2022 Annual *Gratitude* Report

Female house finch / *Lisa Mainz*

Advocacy + Education + Collaboration

Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection
25th Anniversary
1998–2023

The Coalition's mission is to protect the biodiversity of the Sonoran Desert in southern Arizona through science-based advocacy, education, and collaboration.

We work to create a community where: ecosystem health is protected; nature and healthy wild animal populations are valued; and residents, visitors, and future generations can all drink clean water, breathe clean air, and find wild places to roam.

Volunteer Christine DeMatteo at Cienega Creek, pointing out wildlife tracks.

Letter from the Board President

Thank YOU, friends, supporters and colleagues! Without you, we could not do any of what we do. At the Regional Transportation Authority, Carolyn continues to advocate for greater investment in multi-modal transportation and providing for wildlife connectivity. The Coalition was proud to facilitate a breakout session and field trip focusing on local connectivity efforts at the May conference on Corridors, Crossing Structures and Connectivity sponsored by the PEW Charitable Trust, Department of Interior, and various Tribal Fish and Wildlife organizations. Jessica continues to work with our wonderful volunteers, monitoring our wildlife cameras and planning for more. We've continued our ongoing work fielding requests from developers for input on their plans. This largely involves encouraging them to better configure their plans to set aside functional natural open space for wildlife and stressing the importance of sustainable and resilient landscapes and building practices, including water harvesting and green infrastructure. We are especially delighted to be working with multiple agencies, including the Tohono O'odham Nation, local government departments, and our non-profit colleagues, to remove obsolete barbed wire fencing and provide better connectivity across Avra Valley and the increasingly isolated Tucson Mountains. And while we will miss Whelan, Kathleen continues to polish all our efforts, running the machinery of our organization with grace and making it look easy! Thank you all for making it possible!

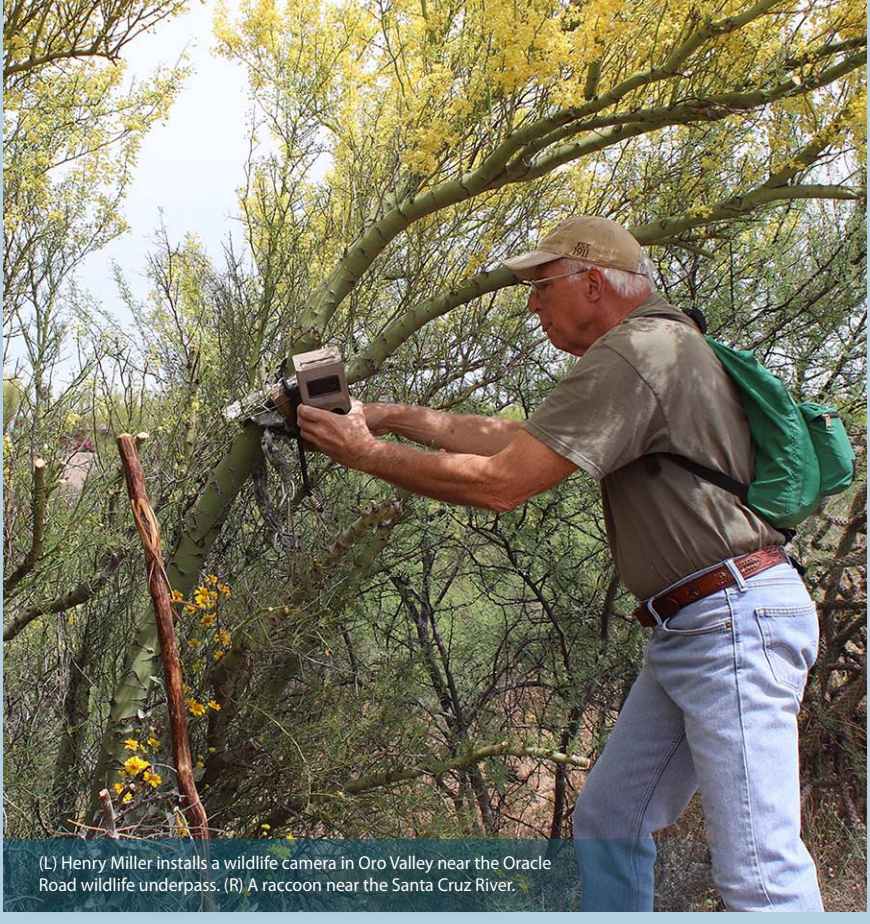
Christina McVie

(L) Our new SKATTUM camera in the Tortolita Preserve, (R) Our first Desert Wildlife Intern Josh Skattum at one of our Critter Cam for Kids Field Days at Catalina State Park in 2019.

Our first Desert Wildlife Intern: Josh Skattum

In August 2022, we welcomed our first Desert Wildlife Intern, Josh Skattum. Josh was a long-time volunteer for the Coalition, monitoring wildlife cameras in almost all of our project areas, including backcountry sites in the I-10 East wildlife linkage. **His cameras seemed to have extra special good luck, capturing both our first badger photos and our first photos of a kit fox.** He also enthusiastically participated in our Critter Cam for Kids Field Day events and established important community connections with the Pima County Master Naturalists, Reid Park Zoo, and the Feminist Birding Club. We were heartbroken when Josh tragically passed away after being involved in a serious car accident in October 2022. **His legacy remains strong within the Coalition. Amazingly, after placing a wildlife camera in his honor in the Tortolita Preserve (the SKATTUM camera), this camera caught our second set of photos of a kit fox this past winter!**

Our first photo of a kit fox in the 10 years of our wildlife camera program, captured on the UTA camera, monitored at the time by Josh Skattum.



(L) Henry Miller installs a wildlife camera in Oro Valley near the Oracle Road wildlife underpass. (R) A raccoon near the Santa Cruz River.

Celebrating 10 years of Community Science!

In April 2022, our community science-driven Wildlife Camera Program celebrated years of collecting data and making a difference for Sonoran Desert wildlife and open spaces! The data from this program has been used to:

+ Advocate for the hugely successful Oracle Road wildlife bridge and underpass;
+ Demonstrate wildlife diversity and presence in the proposed West Option route for I-11 in Avra Valley;
+ Underpin our proposal for improved wildlife fencing and enhanced wildlife culverts along I-10 East in the Cienega Creek area; and
+ Advocate for a new wildlife bridge over Interstate 10 between the Tortolita and Tucson Mountains (in progress!).

Thank you to all our hard-working and amazing volunteers that are the engine behind this program, including our Desert Monitors, Desert Identifiers, and Desert Roadies!

Spotted skunk.

Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection

Ragged Top in the Ironwood Forest National Monument, one of the federally protected areas threatened by the West Route Option for Interstate 11 / *Bob Wick, BLM*

Fighting I-11: A marathon, not a sprint

In 2022, with your support our ongoing fight against the West Option for the proposed Interstate 11 through Avra Valley continued. In collaboration with three of our member groups - Center for Biological Diversity, Tucson Audubon Society, and Friends of Ironwood Forest — **we filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court of Tucson challenging the Federal Highway Administration's approval of Interstate 11 last year.** The agency approved the highway in November 2021 despite postponing an environmental review or deciding between two route options in Pima County, both of which would harm wildlife, public lands, and air quality and exacerbate the climate emergency. **The lawsuit says this "approve now, study later" approach violated federal law.**

A coyote on the prowl.

So far, the lawsuit continues to make its way through the courts, including surviving a legal challenge to part of our lawsuit this past January.

Your ongoing support is crucial to this fight — thank you!

A bobcat track found in the Torolita Preserve during the first Tortolita BioBlitz in December 2022.

The first Tortolita BioBlitz documents species presence and diversity in the Tortolita Preserve

In November 2022, the first Tortolita BioBlitz was a huge success. 46 participants made 700 observations of over 135 wildlife and plant species in the Tortolita Preserve in just a few hours! Along with individuals enjoying and documenting species on their own, seven small group outings focused on different type of species and ways to collect data. One of the guided walks headed by CSDP's Jessica Moreno focused on identifying animals by scat and tracks. **Species identified included Grey Fox, Mule Deer, Bobcat, Coyote, and even the tiny and industrious Kangaroo Rat!** Another walk conducted by Jennie McFarland from Tucson Audubon Society and Steven Prager from Audubon Southwest yielded a list of fifteen species including a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet, the first time this species has been documented at the preserve on E-Bird**. Another highlight was the identification of Gregg's Nightblooming Cereus happily existing in the understory of a Palo Verde. We hope this will be the first of many BioBlitzes in this lush piece of desert.

Thank you to all the volunteers and community partners that made this event such a success!

2022 Volunteers of the Year:

Pat and Henry Miller

This year we are recognizing an amazing volunteer duo: Pat and Henry Miller. Pat Miller has been incredibly effective at advocating and organizing in Oro Valley to find the best solution to the fencing gaps near the Oracle Road wildlife underpass, fixing erosion issues, and supporting revegetation and interpretive signage for the crossings. Henry Miller is not only a Desert Monitor but also a Desert Roadies team leader, and he never misses a Highway Clean Up event.

The desert is a more wild and beautiful place thanks to Pat and Henry!

Wild turkey tracks in Cienega Creek.

Another welcome to our newest member group, the Arizona Master Naturalist Association

We welcomed one new member group to the Coalition in 2022. **The Arizona Master Naturalist Association serves to inspire leadership and community engagement through volunteer service to natural and cultural history organizations in the State of Arizona.** Their corps of volunteers provide leadership service to partners who have education, community science, and stewardship projects. They are environmental educators, interpreters, and scientists seeking to help our communities understand the outdoors should be accessible to all and valued for preservation. **We are excited to have this dynamic and passionate group join the Coalition — welcome once again!**

Our Volunteers can do Anything… and EVERYTHING!

Kit fox / *Raynor Vandeven*

- **Total volunteer hours** **1,139** ($31.80/hr 2022 value according to Nonprofit Leadership Center = **$36,220** in volunteer match!)
- **Total volunteer mileage** **1,969**
- **Total number of volunteers** **56**
- **# New volunteers** **6** (6 Desert Monitors)
- **Volunteer Retention** **84%**

Volunteers powered these programs in 2021:

- **Desert Advocates** **43** hours **1** volunteer
- **Desert Monitors** **630** hours **38** volunteers
- **Desert Identifiers** **409** hours **10** volunteers
- **Desert Roadies** **2** hours **1** volunteer
- **Desert Mailers / Mailing on Tour** **23** hours **4** volunteers
- **Desert Fence Busters** **32** hours **3** volunteers

2022 Wildlife Camera Statistics

- **# of cameras in the field** **53**
- **# of wildlife camera project areas** **3** (Oro Valley, Tucson Mountains, Sopori; 45 cameras removed from I-10 E project in January)
- **# wildlife camera photos** **3 million total** over 10 years of the project
- **# species photographed** **70 species total** over 10 years of the project

36 Events for 2022

- **34 program-related events:** Environmental Lobby Day, Tortolita BioBlitz, Desert Fence Busters, Camera Placements, Volunteer Check-ins, Member Group Presentations

Get *Involved!*

Interested in donating, volunteering, or using your voice to advocate for a Sonoran Desert?

Head over to **www.sonorandesert.org** and learn more!

Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection

Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest ❊ Arizona Master Naturalist Association ❊ Arizona Native Plant Society ❊ Bat Conservation International ❊ Cascabel Conservation Association ❊ Center for Biological Diversity ❊ Center for Environmental Ethics ❊ Defenders of Wildlife ❊ Desert Watch ❊ Environmental Law Society ❊ Friends of Cabeza Prieta ❊ Friends of Ironwood Forest ❊ Friends of Madera Canyon ❊ Friends of Saguaro National Park ❊ Friends of Tortolita ❊ Gates Pass Area Neighborhood Association ❊ Genius Loci Foundation ❊ Great Old Broads for Wilderness – Tucson ❊ Native Seeds / SEARCH ❊ Protect Land and Neighborhoods ❊ Safford Peak Watershed Education Team ❊ Save the Scenic Santa Ritas ❊ Sierra Club – Grand Canyon Chapter ❊ Sierra Club – Rincon Group ❊ Sky Island Alliance ❊ Southwestern Biological Institute ❊ Tortolita Alliance ❊ Tortolita Homeowners Association ❊ Tucson Audubon Society ❊ Tucson Herpetological Society ❊ Tucson Mountains Association ❊ Wildlands Network

Coyote.

SonoranDesertProtection ❊ SonoranDesertProtection ❊ @ForTheDesert

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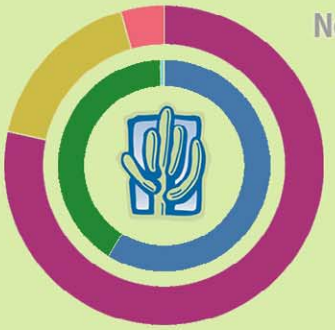
Bobcat.

Thank you. Gifts of all sizes make an impact in supporting a protected and connected Sonoran Desert!



Net Income FY 2022 -$51,645

Total Revenue $277,358
- Individual Donors *59%*
- Foundations (unrestricted) *41%*
- Other *1%*

Total Expenses $329,003
- Program *78%*
- Administration/General Operations *17%*
- Fundraising *4%*

We gratefully acknowledge these foundation and grant funders who supported our vision in 2022:

❊ **Wilburforce Foundation** ❊ **MET, Inc.**
❊ **Deupree Family Foundation**
❊ **Steven Leuthold Family Foundation**