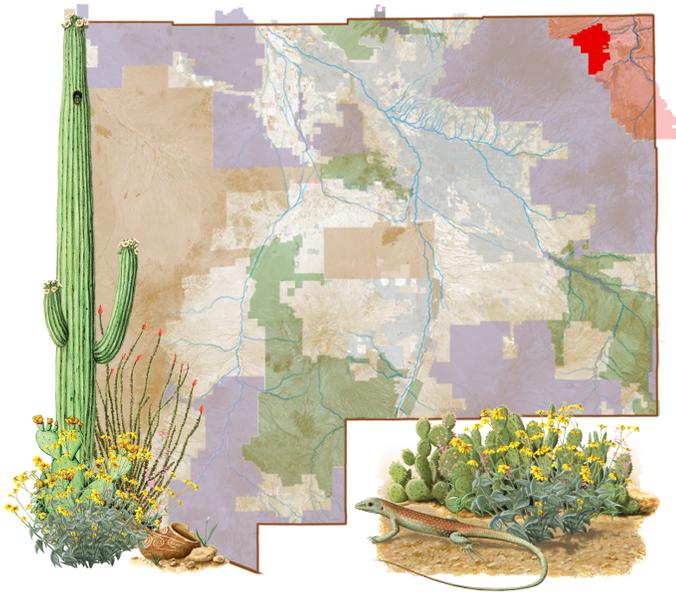


San Pedro Valley Reserve



Six Bar Ranch

Fee lands: 3,292 acres
State grazing lease: 9,000 acres
Conservation easement: 40 acres
Cost: \$11,525,322
Acquired: August 23, 2006
Fund: 2004 Bond Funds
Partner: Arizona Land & Water Trust

Background

The 12,000 acre Six-Bar Ranch is located along the eastern flank of the Catalina Mountains, adjacent to the Coronado National Forest and northwest of the County's A-7 Ranch. It is visible from Catalina Highway at the San Pedro overlook and can be accessed via several trails from the top of the Catalina Mountains. The Ranch contains a major tributary to the San Pedro River – Edgar Canyon. The property expands upon other conserved lands in the area, including the Coronado National Forest, The Nature Conservancy's Buehman Canyon Preserve, and the County's A-7 Ranch, Bingham-Cienega Preserve and Oracle Ridge Properties. A 24,000-acre Forest Service grazing permit is associated with this property. The ranch is a rugged complex of canyons and drainages off the east slopes of the Catalina Mountains down towards the San Pedro Valley.



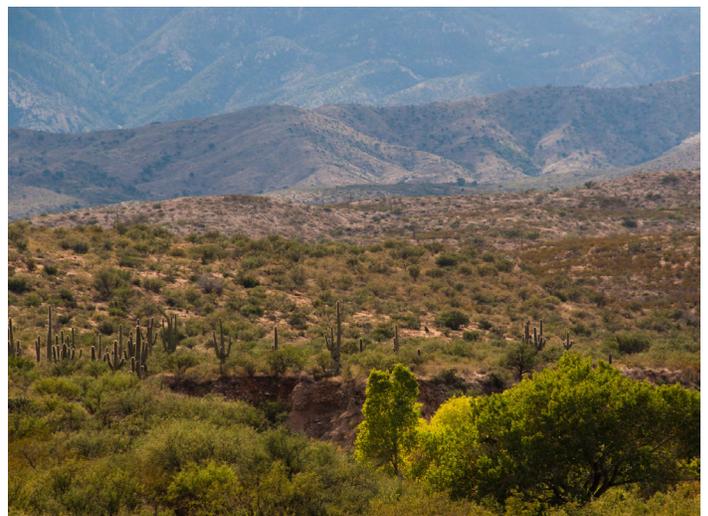
Lowland leopard frog. Photo by Bill Singleton

Historical and Cultural Resources

Archaeological sites in the Six-Bar Ranch area suggest a long period of prehistoric human occupation associated with the San Pedro River Valley villages sites. In addition, a cultural resources survey dated July 2006 identified a historic ranch house and related outbuildings along the southeastern bank of Edgar Canyon – the major tributary to the San Pedro River. This complex is located on a 40-acre conservation easement held by the County, and is used today. Records show that this is likely the O.R. Parker House depicted on the General Land Office map for this area, filed in 1924. The Parker family was involved in the original development of Redington Pass road, and at one time owned some, if not all, of the land associated with the County's A-7 Ranch, southeast of the Six-Bar Ranch.

Biological Resources

The Ranch is located in the lower San Pedro River Valley and is composed of rugged uplands along the eastern flanks of the Catalina Mountains, alternating with narrow, incised valleys formed by generally east trending tributary washes draining into the San Pedro River. The property contains important stands of cottonwoods, sycamore, hackberry and ash trees along the Edgar Canyon drainage, along with intermittent streams and springs, and limestone outcrops. The uplands contain dense stands of saguaros in many places. The property contributes to the conservation of several Priority Vulnerable Species, including Lowland leopard frog, Lesser long-nosed bat, Mexican long-tongued bat, Western red bat, and the Giant spotted whiptail. Fish and frogs have been reported in Edgar Canyon. All of the ranch lies within the Biological Core of the Conservation Lands System and contains portions of Important Riparian Areas. The location of the property between the Catalina and Galiuro Mountains provides for a corridor of open lands for wildlife movement back and forth between the mountain ranges.



Edgar Canyon on Six Bar Ranch. Photo by Brian Powell.

Management

The Six Bar Ranch is a working ranch landscape. The ranch is currently stocked at a light rate, about 20% of allowed use, to reflect ongoing drought conditions. The County maintains a Ranch Management Agreement over all aspects of use of the ranch by an independent operator. The rugged ranch has few roads and is generally accessible only by horseback or on foot. The ranch is being monitored twice annually to establish some baseline data on the overall range condition and trend in vegetative community diversity and productivity. Existing waters are being modified to be more wildlife friendly. Public recreation access on the major road into Edgar Canyon and Davis Mesa is being managed under an agreement with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. All visitors are required to check in and out at an information kiosk as the road passes through private and enters County lands.



Stream in Edgar Canyon. Photo by Locana de Souza.

Recreation

The fee lands along Edgar Canyon contain an existing trailhead for the Davis Spring Trail, which leads up the eastern slopes of the Catalinas to the Palisades Ranger Station from Davis Mesa. The ranch is a popular area for hunting both small game like quail and big game like deer and javelina. Other recreational activities like ATV/OHV riding, wildlife viewing and biking are popular uses of the ranch. This ranch is more remote and has limited access points so it does not get as much use as many of the other ranch properties.



Davis Spring trail signage. Photo by Kerry Baldwin.

Ongoing Property Improvements

- Most of the ongoing activities on the ranch are related to establishing representative long-term monitoring data points and gathering information about the ranch ecosystem.
- Waters are being maintained for wildlife and livestock with escape ramps being installed to prevent wildlife drowning incidents in open troughs and tanks.
- Challenges exist in protecting the historic ranch buildings because of changes in the dynamics of flood water flows in Edgar Canyon due to the buildings being built on the active flood plain of the stream channel.
- Other routine activities include monitoring of recreational use and users.

