



FOR LANDS' SAKE

FALL 2010

NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE CENTRAL ARIZONA LAND TRUST

VOL10/NO.1

A Successful Foray

into Land Protection in the Heart of the Verde Valley

by Matt Turner



*The Protection
of Family
Agricultural Lands
in the Verde:
Past, Present and
Future*

The Central Arizona Land Trust (CALT) and Yavapai County Cooperative Extension (YCCE) have completed a series of land protection workshops held in Yavapai County in 2010. Funding for the workshops was provided by Yavapai County Community Foundation. The final workshop titled “The Protection of Family Agricultural Lands in the Verde: Past, Present and Future” was held on November 6th, 2010 at Lacy Farm in Cornville. The beautiful facilities, perfect fall weather and 12 informative presentations centering on land protection and conservation strategies for farmers and ranchers made for a near perfect day!

Dan Campbell, of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Verde River Program, spoke on the importance of the Verde River, not only as wildlife habitat but the essential role of supporting a variety of agricultural practices and the irrigation infrastructure sustaining it. He spoke specifically on the Verde River Greenway Project and an initiative by TNC centered on the economic analysis of water management. He concluded by

bringing forth a variety of solutions for improving the farming way of life and further protecting the river. Dan offered up a variety of potential solutions specifically tied to the valley’s irrigation infrastructure.

Mid-morning talks centered on innovative water conservation practices and Verde Valley agriculture. Steve Ayers presented a history of irrigation in the Verde Valley leading to a focus on the layout, on-going and future improvements of the Eureka Ditch of which he is the association president. Kevin Hauser, of Hauser Farms, spoke on water conserving irrigation practices he utilizes on his farm. Finishing the discussion was Edward Martin, of University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, speaking about specific irrigation techniques and the newest products available for small scale agricultural operations.

Lunch included home-cooked fare from local Verde Valley and Yavapai County food producers and was a great time for

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LAND TRUST

Preserving Open Space in the Heart of Arizona

Mission

The mission of the Central Arizona Land Trust is to preserve and protect open space, wildlife habitat and the scenic and cultural values of Central Arizona for future generations.

The Central Arizona Land Trust was founded in 1989 as a local private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible as allowable by law.

For Lands' Sake is a regular publication to inform and educate its supporters and the community.

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President's Message



Dear Friends in Conservation,

This is my first message to you as President of the Central Arizona Land Trust (CALT). I have served for several years now in other capacities on the board, and I am honored to have been elected President. Our two past Presidents both cycled off the board recently: Steve Walker, to focus on his duties as Executive Director of Development for Yavapai College, and Steven Corey, who is assuming the Presidency of Olivet College in Michigan. Without their expert guidance, CALT would not be where it is today. I would also like to welcome Gordon Bergthold, a recent addition to our board, who brings years of experience as a member of Land Trusts and as an appraiser qualified to make valuations of conservation easements.

I write this with a sense of enduring excitement over the recent Ranching in the Future workshop held in the Verde Valley at Lacy Farm. Through a generous grant from the Yavapai County Community Foundation, we have been able to have a series of these educational forums. In attendance were representatives from CALT, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, The Nature Conservancy, Verde Valley Land Protection Institute, the County Assessor's office, and local ranchers and farmers. Topics as diverse as flora and fauna of the Verde River corridor, water conservation in agriculture, requirements for agriculture tax status, and conservation easements were discussed. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn from each other and work towards the common goal of preserving open space and working lands throughout Yavapai County.

The most important tool we have for the creation of Conservation Easements is the tax incentives that they provide. Without them, most families could not even consider donating a Conservation Easement on their land. Enhanced incentives have been in place since 2006 (see accompanying article H.R. 1831), but they expired at the end of 2009. It is critical to the future of landowners looking to preserve their property that this incentive be made permanent. In these tough economic times, it is important to know that any donation you are able to make will help support our mission of Preserving Open Space in the Heart of Arizona. And anything you can do to help make enhanced tax incentives permanent will help to preserve family lands and open space for generations to come.

Judy Clapp
President



Use Your Will

to Change the Future of Open Space Preservation

by Steven Corey

The land trust is blessed with the annual support of many of our friends. Our donors recognize the importance of supporting CALT with their annual gift and the value it provides in the effort to preserve the last open spaces in Central Arizona. Many donors wish they could do more, but are limited in the amount they can give each year by the size of their discretionary income and the other current commitments they have, whether it's the car payment, student tuition, or other charitable causes.

One way that you can make a larger and more significant impact on the future of the things you care most about and still meet your current needs is to include your favorite causes in your will. A bequest to CALT in your will allows you to help change the trajectory of open space conservation without parting with any of your assets today. Plus, your generosity will continue long after you're gone. In short, there are two special features:

1. It gives you some flexibility. A bequest lets you balance your philanthropic goals with your concerns about your future. Because you're not actually parting with assets today, you don't need to worry that you might later need those assets to live on. Plus, you can change your mind at any time.

2. It lets you be sensible in your commitment. Your gift doesn't have to be made in dollar terms; it can be made as a percentage of your estate, allowing you to benefit your favorite causes and your loved ones in relative proportion.

“How can I make a gift in my will?”

Here are a few tips:

- Decide what amount or percentage you want to give. A percentage gift ensures that the size of your gift will remain proportionate to the size of your estate, no matter how it fluctuates over the years.
- Take some suggested bequest language to your estate planning attorney to add to your will. (We can help you with this one.)
- Work with your estate planning attorney to update your existing estate plan with a codicil or to begin developing your estate plan.
- Notify us of your intention, if you would like, (we will honor your preferences regarding anonymity) so we can thank you for your future gift and keep you informed of our ongoing activities.
- Need help? We can recommend some good estate planning attorneys that will help you and we can also partner with the Arizona Community Foundation to take advantage of their vast experience and expertise in helping you ensure your long-term wishes are carried out.

Often, the largest impact we can make on the things that are the most important to us is through our estate. If you'd like to know more about how you could consider including the Central Arizona Land Trust and any other cause in your will, please feel free to contact us. We'd be happy to help.

Contact (928) 445-7790 or calt@centralazlandtrust.org

H.R. 1831

Will Congress make the tax deduction for Conservation Easements permanent?

Since 2006, an enhanced tax incentive has allowed family farmers, ranchers, and other moderate-income landowners to get a significant tax benefit for donating a conservation easement on their land. Despite strong support from both parties in Congress, this incentive expired at the end of 2009! We need your help to make it permanent this year.

Conservation easements allow private landowners to permanently retire development rights to protect significant natural resources. Donating development rights to land – often a farm or ranch family's most valuable asset – requires careful planning and consideration. It often takes years from the initial conversations with a landowner before a conservation easement is executed. Many landowners considering a perpetual commitment of their land will never begin the process without the reassurance of a permanent incentive.

How the Enhanced Easement Incentive Works

The enhanced incentive helps landowners of modest means choose conservation by:

- Raising the maximum deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income (AGI) in any year to 50%;
- Allowing qualified farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their AGI; and
- Increasing the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

Without the enhanced easement incentive, an agricultural landowner earning \$50,000 a year who donated a conservation easement worth \$1 million could take a total of no more than \$90,000 in tax deductions. Under the enhanced incentive, that landowner can take as much as \$800,000 in tax deductions - still less than the full value of their donation, but a significant increase.

Fortunately, majorities of both Democrats and Republicans in the House have co-sponsored legislation to make the enhanced easement incentive permanent! We need your help securing more co-sponsors for H.R. 1831 and S. 812; 268 Representatives and 41 Senators from all 50 states have already signed on, but we'll need even more support to get the incentive renewed retroactively – and made permanent!

Landowners in your community need your help to make the Enhanced Tax Incentive for Conservation Easements permanent!



On November 2, voters sent a strong message that conservation remains a bedrock American value and a top priority, even in a bad economy.

Call Your Senators

and your local Representative and tell them you'd like to make this enhanced deduction permanent!

Call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to speak with each of your Senators (your Rep can help too, but this bill will start in the Senate). Don't just leave a message at the front desk—introduce yourself and/or your organization and ask to speak with the staffer who handles tax issues (or better yet, have a board member or local elected official call the Senator directly).



The Plants Around Us

What's in Our Regional Backyard

by Aryn LaBrake

Arizona provides us with many beautiful sights and surroundings, which in many respects is because of its remarkable diversity of plant life. Hiking in ponderosa pine forests in the Bradshaw Mountains or seeing semi-desert grasslands and columnar cacti as one drives south to Phoenix are all characterized individually as biotic communities. Numerous indicator species (both plant and animal) make up a biotic community. The chances of those species surviving are dependent on numerous environmental factors, including elevation, precipitation/evaporation rates, slope aspect, soils and fire history.

Prescott, at 5,638 feet above sea level, is located in what is known “Central Arizona Highlands”. Central Arizona Highlands are a distinct biogeography, climatic, and physiographic province that forms a diverse ecotone between the larger Colorado Plateau to the north and the Sonoran Desert ecoregions to the south. One biotic community found in this province is known as the interior chaparral. It is characterized by large dense thickets of evergreen woody shrubs, ranging in elevation from 4,000 to 6,000 feet in elevation. It occupies roughly 1.4 million hectares of mid-elevation foothill, mountain slope, and canyon areas. The interior chaparral’s dense vegetation normally grows as dense thickets ranging from 3 feet to as high as 6 or 7 feet. Chaparral vegetation often regenerates quickly after burning.

A common chaparral plant is scrub live oak (*Quercus turbinella*), and as anyone who hikes in the region can attest, it is quite unpleasant to travel through. Other indicator plant species include the red barked, point-leaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pungens*), curly-leaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*), Wright’s siltassel (*Garrya wrightii*) and desert ceanothus (*Ceanothus greggii*). On drier sites, one may encounter wait-a-minute bush (*Mimosa aculeaticarpa*),

another hiker favorite. Wildlife commonly utilizing chaparral includes, coyote (*Canis latrans*), mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), ringtail cat (*Bassariscus astutus*), cliff chipmunk (*Neotamias dorsalis*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), eastern cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) and numerous rodent species. Interestingly, the chaparral biotic community is also a favorite haunt of the American black bear (*Ursus americana*). Reptiles commonly found include western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), alligator lizard (*Elgaria kingii*), side-blotched lizards (*Uta* spp.), western diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus* sp.) and king snakes (*Lampropeltis* spp.).

This biotic community is used by wildlife and cattle alike for forage year round, it is also used for recreational activities, such as, ATV use, biking, and hiking. Noted changes in the interior chaparral biotic community have been attributed to both climate

and human-induced disturbances. Researchers have noted increases in juniper cover in grassland areas, including the lower boundaries of the interior chaparral. This in part is caused by the increasing aridity in the Arizona environment since the late 1800’s. Also, in the last 50-100 years, fire, and plant removal have caused vegetation changes in the chaparral biotic community, including the introduction of many new exotic species.

In order to preserve our homeland and the important native plants and animals in which the chaparral depends on for survival, as a community we must be mindful of our impact on the surrounding biotic community we call home.



Pointleaf Manzanita
Arctostaphylos pungens

Aryn LaBrake is a graduate of Prescott College with a degree in Conservation Biology. She is currently working to fundraise for Prescott College as the Development Assistant and Prospect Research Analyst.

Members Make It Happen

Member Acknowledgements

Top Hands

Arizona Community Foundation
Judy Clapp
Jane Cook
Paula Cooperrider
Wesley Debusk
Joan Dukes
Doug Hulmes
Barbara Indra
JW Kieckhefer Foundation
Paul Orme
Steve Walker
Yavapai County Community Foundation

Partners in Protection

Gordon Bergthold
Doug Hulmes
Mary Jo Kirk
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***Top Hands \$250 and above

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Office Supplies and Equipment

Digital Camera – 6 mega pixel or higher
Full sized Rolodex with 26 alpha divisions
Tall narrow bookshelf
GPS Equipment
Paper, pens and printer ink are always welcome.

Books for Central Arizona Land Trust Lending Library

\$25 will buy 5 copies of *Conservation Options: A Landowner's Guide*

\$50 will buy 1 set of

Preserving Family Lands: Book I –

Essential Tax Strategies for the Landowner

Preserving Family Lands: Book II –

More Strategies for the Future

Preserving Family Lands: Book III –

New Tax Rules and Strategies and a Checklist

\$100 will buy 3 copies of *Saving the Ranch:*

Conservation Easement Design in the West

Volunteers

Do you have a few hours a month to help with light clerical work, grantwriting, event planning, and public relations? Call (928) 445-7790.

Please remember that CALT, as a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization can accept donations of all types of assets. See the CALT website for more information on gifts and planned giving options on the comparison chart. Additionally, CALT can accept donations of land that may not be appropriate for a conservation easement, but can be re-sold to benefit our general expenses, programs, and land preservation efforts. Please call our office for more information at (928) 445-7790.

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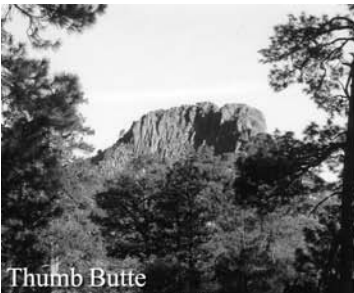
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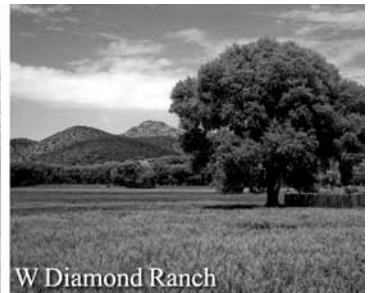
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Become a Partner in Protection

The Central Arizona Land Trust is dependent on your continued support to the mission of preserving and protecting open space throughout Central Arizona.

Please remember CALT when making your year-end charitable gifts for 2010. Your gift works directly to benefit land preservation this year and into the future. As a qualified 501(c)(3) gifts to the Central Arizona Land Trust are tax deductible. Please visit the CALT website to explore options for donations and planned giving.

Preserving Western Lands Since 1989. All donations are tax deductible.