



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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TUCSON – Arizona Open Land Trust (AOLT) and Southeast Arizona Land Trust (SEALT) today announced the merger of the two organizations under the name Arizona Land and Water Trust (ALWT). Arizona Land and Water Trust will continue the work of both organizations, protecting southern Arizona’s vanishing western landscapes, historic ranching traditions, and wildlife habitat.

An increased focus on water conservation issues prompted the name change. In 2007, the Trust launched its Desert Rivers Initiative. The Initiative is developing and implementing conservation strategies that will secure water to sustain the riparian habitat and rural livelihoods that enrich Arizona’s natural and cultural landscapes.

“The value of land in the arid West is generally defined by the presence of water. Water is key to wildlife habitat protection and to ranching and farming,” notes Diana Freshwater, Executive Director of ALWT. “Our work will, we hope, help to demystify statewide water policy for rural landowners.”

According to ALWT Board President, Jeff Hampton, “As a single, unified land trust, we can more effectively and efficiently conserve significant land and water resources by working with farmers and ranchers, at a time when natural areas and working landscapes are most at risk. The residents of Arizona will benefit from this merger, which brings local management and on the ground conservation experience together with an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by ranchers and other landowners in the region.”

Shel Clark, President of SEALT, also expressed enthusiasm about the merger. “This is a significant step forward for achieving our shared mission of land conservation in southern Arizona. AOLT, as the state’s oldest land trust, has a significant history of successful land protection initiatives in the region. Since 1978 AOLT has protected over 17,000 acres of fee title ranchland in southern Arizona. And, since 1996, SEALT has protected over 3,500 acres of ranchland through conservation easements. The Directors of AOLT and SEALT, now combined as the Board of Arizona Land and Water Trust, represent a

broad cross section of southern Arizona, long committed to increasing the protection of our land and water for all residents – present and future.”

The Arizona Land and Water Trust Board of Directors includes members from both formerly independent organizations: Jeff Hampton, President; Britton Simmons, Treasurer; Chuck Pettis, Secretary; Susan Blair; Ben Brophy; Nick Buckelew; Shel Clark; Richard Collins; Christine Conte; Les Corey; Fred Frelinghuysen; Charlotte Hanson; Alex Hobson; Julie Holding; Pat Lopez, III; Randy Massey; Fred McGee; Dennis Moroney; Karen Riggs; Bill Roe; Bill Shaw; Ian Tomlinson; and Henry Wallace.