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Edgar Canyon Open Space Permanently Protected

Arizona Open Land Trust partners with Pima County to protect 3,330-acre ranch as part of Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan

Tucson, AZ - The Arizona Open Land Trust announced today the purchase and permanent protection of 3,330 acres of open space along Edgar Canyon, an important tributary to the San Pedro River in northeastern Pima County. The Six-Bar Ranch acquisition protects an excellent cottonwood and willow gallery forest, as well as dense stands of sycamore and ash trees and various natural springs.

The protection of the Six Bar Ranch - nestled among canyons and tributaries to the San Pedro River, east of the Catalina Mountains - is the result of a partnership between the Arizona Open Land Trust (Trust) and Pima County. The Trust negotiated the purchase and protection of 3,330 acres of private land and associated water rights, and 9,000 acres of State grazing leases. The \$11.6 million transaction was funded through Pima County's 2004 Open Space Bond Program and supports the goals of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

"The Arizona Open Land Trust is pleased to have been able to negotiate the protection of this landscape and important riparian corridor on behalf of Pima County," says the Trust's Executive Director, Diana Freshwater.

"The protection of this property expands and enhances existing conservation preserves," explains Freshwater, "such as the Coronado National Forest, Bingham-Cienega Preserve, A-7 Ranch, and the Buehman Canyon Preserve."

"Conservation of this ranch protects a very large, unfragmented landscape containing high biological values, and habitat for numerous Priority Vulnerable Species identified in Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan," Freshwater said.

The ranch's biological resources include native grassland, Sonoran riparian scrub, cottonwood-willow and mesquite galleries, limestone outcrops and important riparian habitats rich with wildlife. It is also important habitat for endangered species such as the lesser long-nosed bat, according to county documents.

The Arizona Open Land Trust is a non-profit land 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, the Trust has protected more than 17,000 acres of riparian habitat, wildlife habitat and the vast open spaces cherished by southern Arizona residents. For more information contact the Trust at 520.577.8564 or visit us on the web at www.aolt.org.

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