

THE PHOENIX GAZETTE  
Phoenix

MAY 20 1986

ARIZONA PRESS CLIPPING  
BUREAU - Phoenix

## God's apology deserves protection

<sup>18.5.16</sup>  
The U.S. Bureau of Land Management lived up to its name admirably when it acquired 43,400 acres of land along the San Pedro River in Cochise County in a swap that gave a private firm undeveloped land west of Phoenix.

The area acquired by BLM, located between Hereford and St. David and long subject to benign neglect, contains the remains of a Spanish presidio, more than 100 archaeological sites and 200 species of birds and other wildlife.

Recognizing the importance of proper management for the area, Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., introduced a bill in the House that would create the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area. Sens. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., and Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., introduced a similar measure in the Senate.

Kolbe's measure would create a public advisory council to assist the BLM in con-

servicing a "history-rich area for generations to come." It would bar mining, and certain areas could be declared off limits to visitors. Boundaries of the conservation area, from two to three miles wide, would have to be made final by the Interior Department within five years.

The area contains nearly 20 percent of the nation's nesting population of the rare gray hawk, it's a habitat of raccoons, muledeer and whitetail deer, javelina and bobcats. The river banks are lined with cottonwood trees. Beautiful beyond description, some think the area was God's apology for creating the burning Arizona deserts.

Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, supports the bill and has agreed to hold hearings on it. The sooner, the better, because this land deserves help both from the BLM and the people of Arizona. It should be part of our national trust.