



**The Nature Conservancy – Arizona**  
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## The Nature Conservancy – Arizona

Sept. 1, 2016 – August 31, 2017

### PROGRAM FAST FACTS

**Congressional District(s): 1, 2, 3, 4, 9**  
**State Legislative District(s): 1,6,8,13,14,28**  
**Service Area by County/City: 9 AZ**  
**Counties: Yavapai, Maricopa, Pinal, Pima, Cochise, Graham, Coconino, Greeley, Santa Cruz**  
**Project Federal Share: \$68,650**  
**Project Local Match: \$64,798**  
**Community Volunteers Recruited, coordinated and supported by members year 2015-16: 251**  
**Volunteer Hours Served: 2952**  
**Value of Volunteer Hours: \$67,394**  
\*2014 Independent Sector Rate for the Value of a Volunteer Hour in Arizona is \$22.83

### **Community Need**

Our natural infrastructure consists of intact lands and waters that preserve wildlife habitat and safeguard species. These lands and waters also provide services for people, such as groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, and recreational opportunities. They enhance our quality of life and sustain the character of our western landscapes. But most of our rivers and wetlands in Arizona have been lost or degraded, and many important upland areas need restoration. This emphasizes the compelling need to mobilize the communities around the importance that the natural areas will serve to support the urban growth that is expected and to motivate youth to see it as a real priority that actual labor can impact.

### National Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship

#### Performance Goals

- acres of woodlands, riparian areas, and grasslands will be improved
- miles of waterways and trails will be improved
- Working with Verde River irrigation ditch companies and conducting and analyzing stream flow measurements that will lead to management practices resulting in improved flow in the Verde River.
- Water conservation education

### **Partnerships**

Arizona Game and Fish  
 Arizona State Parks  
 Arizona Project WET/University of Arizona  
 Bureau of Reclamation  
 Friends of the Verde River  
 Pima County  
 Salt River Project  
 U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
 U.S. Forest Service

### **Program Activities**

The 5 members are placed in four types of activities.

#### Stewardship Assistants

Two members will work at three Conservancy preserves to map and control invasive species, monitor the effects of invasive plant treatment, participate in fire and fuels management, native



2015-16 Members Sara Vaughan and Nathan Bell, water well monitoring, Hart Prairie Preserve ©Blair Foust

grasslands maintenance, repair and erect fencing to protect endangered species, forest restoration all leading to improving 600 acres. In addition they will building and repair public access trails, install interpretive trail signs, stabilizing stream beds on 9 miles of stream and trails.

Program Activities , continued

### Youth Education Outreach Coordinator

One member will work with Arizona Project WET coordinating teachers, community members and children to train youth about water needs and responsibilities in a water stressed state. They will direct students in learning scientific data collection techniques, learning about the source of their water, collecting information that identifies characteristics of healthy riparian areas, and presenting results at a public symposium.



Student presentation winners at Project WET symposium. ©Sara Krznarich, AmeriCorps Youth Education Outreach Coordinator

### Verde River Technician

One member will work cooperatively with Verde River irrigation ditch owners for better understanding of water use and irrigation needs. Currently the Verde River is severely dewatered in several stretches in the Verde Valley and as a result limits fish passage and the habitat is severely altered. Stream flow measurements will be taken and analyzed. This information will lead to improved irrigation practices and create incentives for creative water management that keeps more water in the river.

### SE Arizona Education Outreach Coordinator

One member will help provide outreach to local communities and provide environmental education experiences. He/she will develop curricula that will lead to the knowledge and understanding of the values and benefits of an environment that supports plants, animals and human life on earth along with the part they as individuals play in environmental protection.

### **Program Impact**

This is beginning the 7<sup>th</sup> year the Conservancy has had the privilege of working with AmeriCorps members. During the first six years of this grant members improved 6,402 acres of land and 46.5 miles of stream and trails, reached 20,204 students with water conservation education. The student's actions saved a total of 23.5 million gallons of water over the 6 years. Members recruited 856 volunteers who served 8,482 hours.

### **Mission**

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

### **Vision**

The Conservancy's vision is to leave a sustainable world for future generations.

### **History**

Our story is of a small group of inspired people who protected 60 acres of the Mianus River Gorge in upstate New York in 1955. They mortgaged their homes to buy the property, and in that singular act, The Nature Conservancy jump-started the land trust movement and set conservation on a new course. This year the Arizona chapter celebrated it's 50<sup>th</sup> year following the story that began in 1966 after Arizona volunteers had overseen the purchase and ongoing protection of the first Arizona preserve—the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve. Since that time we protected or assisted in the special designation of 1.5 million acres of land and created a conservation blueprint for the state, secured the first water right to protect stream flow for the benefit of nature, completed the first voluntary land protection agreement—a conservation easement—in the state, and established a dozen nature preserves. Chapter volunteers were the backbone of the Arizona Conservancy for many years and continue to play a substantial role with 600 volunteers dedicating 32,000 hours, the , equivalent of 17 full time employees, during fiscal year 2015.