

Subject: FYI: San Pedro News--Better Text Format**Date:** Sun, 02 Aug 1998 17:54:23 -0700**From:** Bruce Goff <bgoff@tucson.ars.ag.gov>**Organization:** USDA-ARS**To:** salsa-cooperator@tucson.ars.ag.gov

Dear San Pedro Observer:

the "txt" file (sanpedro.txt) sent with the previous email message had no line breaks. This file (sanpedro2.txt) does and should be easier to read.

Bruce

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 2 Aug 98

San Pedro News and Opinion

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1. Beavers Coming Back to San Pedro

Sierra Vista Herald

<http://www.svherald.com/>

Beavers coming back to the river

DIANE SAUNDERS / Herald/Review / July 31, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - More than colorful leaves are expected at the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area this fall. For the first time in almost a century, beavers may play, swim and build dams in the San Pedro River.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Arizona Game and Fish Department are planning to release 15 beavers in the conservation area between the Highway 90 bridge and the Hereford Road bridge, said BLM Area Manager Jesse Juen. It is hoped the beavers, released in pairs or family groups, will once again thrive along the river, and help restore the area's plants and wildlife.

More than 150 years ago, settlers to what is now Cochise County dubbed the San Pedro "Beaver River" because of the large beaver population, according to a BLM environmental assessment report about the release project. Because of the beaver dams, the river was wide and meandering, bordered by ponds and marshlands called cienegas.

But the shy, aquatic animals were blamed for a variety of problems. Fredlake said people even believed the beavers, which eat only plants, ate fish. By the turn of the century the beavers were eradicated.

Now, wildlife experts believe bringing the beavers back will benefit the area's plants and animals. Beavers would once again build dams on the river, causing the water to spread out and form pools of water.

"You get more lush vegetation," Fredlake said. The ponds will attract more birds and fish, and eventually more mammals to the conservation area.

The beavers are likely to come from Arizona Game and Fish Department's Cluff Ranch ponds near Safford. The animals will be outfitted with radio collars or transmitters implanted under the skin when they are released in October or November.

"It'll be an ongoing monitoring situation," Fredlake said.

Fredlake said beavers, which weigh 30 pounds to 60 pounds when fully grown, are shy animals. Those visiting the San Pedro will see signs of their activities, but may not see them.

Visitors should listen for sounds of water splashing. Beavers warn each other of impending danger by slapping their flat tails on the water's surface.

The beavers' natural predators include mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes and black bears, which all can be found near the river occasionally. Fredlake believes those animals may visit the conservation area more often when the beavers move in.

For more information about the beaver reintroduction, residents may visit the BLM office at 1763 Paseo San Luis to view the environmental assessment for the next 30 days. For more information, call 458-3559.

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2. Ranching and the San Pedro River

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

Ranching operations aren't 'the' problem

Ranching operations aren't a problem

BILL HESS / Herald/Review / July 31, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - Ranching operations aren't a problem in the San Pedro River Valley, but irrigated agricultural lands are, according to the coordinator of an international team of experts studying the river basin.

Greg Thomas' remarks were music to the ears of ranchers like Steve Lindsey who said it's time ranching has been recognized as a way to ensure water soaks into the aquifer because of the type of vegetation on their property.

Thomas said he wanted to clear up a misunderstanding in the North American Free Trade Agreement's Commission for Environmental Cooperation report which could have led people to think ranching was a culprit in the water deficit problem in the San Pedro Valley. The problem is with agricultural irrigation of farm land, which uses far more water than economic benefits produced, Thomas said.

While he doesn't recommend a solution to take farm land out of production and allow it to be developed with homes, which will use far less water than irrigating the property, Thomas said agricultural uses of the area's acreage has to be reduced if not curtailed.

Lindsey and other ranchers, many of who are third- to fifth-generation Arizonans, have said the report has put their lifestyles in jeopardy.

Lindsey defended the ranchers' philosophy at two local focus groups in Palominas and Thursday night's public workshop at Buena High School.

At a Wednesday night workshop in Benson, hosted by the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, a number of people said ranchers can help save the river.

Thomas was one of the four, of the six members, of the expert team who talked Thursday night to about 80 people who attended the third and last workshop.

John Bredehoeft said a review by the Arizona Department of Water Resources of 150 wells in the San Pedro Valley showed more wells were suffering lower water levels than gaining water.

He said there is a deficit and it must be addressed sooner rather than later.

Thomas said he knows it is difficult to convince people there is a growing problem which will first affect the river's riparian area when there is millions of acre feet of water in the aquifer. An acre foot consists of about 326,000 gallons of water.

The aquifer in the Upper San Pedro Basin has "as much water as Lake Powell and Lake Mead combined," he said.

Bredehoeft, the team's hydrologist, said the area cannot continue to draw from its water savings. The area must put more in the region's water banking account, he said.

Jeff Price, the team's bird expert, as he has done at each of the workshops reemphasized the importance of maintaining the riparian area as an important flyway for species which travel from Canada to Mexico and back. He said the area is an international recognized region.

Price also provided some information about the area's plant ecology, speaking for Julie Stromberg who could not attend Thursday night's workshop. He said Stromberg's report indicates cottonwood trees may have maxed out and will start reducing its numbers naturally.

He said the river is changing and by the 21st century it will not be like it is today or as it was in the 1800s.

Hector Arias Rojo said he agrees the area's basin which is partly in Mexico must be studied south of the border.

He said getting information from some of the users in Mexico is difficult but studies are now being done to provide the most current information about the river in that nation.

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3. CEC Report-Citizen Workshops

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

Workshop participants want to bring pressure on public officials

BILL HESS / Herald/Review / July 31, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - The final workshop on the San Pedro River report generated calls Thursday for people to come together to pressure elected officials to listen to everyone on the issue of growth.

Some of the citizens attending the workshop criticized local politicians for not doing enough to control development in the San Pedro Valley. The workshop participants want elected leaders to listen to people on every side of the growth issue.

People, who talked in small discussion groups about an international study of the San Pedro River, said there is a need to ensure those who live on the Mexican side of the shared basin are part of the solution in protecting the riparian area.

About 80 people attended the second workshop in Sierra Vista to hear some of the team of experts who prepared a draft report for the North American Free Trade Agreement's Commission for Environmental Cooperation. It was the final of three workshops - one was held in Benson. The center hosted three small focus group meetings prior to the workshops and are planning two more, and possibly a third before Aug. 14, the deadline for public comments on the draft report.

Before breaking into five small discussion session at Buena High School Thursday night, the audience heard from four members of the six team members and Greg Block, who is the American director of the Montreal-based commission. At the conclusion of the sessions, the experts and Block made additional comments after hearing what the five groups said were their major concerns.

Barbara Kuttner, of Hereford, told her discussion group there needs to be more courage by elected officials to curtail development and to do more in conserving water.

She said as a person who lived "back east," she knew local governments there put restrictions on water use, such as washing cars, watering lawns and filling swimming pools.

Kuttner said the same thing needs to be done in Cochise County, which is more arid.

A member of group one, she called for pressure being put on area politicians to do more to control growth.

Earlier, Greg Thomas, the coordinator of the expert team, said, "It's hard to undevelop the basin," which means actions need to be taken to only have sustainable growth by dropping the water deficit that is estimated to be more than 7,000 acre feet a year. An acre foot contains about 326,000 gallons of

waster.

On a large sheet of paper hung on a blackboard in one of the high school's classrooms other views of group one were listed, including, "development will be the killer of the river," "city council and (county) supervisors will not listen to both sides and they are only interested in growth" and "politicians need to listen to what people are saying." Kuttner called for not putting the commission's report on the shelf and for bring more pressure to bear on local politicians.

"If we can work together in this group, we can do it as the whole community," she said.

As with the other workshops at the end of the session, the facilitators provided the consensus of each of their groups.

Rick Geller said his group wants all stakeholders to contribute to the solutions and there be more growth management.

Ann Moote said her group's concerns were the report's data was incomplete, there should be fair compensation for land taken out of agriculture and more emphasis on recharge projects.

Carol Lewis said her group's concerns are the need for a socioeconomic study of the impact of communities in the United States and Mexico and a need for more data on the impact of mining in Mexico.

Three people from Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico, were at the meeting and were getting ideas on how to do a study and how to arrange for public comments in Mexico concerning the San Pedro River. The river's headwaters are in Mexico.

Gildardo Acosta of the Enlance Ecologico said the University of Sonora is in the process of performing a study of the riparian area in Mexico.

Once it is complete, there will be an analysis of the report to be followed by public meetings in Agua Prieta and Cananea, he said.

The report from the University of Sonora will not be part of the input of the NAFTA commission's study, Acosta said.

However, Block said there will be a public meeting between Aug. 7 and 10 in Cananea to gather comments about the commission's draft study.

Chuck Laroue said his group's desires are to ensure local control of any solution and property rights are protected.

Cynthia Wright's group said they wanted to see equitable rewards and incentives for people who participate in water conservation and "leave it to beaver," which was one of the recommended solutions in the report to reintroduce the animals to the river. Except for Moote, who is employed by the Udall Center, all the other facilitators were from the Cochise County Alternative Dispute Resolution program.

Block said he was pleased by how the community has studied report and while some remain unhappy with the recommended solutions or how the study was done he believes the people who live in the San Pedro Valley want to work the problems out locally.

"There are very few people who question the value of the river and few who have said give the river up," Block said. That leads him to believe people in the area will find ways to protect the river and its riparian area while still continuing with the type of lifestyle they want.

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4. CEC Report-Comment Period

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

2 weeks left for comment
Herald/Review / July 31, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - There are a two weeks left for the public to make comments on the North American Free Trade Agreement's Commission for Environmental Cooperation's report on the San Pedro River. The comment period ends Aug. 14.

The Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy has held three focus group meetings and three workshops. The center expects to hold at least two or three more focus groups.

The center will compile all the public comments and present them to the six-member team of experts and the 12-member advisory panel in mid-September.

The team and panel will then prepare a combined report to be presented to the commission representatives from the United States, Mexico and Canada, who will review the document and possibly make non-binding recommendations early next year.

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5. Sierra Vista Opinion Survey (growth given strong support)

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

Growth given strong support; local government doesn't rate extremely high

BILL HESS / Herald/Review / July 28, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - An overwhelming number of area residents believe Sierra Vista should grow to at least 50,000 people, according to a scientific survey conducted for the Sierra Vista Herald/Bisbee Daily Review.

The survey indicates 70 percent of the adults questioned believe the city should grow to at least 50,000 - 36 percent would like to see the population grow to 60,000 or more.

Sierra Vista city government and Cochise County government do not fare well in the survey.

When asked if either government was establishing good public policy to address water issues, nearly half the respondents had no opinion.

Twenty-seven percent thought the county and city were failing to do the job.

The survey consisted of nine questions and was commissioned by the Herald/Review. It was conducted by A & A Research of Kalispell, Mont., and was conducted between July 15-19. The survey has an accuracy range of plus or minus 5 percent.

Growth When Sierra Vista residents were asked, "With nearly 40,000 people living in Sierra Vista at the present time, what is the largest population size you

feel that Sierra Vista should have," 34 percent said 50,000. Nearly 18 percent selected 60,000 and more than 23 percent said 70,000 or more. A little less than 7 percent of the Sierra Vista residents questioned said the city should remain at 40,000 while 18.9 percent did not know or have an opinion.

People living in communities outside Sierra Vista - Benson, Huachuca City, St. David, Tombstone and the Hereford/Palominas - were not quite as sure about future growth. While 35 percent said they favored a Sierra Vista population of 50,000, nearly 34 percent did not have an opinion and 2.8 percent wanted the city to remain the same. Twenty-eight percent favored a community 60,000 or larger.

The older a person, the less they supported a larger community with 45 percent of people 55 years or more wanting a population of less than 50,000. Younger people, 18 to 34, approved of a larger population by 51 percent.

Government Government leaders the city of Sierra Vista and Cochise County did not do well when it came to whether they "have set good public policy in addressing water issues." Forty-nine percent of the respondents had no opinion about the city's performance, and 50 percent had no opinion about the county government's actions.

Twenty-seven of the people interviewed said they did not believe either the city or county was doing a good job.

Twenty percent said Sierra Vista city government is doing a good job; 19 percent gave county government a good rating.

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6. Sierra Vista Opinion Survey (support strong for river)

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

Support strong to keep the river free-flowing

BILL HESS / Herald/Review / July 28, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - Two out of three area residents - 68 percent - think the San Pedro River should remain free-flowing, according to a survey conducted for the Sierra Vista Herald/Bisbee Daily Review.

The survey also found almost half - 49 percent - are willing to pay more for water and 55 percent support the creation of a local group to manage the area's water resources.

The scientific telephone survey consisted of nine questions and was commissioned by the Herald/Review. It was conducted by A & A Research of Kalispell, Mont., from July 15-19. The survey has an accuracy range of plus or minus 5 percent.

The survey included not only Sierra Vista residents, but people from the communities of Benson, Huachuca City, St. David, Tombstone and the Hereford/Palominas area.

When asked, "How important is it to you that the San Pedro remain a free-flowing river," 68 percent said yes. Ten percent of all the respondents said keeping the river free-flowing was not important and 22 percent either had mixed views or did not know how important the issue was for the area.

Support for keeping the river free-flowing was strong in Sierra Vista - 63

percent supporting the idea - but even stronger in the other areas of the river valley - 77 percent in favor.

While age seemed to have little influence on how people answered the question, income and length a person has lived in the San Pedro Valley may have played a major role.

The more income a person reported the less likely they were to agree that keeping the San Pedro free-flowing was important. Those people who indicated they made less than \$20,000 a year supported the idea of free-flowing river overwhelmingly - 82 percent. The support diminished as income increased. Support was still strong in two middle income brackets - people earning \$20,000 and \$30,000 supported the idea by 65 percent; and people with incomes between \$30,000 and \$50,000 agreed by 71 percent. Over \$50,000 support dropped to 57 percent.

Nearly 74 percent of people who have lived in the area for more than six years support keeping the river free-flowing compared to 52 percent of those who have resided in the valley for five years or less.

Paying for water Forty-nine percent of the people surveyed responded yes when asked, "Would you pay more for water in order to preserve the San Pedro River and riparian area?" Thirty-six percent said no and 16 percent indicated they either had no opinion or didn't know.

Older respondents were less willing to pay more to preserve the river habitat. Fifty-five percent of the younger adults - ages 18 to 34 - supported the idea. Between the ages of 35-54, support dropped to 49 percent; and to 46 percent among those 55 and older, according to the survey.

Water management One of the questions that often arises when local residents discuss water issues is the idea of who's in charge - what government, agency or mix has the final say. Often local officials concede the answer is uncertain.

The survey asked area residents what they thought with the question, "Would you very likely, somewhat likely, or not at all be likely to support the formation of a local group who would manage water issue in the area?" Fifty-six percent of the respondents supported the idea - 26 percent very likely, 30 percent somewhat likely.

A third - 33 percent - of the respondents didn't like the idea of a water manager at all and 11 percent said they didn't know.

More people in Sierra Vista supported the proposal than in rural communities by 60 percent to 46 percent.

Age played a significant role in the responses when 66 percent of the younger group, ages 18 to 34, said yes and those more than 55 years old agreed by only 48 percent. Individuals in the 35 to 54 age groups agreed by 58 percent.

The income of respondents also apparently made a difference. Those people making less than \$20,000 a year favoring the idea by 51 percent. Support rose to 54 percent in the \$20,000-\$30,000 income bracket, according to the survey. Support from those making more than \$30,000 a year was more than 60 percent.

If the respondent had lived in the area for 19 years or less, they were more likely to support a water management agency - an average of 61 percent - than people who have lived here for 20 years or more - only 47 percent.

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7. San Pedro's Fate

Arizona Daily Star
<http://www.azstarnet.com/public/dnews/>

Tuesday, 28 July 1998

San Pedro's fate to be discussed

A multinational report on preventing the San Pedro River from drying up will be discussed at an open house tonight and workshops this week.

The open house is from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 156 W. Kayetan Road, in Sierra Vista.

The Montreal-based Commission for Environmental Cooperation, created in conjunction with the North American Free Trade Agreement, issued the report in June, confirming Fort Huachuca-area ground-water use is depleting the San Pedro.

The report calls for capping the size of Fort Huachuca and halting ground-water use to irrigate farms in Arizona and Sonora. It also recommends growth controls and other water-conservation measures.

The San Pedro originates in Sonora and flows north through Cochise County. It once flowed through far eastern Pima County to the Gila River.

In the spring and early summer, the river is home to 1 million to 4 million migratory songbirds of 500 species, including several that are endangered.

If officials enact the report's recommendations, ground-water losses would decrease from 7,000 acre-feet a year to 3,500 acre-feet a year by 2030, the study says. With no action, the study says water losses would double by 2030 to 14,000 acre-feet a year. An acre-foot is roughly 360,000 gallons, enough to cover an acre a foot deep.

Four-hour workshops on the report's findings are set for:

* Tomorrow, 8 a.m. to noon, Buena High School Performing Arts Center, 5525 Buena School Blvd., Sierra Vista.

* Tomorrow, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., Benson Union High School auditorium, Seventh and Patagonia streets, Benson.

* Thursday, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Buena High School Performing Arts Center.

8. Sierra Vista Opinion Survey (The Survey)

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

The survey

Herald/Review / July 27, 1998

This week a series of public meetings will be held to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Commission of Environmental Cooperation's report on the San Pedro River and its riparian habitat.

This issue impacts everyone living and working in the San Pedro Valley region.

In the belief that our readers deserve as much information as possible, the Sierra Vista Herald and Bisbee Daily Review commissioned a survey on water

issues. The survey was done to perhaps help the community better understand the sentiments that too often remain silent amid the clamor of one side or another in the water issue.

We encourage everyone to review the survey's results, talk to your friends and family about the issue, and participate in the week's public gatherings.

Today we begin a three-part presentation of that survey's findings.

The first installment looks at people's attitudes toward Fort Huachuca, the post's water policies and what the overuse of water may or may not do to the river's riparian areas.

Monday, we will examine the survey's finding of what people think of the San Pedro's future, are they willing to pay more for water and is there support for some type of local water management.

Tuesday, the survey's results will look at people's opinion of how large Sierra Vista should grow and the performance of local government.

The meetings begin with an open house from 4-8 p.m., Tuesday at the Knights of Columbus Hall.

Wednesday, the Sierra Vista workshop is from 8 a.m.-noon, at the Buena High School Performing Arts Center, 5525 Buena School Blvd. Wednesday evening, a 6-10 p.m. workshop is planned at Benson High School.

Thursday, Sierra Vista again hosts a workshop. This time it will be from 5-9 p.m., at Buena's Performing Arts Center.

The goal of the workshops, like that of the poll, is to encourage dialogue on how best to direct our future.

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9. Sierra Vista Opinion Survey (strong support for fort)

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

Survey shows strong support for fort; questions on policy, water usage impact

BILL HESS / Herald/Review / July 27, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - An overwhelming number of area residents do not believe Fort Huachuca should be closed to save the San Pedro River, according to a survey conducted for the Sierra Vista Herald/Bisbee Daily Review.

When asked to rate their response to certain statements, 88 percent of the people questioned disagreed with the idea "to save the San Pedro River, Fort Huachuca should be closed." Nearly 9 percent said they had no opinion or did not know, and a little more than 3 percent favored closing the post to save the river.

The telephone survey consisted of nine questions and was commissioned by the Sierra Vista Herald/Bisbee Daily Review. It was conducted by A & A Research of Kalispell, Mont., from July 15-19. The survey has an accuracy range of plus or minus 5 percent.

The survey indicated people's support for the Fort was apparently unaffected by gender, income, how long they have lived in the San Pedro Valley area or whether they live in Sierra Vista or not.

Age may have had some influence on the individual decision-making process.

Younger respondents, 18 to 34, were slightly less likely to support the post - 78 percent disagreed with closing the Fort. People in the 35-54 age group were 89 percent against closing the post and those 55 and older were more than 92 percent against the proposal.

Fort policy The Fort's officials did not fare as well when the survey asked whether the public agrees or disagrees with the concept that "Fort Huachuca officials have set good public policy in addressing water issues." Forty-one percent of the respondents said they have no opinion if post officials have set good public policy on water issues while 39 percent said the fort has done a good job. Fifteen percent of the people said the fort has done poorly.

Sierra Vista residents - 52 percent - gave the fort good grades in its policy efforts.

Fourteen percent said they disapproved of the fort's performance and 34 percent said they did not know or had no opinion.

People living in rural areas and other communities were more critical of Fort Huachuca's efforts. Nearly 16 percent disagreed with the statement that post officials have set "good public policy addressing water issues." The survey showed 17 percent approved of the post's efforts and nearly 67 percent did not know or had no opinion.

With this question, income may have had an impact on the person's response. The higher the income, the more likely the agreement with the fort's water policies. Twenty-eight percent of people questioned, with an income less than \$20,000 agreed with the fort's policies. That number rose as income increased: \$20,000-\$30,000 36.3 percent agreed, \$30,000-\$50,000 42 percent agreed and those with incomes greater than \$50,000 - a majority- 52 percent agreed.

Those who disagreed with the fort's policies remained below 20 percent regardless of income while those who had no opinion or didn't know were the majority in all, but the highest income bracket.

People who have lived in the area five years or less and those who have lived here 11 or more years strongly supported the fort's policies. People who have been in the valley for six to 10 years were nearly equally divided on the issue - 27 percent for the post policies, 22 against.

The water problem When asked how serious the San Pedro River area's water problems are, the public gave a mixed response.

Forty-five percent of the people questioned agreed that "overuse of water threatens the San Pedro riparian area." More than 22 percent do not believe the riparian habitat is threatened by water demand and 33 percent had no opinion or did not know.

There were only small differences in where those surveyed lived, their gender, age or length of residency.

Forty-three percent of Sierra Vista resident surveyed agreed that overuse of water threatens the riparian habitat; slightly more than 22 percent said no. The response from people in rural areas and other communities was similar - 46 percent agreed, 17 percent disagreed.

The more money a person made the less of a problem they saw with the overuse of water, according to the survey.

Thirty-seven percent of those who said they had incomes greater than \$50,000 a year said yes to the river threat; 32 percent said no. At the other end of the

income spectrum, 54 percent of those making less than \$20,000 a year said there was a threat compared to 13 percent who said no.

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10. Ranchers' View

Livestock Weekly

<http://www.livestockweekly.com/papers/1997/10/23/whlgrazeend.asp>

Vol. 49 - No. 42 Thursday, October 23, 1997

Arizona Ranchers Reeling Under Yet Another Assault On Grazing

Arizona ranchers who may have thought the other shoe had dropped in a recent court order dealing with U.S. Forest Service grazing allotments are reeling under a third blow.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management said earlier this month it will remove cattle from 15 Arizona river areas to protect 15 officially "endangered" or "threatened" animals and plants.

"Somebody wants cows gone - that's the bottom line," said C.B. "Doc" Lane, director of grower affairs for the 2000-member Arizona Cattlemen's Association.

The action, expected to be undertaken within the next few months, is a result of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opinion dealing with what's necessary under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The BLM leases nearly 1.6 million acres of public land to ranchers for grazing 12,128 head of cattle in 288 separate allotments.

Jim Rorabaugh of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Phoenix office said the action includes a portion of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.

Bill Brandau of the Safford BLM office said the other 14 grazing allotments are on the Gila or San Francisco rivers, or on Bonita or Aravaipa creeks. He said some fencing will have to be installed.

The opinion also requires BLM to limit cattle crossings of rivers on three other grazing allotments and requires it to evaluate and monitor the several thousand livestock watering on the grazing lands, he said.

Though the initial BLM action will affect only 24 ranches, the opinion also identified 36 river areas that don't require removing livestock but "need special management to recover so they can provide habitat" for the Southwestern willow flycatcher, said David Hogan, rivers coordinator with Tucson-based activist group Southwest Center for Biological Diversity.

The center filed the 1996 lawsuit that led to the Fish and Wildlife Service study of 42 "endangered" species throughout southeastern Arizona.

Arizona ranchers were feeling beleaguered even before the latest announcement.

The Forest Service has said a recent court order requiring application of management rules adopted in 1996 to the about 1400 ranching operations on national forests in Arizona and New Mexico will require removal of livestock from about half them.

Sens. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., and Pete Domenici, R-N.M., have attempted to block that order through an amendment to the Interior Department's 1998 funding bill.

Meanwhile, the Arizona Land Department is under court order to open its grazing lease bidding to greater competition, a move livestock producers say will increase their costs and could drive some of them out of business.

Lane discounted the environmental claims giving rise to the BLM announcement.

"If the intent was to figure out some way to improve the habitat, people can work around that," Lane said. "But from what we've seen so far, the species really don't count. It's just to get rid of the cattle."

Predictably, environmentalist activists weren't satisfied with the severity of the ruling.

Hogan claimed the study was flawed in having inadequately assessed the impact of grazing on 11 threatened or endangered species.

Examples include the masked bobwhite quail, which needs tall grasses to survive, and the bald eagle, which needs river forests in which to nest and hunt, he said.

Hogan noted the Fish and Wildlife Service opinion didn't say any of the endangered or threatened species were in "jeopardy," a classification that would force the two federal agencies to produce joint plans for "major" actions to protect them. Yet some of the species involved do need such major action, he contended.

Rorabaugh said that without jeopardy findings, his agency requires only "reasonable and prudent measures" to reduce losses of listed animal species but none to protect the five rare plants listed.

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11. Efforts to Save San Pedro River Grow More Complicated

Tucson Weekly

<http://weeklywire.com/tw/current/contents.htm>

July 23-29, 1998

Efforts To Save The Dwindling San Pedro River Grow More Complicated.

By Kevin Franklin

A REPORT CONCERNING the future management of the San Pedro River has fired up the propaganda machines and ire of various interest groups with stakes in the watershed issues of the region.

Environmentalists, ranchers, developers and property-rights activists, not to mention the various governing bodies in the Sierra Vista area, all have concerns about the report released by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC).

The CEC was established as a side agreement to the North American Free Trade Agreement and is supposed to "facilitate effective cooperation in the conservation, protection and enhancement of the environment in the three countries," according to the CEC report.

Some of the more controversial suggestions in the report, including cessation of most agriculture in the area, have stirred up local farmers and ranchers. Some feel that the recommendations, with overtones of big brother-type control, are laying the groundwork for forcing them out of their jobs and homes.

"What right do these people have to come in and say my water is more important for some birds than it is for my livelihood?" says Ken Moore, who ranches and farms near the San Pedro. "It's easy to pick on a small minority. That's what they're doing."

Environmental groups, like The Southwest Center For Biological Diversity, take exception to other recommendations, such as surrendering the existing San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area and moving its boundaries farther southward.

"This is supposed to allow the continued destruction of the river, while 'saving' the conservation area. Such thinking is narrow-minded in the extreme," writes SWCBD Executive Director Kieran Suckling in a press release. Suckling goes on to blast other recommendations in the report. "Importing water from the Tombstone pipeline, the Douglas Basin, or CAP is a temporary 'solution' that will only cause water problems in other areas and fuel unsustainable growth."

The CEC hired the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy as a neutral entity to gather public opinion on the matter, says Ann Moote, Udall Center senior research specialist. Moote is helping to coordinate the public meetings.

Moote points out that nothing in the report is binding and it only lays out observations and recommendations.

"The report ties together a lot of information that existed in other places." Moote says. "It summarizes the state of the knowledge regarding the hydrology, ecology and the links to the local economy. To a fairly large extent, that was its purpose. It also identified a wide variety of management options. People can look at those and take or reject or discuss or refine them. It's a good jumping off point for local people who are really interested in sitting down and deciding what kind of management they want for the future."

Despite the laissez-faire rhetoric in the report, people involved with the issue believe many of the suggestion will be enacted--unless they make it otherwise. In the past, some of these folks became dangerously serious about getting their point across.

"I don't know if you've heard stories about some of the big meetings they've had before," Moote says, "where things have gotten really hostile and people started shouting in a big auditorium setting. It can sort of turn ugly fast. We're going to manage this pretty tightly with strict ground rules with what's appropriate communication and what isn't. We really want to remind people that no one hears you if you're shouting."

An open house for information will be held July 28 from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 156 Kayetan Road, in Sierra Vista. Public workshops will be held July 29 and 30 from 6 to 10 p.m. respectively at Benson High School on the corner of Seventh and Patagonia and at Buena High School, 525 Buena High School Blvd., just off Charleston Road east of Sierra Vista. Call the Udall Center (520) 621-7189 for more information or a copy of the report. [TW]

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12. Plant Sciences Task Force

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

Fort, university honored by city

JODILYNN KROEKER / Herald/Review / July 25, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - Two partners in the Plant Sciences Task Force were honored

Thursday at the group's meeting.

Mayor Richard Archer presented the first Mayor's Award to Col. Theodore Chopin, Fort Huachuca garrison commander, for Fort Huachuca's sponsorship and support of the Plant Sciences Center.

"We take our environmental mission very seriously at Fort Huachuca," Chopin said. He added that the Fort was one of 11 recipients of the Federal Energy Conservation Award for energy conservation and renewable energy. Fort Huachuca also recently signed an agreement to help with the Water Wise program run by University of Arizona-Sierra Vista's Cooperative Extension.

Archer presented the second award to the University of Arizona-Sierra Vista. Katherine Klein, University of Arizona-Sierra Vista's associate dean of student academic support, accepted the honor on behalf of the dean, Dr.

Randall Groth. The University's Sierra Vista campus provided acreage for the current Plant Sciences Center and has helped support environmental programs throughout the area.

In other business, Dr. Robert Leonard, the head of University of Arizona-Tucson's, associate dean of the College of Agriculture, and an architect, visited the Plant Sciences Center to gather information to prepare an 8,000 square foot floor plan for the new Plant Sciences research facility, said Councilman Harold Vangilder. The building will house two laboratories, two classrooms, a plant holding area and administrative area. A detailed plan is expected to be finished in mid-August. The current holding area is about one acre and will be expanded to about two acres.

"This is moving from a dream, past possible toward probable," Vangilder said.

The first phase of the Buffalo Soldier Trail landscaping project was completed last week with the planting of agaves and barrel and prickly pear cactuses on the east and west sides of the road. Phase two will be completed during National Public Lands Day on Sept. 26, when about 1,000 plants, such as ocotillos, and a variety of other native plants will be added. The city is recruiting 65 volunteers to help with this project.

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13. River Study Workshops

Tombstone Tumbleweed
<http://www.theriver.com/tombstonenews/index.html>

RIVER STUDY WORKSHOPS SET

By Pat Koester Tombstone Tumbleweed July 16, 1998

The public will have at least four opportunities - three in Sierra Vista and one in Benson - to voice their opinions and ask questions about the controversial tri-national draft report regarding water management in the Upper San Pedro River Watershed.

The 141-page report, officially titled, "Sustaining and Enhancing Riparian Migratory Bird Habitat on the Upper San Pedro River," was prepared by a team of six experts as part of a study by the tri-national Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the environmental arm of the NAFTA agreement between the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

The four public input sessions are part of the report's 60-day public comment

period, which ends August 14, 1998.

A report summary, background document, and questionnaire for written comments can be found inside this week's Tumbleweed.

The three public input sessions in Sierra Vista include one open house and two workshops.

The open house will be held Tuesday, July 28, from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 156 W. Kayetan Road. This will be an informal event. People can drop by any time during the four-hour period for informal talks.

The public workshops will include time for group discussion, and attendees should plan to stay the full four hours. The two Sierra Vista workshops will be held in the Buena High School Performing Arts Center on Wednesday, July 29, from 8 am to noon and on Thursday, July 30, from 5 to 9 p.m. The Benson workshop will be held in the Benson High School Auditorium on Wednesday, July 29, from 6 to 10 p.m.

Staff from the CEC and the members of the expert team will be on hand at all sessions to present the report and answer questions from the public. All sessions will be moderated by the University of Arizona's Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy.

In addition to the four major public input sessions, The Udall Center has been meeting with a wide range of "focus groups" that have requested such meetings.

According to a Udall Center spokesperson, the purpose of these smaller meetings is "to allow specific stakeholder groups the opportunity to voice their views in an environment free from the distractions of competing interests."

So far, eight groups have requested meetings this month. The groups represent a wide range of "stakeholders," such as a Realtor group, the Friends of the San Pedro, Palominas Neighborhood Association, the People for the USA, and a Masonic lodge.

According to a Udall Center spokesperson, none of the activist environmental groups have requested "focus group" meetings - which are open to the media - since the release of the draft report.

When the CEC first announced, in May of 1997, that it would conduct a study of the San Pedro River, the radical Southwest Center for Biological Diversity claimed victory because the study was being done in response to their petition. The CEC has since downplayed the Southwest Center's petition - it is not even mentioned in the draft report - and, according to a source involved with the report, the radical environmentalists are extremely unhappy with the report because it did not recommend the closure of the U.S. Army's Fort Huachuca.

The source said the environmentalists are also unhappy because the CEC and the Udall Center decided to have the public input sessions in Cochise County instead of Tucson, and because comments are not being actively solicited from the international "environmental" community. An "alert" that has been put out on the Internet by both the Southwest Center and Sierra Vista's Al Anderson of the Huachuca Audubon Society says, "The CEC is only soliciting comments from within the river basin itself, which is dominated by developers and the military, thereby attempting to stack the weight of comments against major policy reforms." The Audubon Society/Southwest Center directive urges people to send comments urging that "if the Fort can't operate without a water deficit, it must be closed."

The CEC report notes that "official projections call for a slight reduction in personnel [at Fort Huachuca] over the next five years. Thus, the fort's demands on the aquifer are expected to decline." The Audubon Society/Southwest Center directive, however, claims that "Growth from the U.S. Army's Fort Huachuca

remains the greatest short-term threat to the river. Uncontrolled growth remains the greatest long-term threat."

The Audubon Society/-Southwest Center directive also urges people to request the creation of an "Active Management Area" and the elimination of all agriculture, which it calls "superfluous." It urges the rejection of the importation of water and the shifting of the federally-created San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) southward into Mexico, two possible plans of action discussed in the report.

Moving the conservation area southward, says the Audubon Society/Southwest Center, "is supposed to allow the continued destruction of the river, while 'saving' the conservation area. Such thinking is narrow-minded in the extreme. A better solution is to expand the SPRNCA to include more of the river, including the area that crosses the international boundary. This will provide an incentive to control water depletion in the entire upper river basin and provide better, more secure wildlife habitat and open space."

The Cochise County Board of Supervisors has also responded to the report, in a letter addressed to the Udall Center. The letter is reprinted on page 19.

A digest of public comments will be released following the 60-day public comment period. The draft report will then be revised and submitted to an Advisory Panel, which will meet in September to formulate recommendations. According to the CEC's charter, these recommendations are advisory in nature and carry no enforcement authority.

The recommendations will be reviewed by the CEC Council, which is composed of U.S. EPA Administrator Carol Browner and her counterparts in Mexico and Canada. The Council will decide whether or not to make the final report public.

14. Editorial Opinion (Tombstone Tumbleweed)

Tombstone Tumbleweed
<http://www.theriver.com/tombstonenews/index.html>

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

An Editorial Opinion from the Tumbleweed Editor
Tombstone Tumbleweed July 23, 1998

Next week, the public will have several opportunities to voice their opinion in a public forum about the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) draft report concerning the San Pedro River. We encourage everyone in Cochise County to attend one of these forums, or one of the individual group meetings that are also being held - both to learn and to voice your constructive opinions.

Yes, there are a lot of problems with the report, and with the idea of an international organization conducting a study of our local area. On the other hand, the water issue is not going to go away, and some kind of open, honest dialog is obviously needed. If this report can provide a vehicle for such dialog, then we should take advantage of the opportunity to provide positive input. The very fact that the international report includes the Mexican as well as the US portion of the river provides an opportunity to open up a dialog with our southern neighbor. This has long been considered an essential element in discussions about the watershed, but nobody has known quite how to go about it.

Yes, the report contains many controversial issues such as importing water and pumping water into the river. (Actually, those issues seem to be not very controversial at all - it appears that just about everyone is against them.) We are willing to take CEC Director Greg Block at his word when he says the task of the expert team was to consider ALL possibilities for the sake of discussion, and then let public input shape the final report. We commend the Udall Center

for offering to hold information-gathering sessions with any group who requests them, and for making the sessions open to the press - a far cry from the "Water Issues Group (WIG)" which a few years ago barred the press from their secret meetings and then tried to cram water regulation legislation down our throats.

We applaud the many groups who have taken advantage of the opportunity to meet with Udall Center representatives and offer constructive input. It is interesting to note that the radical environmental groups have not requested such meetings. They are instead attacking the fact that meetings are being held locally, preventing the international environmental movement from dominating the input process. We do have a few comments and suggestions about the report.

First, let's stop pretending this is about birds. Although the draft report is titled "Sustaining and Enhancing Riparian Bird Habitat on the Upper San Pedro River," everyone knows this is really about managing - read controlling - the water in the San Pedro River Basin. And as everyone also knows, he who controls the water controls the land, as well as growth. When the title of a study is less than truthful, it makes the entire study suspect.

Second, let's understand that all the people of Cochise County are all in this together. This is not a matter of rural vs. urban, as some newspaper reports would have you believe. This is not a matter of Tombstone vs. Sierra Vista, or Huachuca City vs. Sierra Vista, or Palominas vs. Sierra Vista. It is not a matter of Sierra Vista or Fort Huachuca trying to "steal" Tombstone's water. On the other hand, let's hope this is finally a wake-up call to the people of Tombstone who like to stick their head in the sand and pretend the world starts and ends at the Tombstone city limits.

If Tombstone doesn't become an active player, the city may in the end be dealt out of the picture entirely. We hope to see at least the current City Council members and candidates at one of the forums. As much as we all may resent the implied threat that if we do not do more to address the issue locally someone on a state or national - or international - level will impose some kind of water regulations on us, we must acknowledge that possibility. If we keep an open mind and provide constructive input, just maybe we can make the CEC study work for the good of everyone in Cochise County, as well as for the San Pedro River - which, of course, we all want to preserve.

15. Public Lands Day

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

Public lands day for all

JODILYNN KROEKER / Herald/Review / July 22, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - National Public Lands Day is a chance for the community and land management agencies to join forces to benefit public lands.

This was the focus of Tuesday's community open house at City Hall.

"National Public Lands Day is about building relationships, caring for the community and a chance to make things better," said Tony Herrell, program manager and head of the National Public Lands Day team for the Bureau of Land Management's Tucson field office.

Partnerships for the Sierra Vista celebration on Sept. 26 are ambitious. An estimated 600 volunteers are needed to help with 24 projects on city and federal land, with six federal and six local sponsors. Herrell added that the Sierra Vista area celebration is the only event planned out of 40 nationwide events that involves both federal agencies and local government.

National Public Lands Day projects benefit public lands through volunteerism. "These are all very vital projects that we would not be able to do without the assistance of volunteers," said Herrell. "It's a chance to make things better for tomorrow." Frank Rowley of the Safford BLM field office presented a slide show with photos of the project sites. The projects are all environmentally-oriented, including area cleanups, a roadside landscaping project, fence removal, erosion control, windmill maintenance, sign maintenance, trail and fence construction, and riparian restoration.

"We have projects that will fit almost everyone," Rowley said. "Families, rugged outdoorsmen, youth groups, school groups, and those who aren't as 'able-bodied.'" The city's roadside landscaping project along a three-mile stretch of Buffalo Soldier Trail is one of the largest projects planned for the day, requiring 65 volunteers. Arizona Department of Transportation is a partner in this project, and several employees and a prison work crew have already transplanted some of the cactus along the route.

Parents who are volunteering may register 6- to 10-year-olds in Adventure Camp, to be set up at the staging area on Fort Huachuca. A full day of supervised activities, including the devious "Impact Monster" and a Phoenix Zoo program will entice kids to learn about the environment and how to care for it.

Herrell said everyone can help by reaching out to other groups and to friends and family to get them involved.

Three key areas are getting local organizations involved, VIP visits, including an undersecretary from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state legislators and congressional leaders, and finally, by assistance with donations of equipment, tools or other ways to help make the day a success.

"Consider it a fun event. It's hard work but the rewards are phenomenal," Herrell said. "The target is a good time, a fun time, an understanding of public lands and the cooperation of the community and folks on the ground." The staging area will be at Fort Huachuca's La Hacienda Club, near the main gate. Fort Huachuca is now a no-pass required post. Volunteers can park in the secure staging area, and will be provided with transportation to project sites, equipment, tools, and lunch. The day will wrap up with entertainment, a barbecue dinner and an awards ceremony at the staging area. Registration for projects and Adventure Camp begins at 7:30.

Local sponsors include the City of Sierra Vista, Bureau of Land Management Tucson Field Office, Sierra Vista Ranger District, Fort Huachuca and Arizona Department of Transportation.

National sponsors for this year's events are the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Forest Service and the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information about National Public Lands Day or to become a volunteer, call Monica Gallo, BLM San Pedro Project Office in Sierra Vista, 458-3559, Marie Hansen, city public information officer, 458-3315, or the Sierra Vista Ranger District, 378-0311.

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16. Workshops on CEC Study Set

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

Workshops on river study are next week

BILL HESS / Herald/Review / July 22, 1998

SIERRA VISTA - An open house and two public workshops will be held next week in Sierra Vista to discuss the international study of the San Pedro River and its riparian area.

The Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy will take comments as part of the North American Free Trade Agreement's Commission for Environmental Cooperation study of the Upper San Pedro River Basin.

Members of the expert team who put together the report will be available to answer questions at the meetings.

The open house, which will be held from 4-8 p.m., Tuesday at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 156 W. Kayetan Road, is an informal event in which people may stop by during the four hours.

Workshops in Sierra Vista will last for four hours and will include time for group discussions.

They will be held as follows: * Wednesday, July 29 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Buena High School Performing Arts Center.

*Thursday, July 30 from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Buena High School Performing Arts Center.

Another four-hour workshop will be held in Benson on July 29 from 6-10 p.m. at the Benson Union High School Auditorium located at 7th and Patagonia streets.

Individuals who cannot attend the workshops have until Aug. 15 to submit their comments.

Comments can be submitted by writing The Udall Center, 803/811 E. First St., Tucson, AZ 85719; by e-mail at sanpedro@u.arizona.edu ; by voice mail by calling 520-458-8278, extension 190; or on the Internet at <http://udallcenter/Programs/ecr/CEC-Report>.

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17. Fort in Good Shape

Sierra Vista Herald
<http://www.svherald.com/>

General says fort in good shape to survive

BILL HESS / Herald/Review / July 22, 1998

FORT HUACHUCA - The post is an important part of the country's [Image] national security and it stands a good chance of surviving any future rounds of military installation closing as long as the area's environmental concerns are taken care of, said Gen. Dennis Reimer, the Army's chief of staff.

The fort has a long-standing tradition of excellence within the Army and the missions on the post are critical, he said this morning.

Reimer began his visit to Fort Huachuca Tuesday and departed this morning for

the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

There has to be more cuts in the Army's infrastructure to match the more than 600,000 soldiers who have been cut from the rolls, he said.

It is costly to keep more posts open than are needed, said Reimer. He admitted other installation closures have yet to achieve the cost savings initially forecast.

In some cases the federal government did not get "fair value" for property, he said. However, once a post is completely closed the savings mount up, Reimer said.

During his visit to Fort Huachuca, he spoke with people at the Intelligence Center, Army Signal Command and the Technology Integration Center, as well as other units on the post.

Having intelligence and communications on the same post is a plus for the Army since so much the two do are intertwined, Reimer said.

The functions on post have an impact on other Army units, Reimer said.

Reimer was scheduled to operate a Hunter unmanned aerial vehicle this morning, but a heavy downpour caused the cancellation of his time at the controls.

And although he did not get a chance to fly a Hunter, the general said unmanned aerial vehicles are critically important for ground commanders. The testing of the Outrider, another unmanned aerial vehicle at Fort Hood, Texas, is going well even though the system hasn't "made all the requirements." As for the Hunter, Reimer said he is still considering whether to have one system - consisting of eight aircraft and its ground equipment - shipped to Fort Irwin, the general said.

The plus will be units will get good additional training at the California base but because each brigade in the Army will not have UAVs, follow-on training will be hard, Reimer said.

He said he watched the capabilities of the Hunter Tuesday at the Maneuver Brigade Tactical Operations Center.

Reimer also said he and the other joint chiefs are working hard to ensure military members, their families and retirees and their families are better provided for.

He said the Joint Chiefs of Staff have four top priorities concerning people - adequate pay, adequate medical care for everyone including retirees, adequate housing and stopping the erosion of benefits for active duty people and retirees, Reimer said.

Photo: Army Chief of Staff Gen. Dennis Reimer, right, is briefed at a tactical field site by officer in charge 1st Lt. Jason Paxson, left, during the general's visit to Fort Huachuca this week.

Photo by Mark Levy.

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18. Commentary on Conservation Easement Approach

Arizona Daily Star
<http://www.azstarnet.com/public/dnews/>

Commentary

Sunday, 2 August 1998

Mark Muro:

Save the land: Buy ranches

It will take money and cooperation between environmentalists, owners

Good news arrived from range country Wednesday when it developed that the city may have a chance to buy much of the rugged Bellota Ranch in Redington Pass to save it from subdivision.

Last month, the city appeared to lose out when Chicago industrialist Howard Warren sold the spread to Tucson real estate speculator Robert Clark for \$8 million. But now the city is back in contention to secure an open space future for 8,000 acres of developable private land and the hundred square miles of leased rock ledges and blowing grass they control.

The news makes the mind soar - especially since it seems to snatch hope from what a few days ago looked like another failure to save a ranch from the subdividers.

And yet, that was the good news.

Far less encouraging (and perhaps more suggestive), was this summer's other big ranch news: the collapse of a state plan to spend \$9 million buying up the development rights on a 34-square-mile cattle ranch in the lovely San Rafael Valley south of here.

This plan foundered when the ranch's owners, the Sharp family, demanded more money and listed the spread for sale for \$24 million.

Yet what has been equally disturbing has been the broader confusion that episode exposed. Sure, the loss of 22,000 specific, spectacular acres of land to potential home-site development filled many with gloom. But even worse was the display of bickering, naivete and unproductive bashing of ranchers that enveloped the bad news and made you know there would be more of it.

Recall what happened: As the developers stayed above the fray, many Tucsonans ripped the ``greed'' of the landowners who would sell their land - as if legally selling land were not their prerogative in a booming land market.

Meanwhile, Kieran Suckling, director of the Southwest Center for Biodiversity, blasted the abortive development rights deal as ``paying ransom to a rancher'' without suggesting an alternative solution. And then, there was Jon Tate, president of the Western Gamebird Alliance, saying the state should buy the San Rafael Ranch outright, though he ought to have known the state has nowhere near \$24 million available.

Which is to say, not even Southern Arizona conservationists could agree on either the real causes or a meaningful response to the single gravest conservation challenge facing the region: the coming sell-off to developers of dozens of the state's storied ranches. Instead they wasted time demonizing ranchers and quarreling over the moral status of buying development rights.

No wonder any lover of Arizona's ranches and open space had cause to despair this month.

Not only are the ranches going fast, but no consensus exists even among environmentalists about what to do about them.

And yet, it doesn't have to be this way, nor should it be.

After all, if conservationists and other leaders would just attend to the underlying economic causes of ranch sell-offs, the appropriate public responses would become so clear as to preclude much disagreement.

To see this, environmentalists and their partners need to remember that the fate of Arizona's ranches, for better or worse, is largely controlled by the people who own them.

This may sound obvious, but it bears repeating because it dictates another fact: Any solution to Arizona's rangeland crisis must be an economic solution that works for ranch owners, too.

Many ranch owners may well be guilty of disrespect for anything larger than their own grievances and self-interests. However, the fact remains they operate as free players in an under-regulated market economy that gives them powerful incentives to sell ranch land. Low beef prices and escalating land prices diminish income and inflate tax bills, as the Sharps noted several times relevant to their San Rafael spread. By contrast, current laissez-faire state law guarantees raw land can be sold off, subdivided, and resold in rural Arizona for huge profits.

Accordingly, the major threat to Arizona's open space continues to be not evil ranch people (as much of the month's environmental rhetoric seemed to suggest) but rational self-interest on the part of ranchers and developers unchecked by open-space-friendly land-use laws.

And so the conservation community, taxpayers and policy makers need to get over their moralistic distaste for ranch owners' decisions and get to work. Of course they must keep working to get the relevant laws on subdividing and open space tightened. But they must also better understand the present economic trends in ranch country and start joining forces to craft measures that make it worth ranchers' while not to sell or at least to sell to those like the government which wants to preserve their ranches as open land.

>From this perspective, only two real-world options exist for the state and environmentalists as they try to keep the ``big open'' from fragmenting.

First, absent stringent new state and county zoning powers to keep land open, public entities can simply buy key properties outright. This is what the City of Tucson is contemplating at the Bellota, and it is a fine approach.

What recommends this approach, of course, is its certainty and familiarity. Everybody understands locking land up - ranchers who get money and the public that gets the land. In addition, more and more states, counties and towns around the country are showing how to use rural land acquisition to forestall ranch bust-ups.

Boulder County, Colo., for example, recently demonstrated the benefit of earmarking a quarter-cent sales tax for buying open space. Already three ranches have been bought there and preserved as parkland. So buying land works and should be pursued.

But there is a snag here: Land acquisition costs a lot - and incurs opposition from property-rights-activists and sometimes developers who covet the West's private lands. Hence the appeal of the other meaningful stay on the ranch breakup: buying conservation easements and/or the development rights on significant properties.

This approach takes seriously a ranch owner's right to make money off his land, since it advances landowners cash and tax benefits to forgo land sales or development. At the same time, buying these guarantees against subdivision costs taxpayers less than buying ranch after ranch outright. So it would seem a no-brainer that these mechanisms provide a superb means of keeping places intact

without incurring the prohibitive costs and controversy of buying ranches outright.

However, here is where that distressing squabble broke out among local environmentalists (of all people!), as Jon Tate and Kieran Suckling beat up on the state's plan to pay \$9 million to the Sharps to keep their ranch intact forever. Suckling and Tate, in their public quotes at least, seemed to gag on the entire notion of paying the hated ranchers money.

Yet this was crazy. Attacking the specific deal because it permitted too little visitation and ecosystem monitoring was one thing. Rejecting the development rights-purchase concept as a whole was another that was essentially to favor no protection there - a strange position indeed for environmentalists.

In view of this perplexity, then, some serious stock-taking seems essential now.

In the largest sense, the whole state has to decide quite soon if it really wants the state's remaining ranches to continue as Arizona's ``big open.'' Since perhaps 60 percent of the region's ranches will likely change hands in the next 20 years, moreover, the questions intrude urgently. Do Arizonans want ranchettes everywhere, or not? Do they care about the piecemeal fragmentation of viewsapes and ecosystems, or not?

Otherwise, presuming the state does want to hold together some large swaths of its private-land open spaces, all parties need to get real about what that will take - money, and cleverness at using at it.

Such cleverness will require greater savvy about the economic realities at play in ranch country than is evidenced when enviros castigate ranchers for selling land. Almost inevitably, such savvy will suggest the necessity of paying money to ranchers for contracts that accept some ranching or public visitation limits in exchange for a building ban.

In short, the time has come for the state and its environmentalists to buck the naysaying about ``handouts to ranchers'' and embrace easements as a way to protect open spaces in a ``show-me-the-money'' land market.

For the point is, there is no alternative.

The state, the county, cities, conservation groups - all parties need to show ranchers the money by buying up their land or buying their development rights. Otherwise, they can say goodbye to the San Rafael, goodbye to the Bellota, goodbye to dozens of Arizona's most beautiful open spaces.

Mark Muro is a Star editorial writer

19. Letter to the Editor (Conservation Easements)

Arizona Daily Star
<http://www.azstarnet.com/public/dnews/>

Letter to the editor

Wednesday, 22 July 1998

Ransom not the reality

I was distressed by the implications in the July 14 article by Keith Bagwell that the Arizona Parks Board was proposing to pay ``ransom'' to ranchers in its efforts to acquire a conservation easement on the San Rafael ranch (``Critics assail state plan to pay ranchers.'')

The board has a Natural Areas Advisory Committee to provide advice on properties

that might be acquired with Heritage Fund dollars. This committee was formed in 1991 and consists of field-oriented botanists, zoologists, hydrologists and geologists knowledgeable about Arizona's natural heritage.

I have been on this committee since its inception and chaired it for five years. At one of our first meetings, we urged the parks department to consider methods of protecting significant natural areas in the state through methods other than outright acquisition, including the purchase of conservation easements.

We have recommended to the parks board every year that the San Rafael Valley be considered as a high priority for protection because of its outstanding ecological and hydrological features. The board thus has been acting on the strong recommendation of its independent advisory committee in attempting to acquire a conservation easement on the San Rafael Ranch.

Cost should not be an issue. By law the board cannot pay more than fair market value for acquisition of real property or conservation easements.

Steven P. McLaughlin

20. Letter to the Editor (Don't Blame Humans)

Tombstone Tumbleweed
<http://www.theriver.com/tombstonenews/index.html>

DON'T BLAME HUMANS FOR EVERYTHING

Editor:

Like thieves caught with their hands in the till, Sheri Williamson and Al Anderson tried to put the spin on as result of Supervisor Thompson's letter, by name calling, repetitious semi-truths, and outright falsehoods.

Let's look at this allegedly endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. There are eight Empidonax flycatchers in North American, three of which are easily identified. The other five, Traill's, Hammonds, Dusky, Gray, and Least, are so similar that experienced ornithologists cannot positively identify individuals in their natural habitat. Empidonax trailli, or Traill's Flycatcher, is known in the U.S. and Canada as the "Alder" flycatcher, while in Mexico it is known as the "Willow." This is probably because alder trees are not common in Mexico. This widespread species prefers to build its nests in alder and willow thickets in low valleys, swamps, canyons or in high mountain meadows; bushy bogs or muskegs. It is found from Alaska and Canada to Argentina, with its summer range from Alaska and Canada to the southwest and east to New England.

What we have here is an Empidonax flycatcher, in certain Arizona and New Mexico colonies, suddenly given an alias and declared an endangered species.

Extermination of the bison (buffalo) did not eradicate the brown headed cowbird. What gives these people the idea that exterminating cattle will do the job? Somebody is trying to play God without the necessary omniscience (intellect) nor omnipotence (power). Or, just maybe, there exists a much more sinister purpose, as Les Thompson's letter suggests.

American naturalist Will Cuppy has stated, "Let's not be too quick to blame the human race for everything. We must remember that a great many species of animals became extinct before man ever appeared on earth." The flycatcher has had thousands of generations to learn to identify the cowbird eggs and hatchlings and to develop a defense. The fact that the flycatcher has not learned indicates that this bird is not adaptive, which is an evolutionary requirement for

nonextinction. As Cuppy observed, "Maybe the reason for the Dodo's existence was to become extinct." This could also apply to certain Empidonax colonies.

I take strong exception to Sheri Williamson's exaggerated figure of the agriculture losses due to the cowbird. Obviously, she has no idea of the symbiotic relationship that exists between the cowbird and cattle. Other birds have the same relationship, gleaning dung for nourishment. Are they to be sacrificed for the Empidonax? Native Americans did not feed grains to great herds of buffalo. So what did the cowbird eat? As Dr. Goebbels preached, "If you tell a lie often enough people will come to believe it."

In 1962, Richard Ardrey reported that the average American farmer produced enough to feed 12 people other than his family, on farms no larger than in Lincoln's day. No other farmer in the world produced enough to feed more than two other people. I doubt if this is true today, due to the attack on agriculture by those of William's and Anderson's ilk. Some of these people are misguided souls who have been entrapped by emotional ploys. Others, of course, as Thompson and Thornton Benson suggest, are consciously striving to destroy American institutions. Maybe they'll be satisfied when Safeway's lowest priced ground beef is \$50 a pound, though I doubt it.

I'm not the head of any organization, nor do I have some super title to dazzle people into believing that I have credentials that do not exist. I happen to be just a concerned citizen. Yet you can check out my statements in any good library. You might start with the Peterson Field Guides to Western Birds and Mexican Birds or the Audubon Society's Field Guide to North American Birds, Western Region. That's right, Al, your own organization. Then you can go on to more definitive works.

- J.L. Walton,

Huachuca City, Arizona

21. Letter to the Editor (Garbage Science)

Tombstone Tumbleweed
<http://www.theriver.com/tombstonenews/index.html>

GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT - AND WHO IS FOOTING THE BILL?

Editor:

Recently the Arizona Daily Star, the Sierra Vista Herald and the Tombstone Tumbleweed printed 8-page inserts regarding the Upper San Pedro River Initiative as presented by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). A sub-heading was "Sustaining and Enhancing Riparian Bird Habitat on the Upper San Pedro River." After a third newspaper was delivered with the 8-page insert, I had to ask myself - "Who is paying for this? And why?"

On the last page, readers are asked to submit comments in writing or orally to the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona. A web address is given as <http://udallcenter.arizona.edu>.

Upon accessing the Website, one finds that the Morris K. Udall Foundation was established by the Congress of the United States and that the foundation's activities are supported by the interest accrued in the federal trust fund (and by contributions from the private sector).

The Udall Foundation is an Executive Branch commission with its Board of Trustees appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the United States Senate. The Foundation's office is at the

University of Arizona. The President of the University of Arizona, Dr. Peter W. Likins, is a member of the board of trustees.

This organization that is funded by U.S. taxpayers and operating out of the University of Arizona has assumed as one of its missions to coordinate the public input process for the CEC. It is acting as an agency for the CEC, which has published and funded the 8-page insert that has been issued to the public in at least three newspapers in southern Arizona.

The Foundation is, by its actions, supporting and providing efficacy to a CEC initiative that is of dubious validity, of questionable motive and most certainly not in accordance with the wishes of the citizenry of the local area. Was anybody asked about his new taxpayer funded and University of Arizona sanctioned mission? This is funding for a foreign entity that is part and parcel to an extremist environmental movement to close down the economic engine of Cochise County, Fort Huachuca. Fort Huachuca has been here since 1877 and is a vital asset to the defense of the nation.

The Cochise County Board of Supervisors and the Sierra Vista City Council (and others) may wish to question the overt and perhaps even illegal support by the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy and the Udall Foundation. The Board of Regents may also be asked why the University of Arizona is party to this abuse of taxpayers' and congressional funding and authority.

These questions should be asked in light of some issues that have not been properly addressed regarding the current 141-page report that is based on computer modeling. All computer models, while useful to varying degrees, have a minimum of four areas of error:

1. The assumptions must be accurate. It has not, repeat not, been established that the Fort Huachuca Military Reservation and the San Pedro River are even on the same aquifer. Further, in defense of the Army's decision in 1970 to move the Intelligence Center and School from Fort Holibird, Maryland, to Fort Huachuca, two hydrological explorations were conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers. Briefly, the reported findings were that there was sufficient ground water under the military reservation to sustain a population of 30,000 people for over 100 years without further ground water replenishment. The current Ft. Huachuca population is approximately only one-third of the number used in the original Army Corps of Engineer report. Until one can conclusively establish that the Fort Huachuca Military Reservation water source is a contributing factor in this model, there is no justification in mentioning the fort, let alone discussing its future.
2. The computer model and its formula must be accurate. We must remember that the basic computer games that we buy for our children are just computer models dressed up as games. They are wonderful entertainment but hardly reflect reality. What model was used and what authoritatively accepted body has guaranteed it efficacy and accuracy?
3. The input into the computer model must be accurate. What is the source of the data, and what authoritative entity has guaranteed same? We all know of the "garbage in, garbage out" problem. The CIA ran some of the most expensive, state-of-the-art computer models in the world and came up absolutely wrong on the status of the now defunct Soviet superpower. The CEC is surely no better than the CIA.
4. The output must be properly interpreted. Often output is misinterpreted. Our bodies provide output called symptoms for doctors to interpret (diagnose) and, even in an established profession such as medicine, doctors make mistakes in reading the symptoms (output). Who did the model's output interpretation, and who guaranteed the results?
5. Last, but not least, is the issue of the "agenda." What is the real agenda of the "experts" conducting the study? Is it unbiased and unflavored by some

political or "environmental" cause? Or are the so-called study and all of its aspects part of a "self-fulfilling prophecy?"

Perhaps we need not be so fast in accepting the study as having real validity. It has no credibility with me. Does Cochise County really want to accept this questionable computer model version of science to decide our collective future?

I would hope not.

As to my original question, "Who is paying for these 8-page inserts?" You, the citizen-taxpayer, are. And "why?" I leave that up to you to answer.

Ben L. Anderson, Col. U.S. Army (retired),

Post Commander, Ft. Huachuca 1969-1971

Note: this email list is comprised of SALSA science collaborators, San Pedro Technical Review Committee members, other local agencies and NGOs, and interested citizens. The purpose of these occasional messages is to keep interested persons informed of current news and opinion regarding the hydrology and ecology of the Upper San Pedro River basin. If at any time you would like to be removed from this list, please let me know by reply email.

BFG

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