



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 16, 2008

Contact: Diana Freshwater, Executive Director

Office: (520) 577-8564

Cell: (520) 850-4848

5,040 Acres of Sands Ranch in Pima County Permanently Protected

Arizona Land and Water Trust partners with Pima County to protect more ranchland as part of Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan

Tucson, AZ -Pima County Supervisors today voted to approve the purchase of 5,040 acres of the Sands Ranch located in Pima County. Funding for the \$21-million acquisition will come from the sale of bonds approved by Pima County voters as part of the 2004 Conservation Acquisition Bond Program. This acquisition secures the missing link between the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and the Whetstone Mountains and is the most significant grasslands habitat acquisition in Pima County's history.

Arizona Land and Water Trust has been working for months with the landowners, Sands Properties, L.L.C., to find a way to permanently protect the Ranch in Pima County. "The acquisition of Sands Ranch adds 5,040 acres of conserved lands to the Conservation Lands System, providing a critical landscape connection for healthy ecological function and wildlife movement," said Diana Freshwater, Executive Director of Arizona Land and Water Trust, which assisted Pima County with the acquisition.

According to Freshwater, the acquisition of the Pima County portion of the Sands Ranch will expand and connect already conserved lands along the critically important Cienega Creek: the Whetstone Mountains of the Coronado National Forest, the Empire Ranch and the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The County's acquisition will

(more)

Sands Ranch Protected, page two of four

also protect wildlife movement corridors between the Santa Rita Mountains and the Whetstone Mountains, and conserve a direct connection between significant riparian areas such as Sonoita Creek, Babocomari River and Cienega Creek, Freshwater said.

The Sands Ranch in its entirety stretches from just east of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area in Pima County and Santa Cruz County, east into Cochise County to the San Pedro River. The Sands Family has owned the ranch since 1920. Through a ranch management agreement reached as part of the acquisition, Sands Properties, L.L.C. will continue to manage the Pima County portion of the ranch for 10 years with an option for another 10 years.

“Arizona Land and Water Trust is pleased to have been able to partner with Pima County to protect this historic working ranch and critical eco-system” said Freshwater.

About Arizona Land and Water Trust

Arizona Land and Water Trust is a nonprofit land and water conservation organization dedicated to protecting southern Arizona’s vanishing western landscapes and wildlife habitat by acquiring and managing sensitive lands. In addition to its role as land steward, the Trust also engages in programs that support its mission, including appropriate legislation, public education, and outreach that encourages citizens to support protection of landscapes and ecosystems that are vital to the well being of all residents, present and future. Founded in 1978 as Arizona Open Land Trust, the organization merged earlier this year with Southeast Arizona Land Trust to continue their shared mission of protecting working landscapes, riparian corridors, wildlife habitat and the vast open spaces cherished by southern Arizonans. For more information contact the Trust at 520.577.8564 or visit us on the web at www.alwt.org.

(more)

Sands Ranch Protected, page three of four

About the Sands Ranch

Louis M. Sands, founder of the Sands Ranch, was born in Manistee, Michigan in 1875 where he worked in lumbering and agriculture. The terrain and climate in Arizona were a radical change from the level pine country of Michigan. But Louis Sands was one of those turn-of-the-century Mid-westerners who realized Arizona's potential after they arrived here.



Photo: Robert Dawson

Sands went to Flagstaff in 1902 and contracted to build and enlarge the saw mills there for the Saginaw-Manistee Lumber Company. Several years later, he acquired grazing rights on cut-over timberland at the head of Sycamore Canyon and also some deeded land in the area. A tank he built near White Horse Lake still bears his name.

(more)

Sands Ranch Protected, page four of four

In 1907, Sands bought the Hamilton Farm in Glendale. He married Frances Porter of Rockford, Illinois the same year. The newlyweds moved to the Glendale Farm that they called the Manistee Ranch. The couple's three children were born and raised on the Ranch. Louis Sands developed extensive farming operations in Glendale that he ran throughout his life. He also got into cattle feeding. The desert areas northeast of Glendale were open country at the time, and Mr. Sands installed a well on some land that he owned north of the Arizona Canal. He bought cattle and let them run on the desert. The 1920 brand book lists seven irons that Sands had in Glendale; one was the LS brand that the family still uses today.

In 1919, Louis Sands bought the Mattie Canyon Ranch near Elgin. He and his partner owned the Bar XL brand. In 1920, Sands bought out his partner's share and traded part of the Mattie Canyon Ranch to his friend William Banning Vail in exchange for Mescal Springs on the south slopes of the Whetstone Mountains. This water controlled grazing over a wide area.

Later, to enlarge his holdings, Sands bought the adjacent Solano Ranch, the Watts Hammond Ranch and the WI brand. He also acquired the holdings of W.A. Neil at Elgin and his T Triangle Drag brand. In the Solano deal, Sands acquired several Steeldust mares that had been bred by Colin Cameron of the San Rafael Ranch at La Noria. He subsequently got several Rosemont stallions from the government. Cecil Miller, Sr., who knew Mr. Sands as a friend and neighbor, said Sands was a great horseman. Louis M. Sands passed on his love for horses and the land to his children and grandchildren.

(Information from: an article by Richard G. Schans published December 1973 by the Arizona CattleLog; and from the Sands Family).