



## Cochise County Board of Supervisors

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January 5, 2016

Peter Stangel  
U.S. Endowment for Forest and Communities  
c/o SREL, Drawer E  
Aiken, SC 29802  
[Peter@usendowment.org](mailto:Peter@usendowment.org)

RE: Letter of Support for Arizona Land and Water Trust's REPI Full Proposal

Dear Mr. Stangel:

We are pleased to provide this letter of support for Arizona Land and Water Trust ("Trust") in its proposal for the 2016 REPI Challenge. The proposal focuses on conserving and restoring key private, working lands near the U.S. Army's Fort Huachuca in southeastern Arizona. Since Fort Huachuca ("Fort") has been designated a Sentinel Landscape, we believe, in addition to the other funding sought, REPI funds will further advance implementation of various conservation efforts in a collaborative fashion in this important region.

The primary focus of this REPI proposal is to protect the missions of Fort Huachuca by combating encroachment, while conserving historical working ranches and providing credits for the Fort through restoration projects. This unique project brings together partners in the region collectively enhancing the overall impact of individual projects and efforts seeking to restore and conserve key agricultural lands on the larger landscape scale. The proposed project area contains significant working landscapes and natural resources, including the San Pedro River and its tributaries, with a focus on the Babocomari River, native grasslands, and the Chihuahuan and Sonoran deserts. This area is important for its open space, agriculture, historic working ranches, and its contribution to our western heritage.

Because of the numerous partners and various aspects involved, selection of this proposal will further the leveraging of funds as well as maintain an unrestricted mission environment at Fort Huachuca. The Fort is a critical military asset with the following attributes: the U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence, which trains Army intelligence personnel; the largest Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) training center in the world; and the Army's Buffalo Soldier Electronic Testing Range (ETR), which is the designated Sentinel Landscape focus area. Conserving land within Fort's restricted airspace and ETR helps support the continuation of over 100,000 annual military flight operations and reduces electronic interference.

Arizona is one of the fastest growing states in the country and growth of residential and commercial development is rapidly increasing around Fort Huachuca. This growth limits the use of airfields and training areas and threatens the continued viability of missions at the installation. Because Fort Huachuca is a significant contributor to the southeastern Arizona economy, enhancing Fort Huachuca's ability to sustain its missions can

only improve the economic outlook of this region. The conservation and restoration of working lands within the Sentinel Landscape focus area will help sustain one of Arizona's major economic drivers.

For the aforementioned reasons Cochise County supports the Arizona Land and Water Trust's full proposal for the 2016 REPI Challenge. Fort Huachuca and the historic working ranches that will benefit from this proposal are important to the economy as well as the people and culture of Southern Arizona.

Sincerely,

Richard R. Searle  
Chairman  
District 3

Patrick G. Call  
Vice-Chairman  
District 1

Ann English  
Member  
District 2