

## **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
  - water developments
  - erosion control structures
- Increased recognition by the general public of the value and ecosystem benefits provided by sustainable range management
  - increased rangeland resiliency
  - maintenance of large, connected landscapes and open space that support wildlife
  - public enjoyment
  - 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