

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

DECEMBER 10, 2004

Ranch purchase plans irks group

By Mary Jo Pitzl
The Arizona Republic

The planned purchase of a central Arizona ranch by Prescott and Prescott Valley will deplete water in the Verde River and imperil a variety of endangered animals, an environmental group claims.

The Center for Biological Diversity notified federal and local officials this week that it intends to sue unless the local and federal agencies come up with a plan to offset the harm the center believes the purchase will cause to endangered animals.

The two cities announced plans last week to buy the JWK Ranch in the Big Chino Valley to assure the cities' future water supplies. advertisement

But the center, in a formal notification this week, said the move will kill the Upper Verde by diverting its water.

The center is asking Prescott and Prescott Valley to come up with a plan to make up for the reduced water flow in the Upper Verde River.