



## ALTAR VALLEY CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

14990 S. Sasabe Road, Tucson, AZ 85736  
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www.altarvalleyconservation.org

June 17, 2025

To: Andrew McGibbon, Chair  
Pima Natural Resource Conservation District

Dear Mr. McGibbon and Pima NRCD Board,

The Altar Valley Conservation Alliance (AVCA) would like to kindly request a contribution from Pima Natural Resource Conservation District (Pima NRCD) for monitoring and maintenance of the Elkhorn/Las Delicias Watershed Restoration Demonstration Project, along with a road maintenance workshop.

The Elkhorn/Las Delicias Project (constructed on the Elkhorn Ranch and the Santa Margarita Ranch, both Pima NRCD cooperators) 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. This project tells the story of collaborative conservation in action through each phase of planning, installation, monitoring and evaluation. Details about the project are available on [this website](#).

The project site encompasses approximately 1,500 acres and bridges two neighboring ranches: Elkhorn Ranch and the Las Delicias Ranch. The project was installed in 2012 with a generous grant of \$50,000 from Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold Foundation that provided the base for funding the project; match contributions and the donation of volunteer time brought the total invested in project installation to over \$200,000.

After installation, the Alliance has monitored the site twice annually, maintained the structures and road, and conducted educational and outreach activities at the site. Students (primarily the Tierra Seca Range Club) and professionals (primarily Natural Resource Conservation Service staff) have volunteered to monitor the site every year, and the Alliance funded student Fellows to analyze the monitoring data. A scientific paper that was recently published shows evidence that the treatments increased soil deposition and vegetation's resilience to drought ([Science of the Total Environment, March 2024](#)). These activities were accomplished through three \$40,000 grants and a \$30,000 grant from Freeport-McMoRan between 2013 and 2021.

A portion of the project was maintained in 2021 and 2024, but the remainder of the site has not been maintained since its installation in 2012, and the road and rock structures are in need of improvements to continue stabilizing and enhancing the watershed. The Santa Margarita Ranch



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(SMR) has committed to funding the rock and road structure repair at the site this fall - approximately \$25,000.

In addition to the annual monitoring and the needed maintenance at the site, the AVCA is working with the SMR and the Elkhorn to put together a road maintenance workshop in the fall of 2025 for the Border Patrol's road repair contractor (Spencer Construction), Pima County, and select erosion control contractors interested in enhancing their machinery and road construction/repair knowledge. Road expert and instructor Steve Carson has tentatively committed to a two-week road workshop in November. Initial costs are estimated at \$13,000.

The AVCA would greatly appreciate a contribution of \$10,000 from Pima NRCD for:

- A contractor (Heather Speith, tentative) to assist staff in student management and monitoring completion at the Elkhorn/Las Delicias Demonstration Site in the fall of 2025. *Cost estimate: \$1000*
- A contractor (Steve Carson, committed, per conversations via email) for the implementation of a hands-on road workshop in the fall 2025. *Cost estimate: \$9000 (of a total of \$13,000)*

The Alliance greatly appreciates your consideration and continued partnership!

Sarah King, Executive Director  
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