Project Title: South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project

Organization: Altar Valley Conservation Alliance

Event/Project Completion Date: July 1, 2021

Project Location (Include info such as event center, hunting unit, etc.): 36C in Region V

Submitted By: Sarah King

E-mail: sarah@altarvalleyconservation.org

Phone #: 520-820-5337

Today’s Date: 7/9/2021

AZSFWC Recognition:

AZSFWC Logo and Link to AZSFWC on organization’s website? (attach screen print image) Yes ☒ No ☐

License Plate Image w/link to MVD on organization’s website? (attach screen print image) Yes ☐ No ☒

AZSFWC Logo displayed at event? (attach photo(s)) Yes ☒ No ☐

AZSFWC recognized in all marketing materials & post event articles? (attach all samples) Yes ☒ No ☐

The project and AZSFWC’s support are featured on the AVCA website and were featured in AVCA’s Annual Report.

List any social media recognition of AZSFWC (include all screen print images)

Was there any media or press coverage? (attach copies if available) Yes ☐ No ☒

List any other recognition?

Summarize Project Accomplishments:

The South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project is a 1,100-acre habitat restoration area of semi-desert grassland in the southern portion of the Altar Valley. Five phases of habitat restoration have been completed through mechanical clearing of mesquite. Mesquite overgrowth had decreased the extent and patch size of grassland habitat and outcompeted native grasses that provide food for grassland obligates. The project is located on the Santa Margarita Ranch, on private and Arizona State Trust Land that borders the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. The project benefited wildlife, ranchers, non-profit partners actively engaged in collaborative conservation, hunters and recreationists who enjoy the healthy, open landscapes of the Altar Valley, and the neighboring Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (BANWR). The project extended a corridor of treated areas from the BANWR onto private and State lands.

This funding from the AZSFWC completed Phase 4 of the South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project. A contractor grubbed out the mesquite trees with an excavator, and brush was then then piled. Trees and brush were left in the drainages as cover for mule deer and other wildlife, and thinning tapered as uplands transition to drainages. The AGFD Landowner Relations Program matched funding on Phase 4; their program’s $25,000 portion was paid in February 2021.

Since AVCA’s initial application to AZSFWC funding program for Phase 4, the project received funding for Phase 5, which was also recently completed by the contractor. The funding for phase 5 came from the landowner ($12,500) and the AGFD’s Habitat Partnership Committee program. Previous investment and work in this project include:

- Archaeological Surveys on 1,300 acres: $30,000 Santa Margarita
- Phase 1: $35,000 AGFD HPC and $23,000 Partners USFWS
- Phase 2: $15,000 AGFD Landowner Relations Program (LRP)
• Phase 3: $50,000 AGFD HPC and $51,723 ADEQ

Additionally, in the spring of 2021, AGFD funded cultural resources clearances for another 1000 acres adjacent to the original 5 phases that will be part of future brush clearing phases. In February 2021, AVCA and a hydrology team related to the Altar Valley Watershed Working Group visited the site, and 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.

Measurable Results (Fill in all that are applicable):

Attendees (If project was an event, list total # of participants, excluding staff, visiting parents, etc): N/A

Visitors (If the project is an interpretive display, list total # of annual visitors): AVCA has had approximately 70 people out to visit this site. It is not an interpretive display, but the AVCA does hold tours of project sites throughout the Altar Valley, and this site has been used on several field trips to talk about brush management.

Brochures, Pamphlets, etc. (If the project is a brochure, publication, poster or video, list the total produced and distributed): N/A

Other (please explain): Phases 4 and 5 completed: 100 acres cleared via AZSFWC funding, 100 acres cleared via LRP funding, 50 acres cleared via HPC funding, and 50 acres cleared via landowner funding.

Budget (specifically describe how AZSFWC funds were used; e.g. program promotion, type of equipment, materials and/or supplies, etc.) ATTACH COPIES OF ALL RECEIPTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Item</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excavator Contractor Payment for 100 acres of mesquite clearing</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
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Project Cooperator(s) (please include any in-kind contributions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperator (no abbreviations)</th>
<th>Amount Contributors $</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altar Valley Conservation Alliance (staff time - coordination and field trips)</td>
<td>$1000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Margarita Ranch (Phase 5 funding)</td>
<td>$12,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGFD Landowner Relations Program (Phase 4 funding)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGFD Habitat Partnership Committee (Phase 5 funding)</td>
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***The cooperators noted above only reflect Phase 4 & 5 of the full project, which were completed in June 2021.
Photographs

*Visuals are critical to effectively communicating project accomplishments and are a requirement of AZSFWC project reporting*

Following are a few photo guidelines:

- Submit photos (digital & prints are all welcome) in their original format. No photocopies please.
- Include information regarding photo credits.
- Email to [info@azsfwc.org](mailto:info@azsfwc.org) is our preferred method of receiving digital photos, but large files can submitted via CD/DVD/Flash Drive, or uploaded to an online dropbox.

Please return this completed form and supporting documentation and send along with photos to: **AZ Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation Grant Program PO Box 75731 New River, AZ 85087** or e-mail to [info@azsfwc.org](mailto:info@azsfwc.org). Phone: 602-361-6478.
South Legunita Project Funded!

Thanks, Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation!

LEARN MORE

www.altarvalleyconservation.org/our-work/conservation/projects/south-legunita-project/

approximately 457,000 acres of Arizona rangeland in Game Management Units 36 A, B, and C. In this valley, 347,000 acres were categorized by percent shrub canopy cover in a 2012 grassland quantity and composition study conducted by The Nature Conservancy. At the time it was surveyed, only 5% of this once open grassland had less than 15% shrub cover. The survey found 54% of the total area to have between 10-35% shrub cover, and suitable for restoration activities. The remaining acreage was either greater than 35% shrub invaded or not classified at all, likely due to urban encroachment.

This once open area, where shrub cover has not exceeded 35%, still supports a small population of pronghorn antelope, mostly in areas where grassland restoration has been completed, or shrub density was already low. It is the desire of the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) that shrub density be reduced to less than 10% on at least 20 square miles, or 12,900 acres, in the southern portions of the Valley in the interest of promoting pronghorn population growth and improving grassland species diversity. Reducing the number of mesquites will also increase the groundwater recharge rate, and increase the availability of water to grasses and forbs. With more land cover, the grass will then act as a filter to clean water as it goes into the aquifer.

Benefits for Wildlife

In the AGFD’s Management Focal Area Plan for the units associated with the South Legunita Restoration Project, the need for grassland restoration to benefit pronghorn is listed as a Priority 1 Issue, and the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance is actively supporting a pronghorn population that is in decline. This project is specifically designed to enhance pronghorn...
Bill To

Santa Margarita Ranch

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<td>250.00</td>
<td>25,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Encinos Mesquite Grubbing Phase 5</td>
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<td>24,500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pushed brush into piles using Loader</td>
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Thank you for your business

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<tr>
<td>$49,500.00</td>
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E-mail
solidrockfencingaz@gmail.com
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 STATEMENT
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,

Well, I think we can safely say that 2020 was not the year that we thought it was going to be back in January. It has been a year that has taught us to be flexible, think creatively, and not to take our daily routines for granted.

Here at the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance, it has also confirmed that our organization is strong and adaptable. During a recent interview, I was asked about the status of the Alliance in 2020 and what we have had to change and scale back in response to Covid-19. For AVCA, there has been very little that we have had to scale back. We were fortunate that going into this global event, we were already working remotely, had minimal overhead, a lean staff, and had spent years cultivating relationships with partners that were well established during this shift. But I also think that our attitude as a team has been important. We focused on opportunities, adapting to current limitations, and finding positives while navigating the infamous “2020 pivots.”

We continued to convene the Altar Valley Watershed Working Group and are on the home stretch of finishing up the multi-year, innovative Altar Valley Watershed Plan, which is a stakeholder-driven, collaborative plan that will facilitate the implementation of complex projects in the Altar Valley. We recently cemented a name for continuation of the workshop series that we’ve hosted over the last few years - Rangeland Resilience - and are working on launching the 2021 series on seeding. Despite the challenges of being together face-to-face this year, we gained new partners and worked together to solve new challenges. We have sought new funding opportunities, while working on our current commitments. The Alliance is doing more work than ever.

2020 marks the Alliance’s 25th anniversary as an organization. A quarter-century after neighboring ranchers gathered with a vision for the future, their foresight has created a valley where conservation conversations and landscape management solutions are happening on-the-ground. The spirit of conservation led by the AVCA in the Altar Valley provides a much needed example of the benefits of finding common ground, rather than allowing differences in experiences and jurisdiction to divide us.

In a year that often highlighted division among people and places, it is more important than ever to bolster the work being done by the AVCA to facilitate partnerships, to foster a love of place, and care for large landscapes. 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
Altar Valley Conservation Alliance’s 2020 Grants in Review

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation: This summer, the Alliance was awarded a $25,000 grant from the Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation to continue work begun by the Santa Margarita Ranch and the Arizona Game and Fish Department on the South Legunita Grassland Restoration Project. The project borders the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, and the integration of this project with grassland enhancement projects on the Refuge enhances the functionality of ecosystems for grassland obligate species, including masked bobwhite quail and pronghorn. This funding, along with matching funds from the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s Landowner Relations Program, will fund the completion of phase 4 of the project.

Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART - Cooperative Watershed Management Program: Over the past two 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 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 2-year grant from the Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART program, awarded to the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance and matched by the Pima County Regional Flood Control District. Currently, the Alliance is in the final phases of gathering stakeholder input for the plan and editing the plan. The Watershed Working Group meetings take resources and strong commitments from partners, but yield results that are community oriented and landscape-driven.

Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation: The Elk-horn/Las Delicias Watershed Restoration Demonstration Project (Elk/LD Demo Project) has been supported by the Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation since 2012. The project showcases planning, installation, and monitoring of watershed restoration practices in ephemeral arroyos and associated uplands and tributaries in a flash flood dominated landscape of the Altar Valley. During this past year, the AVCA conducted annual monitoring at the site, toured the project with interested parties, and completed a thorough assessment of project impacts.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Cooperative Agreement: This agreement partners with the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge to complete 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: The Alliance hosted the “Regional Watershed Restoration Practitioners Workshop” in February at the Noon Ranch project site. The workshop was taught by Steve Carson of Rangeland Hands, and brought together practitioners from the Southwest borderlands region to design and implement treatments for drainages at the project. It also included discussion regarding aligning professional restoration approaches and strategies specific to our region. The Alliance is currently working on planning a second project via this grant.

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality: ADEQ funded a brush treatment for grassland restoration, conducted in 2019. This experimental aerial herbicide occurred on 2000 acres of Altar Valley land and is being rigorously monitored for its effects on mesquite, grasses, and sediment transport. This grant concludes this year.
Something that struck me that had to do with the forming of the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance, was that when properly motivated, people from different walks of life can actually work together to make things happen. That was kind of a revelation.

I think that the Alliance has a really critical role in maintaining the integrity of the valley, both as a natural and a working landscape. There’s tons of history in the valley for ranching, and for wildlife, and tons of native plants and pollinators. To maintain the integrity of all that, it doesn’t really happen by itself. So you need a group of committed people to make sure that people can continue to live and ranch in the valley.

The success of landscape conservation involves voluntary participation, and the Altar Valley brings the stakeholders together to allow the success of landscape conservation.

The Alliance has really helped different individuals in the Altar Valley to look at the landscape as a whole, and not just at their place, or the land that they own or managed. So the Alliance has helped people to find common ground to look at the larger picture and say what are the commonalities across the landscape that one place can have a positive effect for the other people in the valley.

While 2020 has been a very different year, it was no less important to celebrate exciting milestones. While we wish we could have celebrated our 25th anniversary with a full, in-person party, we moved our celebration into a virtual format. The silver lining to this format is that it is available to share with you all, both near and far. You can find it by opening your camera, and hovering over the QR code square on the picture, and it will take you there. Thank you for celebrating with us!
25 YEARS OF THE ALTAR VALLEY CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

“

We are working on a Watershed Plan that will guide projects and management out here into the next several decades. And we’re also taking responsibility as an organization to pass on the torch, to get younger people engaged. I’m really proud of what we’re doing – we’re looking toward the future.”

Mary Miller

“Tobller’s first law of geography is that everything is connected, those things that are near are connected more.”

Robert Davis

“Why I remember most was there was tension in the valley, not necessarily between the ranches but between the ranches and there were environmental issues. The one thing the Malpai had told us, was concentrate on what you are concerned about, not what you are upset about. And that was a big help.”

Pat King

“The future of the Altar Valley will benefit from all of the groundwork being laid now by folks that are doing the work to bring collaborative conservation to the forefront to work together for the benefit of the landscape.”

Sarah King

“I have hope for the future of the Altar Valley because I think that we’ve got a bunch of very interested landowners and ranchers here that want to preserve and protect what we’re doing.”

Walter Lane
Between November 1, 2019 and October 31, 2020, the Alliance received $25,205.90 in cash contributions. In the same time frame, the Alliance administered $110,504.92 of grant money that went to work in the Altar Valley. The Alliance invested $34,617.94 in grant funds from the Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold Foundation, matched by monitoring time donated by the University of Arizona Tierra Seca Club at the Elkhorn/Las Delicias Demonstration Project. The Alliance's grant from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality put $3,652.85 to work monitoring an experimental brush management project spread across three different ranches. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program provided $3,791.28 that funded completion of an erosion control project, via a special workshop aimed at watershed restoration practitioners. Finally, the Alliance received $17,308.84 from the U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart grant that is supporting preparation of the Altar Valley Watershed Plan. A cooperative agreement between the US Fish and Wildlife Service/Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge and AVCA brought $26,134.01 to work in the watershed, spread between a riparian habitat project, ongoing coordination (particularly related to the Masked Bobwhite Quail Safe Harbor Agreement project), and volunteer support. A new partnership with the Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation brought $25,000 for brush management work on a ranch neighboring the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. The Alliance was a new recipient of a Catchafire grant from the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona that included $8,000 in donated services.

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.

**FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

**ALLIANCE STEWARDS**

Amazon Smile  
Joseph & Sally Barber  
Gerard & Deborah Bast  
Margaret Boggeln  
Broken Arrow Crop Insurance  
William Burke & Nancy Bell Coe  
Burke  
Jason & Holly Cathcart  
Gay Chanler  
JT & Gay Coe  
Richard & Diane Collins  
Rachel Darché & Victor Laurion  
Cynthia & Kevin Devine  
Elkhorn Ranch  
Steve Engel & Susan Saidman  
Sally Flatland  
Alden Freed  
Sue Gerry  
Barbara Giesen  
Mary Gilbert  
Ilse Gudehus  
Thomas Hall and Margaret Weatherly Fund  
Gregory & Lorraine Harper  
Linda Hatton  
Lisa Haynes  
Ben Hufford  
Peggy & George Hunt  
Anne Husted  
Janell Jelliffe  
Louisa & Steve Kessel  
Susan Kiltie  
Delores Kimmel  
Mark Klingensmith  
Judith S. King  
Sarah & Joe King  
King’s Anvil Ranch  
John Koprowski  
Ann Kramer  
Mary Lamy, in honor of Charley and Mary Miller, Elkhorn Ranch  
Kenneth Langton  
Lisa Haynes  
Aaron Lien  
Katherine McCarthy  
Michael & Kay McCarthy  
Mitch McClaren  
Sharon McDonough-Means  
George & Nancy Melling  
Clara Miller  
George Miller  
Janet D. Miller  
Mary & Charley Miller  
Karen Moriah  
Joleen O’Neil  
David Parnell  
Eva Patten  
Cindy Perin  
Presidio Wealth Group  
Cherry Provost  
Sarah Putnam  
William & Marcia Radke  
Anne Richards & John Coolidge  
Dan Robinett & Linda Kennedy  
Jon & Peggy Rowley  
Mick Rusing Family  
Philanthropic Fund  
Reta Rutledge  
George Ruyle & Wendy Vanasco  
Santa Margarita Ranch  
Nathan Sayre  
Cecil & Carol Schwalbe  
Thomas Sheridan & Chris Szuter  
Charlie Silverson & Elaine Elhes  
Fred & Ellie Silverstein  
Southern Arizona Home Builders Association  
Susan Speers, in honor of Mary Miller  
Sherie Steele  
Walter & Nancy Taylor  
Gretchten Theobald  
Kathryn Thomas  
Vicki Treherne  
Trico Electric Company  
Tom and Deanne Urmy  
Robert Vance  
Hedda von Goeben  
Peter Warren  
Patricia Wheeler  
Stephen Williams  
Chris Zeoli & Charlotte Tate
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 State Land Department
BKW Farms
Buckelew Farm
Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge
Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart: Cooperative Watershed Management Program
Cascabel Conservation Association
Catchafire
Chilton Ranch
City of Tucson Water Department
Community Foundation for Southern Arizona
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 Arvil 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 and 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
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

If your name was omitted 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, 2019 and October 31, 2020.
Altar Valley Conservation Alliance
14990 S. Sasabe Road
Tucson, AZ 85736

SAVE THE DATES

Rangeland Resilience Workshop Series:
Virtual Seeds Workshop
February 2, 2021

Annual Altar Valley Community Meeting
May 26, 2021

www.altarvalleyconservation.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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Heather Fox
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Stephen Williams

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Operations Director

Conserving the Altar Valley for future generations