



Shaping the Future of the West
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February 10, 2010

The Honorable Elaine Scruggs
Mayor
City of Glendale
5850 W. Glendale Avenue
Glendale, AZ 85301

For nearly two decades the Sonoran Institute has worked collaboratively with communities, developers, conservationists and stakeholders throughout the Intermountain West. Simply stated, our mission is one of promoting sustainability and smart growth principles both in the natural environment and in the built environment. Today, we are working throughout the Intermountain West on issues related to urban design, land conservation, renewable energy and wise use of water resources.

Here in Arizona, we have been engaged for several years in work on a Western Maricopa County Conservation Plan predicated on landscape level conservation of largely contiguous Bureau of Land Management holdings in areas beneath Luke's current Military Training Routes.

Our primary objectives are expanding the boundaries of existing protected wilderness areas, preserving other key conservation and recreation areas and maintaining viable habitat blocks and the wildlife corridors necessary to sustain them.

A key fact sometimes lost in the discussion of environmental sustainability is the parallel need for economic sustainability. A growing body of evidence demonstrates that economic problems often become environmental problems in short order. For 60 years Luke AFB has been a foundational component of the West Valley economy with quantifiable economic multipliers that extend well beyond the region. As the F-16 Fighters are replaced by F-35s, it is sensible to locate the F-35s in a place where environmental adaptations have already occurred and additional degradation is less likely.

While sensitive lands and habitats exist beneath many of the MTR's currently used for the F-16, we believe there is substantial compatibility between Luke's continuing mission as host for the F-35 and our mission of open space conservation and the protection of wildlife habitat.

Sincerely,

Luther Propst
Executive Director

