



ALTAR VALLEY

CONSERVATION ALLIANCE



2021 Annual Report

Conserving the Altar Valley for Future Generations

The Alliance's Mission & Vision

The Altar Valley Conservation Alliance is a collaborative conservation organization founded in 1995, and incorporated as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.

The Alliance's Mission

We work through a strongly collaborative, science-based, community driven and integrated approach to:

CONSERVE healthy and productive working landscapes, including soil and water conservation, wildfire management, habitat conservation and protection of native species, and other environmental initiatives.

PROMOTE a thriving agricultural economy by encouraging improved ranching and farming practices, diversification and innovation, and by supporting programs and policies that support more effective, long-term economic development.

SUSTAIN a resilient rural community by retaining and renewing the cultural and historical traditions of the Altar Valley.

The Alliance's Vision

Ranchers and other agriculturalists work effectively with our partners to conserve healthy and productive working landscapes, promote a thriving agricultural economy, and sustain a resilient rural community enriched by the culture and history of the Altar Valley.

Dear Friends,

As I write this, the news is filled with admonishments to “do your holiday shopping early” and beware of supply chain issues. In the last two years, people (many for the first time) have considered the supply chain and how it impacts them, and that even if they cannot see every link, they are not exempt from the impacts of disturbances in the chain. Last March, all eyes turned to the Suez Canal, where the Ever Given ship ran aground diagonally during high winds and a dust storm. It blocked the canal for 6 days, leading to a traffic jam of over 200 ships going both directions. It also gave a distinct visual of how one small break in the chain could cause a massive ripple effect throughout the world.

In the Altar Valley, conversations about the conservation supply chain came to a head back in 1995. Conservation was already happening on ranches in the Valley, but as individual ranches ran into issues with implementing projects and working on bigger scales, it became clear that to truly make sure the links in the chain stayed connected, the Valley was going to need more planning, more creativity, and more collaboration, and an entity to keep those on the forefront of people's minds.

Since 1995, the Alliance's work has focused on keeping the supply chains of conservation connected in the Altar Valley. The widgets, the chips, and all those things that no one thinks about when something just works - those are what the Alliance keeps in stock. The supply chain looks like the incredible group of landowners, partners, and stewards that we have here in the Altar Valley. It looks like their work on the Altar Valley Watershed Plan over the last three years - it looks like having conversations about potential projects and thinking creatively about how to keep conservation happening on the landscape.

Every once in a while over the last twenty-six years, something the size of the Ever Given seemed poised to disrupt the chain. But time and time again, the group of partners out here in the Altar Valley has risen to the challenge and found a way to unblock the canal, and keep collaboration and conservation going forward.

We hope that you'll contribute to this supply chain - bringing conservation onto the Altar Valley landscape. We appreciate your past support of AVCA's vision of conserving the Altar Valley for future generations, and we hope you will consider giving again.

Thank you and Happy Holidays to you and yours!



Sarah King

Executive Director

On behalf of the Altar Valley Board of Directors, Science Advisory Board and Staff



AVCA GRANTS IN REVIEW

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality: This funding implemented a mesquite herbicide treatment on three ranches on a total of 2,000 acres. It was designed to promote the desert grassland, improve soil conservation, and reduce sediment discharge. Monitoring occurred in the fall pre- (2018), post- (2019), and one-year post-treatment (2020) and was conducted remotely by the Quiet Creek Corporation and on the ground by AVCA. This grant concluded in December 2020.

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation: In June 2021, this grant helped to complete Phase 4 of the South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project on the Santa Margarita Ranch. The project borders the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, and the integration of this project with grassland restoration work on the Refuge enhances the functionality of ecosystems for grassland obligate species, including masked bobwhite quail and pronghorn. Funding was matched by the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Landowner Relations Program.

Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART: Cooperative Watershed Management Program: Over the past three years, the Alliance has convened the Watershed Working Group to work on an innovative, forward-thinking plan for the Valley. This plan, called the Altar Valley Watershed Plan, describes the projects partners have collectively decided to work on in the near future, as well as a live, interactive library of tools for implementing complex projects. The project was funded by a 3-year grant from the BOR WaterSMART program, awarded to the AVCA and matched by the Pima County Regional Flood Control District. The first iteration of the plan will be completed in March 2022, yielding landscape-scale results that benefit the whole community.

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education: Professional Development Program: This funding was facilitated by the University of Arizona School of Natural Resources & the Environment and The Rangelands Partnership, creators of the Rangelands Gateway (<https://rangelandsgateway.org>). This project trains rangeland professionals and producers to improve their online marketing strategies and skills to increase the visibility of science-based rangeland information in an increasingly technology-driven and noisy world.

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education: Research & Education Program: This funding was facilitated by the Gornish Lab with the University of Arizona. It provided the support necessary for AVCA's annual Rangeland Resilience Workshop Series. Three workshops on rangeland seeding were held in 2021 and were attended by landowners, land managers, researchers, and students throughout the Southwest.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Cooperative Agreement: This agreement partners with the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge to work both on and off of the Refuge. This past year, the agreement has helped to support the Alliance's work on the Masked Bobwhite Quail Safe Harbor Agreement for the Altar Valley, an exciting step toward helping the masked bobwhite quail population expand their habitat, while helping landowners.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Partners Program: This funding installed wildlife-friendly fencing between the Rancho Sierra Vista de Sasabe and the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. The AVCA coordinated the project and hired the contractor to install the boundary fence, while the BANWR provided the fence materials. The new fence allows for better livestock management while facilitating the wildlife movement across the Valley.

DONATE TO THE ALLIANCE

Send a check to: Altar Valley Conservation Alliance
14990 S. Sasabe Road
Tucson, AZ 85736

Visit altarvalleyconservation.org
via the QR code:

We appreciate your support!



Photo by Jeff Maltzman

Project Partners



The South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project

Collaborative Conservation in the Altar Valley

Project Overview

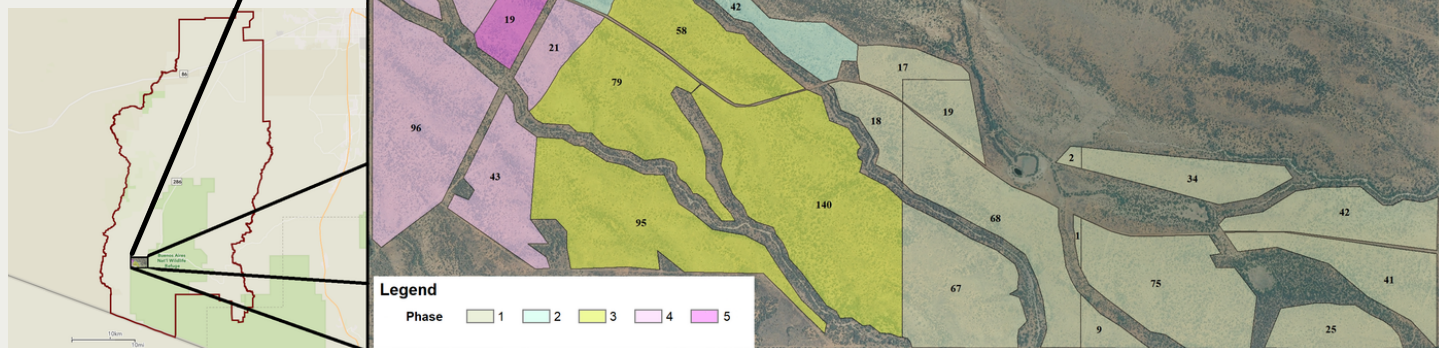
The South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project is a 1,100 acre habitat restoration area that demonstrates the best of collaborative conservation in the Altar Valley. The project, located on the Santa Margarita Ranch, comprises semi-desert grassland in the southern end of the Valley. In 2017, the Santa Margarita, which borders the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (BANWR) to the west, expressed an interest in expanding upon the Refuge's grassland restoration work that had been occurring since 2010.

Mesquite overgrowth on the landscape had decreased the extent and patch size of grassland habitat and outcompeted native grasses that provide food for grassland obligates and livestock. The integration of the BANWR projects and a Santa Margarita grassland enhancement project would enhance the functionality of ecosystems across a large area for grassland obligate species, including masked bobwhite quail and pronghorn. A plan was developed to grub out the mesquite trees with an excavator, and then pile the brush to give cover for mule deer and other wildlife. Thinning would taper as uplands transitioned into drainages, which are natural habitat for mesquite.

The next steps were getting the project concepts onto the landscape. Archaeological surveys were completed for the full site. The Santa Margarita Ranch was first awarded funding for this project in 2018. To date, Walter Lane, the ranch manager and AVCA board member, has coordinated the grubbing of 1,100 acres in cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation, and the AVCA. The grubbing of these 1,100 acres (the five phases shown on the map on the next page) completes the ranch's initial project goal.



South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project Site Map



Map thanks to Sarah Gandaria

Future Plans at the Site

This project, in conjunction with adjacent projects, provides approximately 3,000 acres of continuous habitat for grassland obligate species and has led to conversations about increasing the project size and scope. In the spring of 2021, the AGFD funded cultural resources clearances for another 1,000 acres adjacent to the Santa Margarita's original five phases. This acreage will be part of future brush clearing phases. Concurrently, as part of the work on the Altar Valley Watershed Plan (expected March 2022), the ranch manager, the AVCA, and the Hydrology Technical Team related to the Altar Valley Watershed Working Group visited the site to think about future work. The team is working on a project that would engineer the tank located at the site to better hold water, and allow water from the spillway to flow onto the landscape and increase grass growth following clearing. The area is being evaluated as a potential wildlife release site.



Benefits of Collaborative Conservation

This project is an outstanding example of collaborative conservation in the Altar Valley and showcases the power of working together towards common goals for the landscape. The Santa Margarita Ranch and the AGFD partnered early on to think strategically about how to structure the South Legunita project to sync into work being done by the neighboring Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, which allowed for maximum impact of the new project. Multiple

partners brought funds into the project, and it has benefitted wildlife, hunters, recreationists, livestock and ranchers. With a variety of partners involved, the area naturally came up in discussions with the Altar Valley Watershed Working Group, and planning for future conservation projects in the Altar Valley. This layered approach allows ideas and resources to pool for the maximum on-the-ground benefit to the Altar Valley landscape.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Between November 1, 2020 and October 31, 2021, the Alliance received \$31,702.94 in cash contributions via donations and events. In the same time frame, the Alliance administered \$208,576.60 of grant money that went to work in the Altar Valley. The Alliance finished a grant from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality that used \$10,115.98 to monitor an experimental brush management project spread across three different ranches. \$25,000 granted to the AVCA by the Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation completed Phase 4 of the South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project. \$1817.62 from the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education: Research & Education Program (facilitated by the Gornish Lab) funded the Alliance's Rangeland Resilience Workshop Series. The Alliance used \$12,796.55 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program to coordinate a fence project. \$28,064.86 from the U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart grant enabled work on the Altar Valley Watershed Plan. A cooperative agreement between

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge and the Alliance provided \$137,164.69 for a variety of projects on and off the Refuge, including the Masked Bobwhite Quail Safe Harbor Agreement and work on a Burned Area Restoration Project. The Alliance received \$5000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help write an Environmental Assessment. Finally, AVCA utilized \$34,222.26 in funds generated from the Alliance's Sierrita Endowment.

Grants and donations give us the financial resources to further our mission. However, no amount of money can substitute for the collaborative, cooperative spirit of mutual respect and support that is demonstrated among our many partners, stewards and friends. Below is a list of the wonderful groups and persons that share our mission and our vision for the Altar Valley, and continually put their resources and time into conserving the Altar Valley for future generations.

ALLIANCE STEWARDS

Chris Ader
Aubin Ames
Wally & Lew Armer
Kerry Baldwin
Barb's Frame of Mind
Amelia & Antony Barton
Dinah Bear
Cameron Becker
Betts Printing
Broken Arrow Crop Insurance
Emily Burns
Nancy Cammann
Carianne Campbell
Steve & Nansy Carson
Jason & Holly Cathcart
Sarah Cathcart
Faya Causey
Helen Clay Chace
Gay Chanler
Kent Chasson & Carrie McCarthy
NancyBell Coe & Bill Burke
Richard Collins
Julie Crawford
Rachel Darché & Vic Laurion
Robert & Vangie Davis
Desert Forager
Desert Provisions
Bill Doelle & Linda Mayro
Katharine Drake
Jennifer Duan
Elizabeth DuPont
Elkhorn Ranch
Robert Enyeart
Larry Fisher & Tahnee Robertson
Alden Freed

Diana Freshwater
Barbara Giesen
Mary Gilbert
Google
Elise Gornish
Ilse Gudehus
Margaret Weatherly Hall &
Dr. Thomas B. Hall III
Trevor Hare
Greg & Lorrie Harper
Linda Hatton
David Henckler
Katherine & Regis Henckler
Janine Higgins
Peggy & George Hunt
Intel
Felice Jarrold
Scott Jones
Justin Johnson
Hush: A Salon and Day Spa
Barbara Hutchinson
Steven & Louisa Kessel
Delores Kimmel
King's Anvil Ranch
Joe & Sarah King
John & Pat King
Judith S. King
Kingfisher Bar and Grill
Mark Klingensmith
John Koprowski
Ann Kramer
C. Benson Hufford
Mary Lamy
Walter Lane
Ruth Larson

Aaron Lien
Sarah Malarik
Michael & Kay McCarthy
Maureen Michael
Nancy & George Melling
Clara Miller
Janet Miller
Linda Miller
Mary & Charley Miller
Mitchel McClaren
Sharon McDonough-Means
George & Diane Montgomery
Karen Moriah
Brett Myers
Katherine Ng in honor of the
Millers at Elkhorn Ranch
Old Town Horse and Pet
Caylie O'Neil
Joellen O'Neil
Duane Ott
David & Mary Parnell
Eva Patten
Cynthia Perin
Brian Powell
Cherry Provost
Joanna Prukop
Sarah Putnam
Quiet Creek Corporation
William Radke
Rancho de la Osa
Anne Richards & John Coolidge
Dan Robinett and Linda Kennedy
Nina Ronstadt
Peggy & Jon Rowley
Austin Rutherford

Reta Rutledge
Michael Rusing
Mick Rusing Family Philanthropic
Trust
George Ruyle & Wendy Vanasco
Barbara Safranek
Santa Margarita Ranch
Tom Sheridan & Chris Szuter
Charlie Silverson & Elaine Elnes
Fred & Ellie Silverstein
Rick & Jody Simpson
Julia Sittig
Susan S. Small
Willie Sommers
Sherie Steele
Southern Arizona Home Builders
Association
Priyanka Sundareshan
Trico Electric Cooperative
The Stephens Family
Annie Taylor
Walt & Nancy Taylor
Kathryn Thomas
Tom & Deanne Urmy
Dani Verges
Whiskey del Bac
Wild Bird Store
Tricia Swift
Charlotte Tate & Christopher Zeoli
Hedda W. von Goeben
Joanna Watson
Sarah Wentzel-Fisher
Stephen Williams
Barbara Witmore
Kellie Wolverton

ALLIANCE PARTNERS

Altar Valley School District
 Archaeology Southwest
 Arivaca Fire District
 Arivaca Boys Ranch
 Arivaca Watershed Education Task Force
 Arizona Antelope Foundation
 Arizona Association of Conservation Districts
 Arizona Department of Agriculture
 Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
 Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management
 Arizona Farm and Ranch Group
 Arizona Farm Bureau
 Arizona Game & Fish Department
 Arizona Game & Fish Department, Tucson Habitat Partnership Committee
 Arizona Land & Water Trust
 Arizona Revegetation & Monitoring Co.
 Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
 Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation
 Arizona State Land Department
 BKW Farms
 Buckelew Farm
 Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge
 Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart: Cooperative Watershed Management Program
 Cascabel Conservation Association
 Chilton Ranch
 City of Tucson Water Department
 Colorado State University Center for Collaborative Conservation
 Coronado National Forest
 Cross-Watershed Network
 Cuenca Los Ojos Foundation
 Desert Archaeology, Inc.
 Diamond Bell Ranch
 Elkhorn Ranch
 Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation

Friends of the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge
 Global Rangelands
 Jarillas Ranch
 JE Fuller Hydrology & Geomorphology, Inc.
 King's Anvil Ranch
 King's 98 Ranch
 Brad Lancaster
 Larry Humphrey
 Lower San Pedro Watershed Alliance
 Malpai Borderlands Group
 Marley Ranch
 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 Noon Ranch
 Old Hayhook Ranch
 Palo Alto Ranch & Baboquivari Peak Ranch
 Pima County Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation
 Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation
 Pima County Regional Flood Control District
 Pima Natural Resource Conservation District
 Quiet Creek Corporation
 Quivira Coalition
 Rancho de la Osa
 Rancho Santa Lucia
 Rancho Seco
 Rangeland Hands, Inc.
 Robinett Rangeland Resources, LLC
 Safari Club International, Arizona Chapter
 San Fernando School District
 Santa Margarita Ranch
 Robert Schmalzel
 Sierrita Mining & Ranching Co.
 Sky Island Alliance
 Southern Arizona Cattlemen's Protective Association
 Southern Arizona Quail Forever
 Southern Arizona Rangeland Honey
 Southwest Decision Resources
 Stockwell Honey Company

The Nature Conservancy
 The Rangelands Partnership
 Three Points Fire District
 Tohono O'odham Nation Fire Department
 Tohono O'odham Nation Department of Natural Resources
 Tucson Interagency Dispatch Center
 U of A CALS Communications and Cyber Technologies
 U of A CALS Cooperative Extension
 U of A James E. Rogers College of Law, Natural Resource Use & Management Clinic
 U of A Little Chapel of All Nations
 U of A School of Anthropology
 U of A School of Natural Resources and the Environment
 U of A Southwest Center
 U of A Student Chapter for the Society for Range Management: Tierra Seca
 U of A Wild Cat Research and Conservation Center
 US Border Patrol
 US Bureau of Land Management
 USDA Agricultural Research Service - Southwest Watershed Research Center
 US Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services
 US Fish and Wildlife Service - Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
 US Forest Service
 US Natural Resources Conservation Service
 Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona
 Watershed Management Group
 Western Collaborative Conservation Network
 Western Landowners Alliance
 Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education
 Westland Resources, Inc.
 Wildvisions Arizona
 Zeedyk Ecological Services

If your name was omitted from this list or misspelled, please accept our sincere apology and notify us so that we may correct our records. These lists reflect donations, services and partnerships occurring between November 1, 2020 and October 31, 2021.





Altar Valley Conservation Alliance
14990 S Sasabe Road
Tucson, AZ 85736

Save the Date

Altar Valley
Community Meeting:
May 18, 2022

www.altarvalleyconservation.org

Board of Directors

Pat King, President
Peggy Rowley, Vice-President
Walter Lane, Treasurer
Paul Bear
Sue Chilton
Heather Fox
Mary Kasulaitis
Dee Lusby
Charley Miller
Mick Rusing
Tom Sheridan
Stephen Williams

Science Advisory Board

Chuck Hutchinson, Co-chair
Charley Miller, Co-chair
Kerry Baldwin
Brett Blum
William Doelle
Larry Fisher
Elise Gornish
Scott Jones
Walter Lane
Brian Powell
George Ruyle
Tom Sheridan
Priya Sundareshan
Peter Warren

Staff

Sarah King
Executive Director

Julia Sittig
Conservation & Science Director

Mary Miller
Operations Director

Photo thanks to Robert Harris

Conserving the Altar Valley for Future Generations