



Altar Valley Conservation Alliance 2012 Year in Review

Dear Friends,

How time flies! This past year was a busy one for the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance. The Alliance remains the common ground where cowboys and conservationists meet to pursue the collective goal of keeping the Altar Valley watershed healthy.

2012 kicked off with the Elkhorn/Las Delicias Demonstration Project, which showcased the planning, installation and monitoring of watershed restoration practices in arroyos and associated uplands over an approximately 1,500 acre project site. A generous grant of \$50,000 from Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Mines Foundation provided the base for funding the project. Match contributions and the generous donation of time and energy from partners brought the total invested in the project to over \$200,000. Ongoing monitoring will chart and share the project results with all of you! The project included:

- 920 tons of rock staged by hand and by machine
- 359 erosion control structures installed
- 54 rolling dips on 3.25 miles of road
- 14 road crossing stabilization structures on 3.25 miles of road

There were countless individuals and organizations that had a hand in making this project a success. Special thanks go to volunteer Forrest Sherman, who worked on the project installation and is spearheading the monitoring effort.

The Alliance continued restoration work via prescribed fire with a three-year project funded by a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant. The grant launched in 2010, with requirements to design five burn plans in various sites throughout the Altar Valley. The burn plans outlined in the grant are now complete, with funding in place for several of them to leap off the page and out into the landscape! The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded a second grant to the Alliance this summer. It will carry the burn plans from the previous grant forward into a more comprehensive watershed restoration plan, which will include additional burn plans, rock installations, and other erosion control and grasslands restoration activities.

This grant is kicking off before the end of the year and will continue into 2015. Stay tuned!

The Alliance continues to count on support from our partners to help accomplish our common goals. One of our key partners is the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture. NRCS works with the Alliance throughout the Altar Valley to monitor the health of the valley, plan and execute projects, as well as give direct funding to Alliance work via their Technical Service Provider (TSP) grant. NRCS plays an important role in the valley and we appreciate all that they do!



Photos taken by Forrest Sherman during summer 2012 while monitoring the Elkhorn/Las Delicias project.



NRCS monitoring on Sierrita Mining & Ranching lands on the east side of the valley. (Photo credit: Sarah King)

Many of you are aware of the Sasabe Lateral Project proposed by El Paso Natural Gas, which seeks to construct a 36- inch pipeline through the Altar Valley to deliver natural gas from the United States to Mexico. The Alliance became involved in conversations about the pipeline early in the process and has been an organized voice for the valley. AVCA's existence has enabled Altar Valley ranchers to work effectively with partners to have "a seat at the table" in the decision making process as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission considers EPNG's proposal. We have set up a website, www.altarvalleyaction.com, where you can learn more about the proposed project and how your voice can be heard. Many thanks to those of you who took the time to write scoping letters about the project.



The net proceeds from Elkhorn's "In the Field with Altar Valley Conservationists" week will benefit ongoing monitoring of the Elkhorn/Las Delicias Project, seen here in an aerial photo. (Photo Credit: U.S. Border Patrol)

If you're looking for a fun way to visit the Altar Valley, mark your calendars now for April 7-14 or April 14-21, 2013, when the Elkhorn Ranch will host two special weeks – ***In the Field with Altar Valley Conservationists***. A week or two of guest ranch life, and opportunities to journey horseback from Sonoran desert grassland country high into the Sky Island of the Baboquivari Mountains, will be complemented by talks, walks, and rides with accomplished Altar Valley conservation professionals and volunteers. A portion of the proceeds from your stay will benefit ongoing monitoring of the Elkhorn/Las Delicias Demonstration Project. If you're interested in attending, please contact the Elkhorn at 520-822-1040 or office@elkhornranch.com.

If you haven't visited our website, www.altarvalleyconservation.org, be sure to pop by to take a peek. You can sign up for our e-news to receive updates from us throughout the year. You can find the Alliance on both Facebook and Twitter, too!

Between November 1, 2011 and October 31, 2012, the Alliance received \$16,105.00 in private monetary contributions. Throughout 2012, the Alliance received \$50,000 in grants that went to work in the field matched by in-kind contributions and donated goods and services valued at nearly \$250,000. Those contributions and grants have helped make 2012 a successful year for the Alliance and ***with your help***, 2013 will see the same success.



We would like to extend our thanks to our wonderful staff, Sherie Steele (Program Administrator) and Sarah King (Program Director) for all of the great work that they do. We can't thank all of you enough for all of your contributions that help us keep them hard at work! Many thanks and congratulations to David Seibert for his great contributions to Altar Valley watershed restoration, and successful completion of the first National Fish and Wildlife Foundation fire planning grant!

The Altar Valley Conservation Alliance works ***to conserve the Altar Valley for future generations***. Your support continues to be essential to our ability to achieve that goal. Thank you for all that you do to contribute to our collective vision. We wish you and yours a wonderful holiday season and a joyous start to the new year.

The Altar Valley Conservation Alliance Board

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