

2025 Annual *Impact* Report

Photo credit: Frank Staub.

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

A happy 25th anniversary to Pima County's award-winning Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, one of our guiding documents! We're also celebrating milestone anniversaries for Ironwood Forest National Monument, the county's Multi-Species Conservation Plan, and the Ann Day Memorial Wildlife Bridge.

It is a blessing to have opportunities for progress and celebration during these challenging times for the desert.

The new RTA Next plan is one of these opportunities, with its transportation program balanced by an investment in regional wildlife crossings to ease safe passage for people and wildlife.

Special thanks to our volunteers, members, and partners who have been stalwart in making our ambitions possible. **The needs have never been greater**, so please give generously of your time and treasure in support of the desert and our quality of life!

With gratitude,

Christina McVie



A Vermilion Flycatcher rests on a palo verde branch.
Photo credit: Sheryl Hester.

Key accomplishments in 2025

The Coalition builds on more than **28 years of strong working relationships** with local governments, planners, developers, state and federal agencies, our 30 coalition members, volunteers, and the larger community. These partnerships enable us to **achieve our shared conservation goals**.

In 2025, we worked with our partners on 73 land use, policy, and planning issues.

Here are the highlights:

- We shaped key conservation goals in multiple **10 and 20-year regional land-use** plans, including those for Pima County, the Town of Oro Valley, and the City of Tucson.
- We worked on 24 specific developments to **reduce impacts on open space**, including La Mariposa, Pecos Way, Black Angus Mine, Linda Vista, and Cascada II.
- We demanded **data center development standards**, engaging with local governments on the Project Blue, La Osa, and Lockett Road projects and shaping enforceable policies and regulations.
- With public lands under threat, we created a **coalition to defend Ironwood Forest National Monument**, spoke up for critical legislation, and hosted a national press tour in Tucson.
- The **Santa Cruz River Wildlife Ramp** was completed! We helped guide its design, created a working group to identify any future ramp needs, and began monitoring wildlife movement.
- We continued to **advocate for wildlife crossings** within transportation budgets and successfully reversed a 50% (or \$25 million) cut to RTA Next's environmental funding.
- We sent over **50 comment letters** and spoke up for the landscape in just shy of **20 public hearings**.
- We supported the county's purchase of **Kelly Ranch** to conserve as open space next to Catalina State Park, after decades of advocacy.
- We led or served on **key committees**, including the new Conservation Lands & Resources Advisory Board for Pima County.

We continue to defend Ironwood Forest National Monument with our partners. Photo credit: Jim Dublinski.



CSDP volunteers planting mesquites by the wildlife underpass on Oracle Road.



Our collective impact

From the wildlife data you collect, the habitats you work to restore, the public meetings you attend, and all the other ways you show up for the desert—we are inspired by your impact.

'25 field stats

- 1,610+ volunteer hours, valued at \$54,257*
- 200 active volunteers
- 9 work days improving Oracle Road's wildlife crossings
- 30+ educational workshops, presentations & field trips
- 3 highway cleanups and 47 bags of trash collected
- 45 roadkill surveys documenting 63+ species over 300 observations

*Calculated using the Independent Sector's estimated value of volunteer time (\$33.70/hour), developed in partnership with the University of Maryland's Do Good Institute.

Jonni, Jessica, Nick, and Kate from the CSDP team on a field work day in the Tucson Mountains.



Photo credit: Jonni Zeman.



Special moments shared

It was a joy to celebrate the landscape with you in 2025—thanks for sharing in our special events, such as the unveiling of our new sign at the Big Wash Trailhead and our **inaugural Day of Desert Joy**.

One event was particularly momentous. **After 13 years**, we wrapped up Southern Arizona's longest-running wildlife camera program.

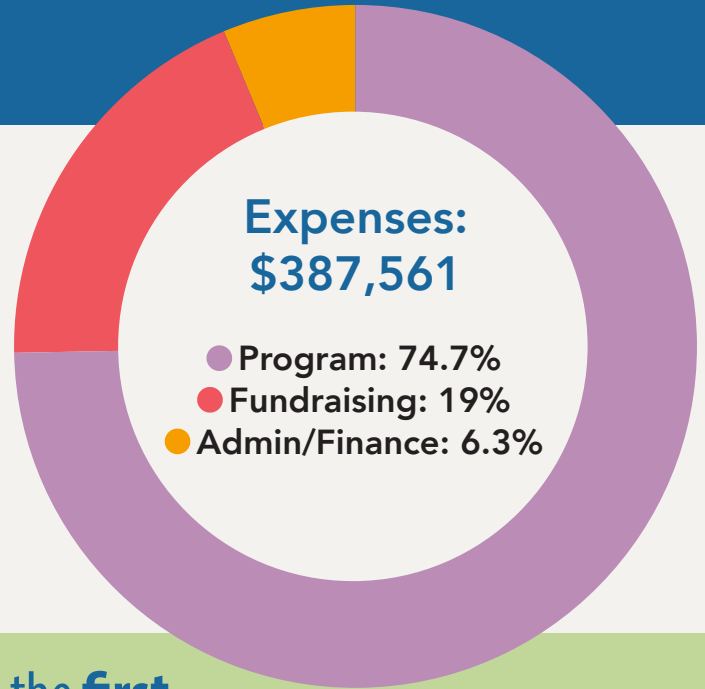
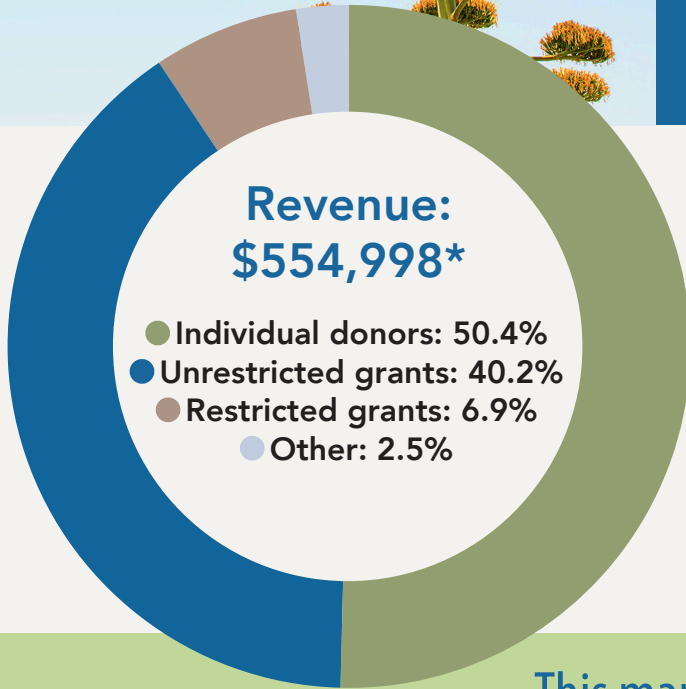
Thank you to the **50+ volunteers who powered this effort in Oro Valley** and to those who continue this work, and our roadkill surveys, in our Tucson Mountains study area!

2025 financials



We gratefully acknowledge these grant and foundation funders who supported our mission in 2025:

MET Foundation • Wilburforce Foundation
Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area
Western Conservation Foundation
Steven C. Leuthold Family Foundation
Conservation Lands Foundation
Deupree Family Foundation
Jewish Community Foundation of Southern Arizona
Community Foundation for Southern Arizona



This marked the **first**
year we raised more than half a
million dollars for the desert!

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

We do more with less. With more work than ever in 2025, your support meant we could grow to a five-person team for the first time.

*Due to a multi-year grant received in 2025, our 2025 income was inflated by \$45,000.

CSDP supporters rally for wildlife crossing funding.
Photo credit: Leslie Epperson.



Donate today!

Movement in our I-11 lawsuit

In 2025, the Federal Highway Administration and the Arizona Department of Transportation were **forced to re-do their environmental report** for the Interstate 11 (I-11) project. **This was thanks to the lawsuit** we filed with three other groups in 2022 that challenges the project's proposed, and destructive, route through Avra Valley.

Get ready to use your voice—in late 2026, we expect a new public comment period to open.



Visit stopi11.com



The proposed I-11 route through Avra Valley would destroy pristine desert habitat, fragment wildlife corridors, and undermine decades of conservation work.

Planning for conservation

In 2025, CSDP input on several regional land use plans that will shape the next 10 – 20 years of local conservation. Here are some of our wins:

- In Pima Prospers, Pima County's new 10-year comprehensive plan, we're especially proud of a new policy that **encourages developers to preserve open space** within or near their projects, helping to protect the parts of the landscape most affected by growth.
- We advocated for wildlife in the Regional Transportation Authority's draft 20-year plan (RTA Next). The **\$50M in funding for wildlife connectivity** became the most popular part of the plan, thanks to our public engagement!
- The City of Tucson's new General Plan, Plan Tucson, now incorporates the county's award-winning Conservation Lands System—a significant effort that required **partnership with local developers**.

Photo credit: Frank Staub



Our team

Board of Directors

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

Advisory Committee

Consisted 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*
Nick Maya, *Program Manager*
Jessica Moreno, *Wildlife Biologist*
Jonni Zeman, *Program and Communications Coordinator*

Interns

Aster Schaefer
Spring 2024 - Spring 2025
Mireya Ballesteros
Spring 2025 - Summer 2025

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Photo credit: Sheryl Hester.



Volunteer spotlight

A note from dedicated CSDP volunteers, Keith Kleber and Virgil Swadley:

Keith (top): "Volunteering with CSDP is an adventure: from checking wildlife cameras to constructing rock walls for erosion control at the wildlife tunnel & the list goes on. Join us for a **hyper-local experience.**"

Virgil (bottom): "Knowing my efforts help this great organization make positive improvements for wildlife is what motivates me to volunteer."

Coalition members

Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest + Arizona Master Naturalist Association + Arizona Mountain Mamas* + Arizona Native Plant Society + Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum* + 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* + Maricopa Bird Alliance* + Native Seeds/SEARCH + Protect Land and Neighborhoods + Reid Park Zoo* + 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 and 2026!*

