

2024 Annual *Impact* Report

Ragged Top in Ironwood Forest
National Monument.

Advocacy + Education + Collaboration



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

We envision a community in the Sonoran Desert where ecosystems are healthy, valued, and protected, with benefits for current and future generations.

Letter from the Board President

2024 was a banner year. Following our founding Executive Director's retirement, Pima County's Board of Supervisors and the City of Tucson honored Carolyn Campbell's exceptional service to our community with proclamations that memorialized CSDP as "**one of the most successful advocacy organizations in the history**" of Pima County and Southern Arizona, respectively.

We strive to uphold this reputation. CSDP has been resilient since our formation in 1998 and has developed relationships of trust and respect with our coalition members, local governments and interested stakeholders.

Building on our past efforts are our **new Co-Executive Directors** Kathleen Kennedy, formerly our Associate Director and with the Coalition since 2007, and Kate Hotten, recently returned to the US from Ireland where she has enjoyed a remarkable career.

We will continue our founding mission of protecting the unique biodiversity of our region and **we stand ready to adapt to ever changing circumstances** with continuity of purpose and professionalism. **For the desert!**

Christina McVie

Saguaro fruit. Photo
credit: Jonni Zeman.

Key accomplishments in 2024

The Coalition builds our success on over 27 years of strong working relationships with local governments, planners, developers, and state and federal agencies, as well as our 31 coalition members, volunteers, and many supporters. These partnerships allow us to accomplish shared conservation goals.

In 2024, we worked on 22 land use, policy, and planning issues with our partners. This includes several developments we improved upon. Some other highlights include:

- We collaborated with and advised Pima County's Regional Flood Control District on the **Santa Cruz River Wildlife Ramp**, the first structure of its kind to allow animals to move in and out of the river with its steep levee.
- As part of the Planning Committee, we also input on land use issues in **Pima County's Floodplain Management Plan**.
- Along with many regional partners, we input on and supported plans for the **Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge**.
- We **advocated for amendments to the 2,160-acre H2K Planned Area Development**, including protection of washes and wildlife corridors and improved noise and light pollution mitigation.
- We continued to **advocate for wildlife crossings** in the Regional Transportation Authority's draft 20-year plan (RTA Next). The last RTA Plan and its wildlife linkage funding was approved by voters in 2006.
- As part of the **Desert Fence Busters**, we helped remove 28.8 miles of outdated barbed-wire fence over 11 work days, improving connectivity and protecting wildlife.
- We continued to work on **updates to Pima County's comprehensive plan**, *Pima Prospers*.
- We **participated in working groups** such as the Sentinel Landscape Restoration Partnership, the Avra Valley Connectivity and Research Working Groups, and the SR-86 Technical Advisory Committee.



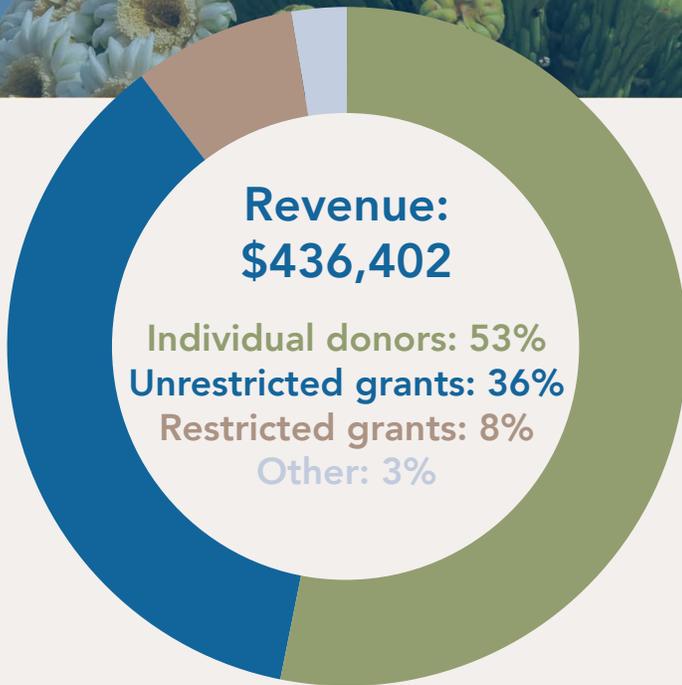
Planting native agaves at the Oracle Road wildlife crossing bridge. Photo credit: Leslie Epperson.

2024 financials

We gratefully acknowledge these grant and foundation funders who supported our mission in 2024:

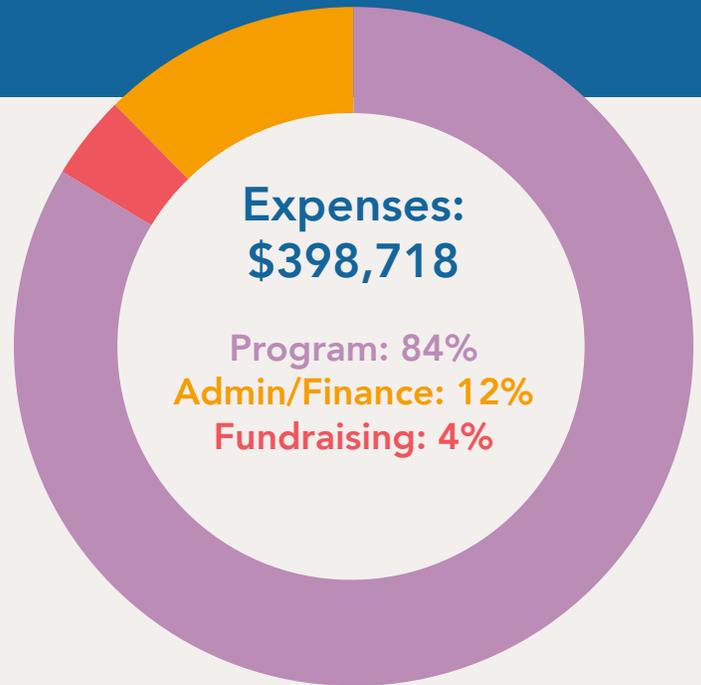
Community Foundation for Southern Arizona
+ Deupree Family Foundation + Jewish Community Foundation of Southern Arizona
+ MET Foundation Inc. + Steven Leuthold Family Foundation + Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area + Wilburforce Foundation

Curve-billed thrashers. Photo credit: Frank Staub.



Revenue:
\$436,402

Individual donors: 53%
Unrestricted grants: 36%
Restricted grants: 8%
Other: 3%



Expenses:
\$398,718

Program: 84%
Admin/Finance: 12%
Fundraising: 4%

Thank you! Gifts of all sizes support our long-term, local and positive impacts on the Sonoran Desert in Southern Arizona.

Maintaining our independent, grassroots funding is critical to our strategy.

We use your donations wisely. In 2024, 84 cents of every \$1 we spent went directly towards our vision.

The rest keeps the lights on! Industry standard is closer to 70% of expenses.



Donate today!

Desert spiny lizard. Photo credit: Kathy Krucker.

Community science: wildlife camera program

- + 4 active project sites, including the **new CAP canal site** in 2024
- + 62 active cameras, including 6 new in 2024
- + 30 new solar panels to power cameras, funded by TEP
- + 19,617 new wildlife photos, documenting 68 species

Mule deer spotted by one of our CAP cameras.



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Looking towards the future with our wildlife camera data

Our wildlife camera monitoring program continued strong in 2024, entering its 12th year. Three new cameras were placed at the wildlife crossings over the **CAP canal** near the **Tucson Mitigation Corridor** for wildlife, helping us gather data (including pictures of the deer above) that informs our fight against the proposed Interstate 11 in Avra Valley.

In 2024, another three cameras went in the **Tortolita Preserve**, one of the study areas in our Tucson Mountains - Tortolita Mountains linkage project. This research helps us support arguments for improved connectivity across Interstate 10.

New: Roadkill surveys

In August 2024, CSDP joined Saguaro National Park, Bureau of Land Management, Pima County and volunteers on a **10-mile roadkill survey on Sandario Road**. We made nearly **300 observations of more than 17 species** including Sonoran Desert toads, long-nosed snakes, bats, tarantulas and lesser night hawks! **Building on this, we have launched a new roadkill survey in 2025.**



Left: new solar panels power a disguised wildlife camera.
Right: A roadrunner captured on our BASIL camera.





Globemallow. Photo credit: Leslie Epperson.

Our volunteers

Between 10 habitat restoration days, 4 highway cleanups, 12 outreach events, our wildlife camera program, educational talks and workshops, two mailing parties, photo and art submissions, help with equipment, advocacy work, and MORE, **volunteers like you had an incredible impact on our work in the Sonoran Desert.**

We are grateful for your time, energy and creativity!

'24 field work stats

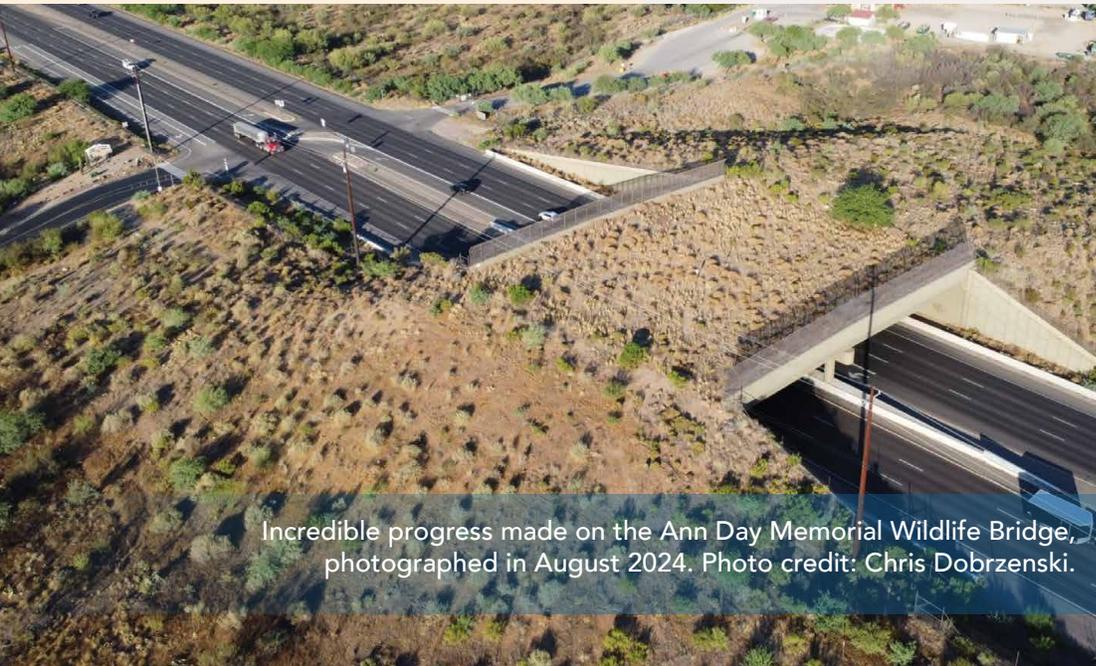
- + **1,736** volunteer hours
- + **154** active volunteers
- + **10** habitat restoration days
- + **4** highway cleanups, and **74** bags of trash picked up
- + **60+** bags of buffelgrass cleared
- + **10** miles of roadkill surveys

Continuing to establish native habitat on the wildlife crossings

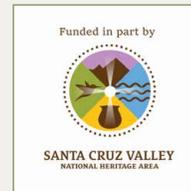
2024 saw a full year of our *Habitat Restoration Days* at the Oracle Road wildlife crossings.

Since 2023, we have worked with our volunteers to **set this area up for success** — including by re-establishing native habitat, addressing erosion, and removing invasive species that started to creep in after construction finished in 2016.

These collective efforts have helped us **blend the crossings into the surrounding landscape**, providing additional resources for pollinators and fauna such as Sonoran Desert tortoises, mule deer, agave feeding bats and more.



Incredible progress made on the Ann Day Memorial Wildlife Bridge, photographed in August 2024. Photo credit: Chris Dobrzanski.



This project was funded in part by the Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area.

Thank you to Carianne Funicelli of Strategic Habitat Enhancements, as well as our partners at Bat Conservation International, for their help with native habitat establishment!

Our team

Board of Directors

Christina McVie, *Chair*
Martin Baumrind, *Treasurer*
Joy Herr-Cardillo, *Secretary*
Carolyn Campbell

Advisory Committee

Consists of representatives from our Coalition members:

Bryan Bird
Christina McVie
Tricia Gerrodette
Rob Peters
Russ McSpadden

Staff

Kathleen Kennedy, *Co-Executive Director*
Kate Hotten, *Co-Executive Director*
Jessica Moreno, *Conservation Science Director*
Jonni Zeman, *Program and Communications Coordinator*

2024 Interns

Aster Schaefer
Lilly Elena Esperanza Ramirez
Woods Nystedt



Carolyn's retirement party in 2024. Photo credit: Leslie Epperson.



Kyle rallies for wildlife crossings. Photo credit: Leslie Epperson.

Volunteer spotlight: Kyle Rohlfing

"Volunteering with the Coalition has given me a chance to repay the land that sustains us. Whether it's clearing invasive plants, checking trail cameras, or tending to the current plants and animals that call our desert home, each footprint and every image reminds me how meaningful our efforts are. I encourage everyone to do just one small thing every week that gives back to their home: mother earth."

Coalition members

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 + DarkSky Southern Arizona* + Defenders of Wildlife + Desert Watch + Environmental Law Society + 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 + Living Desert Alliance* + Native Seeds/SEARCH + Protect Land and Neighborhoods + Save the Scenic Santa Ritas + Sierra Club – Grand Canyon Chapter + Sierra Club – Nopales Group + Sky Island Alliance + Tortolita Alliance + Tortolita Homeowners Association + Tucson Bird Alliance + Tucson Herpetological Society + Tucson Mountains Association + Wildlands Network *NEW in 2025!



738 N. 5th Ave., Suite 205
Tucson, Arizona 85705
520.388.9925
sonorandesert.org