

Evaluating the Ecological Economic Success of Riparian Restoration Projects in Arizona

Gary B. Snider, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ

Abstract.—In the past 4 years the Arizona Water Protection Fund provided more than \$25 million to individuals and organizations for stream and riparian restoration projects in Arizona. Information which increases the awareness of the value of Arizona's riparian systems is crucial to the incorporation of ecosystem services into decision-making frameworks, which are largely structured in economic terms. Many individuals reject an anthropocentric perspective of the measure and valuation of ecological goods and services believing they should be protected for purely moral or aesthetic reasons. Others argue that recognizing the economic value of ecological goods and services is not only useful, but may in fact be necessary if we hope to succeed in sustaining the Earth's basic life-support systems. If conservation and restoration of ecosystem services can be shown to be of *economic value*, then the dialog becomes not one of discourse but of compliment. Just as firms must account for their capital depreciation and reinvest in their capital to remain viable, humans must account for *natural capital* depreciation and reinvest in conditionally renewable resources to be sustainable. This research seeks to develop a *natural capital* budget for the Upper Verde watershed. The analysis of total natural capital includes relevant ecological goods and services such as flood control, water purification, water supply, recreation and habitat.