

## **Historic Kane and Two Mile Ranches Bought by The Grand Canyon Trust and The Conservation Fund**

Groups to Focus on Partnering with Land Managing Agencies to Maintain and Restore Extraordinary Landscape

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FLAGSTAFF, AZ - The Grand Canyon Trust (GCT) and The Conservation Fund (TCF) announced today that they have finalized the landmark \$4.5 million conservation purchase of the Kane and Two Mile ranches from the Kane Ranch Land Stewardship and Cattle Company. The ranches, consisting of approximately 1000 acres of private land and associated water rights, and 850,000 acres of grazing leases on public lands managed by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Arizona State Land Department, stretch from the Grand Canyon's north rim to the Utah border and connect three national monuments, two national recreation areas and eight wilderness areas. The Trust and The Conservation Fund have created North Rim Ranch LLC as the official holding company to own and operate the ranches.

"The purchase of the Kane and Two Mile Ranches demonstrates one of the most important and innovative public-private conservation efforts of our time. Thanks to the leadership, vision and support of our partners, we will be able to do our part to make sure that this spectacular landscape and vital wildlife habitat will be preserved for future generations," said Mike Ford, Nevada and Southwest Director of The Conservation Fund, which led the fundraising effort.

The ranches and their associated allotments span a wide range of landscapes including sagebrush steppe lands running through House Rock Valley down to Marble Canyon, pinyon-juniper forests on the Paria Plateau, and spruce-fir forests on the Kaibab Plateau. The project area also contains important habitat for several endangered species including the California Condor, Northern Goshawk and Apache trout, as well as peregrine falcon, pronghorn antelope, mountain lion, black bear and mule deer.

"These public-land ranches are stunningly beautiful and have tremendous ecological and social value," stated Rick Moore, Director of the Kane and Two Mile ranch program for the Trust. "The vast majority of the lands making up the ranches are public lands designated for multiple use. As a conservation group we are interested in making sure that our livestock operation truly fits within the multiple-use

philosophy, while at the same time helping the agencies manage for public values such as the protection of rare species, good management of wildlife habitat, conservation of archaeological sites, providing opportunities for low-impact recreation, and the values embodied by wilderness and national monument designations.”

“We want to do everything we can to ensure that the livestock operation does not negatively impact wildlife habitat, and in particular, that adequate forage is available for the world-class Kaibab mule deer herd,” Moore added.

“BLM looks forward to partnering with Grand Canyon Trust and The Conservation Fund to continue the multiple-use management of the public lands on the Kane and Two Mile ranches,” said Rob Roudabush, acting BLM Arizona Strip District Manager

Earlier this year Grand Canyon Trust convened a Science Advisory Council made up of regionally and nationally recognized scientists who provided guidance for developing a baseline ecological assessment to get a better idea of the condition of the grazing allotments associated with the ranches. The assessment field work was completed this summer, with crews gathering soil and plant information from more than 640 sites randomly scattered across the ranches. That data, combined with existing agency data, will provide the foundation for working with the land management agencies to develop and implement projects that will help achieve the conservation and preservation goals and objectives sought by Grand Canyon Trust and The Conservation Fund.

With the transaction now completed, GCT will soon be purchasing cattle in order to begin grazing on the ranches next spring. The Trust has hired John Heyneman, a third-generation Wyoming rancher, to manage the North Rim Ranch LLC operations.

“We'll be working with Grand Canyon Trust to get their grazing permit issued this winter, and ensure that everything's ready for their cattle to be turned out on their allotments in the spring,” said Jill Leonard, district ranger of the North Kaibab Ranger District, the Forest Service unit that manages four of the nine allotments on which Kane Ranch is permitted to graze cattle.

Funding to support the acquisition was provided by the Richard King Mellon Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and the

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through its partnership with Wal-Mart and the Acres for America program.

The Grand Canyon Trust, now celebrating its twentieth anniversary, is a nonprofit, conservation advocacy organization headquartered in Flagstaff, Arizona. Its mission is to protect and restore the Colorado Plateau -- its spectacular landscapes, flowing rivers, clean air, diversity of plants and animals, and areas of solitude and beauty.

The Conservation Fund is the nation's foremost conservation nonprofit dedicated to protecting America's land and water legacy for current and future generations. Since its founding in 1985, the Fund has helped its partners safeguard more than 4 million acres of wildlife habitat, working landscapes, community greenspace and historic areas.

More information on the two organizations is available at <http://www.grandcanyontrust.org> and <http://www.conservationfund.org>.

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