Conservation Incentives

- Relatively new concept – often referred to as payments for ecosystem services (PES)

- Way to pay ranchers for ecological benefits of new or existing management practices

- Provide voluntary, non-regulatory approach to encourage sustainable land management
Ranching and Conservation

• Sustainable ranching is essential to large-landscape conservation

• Work ranchers are doing with management practices plays a vital role in maintaining healthy habitat

• Ranching provides large blocks of open, relatively undisturbed land essential for wildlife

• Way to compensate ranchers for providing these ecological benefits
Benefits of Conservation Incentives

• Diversification of income sources

• New capital sources to implement desired conservation practices
  o water developments
  o erosion control structures

• Increased recognition by the general public of the value and ecosystem benefits provided by sustainable range management
  o increased rangeland resiliency
  o maintenance of large, connected landscapes and open space that support wildlife
  o public enjoyment
  o increased certainty that rangelands are sustainably managed.
Key Elements of Conservation Incentive Programs

A. Who pays?
   • Governments (state or federal)
   • Non-governmental Organizations (conservation groups or foundations)
   • Private Equity (investor dollars)

B. What does the program pay for?
   • Outcome-based (improvement above baseline)
   • Input-based (practices expected to result in improvement)
   • Planning
   • Management assistance/technical assistance
   • Emergency assistance
   • Other

C. How does the program pay for these things?
   • Credits
   • Term contracts (cost share, full cost)

D. How long must a rancher provide services?
   • Fixed period (not forever), or
   • Permanently

E. Regulatory assurances
QUESTION 1

Based on what you’ve heard, what would be the key elements to create a workable conservation incentives program for ranchers in the Southwest?

Things to think about...

- What would it focus on?
- What are the real needs on the ground?
- What types of incentives would help you?

QUESTION 2

Are you comfortable with the idea of making conservation part of your business model?

Things to think about...

- Could supplement ranching income, but may require changes to your operation
- Positives and negatives?
QUESTION 3

What types of payments are you most comfortable with?

Things to think about...

- Ongoing payments for the life of a contract (yearly, quarterly, etc.)
- One-time payment
- Payment in the form of technical assistance (such as drought planning)
- Emergency payments (money, feed, or access to emergency pastures)
- Contract lengths

QUESTION 4

What types of regulatory assurances would you need to participate in a conservation incentives program?

Things to think about...

- A Safe Harbor agreement to protect me
- A Safe Harbor agreement that protects me and my neighbors
- No government involvement or funds to prevent creation of a Federal nexus on my private land
- Others?
QUESTION 5

If a conservation incentives program were to proceed, what would be the necessary elements for it to work for you?

Things to think about...

➤ Would you consider participating in the development of a program?
➤ Can you imagine a program that would help ranchers address management challenges and improve the sustainability of ranching?
➤ Would you consider participating in a program if one were developed?

QUESTION 6

May we contact you?

➤ Name
➤ Address
➤ Phone
➤ Email