

GOAL 3

LOVE & SUPPORT





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GOAL 3: LOVE & SUPPORT

Build champions and the constituency of support and action for Sonoran Desert conservation by raising awareness and connecting people with nature.

Background and Rationale

Personal experiences and connections with nature bring us joy, relieve stress, facilitate physical and mental wellbeing, boost our creativity and intellect, calm our minds, and provide a deep sense of place in space and time. Even so, an ever-growing body of evidence suggests that people today are spending significantly less time in nature than previous generations, raising deep concerns across fields of expertise and practice. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the average American spends 98% of their time indoors or in transit¹.

Especially concerning is a growing disconnect between children and nature. A recent study from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that kids ages 8 to 18 spend an average of 7.5 hours a day, 7 days a week, plugged into computers, TV, video games, music, cell phones, etc.² Other research found that more children know how to play a computer game and open a web browser than swim or ride a bike³. This is not just an urban challenge – across nations, this children-nature disconnect is playing out throughout rural, suburban, and urban communities.

The challenges presented by this disconnect are many. When we do not spend time in nature, we cannot realize the physical and mental benefits nature provides. Furthermore, research also suggests that simply having information about nature is not sufficient for a person to value nature, be motivated to act in its interest, and support its conservation. Experiences in and connections with nature, above and beyond mere awareness of nature, are critical as a foundation of support for nature conservation. Best said by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's #NatureForAll initiative, "New approaches are required to broaden support and mobilize action for conservation with new audiences across all sectors."

The objectives and actions identified in Goal 3 aim to engage people, especially young people, across Maricopa County to experience, connect with, and share their love of nature. These actions will grow champions and advocates for Sonoran Desert open space conservation. Actions under Goal 3 underpin the successes of Goals 1 and 2 and work in close concert with Goal 4.

The wildest and remotest place on Earth, the most imperiled species on Earth, will be protected only if people care about nature where they live.

- Ted Trzyna, Urban Protected Areas: Profiles and Best Practice Guidelines



OBJECTIVE 3.1

Raise awareness and inspire people to love, appreciate, and care for the Sonoran Desert.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATION(S)	OTHER PARTICIPANTS	TARGET YEARS
3.1.1	Develop and implement a regional open space marketing strategy.	DBG, MCPRD, CoPPRD, CoTPRD, CoPCSD, CoSPR	APRA, ASP, BOAZ, AAEE, WTMC, ASU, TNC, AZF, AGFD, ACNC-SOMO, LW, MT+PF, DFLT, SALT, ASP, Local First, municipalities, tribal communities, agencies and depts. engaged in tourism and economic development, and CAZCA partners	2018-
3.1.2	Go beyond the choir. Outreach, engage, and develop partnerships with people and organizations representing the full diversity of Maricopa County communities.	DBG, MCPRD, CoPPRD, ACNC-SOMO, BLM, AAEE, LW, BOAZ, WTMC, MSC, ASP, USFS, TPL, TNC, DFLT, SALT, AudAZ, CNUW, ASU-CAP LTER, AGFD, SI, CoTPRD, CoPCSD, CoBCSD, CoSPR, tribal communities	Municipalities, GSCPC, BSGCC, CAZCA partners, other conservation and environmental education organizations	2018-
3.1.3	Communicate broadly and often the myriad of benefits provided by Sonoran Desert open space specifically and nature broadly (economics, health, quality of life, biological benefits).	DBG, MCPRD, CoPPRD, CoPCSD, CoBCSD, CoSPR, ACNC-SOMO, ASP, USFS, AAEE, BOAZ, WTMC, MSC, TNC, MT+PF, DFLT, SALT, AudAZ, ASU-CAP LTER, AGFD, SI, CoTPRD	Local First, municipalities, tribal communities, agencies and depts. engaged in tourism and economic development, and CAZCA partners	2018-
3.1.4	Develop and advocate for implementation of a framework for eco-regional environmental education for learners of all ages. This framework would contain common Sonoran Desert ecoregion themes across parks, preserve, and trail systems.	DBG, MCPRD, CoPPRD, AAEE, ACNC-SOMO, ASU-CAP LTER, CoTPRD, TNC, DFLT, SALT, ASP, WTMC, MSC, DFCF-DAC, tribal communities	GSCPC, BSGCC, LW, municipalities, CAZCA partners, other conservation and environmental education organizations	2020-

OBJECTIVE 3.2

Get people into nature. Facilitate learning, experiences, and connections with the Sonoran Desert through formal, informal, and non-formal opportunities.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATION(S)	OTHER PARTICIPANTS	TARGET YEARS
3.2.1	Connect teachers with existing nature play and environmental education curriculum and teaching opportunities through workshops and professional development.	DBG, AAEE, ACNC-SOMO, AudAZ, ASU-CAP LTER	MSC, WTM, AGFD, TNC, DFLT, SALT, CoTPRD, LW, tribal communities, other conservation and environmental education organizations	2018-
3.2.2	Participate in and champion the development of an Arizona Environmental Literacy Plan to connect children with nature.	AAEE	ASU-CAPLTER, ACNC-SOMO, BOAZ, AudAZ, TNC, DBG to facilitate CAZCA partner participation, municipalities, tribal communities, other conservation and environmental education organizations	2018-2022
3.2.3	Familiarize schools, groups, and communities with open space parks and preserves and opportunities for experiences in nature and outdoor learning spaces. Consider developing and implementing a program analogous to Dept. of Interior's "Every Kid in a Park" program.	DBG, LW, MCPRD, CoPPRD, CoSPR, CoBCSD, CoPCSD, CoTPRD, MT+PF, DFLT, SALT, USFS, BLM, ASP	ASU-CAPLTER, ACNC-SOMO, BOAZ, AudAZ, TNC, MSC, WTM, GCCPC, BSGCC, municipalities, tribal communities, other conservation and environmental education organizations	2018
3.2.4	Research existing tools, apps, websites, and calendars that house opportunities and information on open space events, volunteering, and other kinds of engagement. Determine if existing tools are comprehensive or could become comprehensive. If necessary, develop a "clearinghouse" calendar of open space events, stewardship, informal and non-formal educational opportunities, and citizen science trainings.	DBG, BOAZ	AZTWS, WTM, AGFD, TNC, MCPRD, CoPPRD, CoTPRD	2018-2019

Objective 3.2 – Continued on next page

OBJECTIVE 3.2 (Continued)

Get people into nature. Facilitate learning, experiences, and connections with the Sonoran Desert through formal, informal, and non-formal opportunities.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATION(S)	OTHER PARTICIPANTS	TARGET YEARS
3.2.5	Utilize social and traditional media to cross-promote regional opportunities to connect with nature, eg. #ThriveOutside, #NatureForAll, and #HikeRight.	DBG to facilitate regional participation	AZTWS, TNC, AFGD, WTMC, AudAZ, BOAZ, ASP, NPS, BLM, USFS, municipalities, tribal communities, other conservation and environmental education organizations	2018-2022
3.2.6	Develop and advocate for implementation of a framework for eco-regional environmental education for learners of all ages. This framework would contain common Sonoran Desert ecoregion themes across parks, preserve, and trail systems.	DBG, MCPRD, CoPPRD, AAEE, ACNC-SOMO, ASU-CAPLTER, CoTPRD, TNC, WTMC, MSC, tribal communities	GSCPC, BSGCC, LW, municipalities, CAZCA partners, other conservation and environmental education organizations	2020-

OBJECTIVE 3.3

Build political and other kinds of influential champions for open space conservation in the Sonoran Desert.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	SUGGESTED LEAD ORGANIZATION(S)	OTHER PARTICIPANTS	TARGET YEARS
3.3.1	Connect with experts to work in the business, education, environmental community to build a base of advocacy.	DBG, PMPC, SI, MT+PF, WTMC	DBG to facilitate CAZCA partner engagement	2019-
3.3.2	Create or engage an existing coalition to motivate state and local elected officials to pursue increased acquisition and management of conservation areas in the Sonoran Desert.	DBG, PMPC, SI	DBG to facilitate CAZCA partner engagement	2018-2022
3.3.3	Identify the network of local/state/regional officials who will champion open space conservation in the region.	PMPC, DBG, WTMC, SI	ASU- CAPLTER, ACNC-SOMO, BOAZ, MSC, WTMC, TNC, DFLT, SALT, CFA, tribal communities, MAG committees and councils, DBG to facilitate CAZCA partner participation	*2017-2018
3.3.4	Develop relationships with the business community. Connect the dots between the Sonoran Desert (place), quality of life, and economic prosperity.	DBG	Local First, GPEC, AFGD, ACNC-SOMO, BOAZ, AAEE, WTMC, tribal communities, MAG committees and councils, depts. engaged in tourism and economic development, CAZCA partners	2018-2019



