



## Creating “a Civilization to Match the Scenery” in Western North America

*It's not as exciting as restoring a wetland or leading a geotour. It's not as satisfying as bringing cattlemen, conservationists, commissioners and contractors together to work out a vision for their community. Planning doesn't generate much adrenaline or many headlines. It does, however, lay the groundwork for all that follows. Last summer the Sonoran Institute began planning for the next five to 10 years by examining the West — its rapid growth, changing economy and much more. By June, we will have a new plan for best using our time, energy, funding, skills and passion for this land. Here's a sneak preview.*

### *Healthy Lands, Resilient Economies, Vibrant Communities*

The goal is a West where civil dialogue and collaboration are hallmarks of decision making; people live in harmony with the land and wildlife; clean water and energy are assured; and vibrant communities, resilient economies and healthy lands reflect “a civilization to match the scenery,” as Western writer Wallace Stegner envisioned. The Sonoran Institute, with the support of people who care about the West, is working to bring this vision to reality.

### *Changes & Challenges: A Snapshot*

Grizzlies. Saguaros. Iconic landscapes — Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountains, Yellowstone. The West is mythical — a land where many aspire to travel or live, whether in a modern city flanked by rugged wilderness or in a mountain town with world-class skiing or fishing five minutes from work. But

profound change is underway. We must be careful stewards of nature's gifts or risk losing them.

**Growth.** Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, Colorado and Utah are the fastest-growing states. Ranches and open space are giving way to subdivisions. Homes and jobs are often far apart, and streets are gridlocked. Many rural communities outgrow their small-town character. Retirees also look south of the border for affordable, resort-style living. Sources of energy and water are strained.

**Public Land.** Nearly half of the West is public land. Neighboring private development hampers wildlife migration. More off-road motorized vehicles damage resources that understaffed agencies cannot protect. Policies impede public-land managers' work with private landowners, tribes and other jurisdictions, yet most threats arise outside public-land boundaries.

**Laws & Policies.** State and federal policies offer few incentives and limited authority for communities to plan for growth and protect their land, air and water. Poorly planned development decreases property values and increases costs of infrastructure and services.

**Energy.** Parts of the West are in the grip of an energy boom. When bust follows boom, communities have to pick up the pieces. Many are unprepared for the impacts on their land, water and social fabric.

**Drought.** Compounding these challenges, a prolonged drought is evidenced by reduced mountain snow pack, falling river levels, intense wildfires and expanding noxious weeds.

**Changing Economy.** Traditional industries no longer make a major contribution. Scenery, recreation and open space are the West's new competitive advantage.

The challenges loom large, but they can be overcome. We can make better decisions about how to develop our communities and preserve the places and quality of life we cherish.



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## Offices

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

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

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

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

## Field Offices

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

Magisterio #627, Col. Profesores Federales  
MEXICALI, BAJA CALIFORNIA, C.P. 21370  
Mexico  
Tel: 011-52-686-582-5431

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

Contributors: Joaquin Murrieta, John Shepard, Nina Jaeger,  
Sarah Waring, Jennifer Barefoot, Jennifer Boyer, Whitney Tilt

Map: Erin Mock

Photos: Page 1: Sarah Studd Page 2: Chris Mooney  
Page 3: Joaquin Murrieta Page 4: Rocky Mountain Front  
by Dave Wedum; John Day River by Ellen Bishop - Paleo  
Lands Institute Page 5: Karen Hyun Page 6: Tim Crawford  
Page 7: Marjo Curgus Page 8: Teton Science Schools (top)  
by Mithun; BoDo (Boise Downtown) and Orchard Gardens  
in Missoula by Brian Brush

The Sonoran Institute promotes community decisions  
that respect the land and people of the West

## Dear Friends,

If a person likes to stay busy, the Sonoran Institute is an especially great place to work. These pages let us share with you just a small sample of what we're doing and where we're doing it.

You'll see a photo essay on page 3 about our work with the Kwapa people in the Colorado River Delta, but it doesn't show what we do in the Delta with other communities, local and federal governments, conservation groups, research institutions and non-governmental organizations. We restore wetlands, plant trees and organize cleanups. We promote geotours and other sustainable local economic development efforts. We contribute research and advance policy recommendations. We're even helping build a camp that will offer recreation, environmental education and restoration research opportunities for locals and visitors.

Back in our offices, we've been looking long and hard at challenges to and opportunities for conservation and prosperity in Western North America. Pages 1 and 5 give a snapshot of our preliminary plans to make sure the Institute's energy and resources are focused on the future – a future that begins now.

I hope the stories in *WestWord* whet your appetite for more information about the Institute's work, which you can find at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org) or by contacting one of our offices listed on this page. Even though we're busy, we like to help you learn more about how we work to inspire and enable decisions and policies that respect the land and people of the West.

*Luther Propst*

Luther Propst  
Executive Director



U.S. Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords is shown at the Sonoran Institute's Faces of Conservation awards event in March with Institute Executive Director Luther Propst. Speaking to the crowd of about 300 in Tucson, Giffords praised "Americans taking responsibility for our future," saying they inspire and give hope "that we will rise to the challenge of population growth, economic development, water resource management, and global warming." She also said "the Sonoran Institute's collaborative approach to conservation and development is critical. ...Congress could learn a lot from the principles that the Institute lives by."

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# The People at the End of the River

Shortly before the depleted Colorado River disappears into the Gulf of California, it passes through the land of the native Cocopah in the U.S. and the Cucapá in Mexico. Together the two tribes are called the Kwapa or “river people.” They have seen their long relationship with the river seriously impacted by the reduction of the Colorado Delta’s wetlands and riparian habitat. The Sonoran Institute works with the Kwapa and others in the Delta and Upper Gulf region on restoration, conservation, economic development and policy reform.



*Chaquira beadwork is a traditional handicraft of the Kwapa. Now that tradition is helping rid the area of invasive salt cedar trees. As the Kwapa and the Sonoran Institute remove non-native plants, the trees have become a new source of material for the beadwork, which is finding new markets in the U.S. and Mexico.*



*Kwapa youths perform traditional music for geotourists exploring the Delta with the Institute's partner, La Ruta de Sonora. La Ruta tours visit cultural and natural sites, support local economies and promote responsible tourism in the Sonoran Desert region.*



*The Kwapa are mapping the community's knowledge and perspective of their environment, history and traditions with assistance from the Sonoran Institute. The tribes will use the completed map in their educational programs and to promote conservation, understanding and respect for the region's land and culture.*



For more information about the Sonoran Institute's work with the Kwapa, e-mail [Joaquin@sonoran.org](mailto:Joaquin@sonoran.org).







# FIELD REPORTS: Oregon and Montana

The John Day River in north-central Oregon is the second-longest free-flowing river in the continental United States (the Yellowstone is the longest). It supports abundant fish as it winds through scenic, pristine country proposed for wilderness designation.

Scenery, outdoor recreation and other natural assets are important for the region's prosperity. Alex Phillips, the Sonoran Institute's John Day field coordinator, is collaborating with organizations and local leaders to integrate protection of the river with local economic aspirations.

Our John Day partners include: the Bureau of Land Management, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, several state agencies, local governments, John Day Basin Trust, Oregon Natural Deserts Association, Sustainable Northwest, The Nature Conservancy, and the Wild Salmon Center.

Alex is one of two new Institute field coordinators promoting long-term

conservation and prosperity in special places. After working with residents of Montana's Rocky Mountain Front for the past few years, the Institute hired local citizen leader Corlene Martin in January as our field coordinator there.

Along the Front, a rural area with miles of open space, spectacular views and wild lands, the Institute advocates a solid land-use planning foundation and community visions that incorporate conservation.

Corlene works with communities on the Front, each with a set of challenges related to growth and economic vitality. We are helping Choteau design a city growth policy, while in Dupuyer and Augusta the focus is on water issues and economic development opportunities.

The Institute studied the region's economic strengths and weaknesses and made recommendations for businesses and communities in this place where prosperity and quality of life are inextricably linked to conservation of its natural assets. This research is the basis



for ongoing public education about agriculture, geo-tourism and community development.

The Institute also works collaboratively in the area to complement the efforts of other organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy and The Wilderness Society. With the National Parks Conservation Association and National Geographic Society, we are identifying the shared values of the Crown of the Continent region, including the Rocky Mountain Front.



## CIVILIZATION *continued from page 1*

### *A Strong Record & A Big Vision*

For 17 years the Sonoran Institute has been bringing together people with diverse interests and perspectives — local officials, civic and business leaders, ranchers and other landowners, conservation groups, developers, public land managers and engaged citizens — to forge enduring solutions to the challenges of growth and change.

To this day our conservation work is informed by and supports local efforts. We use a full range of land-use strategies, from outright protection to managing growth to integrating conservation into development. We demonstrate how conservation and planning are keys to prosperity and quality of life. We help communities agree on growth plans that preserve their natural and cultural assets. In innovative partnerships, we train local leaders across the West.

From railroads and dams to public lands, the West has been home to big ideas. Now is the time for another — an ambitious, inclusive vision of healthy lands, clean water, sustainable energy, resilient economies, and vibrant communities committed to conservation.

### *Making the Vision a Reality*

To meet the challenges of the changing West, the Sonoran Institute will focus on public lands, growth, water, energy and climate change — core issues that define how the region grows and changes. We will expand and deepen our work in two principal ways:

- Apply the full range of our expertise and conservation approaches to long-term Legacy Projects in four Western landscapes (see map).
- To help Western cities, counties and public land managers obtain the tools, authority and funds to better manage growth and protect our natural heritage, we will work to inform and reform state and federal policy by:
  - **Understanding and communicating what growth means in the West** — researching drivers of growth, future growth scenarios, and how conservation and land-use planning benefit economies.

## LEGACY PROJECTS

*The Sonoran Institute is launching four keystone initiatives to tackle Western challenges, positively influence other areas, and enrich communities and lands that future generations will want to enjoy and protect.*

### TOP OF THE ROCKIES

Vast public lands; adjacent private land development threatens wildlife corridors & fire management; growing communities.

**Strategies:** Help communities —

- shape growth to allow wildlife and humans to coexist
- collaborate with public land managers to plan smart growth and economic development around natural and cultural assets
- protect open spaces, scenery, small-town character, wild lands



### COLORADO RIVER DELTA/UPPER GULF

Important wetland, stopover for birds on Pacific Flyway; source of water for Upper Gulf; good potential for restoration; bi-national agreements needed. Gulf coast slated for resort development.

**Strategies:**

- scale up model restoration projects
- work with tribes and other local communities to realize sustainable economic development
- work to ensure coastal development protects environmentally sensitive areas and creates local economic opportunities

### ENERGY HEARTLAND

Unprecedented oil and gas development; communities face ruined landscapes, “busted” economies.

**Strategies:** Help communities —

- understand, minimize oil and gas development impacts
- pursue cleaner, more reliable energy
- declare independence from conventional energy
- become leaders in energy sustainability

### SUN CORRIDOR

One of the fastest-growing areas; more than 10 million people by 2030; mostly desert.

**Strategies:** Work to create —

- world-class model sustainable desert city
- commuter rail between Phoenix & Tucson
- extensive network of conservation lands
- state policies to preserve remaining rivers

- **Building coalitions for change** — nurturing diverse leaders and organizing them into broad coalitions that value and advance land and water conservation and planning.
- **Advocating for reforms** — sharing information about obstacles to and incentives for effective conservation and land use planning; recommending policies that support collaboration across jurisdictions; conveying a vision where prosperity, quality of life and conservation go hand-in-hand.

- **Expanding our geographic presence** — from current offices in Arizona, Montana, Colorado and Baja California to offices in all eight intermountain states and Sonora, Mexico.





# "Poorly planned growth" motivates donor's action

Tim Crawford has seen a lot of change in the 30-plus years he has lived in the Rocky Mountain West, and he is not sanguine about all of it. "I've seen the ravages of poorly planned growth in Utah, Idaho and Montana. I feel it chases me wherever I go."

Living in Gallatin County, Montana, for more than 20 years, Tim has been doing his part to protect agricultural open space and the recreational values he cherishes. He has placed significant acreage under conservation easement and has been a dedicated philanthropist in the conservation community.

Tim supports the Sonoran Institute and its community-based approach to helping communities grow in a way that protects quality of life, nature and culture. "The Institute is realistic about growth and wants to see it done right... to ensure that growth leaves recreational and renewable resources for the future," he says.

While discouraged about the failure of streamside setback legislation in the Montana Legislature this session, Tim feels confident that the Institute's work can help mitigate the impacts of unfettered development along Montana's fabled waterways.

Tim Crawford Enterprises is a diverse business that includes a downtown building, several ranches, and commercial photography. Tim's signature landscape photos are featured in environmental publications across the region, including the Institute's. His passions include bird and deer hunting.

Tim believes "it is a privilege to be able to give to the community." The Sonoran Institute is privileged to count him as a loyal supporter.



*Tim Crawford's activities include supporting the Sonoran Institute and taking landscape photos, such as this one of cottonwoods in a spring twilight in Gallatin County, Montana.*



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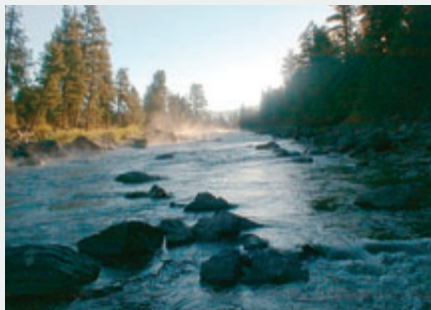
IT'S A GOOD TIME TO SUPPORT HEALTHY LANDS & COMMUNITIES IN THE WEST!  
The Kendeda Fund for Sustainability of the Tides Foundation is matching gifts to the Sonoran Institute from first-time donors, dollar-for-dollar.



### Community “Energized” After Institute Visit

This e-mail arrived after the Sonoran Institute’s Marjo Curgus visited Greenough, Montana, in February to help residents create a vision for their community.

Thank you,  
Sonoran Institute!! A  
quick note to thank you  
so much for sending  
Marjo to Greenough this  
past Saturday! Our little  
community (about 160)  
is spread out over 120  
square miles around the  
confluence of the



Blackfoot and Clearwater rivers in Missoula County and, as you  
can imagine, represents a wide range of personalities/wealth/non-  
wealth/ideas/experiences. She allowed for us to finally come together  
for some much-needed, constructive dialog.

I can’t tell you how much animosity and distrust she cut  
through – for almost six weeks prior there were people who were  
vehemently opposed to the Sonoran Institute facilitating in  
Greenough (just some wacko-enviro group to tell me what I should  
do with my land), but when Marjo left I got a phone call from a pre-  
vious naysayer gushing, asking how soon Sonoran could be back.

I sound like a damn commercial, but the community vision day  
was a huge success. Also, I can’t say enough about Marjo’s energy  
and vitality – her toughness and humor were perfect for this crowd.

The community feels energized and excited; thank you for pro-  
viding us with this opportunity. We’re looking forward to learning  
how Sonoran can be more involved in our future. This is a special  
time in Missoula County – I feel like we’re on the verge of accom-  
plishing something great.

Juanita Vero

### Welcome and Farewell to Board Members

Retired attorney Richard R. (Dick) Thweatt has joined  
the Sonoran Institute Board of Directors. He was with the  
Montana Departments of Environmental Quality and State  
Lands from 1986 to 2001 and has served as secretary for the  
planned growth group, Plan Helena. He volunteers for the  
Prickly Pear Land Trust to protect open space in three  
Montana counties and has a limited pro bono practice in  
land-use law. Dick and his wife Suzanne live in Helena.

After nine years of first-rate service to the Sonoran  
Institute, Andy Gordon of Phoenix and Susan Heyneman  
of Fishtail, Montana, completed their terms on the board  
in March.

### Water in the West

**“How To” Report:** Unprecedented demand for groundwater  
across the West is adversely impacting rivers and streams. A  
new Sonoran Institute report, *Sustainable Water Management:  
Guidelines for Meeting the Needs of People and Nature in the  
Arid West*, explores the relationship between groundwater and  
surface water and proposes a framework for sustainable water  
management. The report applies the framework to three case  
studies in Arizona – the San Pedro, Santa Cruz, and Verde  
rivers – and recommends water-management policies to allow  
this arid state to grow and develop while protecting important  
river systems.

**Watershed Training:** Powell Planning, a new Sonoran  
Institute training designed for watershed groups, is named  
after John Wesley Powell who advocated aligning county juris-  
dictions and human settlements with watershed boundaries  
during the settlement of the West. The first Powell Planning  
hosted 60 participants on 11 watershed teams for three days  
in Montana in March. Twenty instructors and staff explained  
basic watershed science, land-use planning tools, integrating  
land use and water management, legal issues, community  
involvement, and crafting a shared vision.

### Congress Hears About Evolving West

Sonoran Institute Executive Director Luther Propst  
testified at an oversight hearing on the “Evolving West” before  
the U. S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural  
Resources in February. The Institute’s research about growth,  
economic trends, and the link between prosperity and  
protected lands informed his talking points.

### New On-line Library Aids Public Land Collaboration

On March 15 the Sonoran Institute and the National  
Forest Foundation launched the Western Collaboration  
Assistance Network (WestCAN) resource library at  
[www.WestCANhelp.org](http://www.WestCANhelp.org). The site provides free, easy access  
to hundreds of documents offering tools, guides, research,  
lessons learned and best practices to help community members  
and public agencies involved in collaboration on public-lands  
issues. WestCAN also offers “nuts and bolts” technical  
assistance and links people through a peer-to-peer network.  
Questions, comments and feedback can be addressed to  
[whitney@sonoran.org](mailto:whitney@sonoran.org)

### Venturing Beyond Trust Lands

The Sonoran Institute/Lincoln Institute of Land Policy  
Joint Venture is reviewing ideas generated at a March round-  
table with land-use and growth-management experts from across  
the country. To broaden its focus in the West beyond state trust  
lands, the Joint Venture is considering researching spillover  
effects of growth in adjacent counties, economic drivers of  
growth, and metrics and indicators for land conservation success,  
plus developing regional profiles of demographic change.

To learn more about these stories and others, visit [sonoran.org](http://sonoran.org)





# Sonoran Institute

7650 EAST BROADWAY BLVD., SUITE 203  
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## New book celebrates visionary development in Northern Rockies

Resourceful architects and developers are designing and building a new West that honors the region's traditional designs and patterns of growth. They enhance structures with energy efficiency and environmentally friendly materials, create communities that are walkable and affordable, and involve the community in planning projects.

In words and colorful pictures, *Building from the Best of the Northern Rockies* documents, celebrates and encourages new developments that embody this vision. The book features 37 case studies of innovative design, building, planning and development in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. It was published in April by the Sonoran Institute's Northern Rockies office in Bozeman in partnership with Montana State University.

The case studies include in-town projects like BoDo (Boise Downtown); urban edge projects such as the McCauley Butte Master Plan on the outskirts of Missoula; and rural projects, including Teton Science Schools' Jackson Campus in Wyoming.

This publication communicates ideas for industry professionals, key decision makers and citizens in three primary sections. Identification of "best practices" addresses issues from project planning, design and location to energy efficiency, affordability and environmental sensitivity. The case studies demonstrate the application of best practices. Finally, the book recommends policy reforms to remove barriers to — and provide incentives for — applying best practices.

