

SUMMER 2008

“Working together to protect
the Sonoran Desert for future
generations.”

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The Farm Bill

The Farm Bill (H.R. 2419) which Congress enacted on May 22, 2008 with an override of the President's veto, renews a powerful tax incentive which has helped conserve a million or more acres of natural areas, farms, and ranches across the US. The incentive had expired January 1st, but is now retroactive to the beginning of the year and will last through 2009.

The incentive, which applies to a landowner's federal income tax, will:

- Raise the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;
- Allow farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increase the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

To learn about ways you can benefit from these tax incentives, please call the Desert Foothills Land Trust, Conservation Director Stacy Fischer 480.488.6131

For more information please visit: www.lta.org or visit www.dflt.org for

A FRUITFUL SEASON

ANNUAL SAGUARO FRUIT HARVEST

For the Tohono O'odham, native people of the Sonoran Desert, the saguaro fruit harvest, *Ha:sañ Bak*, signals the beginning of the rainmaking ceremony. *Ha:sañ* is the O'odham word for saguaro cactus. *Ha:sañ Bak* means "the saguaro is ready." Before harvesting the first fruits, *Tohono O'odham* bless themselves with a fallen fruit from the saguaro. The fruit is rubbed on the body near the heart. The fruit picker asks for a clear mind and a good heart before going out into the desert. The *Tohono O'odham* place the first fruit picked on the ground with the red side facing the sun once the red meat of the *bahidaj* is removed.



Volunteers from Desert Botanical Garden & DFLT harvest saguaro fruit in P.A. Seitts Preserve at Go John Canyon



Kukipad or harvesting poles are made from saguaro ribs.

This signifies that the sun will draw up the moisture from the fruit into the sky, to make the clouds and the rain.

Our harvest took place in the early morning on June 26th, staff and volunteers from the Desert Botanical Garden and the Desert Foothills Land Trust gathered at the P.A Seitts Preserve at Go John Canyon. We collected close to 400 fruits in about three hours. The fruit is ripe when the base and sides are yellowish-pink. If you wait until you see the red flesh, the White-winged doves will have already enjoyed the moisture-rich fruit. White-winged doves are saguaro specialists, and they rely on saguaros almost solely for nutrients and water during the breeding season. After the harvest, the fruit was processed at the Desert Heritage Pavilion in Gateway Desert Awareness Park. The fruit will be used throughout the year during demonstrations for the public and school tours at the Desert Botanical Garden.

Now that the fruit has been harvested; we wait for rain.

2008 Fall/ Winter Hike Schedule

October 18: The Jewel (Birding Hike)
November 1: P.A. Seitts at Go John Canyon
November 8: H.B. Wallace on Lone Mountain
November 15: The Jewel
November 22: New River Nature Reserve

November 29: P.A. Seitts at Go John Canyon
December 13: New River Nature Reserve
December 20: The Jewel
December 27: H. B. Wallace on Lone Mountain
For hike information call 480 488-6131

Save the Date!

2009 Sonoran Symphony
Our 14th annual event will
be held on April 25th.

**OUR LAND, OUR SCHOOLS-PROPOSITION 103
TO PROTECT 570,000 ACRES
OF ARIZONA STATE TRUST LANDS**

The Desert Foothills Land Trust supports "Our Land, Our Schools" a 2008 statewide initiative, which will appear on the November ballot. The initiative proposes to amend the Arizona state constitution so that state trust lands can be managed and sold for conservation purposes. The initiative protects forever 570,000 acres of state trust lands. This means that the identified lands can never be developed.

"Our Land, Our Schools" permanently protects lands that are environmentally critical for protecting Arizona's water sources, including lands next to major natural landmarks such as the Grand Canyon, Superstition Mountains, Picacho Peak, McDowell Mountains, and San Pedro River. Lands identified upfront for protection include significant open space lands within the Desert Foothills Land Trust priority area. Protected lands include acreage near Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area, Continental Mountain-Section 2 and areas near the Cave Creek Recreation Area.

Conserved lands will remain in ownership (and management) by the state land department, but can be purchased by local governments at conservation value (stripped of development rights). They can never be developed and must be managed consistent with conservation values.

The constitutional amendment will also validate the Arizona Preserve Initiative (API). This will allow lands not immediately identified for conservation protection to be protected subsequently through the API process. Desert Foothills Land Trust successfully used API to reclassify and purchase the Jewel of the Creek and P.A Seitts Preserve at Go John Canyon.

While conserving some of Arizona's most threatened state lands, "Our Land, Our Schools" continues financial support for Arizona's schools. By passing the initiative, we create the best scenario: We protect delicate land from development while increasing the value of the developable land neighboring protected open space.

"Our Land, Our Schools" is endorsed by many individuals and organizations, including Governor Janet Napolitano, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, Sonoran Institute, Arizona Education Association, Arizona League of Conservation Voters, Audubon Arizona, Center for Biological Diversity, and Trust for Public Lands.

**THE DESERT FOOTHILLS LAND TRUST URGES YOU TO PLEASE VOTE
"YES" ON PROP 103 IN NOVEMBER**



P.O. Box 4861

Cave Creek, Arizona 85327-4861

We've moved!!!

Desert Foothills Land Trust has moved up
(stairs).

We are now in Unit B-6 at the

Carefree Office Center

7518 E. Elbow Bend

Carefree, AZ 85377

Our mailing address is still

P.O. Box 4861

Cave Creek, AZ 85327

**CALLING ALL
VOLUNTEERS**

Though the dust has just settled from the 2008 Sonoran Symphony it is time once again for us to begin planning for 2009.

Each year Desert Foothills Land Trust is graced by the talents of our members and friends in the planning and execution of our signature event. If you are interested and able to make a commitment to assist us in the planning stages, DFLT would love to have you as a volunteer on the Sonoran Symphony Committee.

To sign up or for more information please contact the DFLT staff at 480 488-6131 or info@dfilt.org

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