



Arizona Game and Fish Department

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NEWS RELEASE

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**Arizona Game and Fish Commission unanimously supports federal
Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act**

PHOENIX – The Arizona Game and Fish Commission voted unanimously at its May 10 public meeting in Kingman, Ariz., to support H.R. 687, the Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act.

The legislation, sponsored by Congressman Paul Gosar and Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick, would bring into federal stewardship more than 5,500 acres of high-priority conservation lands in exchange for 2,600 acres of national forest system land intermingled with private land and blanketed by unpatented mining claims in the copper triangle in Southeast Arizona. This action would consolidate lands for the proposed Resolution Copper Mine and offer public ownership of extremely high value wildlife habitat at a more than two-for-one exchange ratio.

“These lands would come under the stewardship of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management,” stated Commission Chairman J.W. Harris. “Each parcel, identified for acquisition, has unique and very beneficial wildlife habitat and/or riparian stretches that become more important to wildlife as Arizona continues to grow.”

The high-value conservation lands include:

- 7B Ranch – Pinal County, Arizona – 3,073 acres within the San Pedro ecosystem, designated by the Nature Conservancy as one of the “Last Great Places on Earth.” Home to a free-flowing artesian spring-fed wetland populated by lowland leopard frogs, nesting birds, and native fish. This parcel is recognized by BirdLife International as an “Important Bird Area.” The conveyance of this land would be an important addition to the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.
- Appleton Ranch – Santa Cruz County, Arizona – 956 acres adjacent to a congressionally established conservation area, home to 200 species of birds, 60 species of mammals, more than 90 species of native grass, and 480 native plant species.
- Cave Creek – Maricopa County, Arizona – 149-acre inholding that would enable the protection of Cave Creek and its riparian corridor as well as numerous archaeological

sites, including petroglyphs, structure ruins, and grinding sites. In addition, the area includes neotropical migratory songbirds, raptors, amphibians, javelinas, and coyotes.

- East Clear Creek – Coconino County, Arizona – 640-acre inholding. East Clear Creek extends through the property for more than 2 miles, encompassing a notable fishery with sustained populations of both rainbow and brown trout. The riparian corridor is also home to big game such as Rocky Mountain elk, mule deer, turkey, and black bear. It is a suitable habitat for several federally-threatened endangered, proposed, and sensitive species, including the bald eagle, northern goshawk, and the peregrine falcon.
- Dripping Springs – Gila County, Arizona – 160 acres identified by national rock climbers as a significant rock climbing resource.
- Turkey Creek – Gila County, Arizona – 147-acre inholding presents a significant opportunity to preserve alluvial surface water (very rare) by re-establishing native cottonwood and sycamore trees. The parcel is within the proposed critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl.
- Tangle Creek – Yavapai County, Arizona - 148 acres recognized for having both pre-historic and historic value. It is believed that the property was important Native American farming land in the 1800s and features a variety of trees and shrubs which are believed to be over 100 years old.

The U.S. House of Representatives will likely vote on H.R. 687 in the next few weeks. Senator John McCain has also introduced a companion bill in the Senate, S.B. 339.