

Cienega Valley-Empire Ranch Reserve

- 1 Bar V Ranch
- 2 Empirita Ranch
- 3 Sands Ranch
- 4 Clyne Ranch
- 5 Colossal Cave Mountain Park Expansion
- 6 Cienega Creek Natural Preserve Expansion
- 7 Acquisitions that contribute to Reserve

-  Riparian
-  Grassland
-  Mountains

Grasslands

The Cienega Valley contains one of the most important grassland communities in Arizona and was recently recognized as one of three most important grassland complexes in the southwest by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



Photo by Robert Dawson

Santa Cruz County

Cochise County



Photo by Smith-Southwestern Inc.

Colossal Cave

Large amounts of limestone in the Cienega Watershed contributed to the development of another resource in this area hundreds of thousands of years ago - Colossal Cave. Colossal Cave Mountain Park supports habitat for almost half of the bat species in the State.



Photo by Pima County

Cienega Creek

Pima County's Cienega Creek Natural Preserve protects 12 miles of one of the last remaining perennial streams in Pima County. Spanning 4,000 acres, the Preserve is home to many rare and federally protected species. This watershed provides a key source of drinking water to portions of the Tucson basin. These natural resources also play a role in attracting eco-tourism to our region.



Empirita Ranch along the Pima/Cochise County border looking across Interstate 10 towards the Rincon Mountains. Photo by Arizona Land and Water Trust

The Cienega Valley Empire Reserve encompasses some of Pima County's most ecologically rich and desert-rare resources. Located southeast of Tucson, it encompasses the valley between the Rincon, Santa Rita and Whetstone Mountains. This valley received national recognition as one of seven endangered cultural landscapes in America in 2004. The reserve includes Davidson Canyon, Cienega Creek, Colossal Cave, a key segment of Agua Verde Creek, and other important sections of the Cienega watershed. This area contains a wide range of invaluable natural resources, including the best example of a riparian forest system embedded within semi-desert grassland in Pima County. The diversity in habitat types support a majority of Pima County's 55 Priority Vulnerable species. Adjacency to existing federally conserved lands, such as the Coronado National Forest, Saguaro National Park and the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, provides important wildlife corridors.



Photo by Steve Anderson

Recreation and Arizona Trail

Cienega Valley offers many natural resource based recreational opportunities. Activities include birding, camping, caving, horse riding, hiking, picnicking, visiting cultural/historic resources, scenic driving, and hunting. The Arizona Trail also passes through this valley.

