



SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

2006
annual report **Arizona**

40 YEARS

...of conserving land and water
to benefit people and nature

In 1966 a group of conservation-minded citizens raised money to buy the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve, and The Nature Conservancy in Arizona was born. Over the years that followed, nature preserves throughout the state were purchased by or donated to the Conservancy. They had a common focus: protecting water and restoring the health of the land.

This 40th annual report documents the natural evolution of an organization whose mission calls upon us to preserve the diversity of life on Earth. We have come to cherish Arizona's rich biological heritage. We have learned about our vital connections with neighboring states and other countries through a system of similar habitats or ecoregions. We are beginning to understand how special places are vulnerable to changes that occur many miles away. And, we now know that change can be friend and foe.

Today we are working at an unprecedented scale, on critical issues not recognized 40 years ago, such as global warming and the decline in forest health.

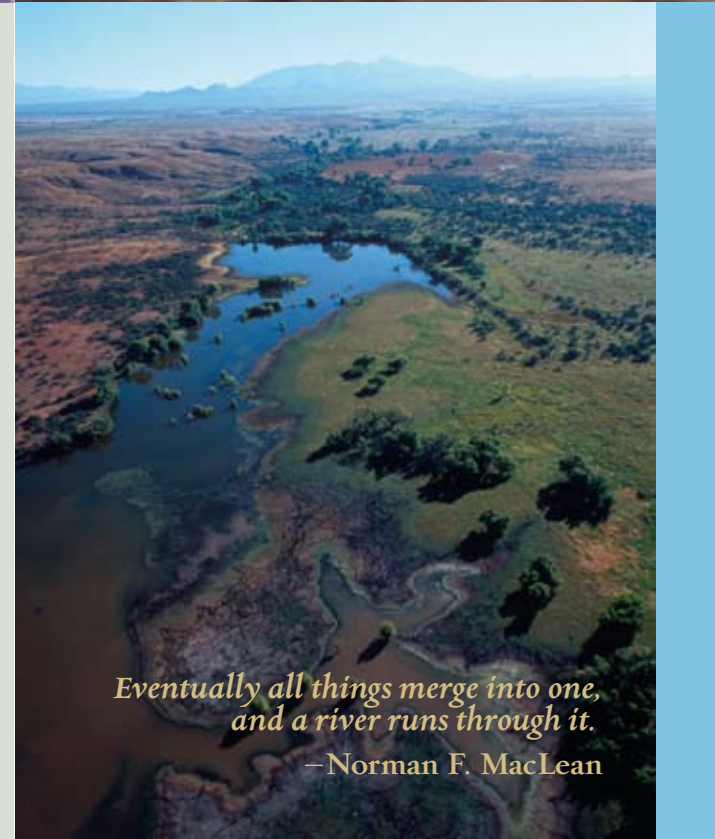
We practice conservation by creating a blueprint, drawing on our deep-science knowledge to allow us to focus our resources on the most important areas and threats. We practice community-based conservation, engaging with local communities in the Verde and San Pedro rivers and elsewhere. We practice conservation across borders, working on projects in Mexico and New Mexico and in our exchange of scientists with Mongolia.

Perhaps most important is our aim to practice conservation with humility. Even with all our experience and support, we cannot do this work alone; we need *your* help. The challenges are too great and the need is too urgent.

If you believe, as I do, that we can create a healthy future for our communities, our economy and nature—and if you believe the time to act is now—then together we can turn our hope into our destiny.



Pat Graham
State Director



*Eventually all things merge into one,
and a river runs through it.*

—Norman F. MacLean



VISION: We will ensure freshwater sources are secure and sustainable in order to support our growing population and the rich diversity of life that depends on fresh water to thrive. We will work with water users, providers and those who depend on growth to create the incentives and limits that will guide future growth and create well-planned communities in the face of uncertainty created by global climate change.

Upper San Pedro Partnership

With the added urgency of the first recorded no-flow reading at Charleston gauge in 2005, the Upper San Pedro Partnership (USPP) has ramped up its efforts toward long-term achievement of sustainable water management. Cochise County adopted a water conservation and management policy plan in 2006 that precludes any increases in residential density within a 2-mile corridor of the San Pedro River. The plan relies on a new groundwater modeling tool developed by science staff from the Conservancy and the U.S. Geological Survey.

The USPP also restructured to improve its ability to accomplish water conservation projects. The Partnership completed an initial review of water augmentation options and a water-needs study for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, which the Bureau of Land Management is using to revise its federal water rights claims. The Nature Conservancy is represented on both the partnership's executive and technical committees.

Verde River Greenway

The Conservancy sponsored field trips and provided testimony before the State Parks Board to help win the vote to expand the State Parks Verde River Greenway project area an additional 30 miles downstream from Cottonwood. The Conservancy also supported efforts for Congress to designate Fossil Creek as Arizona's second Wild and Scenic River, and partnered with Salt River Project to produce a Verde River video that showcased the river's magic and the complex issues affecting its future.

The Conservancy is joining with partners to bring science-based water resource management to the Verde River. The nascent Verde River Basin Partnership will collaborate on policies and projects aimed at ensuring sustainability of the "gift of green in a drought-ridden desert." The partnership will focus on rivers, creeks and aquifers in the 6,600-square-mile Verde watershed.

