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News Advisory

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For Immediate Release

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18 Years & Hundreds of Volunteers *Mapping Where There's Water in the San Pedro River*

On Saturday, June 17, more than 100 volunteers will fan out along the 170-mile-long San Pedro River and its key tributaries. They hope to get their feet wet while mapping where there is water and where the river is dry.

The “**citizen scientists**” will be armed with GPS technology, cameras and plenty of water. They’ll be rewarded with wildlife sightings and scenic river stretches. For many, it is an annual event and a labor of love for a threatened desert river that is almost unmatched on the continent for its importance to migratory birds and wildlife. This is our 18th year of mapping the river.

Who: Dozens of partners coordinate this massive effort that covers more than 300 miles of main stem and tributaries within the San Pedro River Basin in Sonora, Mexico and Arizona. Partners include: The Nature Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Arizona Game and Fish, Community Watershed Alliance of Benson, Cascabel volunteers, and Mexican partners and landowners among others, and many local volunteers.

When: Saturday, June 17 from 6 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Where: The San Pedro River, from its headwater streams in Mexico to its confluence with the Gila River near Winkelman, tributaries of the San Pedro including the Babocomari River, Aravaipa Creek, Hot Springs Canyon and many other smaller tributaries, covering more than 300 miles.

Why: Annual mapping of where there is surface water – conducted during the hottest part of the year – helps determine over the long-term where to focus conservation projects. It provides a snapshot of conditions along the entire river at the same date each year, allowing comparisons of year-to-year variability. In 2016, 38 percent of the river had surface water, down from 43 percent in 2015. That year’s result was in large part due to heavier than normal rainfall during fall 2014 that persisted into 2015.

Past wet-dry maps of the San Pedro are available at:
http://azconservation.org/downloads/san_pedro_wet_dry_mapping

Impact: As we move into the 18th year of determining where water is present on the river, science shows that our conservation actions are having a positive impact. The mapping information, along with USGS research, has helped the Conservancy, Cochise County, Cities of Sierra Vista and Bisbee, and the Hereford Natural Resources Conservation District, with input from Fort Huachuca design an innovative regional recharge effort designed to collect stormwater runoff and put it back in the ground, replenishing the aquifer that supports river flows.

Media: If you're interested in participating in a stretch of mapping for a story, please contact us regarding what river stretches might best meet your needs.

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The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have helped protect 130 million acres worldwide. Visit The Nature Conservancy on the Web at www.nature.org/Arizona.

The Bureau of Land Management manages more land – 245 million acres – than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.