

2010

Annual Report ~ CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



20 YEARS: TIME TO REFLECT AND RESET



Creating a More Sustainable Future in the West

Friends,

The Sonoran Institute began 20 years ago with the idea to bring to communities in western North America an approach to conservation being used successfully in the developing world. This approach, pioneered by World Wildlife Fund and other international conservation groups, is based on the conviction that effective and enduring conservation requires building positive relationships with the people who live next door.

When we established the Institute in 1990, community-based collaborative conservation was still a fairly novel idea in the West. Although there were notable exceptions, environmental groups here still very much relied on the “legislate and litigate” model of conservation. As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, I am proud to see that the approaches we helped pioneer have blossomed, and that almost everyone, conservation groups and public land managers alike, now embrace the importance of listening to neighbors, building strong relationships, and getting local people involved in creating solutions for their communities.

Until 2007, much of the focus in the West was about growth and housing development. As the population across the West skyrocketed and our economy became increasingly dependent on real estate development, there was a steady march to turn our ranches, open spaces, and wildlife habitat into subdivisions and ranchettes. The subsequent real estate collapse has been painful, leaving many of these developments as bare as the county coffers needed to support them. It is hard to underestimate the economic, ecological, and social costs of this boom and bust cycle.

The silver lining in the Great Recession and building bust is the opportunity it offers us to reflect, reset, and create a more sustainable future. Through the years, we’ve helped dispel the mythology that protecting the environment comes at the expense of jobs. Today, we are seeing a merger of conservation and economic development strategies happening in the West, with many more communities realizing that conservation and smart growth are important for their economic prosperity. By helping local governments plan and zone

more effectively, promote transit, and protect working ranches, we can help them avoid the mistakes of the past and position themselves for a new economy based on knowledge and technology, rather than just building houses.

Preserving what is special about the West—our open space, wildlife, scenery, and vibrant, walkable downtowns—not only protects our quality of life but also attracts the human talent needed to build this new economy and bring prosperity back to our communities. This is our vision for a sustainable future in the West, and we look forward to working with you and our neighbors to help shape it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Luther Propst". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Luther Propst
Executive Director



“As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, I am proud to see that the approaches we helped pioneer have blossomed.”

LUTHER PROPST ~ Sonoran Institute Executive Director

USING SCIENCE TO PROTECT OUR NATIONAL PARKS

A national park's protected status is defined by its borders, but its ecosystem is not.

Wildlife roam across boundaries, and a park's plants, soils, air, and water are all affected by outside influences. As the National Park Service (NPS) confronts ever-increasing human activity around the parks, along with other issues spanning from the spread of invasive species to the effects of climate change, it has begun to rely more heavily on science to inform and drive its management decisions.

The Institute is working closely with the NPS to help it better understand the

status and trends of natural and cultural resources in and around park service units in the Greater Yellowstone and American Southwest regions.

In the Yellowstone area, for example, the habitat information that the Institute is providing can help park managers work with surrounding land owners to keep critical areas accessible to migrating wildlife. At numerous parks in Arizona, the Institute is helping synthesize ecological research from the past century so officials can understand their park's condition and plan appropriately. At Capulin Volcano National Monument in Des Moines, New Mexico, the Institute and

NPS are studying the impact of potential development such as roads, wind farms, and houses on the monument's scenic vista.

The National Park Service turns 100 in 2016. By helping it sharpen its eyes—on the ground, beyond its borders, and on the future—the Institute hopes to also help the NPS preserve our parks for the next 100 years and beyond.

Read more about our partnership with the NPS at www.sonoraninstitute.org.



As part of its multifaceted collaboration with the NPS, the Institute is leading the development of two “virtual learning center” websites that communicate scientific information about national parks in the West. The web tools that the Institute is building support the learning center's mission of “connecting parks, science, and people,” and its intended goal of building stronger relationships among scientists, helping disseminate project results, and supporting science-informed decision-making in the parks.

The Institute is also leading a collaborative effort to publish a suite of tools that can be easily adopted by the other virtual learning centers underway from Maine to Hawaii.

To visit the virtual learning centers, go to:
www.greateryellowstonescience.org or www.southwestlearning.org.





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“It’s really refreshing working with the Sonoran Institute, because it brings a different perspective to the table. We’re focused in on our specific parks, whereas the Institute puts the parks in the context of the surrounding communities.”

DR. ROB BENNETTS ~ Program Manager,
NPS Southern Plains Network

“We’re looking at landscapes both inside and outside the parks, how the landscapes are changing, and what the potential influences of those changes are on the parks themselves.”

CHERYL MCINTYRE ~ Sonoran Institute
Lead Ecologist and NPS Project Lead



AN ENDURING PARTNERSHIP

Western Lands and Communities is an enduring partnership between the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Sonoran Institute. For the past seven years, this joint venture has been working to shape growth, sustain cities, protect resources, and empower communities in the Intermountain West.

“We have a special relationship with the Sonoran Institute, and the joint venture is very much part of that. Issues concerning land and sustainability have only grown in importance, and we are proud to be engaged in this partnership.”

Kathryn J. Lincoln ~ Chair of the Board of Directors of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy



Kathryn J. Lincoln with Luther Propst and Jim Holway of the Sonoran Institute.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy is a leading resource for key issues concerning the use, regulation, and taxation of land. Providing high quality education and research, it strives to improve public dialogue and decisions about land policy. As a private operating foundation, whose origins date to 1946, the Lincoln

Institute seeks to inform decision-making through education, research, policy evaluation, demonstration projects, and the dissemination of information, policy analysis, and data through publications, its website, and other media. By bringing together scholars, practitioners, public officials, policymakers, journalists and involved citizens, the Lincoln Institute integrates theory and practice and provides a nonpartisan forum for multidisciplinary perspectives on public policy concerning land, both in the U.S. and internationally.

The roots of the Sonoran Institute—Lincoln Institute of Land Policy joint venture are in the management of state trust lands. Beginning in 2003, the two institutions collaborated on a 23-state database and collection of case studies. This work led to the publication of the Policy Focus Report, *State Trust Lands in the West: Fiduciary Duty in a Changing Landscape*.

Since then, the scope of our work together has broadened dramatically to include a wide variety of smart growth and land conservation issues. In 2009, the joint venture was formally named Western Lands

and Communities to reflect this expanded focus. Among our many important initiatives is a focus on climate change as it relates to land use. This work resulted in the landmark Policy Focus Report, *Planning for Climate Change in the West*, published in early 2010.

“The Intermountain West is a key region of the country, with its breathtaking landscape, intense growth pressures, and its critical role in the future of the U.S.,” says Peter Pollock, Ronald Smith Fellow at the Lincoln Institute. “The Sonoran Institute mirrors our interests in both the sustainable development of the urban environment and the conservation of land and water resources. It combines thoughtful policy analysis with ‘boots on the ground’ activism that brings reality to our efforts.”

Jim Holway is the director of Western Lands and Communities. Prior to joining the Sonoran Institute, Jim directed the Sustainability Partnership at Arizona State University and served as assistant director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources.

“The ability to plan out years ahead is the powerful advantage that working with the Lincoln Institute gives us,” Jim says. “The

“Working with the Lincoln Institute allows us to do strategic thinking and long-term capacity building on a scale that wouldn’t otherwise be possible.”

JIM HOLWAY ~ Western Lands and Communities Director



stability of the Lincoln Institute’s mission and funding commitment, combined with its enormous expertise and broad perspective, allows us to do strategic thinking and long-term capacity building on a scale that wouldn’t otherwise be possible.”

Western Lands and Communities is currently leading planning initiatives associated with the recent phenomenon of abandoned and “premature” subdivisions in the wake of the housing collapse and recession, and is engaged with other partners on large-landscape conservation and regional collaboration efforts. The joint venture “continues to look toward the future for the most pressing challenges facing the Intermountain West,” says Armando Carbonell, chairman of the Department of Planning and Urban Form at the Lincoln Institute.

Read more about Western Lands and Communities and see our reports at www.sonoraninstitute.org and www.lincolninst.edu.

Jim Holway with Susan Culp of the Sonoran Institute



RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE WEST

From sunny Arizona to windy Wyoming, the push is on to take advantage of the West's abundant renewable energy resources. State mandates for increased renewable power production, combined with federal stimulus funding incentives, have led to hundreds of fast-track proposals for renewable energy generation and transmission projects throughout the West.

“Determining suitable sites, understanding the tradeoffs, and hopefully minimizing the impacts are things that the Sonoran Institute does well.”

JOHN SHEPARD ~ Sonoran Institute Senior Adviser

The Sonoran Institute has been deeply involved in helping evaluate proposals for solar development in Arizona. More recently, we have begun assisting with proposals for transmission installations in Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming.

“As a Westwide organization, we’re always looking out for land uses that could significantly affect western landscapes,” says John Shepard, Sonoran Institute senior adviser. “Renewable energy development has jumped to the

forefront of land uses with potentially profound impacts.”

While the benefits of renewable power are clear, its negative aspects cannot be ignored. Solar energy facilities require vast tracts of land, at least 2,000 acres for utility-scale projects. Massive wind turbines inevitably transform familiar views. New transmission lines will cut through hundreds of miles of terrain, creating local impacts all along the way.

Shepard praises the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for proactively identifying more than 600,000 acres throughout the West where renewable energy could be developed with minimal environmental impact. The Institute also actively supports the Arizona BLM office’s innovative pilot project to look at potential sites—public or private—on previously

“disturbed” lands (i.e., once used for farming, mining, landfills, etc.).

Meanwhile, with state and federal agencies and local communities grappling with how to best evaluate the stacks of proposed fast-track projects, the Institute’s diverse land use expertise is particularly valuable.

“Determining suitable sites, understanding the tradeoffs, and hopefully minimizing the impacts are things that the Sonoran Institute does well,” Shepard says. “This issue cuts across federal land, state trust land, and private land. One of our strengths is that we’re uniquely positioned to talk about siting issues on all different types of land ownerships.”

For more information on renewable energy development in the West, visit www.sonoraninstitute.org.



One solar project that the Institute endorsed early on shows that smart siting can fulfill renewable energy’s “clean power” potential. The Solana project, being built by Abengoa Solar near Gila Bend, AZ, is located on private, disturbed land, is close to a major market, and will use less water than the farm that preceded it. The 280-megawatt project is scheduled to begin operation in 2013.



DONOR PROFILE

GRETCHEN LONG ~ WILSON, WYOMING

Dividing her time between her home in Wilson, Wyoming, and her 1740 farm in the Berkshires of New England, Gretchen's passion for the environment and big-picture thinking has caught the attention of nonprofits across the country—and national leaders.

In 2010, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar appointed Gretchen to the National Park System Advisory Board. The 12-member board, first authorized in 1935, advises the Interior Secretary and the Director of the National Park Service (NPS) on matters relating to the parks.

"We need to approach conservation at the ecosystem level, which means looking beyond the geographic boundaries of any park," says Gretchen. "To be successful in the next 100 years, the NPS must adopt the collaborative conservation approach used by organizations like the Sonoran Institute to build local relationships and strong regional partnerships."

Gretchen first knew of the Sonoran Institute in the early 1990s as a board member of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. "Luther made a very forceful presentation on the Institute's 'Successful Communities' initiative, and I remembered being hugely impressed by his new and fresh approach to getting conservation results." Gretchen has been a loyal fan—and supporter—ever since, even joining the Institute's board for a four-year term.

"The good news is that the Institute's

unique collaborative approach to conservation has gone mainstream," says Gretchen. "The challenge is to be consistent in applying this community-based approach, and this is where the Institute has been very effective over the last 20 years."

A graduate of the Harvard Business School, Gretchen spent her professional career as a partner of an executive search consulting firm in New York, where she and her husband raised three children—and spent every weekend on their farm in the Berkshires. In the early nineties, Gretchen decided to give all her attention to conservation and, in 1993, children grown, she moved to her inspirational West at the same time that she was chair of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Since 1996, she has been a trustee and four-year chair of the National Parks Conservation Association, and trustee and chair of the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) and the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. Her commitment to protecting nature's special places continued as a founder and chair of the Murie Center in Moose, Wyoming.

An enthusiast of the outdoors, Gretchen enjoys skiing, hiking, and gardening. She spends as much time as possible with her family, while still doing "her work." Currently, in addition to chairing the Planning Committee of the Park System board, Gretchen is an active board member with the Land Trust Alliance, NatureBridge, and Scenic Hudson.



STAFF PROFILES



EDITH SANTIAGO ~ PROJECT MANAGER, UPPER GULF LEGACY PROGRAM

Edith Santiago has always wanted to work on the water. Born in Mexico City, she traveled across the country to study oceanography at the University of Baja California. She then earned a master's degree in integrated environmental studies at the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom and took a government conservation job in southeastern Mexico. But Baja California beckoned, and she returned there to work out of the Sonoran Institute's office in Mexicali.

As project manager for the Institute's Upper Gulf Legacy Program, Edith works to

improve water quality and increase flows to the Colorado River Delta. She and Institute staff plant native trees, remove invasive vegetation, and conduct water and fish monitoring. Through the Institute's Adopt-a-River and other wetland projects, Edith engages local communities in the work of restoring the Gulf's greatly depleted but critical ecosystem.

After seven years, Edith is encouraged by the progress she sees. Large birds are perching in trees she helped plant four years ago. Government agencies are more committed to trying to restore the Delta,

and the Institute is a well-known and trusted partner in the region. The best sign may be that local communities are getting involved and inspired.

"With Adopt-a-River, we work with a lot of young people, mainly high school students," Edith says. "You can see the interest in their faces. When we plant trees at our restoration site and you see the relationship they get with the river, it's really exciting."

Besides conservation work, Edith's passions include her family, music, reading, and "learning something new each day."



CLARK ANDERSON ~ DIRECTOR, WESTERN COLORADO LEGACY PROGRAM

"How can you not love this job?" Clark Anderson asks about working for the Sonoran Institute. "We have the unique honor—given by those who believe in us and invest in our work—to go out and try to shape a more sustainable future for the West: to protect the good stuff and fix what's broken. That's a job that is easy to be passionate about."

As director of the Western Colorado Legacy Program, Clark works with communities to align land-use planning, community design, and natural resource protection. He's busy now in Garfield County, helping communities like Rifle create a more walkable and vibrant

downtown. "We're also partnering with local organizations to create an open space and trails program, and we're pulling together a hugely diverse group to better protect and manage the Middle Colorado River watershed, which, without help, faces a very challenging and uncertain future," he says.

Born and raised in western Colorado, Clark came to the Sonoran Institute to follow his passions—community-based conservation and smart growth—in the communities and landscapes he grew up in. "I love this place, these communities. It's where I grew up, it's part of who I am, and it's where I hope to raise a family. Oh yeah,

and it's a place where I can go play outside when I'm not working. I like that too."

Before joining the Institute in the fall of 2008, he led the Local Government Commission's Water and Land Use Program in California. Clark holds a bachelor's degree in environmental biology from the University of Colorado and a master's in geography from the University of California, Davis.

When not working, Clark is likely out with his wife, Kayce, skiing, kayaking, fly-fishing, mountain biking, or otherwise enjoying the natural wonders that he and the Institute work to preserve.



LANDSCAPES OF THE AMERICAN SPIRIT

Celebrating 10 Years of the National Landscape Conservation System

From the haunting solitude of Southwestern deserts, through the historic pioneer trails in the prairie and mountain states, to the desolate splendor of the Alaskan tundra, the 27 million acres of wild and scenic landscapes in the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) preserve America's heritage and define its spirit.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2010, the NLCS is part of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and represents the conservation emphasis of the

November, when Interior Secretary Ken Salazar granted the system the level of "directorate" within the BLM and set conservation as a top priority.

"Each of these places within the National Landscape Conservation System holds special meaning to the American people and is an engine for jobs and economic growth in local communities," Salazar noted at the signing.

The Institute has been an active player since 1999 in advocating for permanent protection of NLCS lands, including conducting research highlighting the economic value of the properties to their neighboring communities. In 2010, the Institute partnered with the BLM to publish *Landscapes of the American Spirit: A Celebration of the National Landscape Conservation System and its Community Partnerships*. Profiling six NLCS sites, this publication offers a sampling of the varied and spectacular landscapes in the system and highlights the hard work of citizen volunteers who help ensure these lands remain protected and accessible.

Read *Landscapes of the American Spirit* on our website: www.sonoraninstitute.org.

"Each one of these places within the National Landscape Conservation System holds special meaning to the American people and is an engine for jobs and economic growth in local communities."

KEN SALAZAR ~ U.S. Secretary of the Interior

BLM's multiple use mission for public lands. Established administratively in 2000, the NLCS became law in 2009, when President Obama signed the Omnibus Public Land Management Act. The system received further status in

BOARD PROFILES



LOUISE GLASSER ~ TUCSON, ARIZONA

For Louise Glasser, the best view of the world is on horseback. Up in the saddle she can fully enjoy the scope and beauty of a landscape, and also get a great perspective on the West that the Sonoran Institute is working to preserve. It was while involved with an organization that ran trail rides on ranches and public lands throughout Arizona that Louise decided to join the Institute's board.

"If you appreciate the wonderful land we live in," she says, "you appreciate how important the work is that the Sonoran

Institute is doing to maintain these landscapes and our quality of life."

Louise grew up in Illinois and has long been actively involved in charitable and cultural organizations in Chicago, such as the Field Museum of Natural History, the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, and the Art Institute of Chicago. She and her husband, Jim, still return often to Illinois, but their permanent residence now is the home they bought in Tucson in 1991. There, they board their "aging herd" of four horses at a communal horse facility and

share their home with three Bedlington terriers. But with two daughters, a son, and eight grandchildren living on both coasts and in Singapore, Louise and Jim aren't in any one place for long.

What brings her back as a board member year after year is seeing the impact that the Institute makes in encouraging communities to preserve what they have and love: "We're probably the most effective organization in the West for promoting conservation and smart growth on a community level."



BILL MITCHELL ~ VASHON ISLAND, WASHINGTON STATE

Bill Mitchell spent his childhood exploring the unspoiled outdoors of post World War II Denver. In that time of national optimism and growth, many in Colorado viewed a future of metropolitan expansion from Pueblo to Cheyenne, Wyoming, as progress and prosperity. Over the years, Bill has seen much of this development come true, at the expense of his childhood stomping grounds and so many other wild, open spaces. What remains intact is his abiding interest in wildlife biology, conservation, and the West.

Trained as a wildlife biologist, Bill is president of Flatcoat Consulting and has

been an advisor to the Alki Fund (Tides Foundation) since its inception in 1991. He spends much of his time consulting with and finding funding for non-profit groups working to protect intact ecosystems and working ranchlands from the effects of energy and natural resource development.

It was the Sonoran Institute's work on water and biodiversity restoration in the Colorado Delta that drew Bill to the board. "I also appreciated the Institute's desire for collaboration and the way it works with many different parties," he says.

"Throughout my professional career, I've seen the inherent value of networking with

communities and getting organizations to work together to accomplish something that could not be done individually."

Whenever he can, Bill returns to the woods to pursue his passion for bird hunting and bird watching, wandering with his dogs and hunting buddies around the backcountries of Montana, North Dakota, and Canada. He and his wife, Mia, live on Vashon Island in Puget Sound, Washington State.

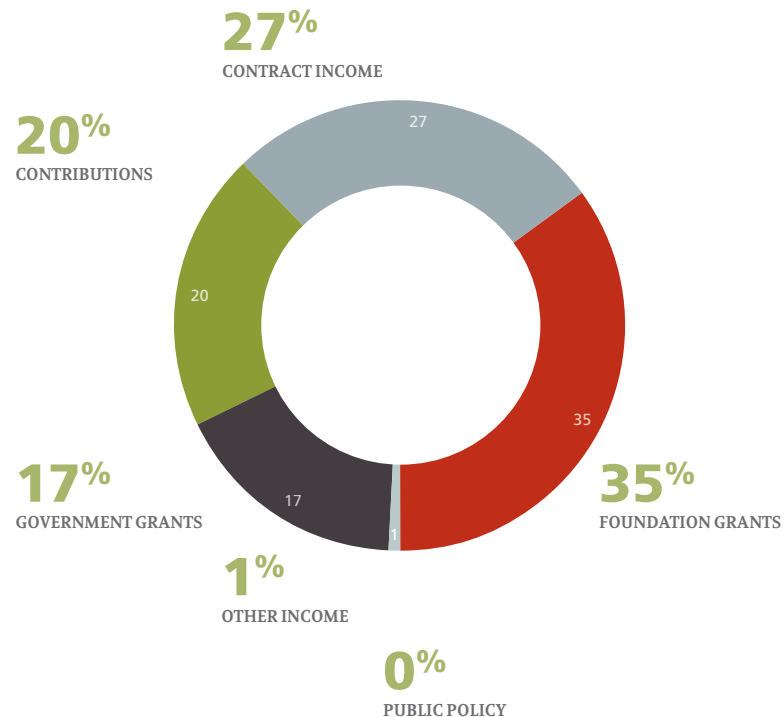


FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FY 2010: July 1, 2009–June 30, 2010

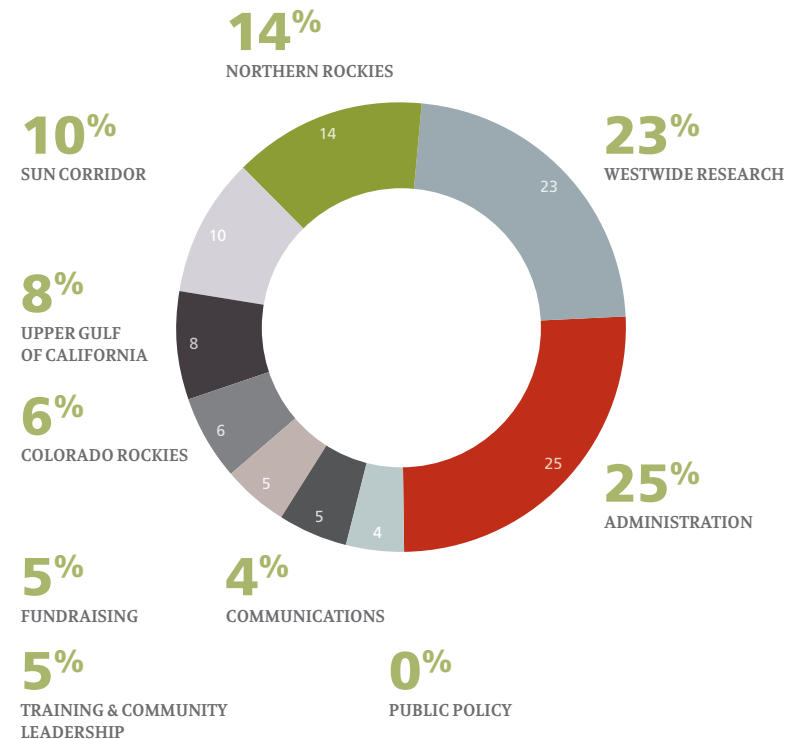
REVENUE

Program Service Income	\$7,774	0%
Other Income	\$48,190	1%
Government Grants	\$791,148	17%
Contributions	\$916,763	20%
Contract Income	\$1,276,825	27%
Foundation Grants	\$1,648,809	35%
	\$4,689,509*	100%



EXPENSES

Public Policy	\$17,215	0%
Communications	\$174,486	4%
Training & Community Leadership	\$228,453	5%
Fundraising	\$232,548	5%
Colorado Rockies	\$299,668	6%
Upper Gulf of California	\$369,861	8%
Sun Corridor	\$493,504	10%
Northern Rockies	\$662,602	14%
Westwide Research	\$1,140,128	23%
Administration	\$1,266,092	25%
	\$4,884,557	100%



The Sonoran Institute is audited annually by Keegan, Linscott & Kenon, PC.

* In addition, resources for FY2010 include net assets of \$1,011,315 carried forward from previous years, and restricted for use in this and future fiscal years.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

January 1, 2010–December 31, 2010

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\$50,000 and Up

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Ian G. Wilson & Audrey L. Spillane

PHOTOGRAPHY

Brian Forbes Powell ~ Mustang Mountains, page 3; Agave, page 7; Flower, page 15

Terry Moody ~ Queen butterfly, page 11; Creosote, page 12; Lichens on granite, page 14–15; Gulf fritillary, back cover

Ansel Adams ~ Snake River, page 5

Pam Anning ~ Learning Center Partners, page 5

Michael Quinn ~ Canmore, Alberta, page 7

Bureau of Land Management ~ Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, page 11

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Terry Moody

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SONORAN INSTITUTE MISSION AND VISION

The Sonoran Institute inspires and enables community decisions and public policies that respect the land and people of western North America. Facing rapid change, communities in the West value their natural and cultural resources, which support resilient environmental and economic systems.

Founded in 1990, the Sonoran Institute helps communities conserve and restore those resources and manage growth and change through collaboration, civil dialogue, sound information, practical solutions and big-picture thinking.

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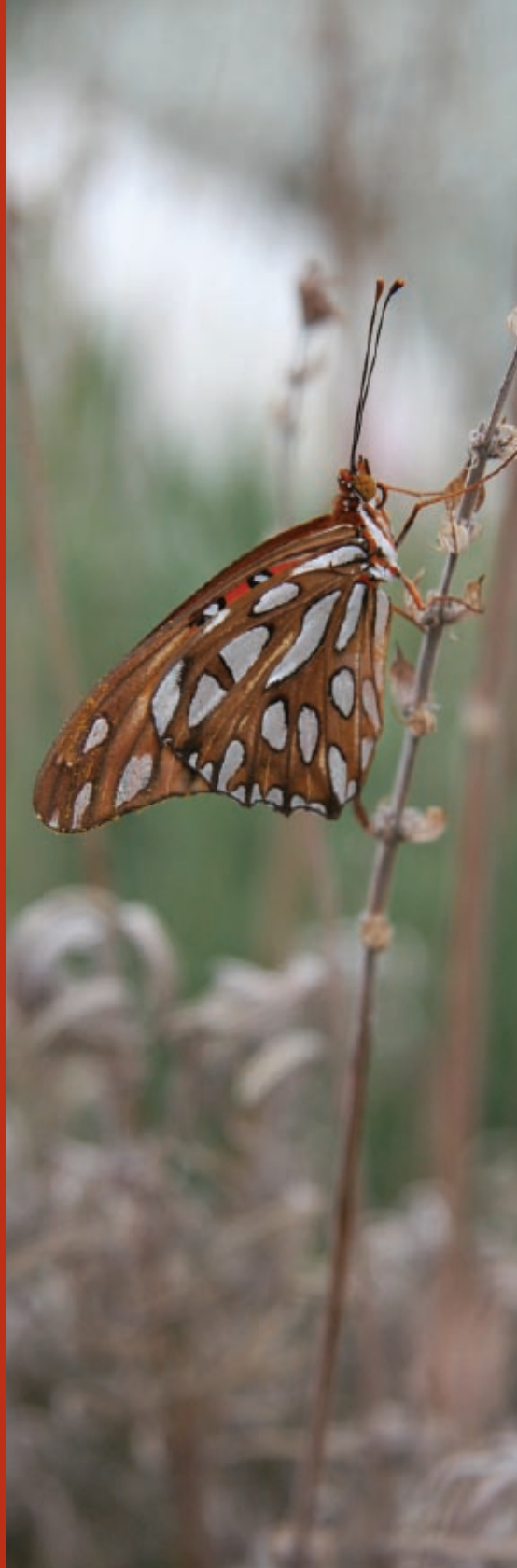
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