the mid-twentieth century, and many, including leading scientist Exequiel Ezcurra, thought “the Delta was gone, vanished forever.”

However, according to Dr. Ezcurra, who recently became a Sonoran Institute board member, conservation groups began “to defend this treasure ... and to propose means to protect it ... preserving a heritage we all thought was gone forever.”

The Sonoran Institute, Environmental Defense and other partners developed guidelines and recommendations for conservation in the Delta, and in 2005, published *Conservation Priorities in the Colorado River Delta*, reflecting the

contributions of many scientists, resource managers and resource users. That report was adopted in April by the binational Minute 306 Advisory Group, part of the International Boundary and Water Commission, representing government and nongovernmental organizations.

As of July, the Advisory Group identified eighteen projects it will support to address the report’s recommendations. This political support is critical for seeking funds for the projects, which fall into three categories: restoration, policy and research.

The Sonoran Institute is leading or participating in several of these projects, including restoration work in the Colorado River riparian corridor and the Río Hardy. Institute staff led by Project Manager Francisco Zamora started a Restoration Demonstration Site, and in the next year they expect to plant 25 acres of native trees and restore three acres of marsh wetland in backwater areas.

Ecotour explains border line

By Walt Staton, Sonoran Institute staff

Yuma, Arizona, is in the hottest, most arid part of the Southwest, yet Google Earth satellite photos show green patchwork farmlands that we would expect to see in the Midwest. Also clearly visible is a line where the land goes from bright green to a lighter shade with more brown areas. The border between the United States and Mexico can be seen from space! As I learned on an ecotour in June, it isn’t roads or walls, but policy and access to natural resources that create this visual boundary.

I joined a group of law students from San Francisco on the trip led by La Ruta de Sonora, a partner of the Sonoran Institute. The custom tour focused on water, immigration and the environment in southern Arizona and California, northern Baja California and Sonora, and the Cocopah and Tohono O’odham reservations.

We saw dams, diversions and canals that distribute water across the desert – all on the U.S. side. We saw the Colorado River reduced to a creek as it flowed into Mexico. We drove across a dusty plain, formerly a gigantic wetland ecosystem in the river’s delta, only to find a small *ciénega* created by discharged agricultural runoff.

We met with tribal leaders, government officials and NGO representatives from both countries and heard accounts of environmental tensions – everything from court battles over mismanaged floods to naval interventions to stop illegal fishing.

Best of all, we witnessed some amazing on-the-ground conservation efforts led by the Sonoran Institute and other groups to revitalize the region’s ecosystem and educate people about its importance.

I heard that some of the law students on the tour will return as volunteers this winter to do restoration work. Maybe they’ll plant trees in the Delta, adding a little more green to the “other” side of the line.



Stream Science

SONORAN INSTITUTE & PARK SERVICE TEAM UP TO MONITOR VITAL SIGNS OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Sonoran Institute scientists have been working with the National Park Service (NPS) for four years to design and implement a monitoring program to determine the health of natural resources in NPS's 11-unit Sonoran Desert Network. Teams camp out at various sites where they collect data that help the Park Service make resource-management decisions based on sound science. The network includes New Mexico's Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument where a monitoring team collected data on nine vital signs this summer, as shown in these photos.



Cheryl McIntyre, the Sonoran Institute's ecosystem monitoring project manager, sets up a "total station," (left) which shoots a laser beam to prism poles to measure the stream's path, width and depth. Getting accurate data requires about 300 shots in each quarter mile of a stream. Getting into her work often means getting wet for Cheryl. Here she uses a densiometer to measure overhanging vegetation, which helps determine how much of the stream's habitat is suitable for fish.



The Institute's Jason Welborn (left) collects periphyton, while teammate Mark Zepp uses a kick net to gather macroinvertebrates. The condition and community structures of their "catch" help assess long-term water quality.



Sarah Studd (left) of the Sonoran Institute and Dana Backer of the National Park Service record habitat data along the West Fork of the Gila River. The blue flags mark sample sites.

Three significant community decisions in Montana

Diligent work by citizens, assisted by Sonoran Institute staff from the Montana Smart Growth Coalition (MSGC) and Northern Rockies Program, paid off recently in Montana.



- **Ravalli County:** After more than 800 people attended a public hearing to discuss the impact of a proposed Wal-Mart on the rural county's small towns, commissioners passed a zoning ordinance to protect downtown vitality by restricting the size of big-box stores.
- **Gallatin County:** Thousands of volunteer hours led to the protection of open space and wildlife habitat on Bozeman Pass. See the story on page 1.
- **Missoula County:** Commissioners approved a development that will protect McCauley Butte and Bitterroot River frontage with conservation easements that preserve 266 of 286 acres as open space. Walkable, traditional neighborhoods will occupy 19.4 acres. The developers collaborated with government and community groups to forge plans for the area.

In these politically diverse counties – one conservative, one liberal, one moderate – people want a stronger voice in how their communities grow, says Tim Davis, MSGC project manager. “They want to make sure what they love about this place is protected.”

Takings initiatives threaten community planning decisions

Communities like the three in Montana in the above story could be prevented from protecting quality of life, open space, wildlife, and other natural and cultural assets if the “takings” initiatives on this November’s ballot in several states are passed. The Sonoran Institute is part of broad-based coalitions in Montana and Arizona opposed to these initiatives.

Cloaked as efforts to limit eminent domain or to protect property rights, these initiatives would nullify state and local land-use regulations that protect neighborhoods, the environment and property values.

A recent article in the *High Country News* mentioned Gallatin County, Mont., as an example where passage of the takings initiative would kill “an effort to begin countywide zoning to address chaotic sprawl, increased traffic congestion, strain on all government services, worsening air pollution, and disappearing open space; the county would not be able to pass or enforce any new regulations. Also, there would be no more grassroots efforts to create small zoning districts, as the residents of Bozeman Pass just did.”

AROUND THE WEST .. *in a word*

Scientist joins Institute board Dr. Exequiel Ezcurra, provost of the San Diego Natural History Museum and director of its Biodiversity Research Center of the Californias, is a new member of the Sonoran Institute’s board of directors. Dr. Ezcurra has written more than 70 scientific journal articles and eight books and he coproduced the award-winning film, “Ocean Oasis.” He served three years as president of Mexico’s National Institute of Ecology. Dr. Ezcurra received the prestigious Conservation Biology Award from the Society for Conservation Biology in 1994.

Money goes where it counts

The Sonoran Institute’s commitment to put its resources where they do the most good for communities and land in western North America has earned it a four-star rating from Charity Navigator, America’s largest independent evaluator of charities. Charity Navigator wrote that “receiving four out of a possible four stars indicates that [the Sonoran Institute] excels in successfully managing finances in an efficient and effective manner.”



Citizens learn leadership skills As we go to press, the Sonoran Institute’s first Western Leadership Institute (WLI) is underway in Park City, Utah. Forty-one citizens from eight counties in Montana, Idaho, Colorado and Arizona are learning to lead others in their communities to become involved with growth and land-use issues and decisions. WLI is an outgrowth of the Western Community Stewardship Forum (WCSF), which provides land-use training and tools to help local officials manage change in their fast-growing communities. Many of those officials encouraged the new WLI project, with one saying, “The political leaders have gone thru WCSF and been inspired; now they need an inspired citizenship to support decisions about the future.”

Program director makes a municipal bond

Jim Spehar, director of Sonoran Institute’s Central Rockies Program, is the 2006-07 board president of the Colorado Municipal League, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of 265 cities and towns. Jim has served on the board since 2003 and on the Grand Junction City Council since 1999. “The League puts me in touch with people from communities the Sonoran Institute is serving as we expand in this region,” Jim says. “Both organizations are tackling big issues these communities face.”





Sonoran Institute

7650 EAST BROADWAY BLVD., SUITE 203
TUCSON, AZ 85710

NON PROFIT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #1454
Tucson, AZ 85710



PRINTED ON
RECYCLED PAPER

PLEASE CONSERVE RESOURCES AND
SHARE THIS COPY WITH OTHERS
BEFORE RECYCLING

Is your address correct?

Please contact Angie at (520) 290-0828
to update our information



Two New Geotours Explore Mexican and Native Lands, Cultures, Traditions

RÍO SONORA TOUR – RURAL CULTURE & TRADITIONS

Following the course of the Río Sonora from its headwaters in Cananea, Sonora, to Hermosillo, the state's capital, this tour offers a fascinating glimpse into 400 years of northern Mexico's history. Along this picturesque route, we will encounter colorful flora and fauna, ongoing ranching traditions, and spectacular examples of colonial architecture. We tour quaint towns and enjoy local delicacies, spicy chilies and the relaxed way of life along the Río Sonora. 4 days/ 3 nights. December 7-10

THE O'ODHAM HIMDAG TOUR – WAY OF LIFE OF THE DESERT PEOPLE

Our visit with the Tohono O'odham, the Desert People, starts with an overview of their Hohokam ancestors. We'll explore Ventana Cave and examine ancient petroglyphs. The Children's Shrine offers a glimpse into the mystical world of O'odham storytelling. At Baboquivari Peak, the center of O'odham cosmology, we are introduced to traditional spiritual beliefs. A stop in Sells gives insight into the tribal government and economy. This unique journey concludes at a farming project reviving the traditional Himdag or lifeways. December 1-2

MORE LA RUTA DE SONORA GEOTOURS

- Heritage Tour – November 3-5
- Colorado River Delta Tour – November 9-13
- Desert & Sea Tour – November 17-19

For more information, visit laruta.org or call Monica Durand at 800-806-0766.