

Pinal Partnership Open Space Initiative Committee
Working Definition of “Open Space”

June 7, 2011

Open Space in Pinal County is land withheld from residential, commercial, and industrial development, through public or private initiative, for the interconnected purposes of enhancing quality of life and conserving ecosystems, watersheds, wildlife, geological formations, natural resources, archaeological and historic sites, and cultural features. Typical categories of open space include, but are not limited to:

- a. **Developed open space** – for passive and active park and recreational activities.
- b. **Conservation open space** – areas that contribute to sustainable ecological function.
- c. **Transitional open space** – buffer areas adjacent to existing tracts of public land, such as National Forests, so designated to assure access, watersheds, and view sheds for the public and a transition from wilderness to developed areas for wildlife.
- d. **Interspersed natural landscapes** – designed or reserved in planned development to provide wildlife habitat and corridors, recreational trails, visual amenity, and a connection to the desert ecology that attracts so many visitors and new residents to our region.
- e. **Heritage open space** – areas that have significant cultural, historical, or archaeological value.
- f. **Agricultural** – areas that provide local production of food and fiber, as well as the rural character that has been a hallmark of Pinal County for many decades.
- g. **Conservation Range land** – areas that provide responsible and cost effective stewardship of large tracts of state and federal land in our county.

Open space policy in Pinal County attempts to preserve a high quality of life while encouraging active engagement in determining a sustainable balance between development and the resource-limited nature of the predominantly Sonoran Desert ecology. As a sustainable carrying capacity for our county is being determined, open space will be maintained and acquired for durations extending from decades to perpetuity through a variety of means, such as partnerships, zoning policy, leases, conservation easements, Natural Resource Conservation District agreements, utility/water access realities, Federal Wilderness and Conservation Study Area designation, State Land policy, land swaps, and outright purchase and designation by individuals, organizations, and county government.