

AQUATIC CONSERVATION EFFORTS OF A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION— CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE OR ARE WE JUST TURN(ER)ING CIRCLES?^{AFS}

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The Turner organization is uniquely positioned to conduct large-scale conservation projects because of our large land base and geographical extent. Our operational objectives are guided by the philosophy of managing landscapes in an ecologically sensitive manner to conserve native biological diversity while maintaining economic viability. As such, the objectives of our biological programs are to 1) conserve and restore native, imperiled, and endangered species and their habitats, 2) develop long-term working relationships with federal and state agencies and other non-governmental organizations to further conservation, 3) conduct scientifically credible research regarding conservation and management of imperiled species, and 4) work with and educate other private landowners. Since 1998 biologists within the Turner organization have worked diligently to build networks with state and federal agencies and implement on the ground projects. Aquatic native species conservation has focused primarily on native cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*) restoration projects with efforts ongoing to restore two subspecies on three properties in two states, including the infamous Cherry Creek project. Two of these projects, to our knowledge, are the largest (in contiguous stream km) ever attempted. We are involved in significant efforts to monitor and recover Chiricahua leopard frogs (*Rana chiricahuensis*) and Rio Grande suckers (*Catostomus plebeius*) in the desert southwest, and restore the native bosque community along the Rio Grande River. The Turner “model,” even considering some inconsistencies, has been very successful initiating on-the-ground projects as agencies and organizations recognize the scientific credibility, logistical organization, and financial resources that we can bring to the table. Ultimately, collaboration is the key to success on many of these projects and we remain committed to their successful conclusion.