

# Ranching in SE AZ and the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan

Compromise - Consensus - Balance

## Culture and History

- Open space, vastness of land defines and symbolizes Arizona.
- Maintaining ranching and the ranching way of life is to maintain the traditions and symbols of western life in Arizona.

## Major issues for Ranchers:

- Maintaining our cultural, traditional and financial well-being
- Keeping intact, working ranch lands, for generations to come



## Major issues for conservation: Biodiversity

- Maintain enough viable, connected habitat in Pima County to sustain the level of biodiversity that is natural in SE AZ
- This is a very long term goal



## Defining the Problem: Ranchers

- Population explosion in AZ...
- Dramatic increase in property values...
- Increased property taxes
- Grazing lawsuits
- All lead to sale of ranch property and turn over of State/Federal grazing leases

Fragmentation and loss of Property

## Defining the Problem: Conservation

- Drastically under funded
- Cannot afford to buy vast tracts of land on par with the size of working AZ ranches
- Pima County is losing 1 acre of irreplaceable desert habitat every two hours to development, resulting in habitat destruction and fragmentation. (Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection)

Fragmentation and loss of Habitat

## Fragmentation and loss of property/Habitat:

- Some how ranchers and conservationists have found themselves on the same page...go figure.
- SDCP is the setting in which ranching communities and conservation organizations can work to help each other

## A Compromise: By working with conservation organizations-

- Reduce legal battles
- Work with scientists and State/Federal land management agencies
- Develop ecologically sound, sustainable ranching practices
- Conservation easements/ HCPs
- Preserve large tracts of ranch property/habitat

## Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan

- Communities are born from a respect for ecology, history, culture and diversity
- They survive through compromise and consensus
- Achieve a lasting balance between all members of the community and their respective interests

## Conclusion

- Ranching is more than an occupation; it's a way of life that symbolizes and preserves Arizona heritage
- Sustainable ranching in cooperation with conservation orgs, State/Fed agencies and scientists may be the most important collaboration in the SDCP
- SDCP opens up a dialogue between two members of AZ community that have historically been at odds