

# Onward, Upward, Together

A man with a shaved head, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a brown belt, stands in the foreground of a desert canyon. The background features red rock formations under a sunset sky with hues of orange, pink, and purple. The title "A YEAR OF VICTORIES AND" is overlaid in large white letters at the top right.

# A YEAR OF VICTORIES AND

“Across Arizona, we are boldly, rapidly, collaboratively addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. How we tackle these existential threats in this decade will define the future of nature—and our civilization.”

**Dan Stellar**, state director for The Nature Conservancy in Arizona

## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

There is truly no other place quite like Arizona. Sparkling deserts, colorful canyons and winding rivers flowing among dense forests inspire wonder and awe.

At the same time, an arid climate and unique geography means the people, wildlife and natural systems of the state are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Large wildfires are happening more frequently, flowing streams

are drying up, and prolonged drought has stressed habitats and reduced wildlife populations.

For more than 50 years, The Nature Conservancy has worked to protect what makes Arizona special. In this report, discover some of the major milestones we reached in 2022—and how these accomplishments serve as a strong foundation for the audacious and necessary goals we have set for the years to come.

# VISION

“Arizona is home to iconic landscapes, diverse wildlife, productive natural systems, and wonderful people who care about the environment. The Nature Conservancy is known for bringing science and optimism to the table. That approach was important in 2022—and it will be even more so going forward.”

**Sydney Dye**, Board Chair, The Nature Conservancy in Arizona



**OUR MISSION:**  
To conserve the lands  
and waters on which  
all life depends

#### LEADERSHIP STAFF

- Daniel Stellar, *State Director*
- Diana Bermudez, *Director of Strategy*
- Heather Beshears, *Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing*
- Scott Deeny, *Director of Conservation*
- Rebecca Garrett, *Director of Development*
- Christian Stumpf, *Director of External Affairs*
- Sonja Stupel, *Director of Finance and Operations*

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES AS OF DECEMBER 2022

This dedicated group of leaders motivate our team, encourage us to take risks and inspire us by their commitment to a healthy future for Arizona.

- |  |                 |                     |                    |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Chair</b> Sydney Dye  | Erik B. Bakken  | Carrie L. Hulburd   | Earl Petznick, Jr. |
| <b>Secretary</b> Karen L. Peters   | Steven A. Betts | Anne Jones          | Rob Taylor         |
| <b>Treasurer</b> Tammy McLeod, PhD   | William E. Cobb | David J. Lane       | Jacob Tetlow       |
| <b>Immediate Past Board Chair</b> William G. Way   | Bonnie Colby    | David J. Larcher    | Jeffrey S. Walters |
| <b>Senior Advisors to the Board</b> Bennett Dorrance, John W. Graham, Honorable Jon L. Kyl | Barton Faber    | Marco A. Lopez, Jr. | Maja Wessels       |
|  | Sybil Francis   |                     |                    |

An aerial photograph of a vast forest landscape. In the foreground, a large pile of cut logs is visible, showing the texture of the bark and the circular ends of the trunks. The forest extends into the distance, with a range of mountains visible on the horizon under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a mix of natural forest and managed timber resources.

## FORESTS

“The innovations and efficiencies explored in this agreement and with [TNC] in general are quite remarkable, lead to cost savings that allowed us to complete more treatments, and are something we have an opportunity to share out and build upon in the future.”

**Samantha Flores**, project manager, Bill Williams Mountain Restoration Forest Service on the Clover Supplemental Project Agreement final report submitted to the Forest Service in December.

# Leading Forest Restoration

Forest restoration is one of the few tools available to forest managers who face a climate and wildfire crisis. TNC operates much like a learning laboratory and tests various efficiencies, to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration.

Arizona's solution is the Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) which uses mechanical thinning and prescribed fire to reduce tree densities across one-million acres of ponderosa pine forests in northern Arizona by an average of 40-percent in the next 10-20 years.

- Technology innovation has enabled us to mark 40-60 acres/day compared to 8 acres/day with traditional paint.
- Over the last few years, several fire starts were nearly immediately extinguished because of restoration efforts in the Chimney Springs project area near Flagstaff.



## BY THE NUMBERS

2,628  
acres treated

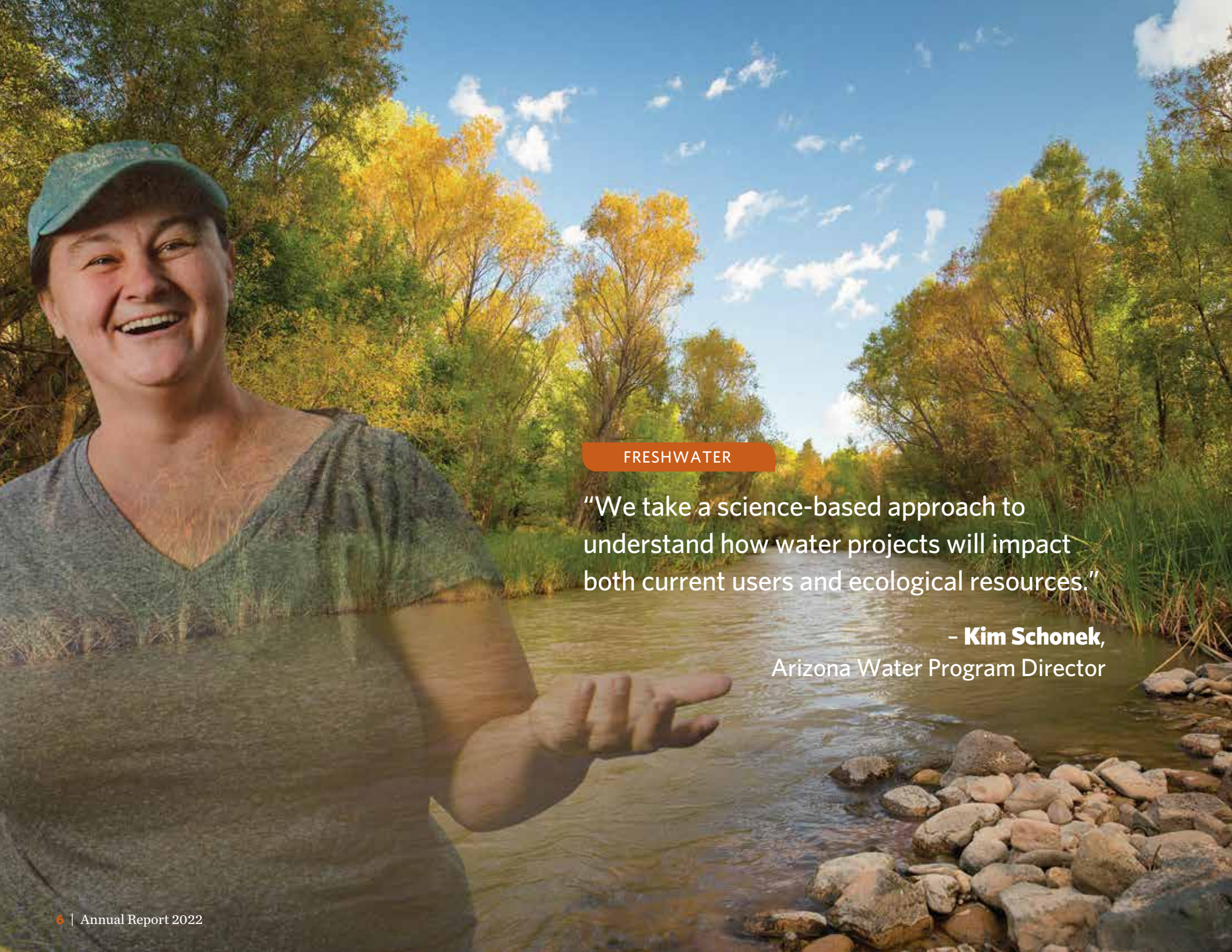
44 miles  
of road  
maintenance



## Parks West progress

Our work in forest restoration and technological advancements continues to expand. We completed mechanical thinning on over 4,200 acres in Parks West, an area north of I-40 and west of Parks at Pitman Valley. Because we were able to implement a full suite of efficiencies we saved over \$1.3 M, which we are reallocating to three additional restoration activities (mechanical thinning, mechanical meadow restoration

and mechanical timber stand improvement) on what will likely be across an additional several thousand acres. We have also been working with Arizona Game and Fish and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) to support the development of a new wildlife corridor that is directly adjacent to Parks West and which will cross over I-40.



FRESHWATER

“We take a science-based approach to understand how water projects will impact both current users and ecological resources.”

- **Kim Schonek**,  
Arizona Water Program Director

# Preserving Our Water

News about water resources in the West has been dire – prolonged drought, increases in water demand and reduced water supplies all pose risks to the environmental and economic health of our region.

TNC has a long history in water management efforts throughout the Colorado River Basin. One of the areas where we've put an emphasis is on rural communities and small agricultural enterprises, who often lack funding or support. Our current projects include:

- Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network, Bisbee Effluent Recharge Project along the San Pedro River
- Mason Lane Water Users Association irrigation ditch infrastructure, which conserves water for Oak Creek
- Upper Verde grasslands and aquifer protection efforts to preserve farm and ranch lands and reduce impacts to the Verde River headwaters.
- Partnerships with indigenous communities to increase funding for critically needed water management infrastructure.





HEALTHY CITIES

“Currently what we’re doing with what we learned is advocating for increasing green spaces in our community. It addresses so much of the mental health needs, physical health needs of our community.”

– Reggie, an Academy graduate





# Building Healthy Cities

Innovative programs that not only bring resources into our communities but empower neighborhood leaders to identify and implement solutions, have garnered national attention.

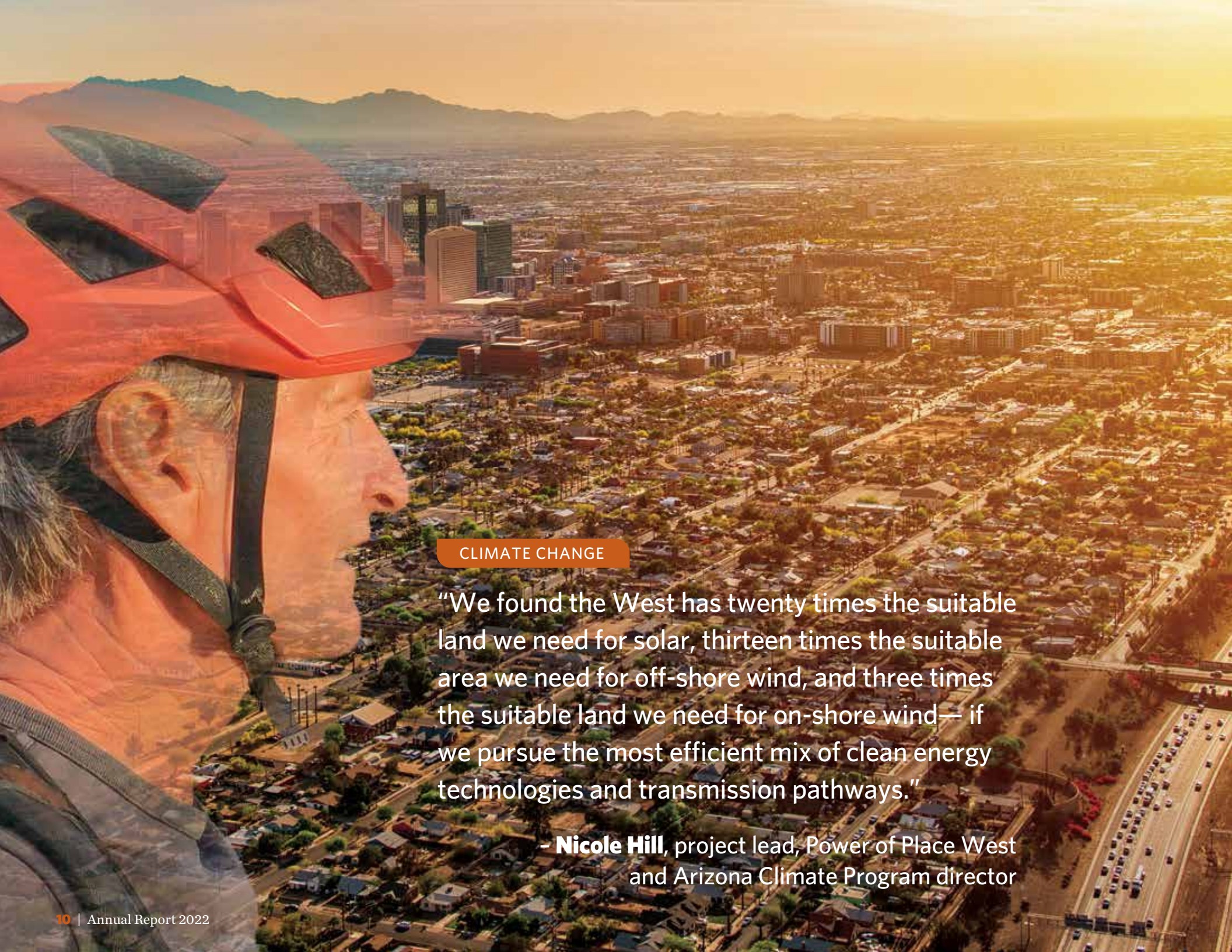
Rising temperatures affect everyone. However, underserved communities are impacted the most. TNC and Phoenix Revitalization Corporation launched the Urban Heat Leadership Academy two years ago. To date, 80 community leaders have completed the virtual program and are affecting change in their neighborhoods. In 2022, four teams of graduates implemented a series of community impact projects including the reopening of a cooling center in Phoenix, and planting trees in areas with low percentage of tree canopy through community greenings at private residences, Grant Park Community Garden, and Capitol Elementary School in Phoenix. These individuals are equipped to apply what they have learned to implement and advocate for changes to cool down their communities.



**TO LEARN  
MORE GO TO**

nature.org/  
healthycitiesaz

OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT Phoenix © iStock; Urban Heat Leadership Academy community project led by Reggie, third from right in back © Ivan Martinez; THIS PAGE Monique, a UHLA participant with neighborhood volunteers © Ivan Martinez; Known as a walking school, Frank Borman Elementary is located in Maryvale, which is a community disproportionately impacted by urban heat with only 4% tree canopy cover, compared to the average of over 12% in Phoenix, AZ. Students, parents, staff and community volunteers created a rain garden and planted 75 trees. © Ivan Martinez



CLIMATE CHANGE

“We found the West has twenty times the suitable land we need for solar, thirteen times the suitable area we need for off-shore wind, and three times the suitable land we need for on-shore wind— if we pursue the most efficient mix of clean energy technologies and transmission pathways.”

– **Nicole Hill**, project lead, Power of Place West and Arizona Climate Program director

# Acting on Climate

Climate change may be the biggest environmental challenge we face, and our polling indicates that Arizonans are increasingly concerned about this issue.

The Conservancy works with public and private partners to lean into this challenge and support durable solutions that will put Arizona on a path to carbon neutrality by 2050. Recently passed federal legislation should fuel innovation in clean energy and attract new investments in tech and manufacturing jobs in Arizona. The case for investing in innovation and policy-based solutions that address climate change has never been more clearly a win-win for people and nature.

**Power of Place:** clean energy solutions that protect people and nature. Working with industry-leading energy researchers, TNC combined modeling tools and ecosystem and wildlife habitat data to advise on the deployment of clean energy infrastructure across the West. The project also includes Voices from the West, interviews to gain wisdom and insight from Tribal and Indigenous communities across the 11 Western grid states.



**TO LEARN MORE GO TO** [nature.org/powerofplace](https://nature.org/powerofplace)



#### OUR PRESERVES

“We take a large, landscape view. We piece together land to secure conservation outcomes and improve management.”

- **Damian Rawoot**, Land and Water Protection Manager, TNC Arizona



# Our Preserves

We have long been known for our land conservation. That has not changed. Many have become supporters because of visits to the beautiful, diverse areas that we call home. Many things came to a stop during the pandemic but conservation did not. We continue our role as steward of the lands that are currently under our ownership. We are preserving water flow in our state and through critical Western rivers by partnering with agriculture and community partners. For critical lands and habitat corridors, we are identifying and implementing mutually beneficial solutions that ensure long-term protection.



OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT Burrowing Owl © Thomas Unger/TNC Photo Contest 2019; Hartwell Canyon Preserve © Sue Sirkus/TNC  
 THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE Ramsey Canyon Preserve © Mark Godfrey/TNC; Hart Prairie Preserve © Neil Chapman/TNC; Aravaipa Canyon Preserve © TNC; Mountain lion cubs in tree at Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve © Kathy West

# A Science-Based Approach

Wildfires in the western United States are concerning in part because conifer forests may not regenerate under increasingly warm, dry climate conditions and severe burning.

A recent study led by TNC, University of Montana and collaborators across the West compared the relative importance of differences in fire-caused tree mortality, which limits seeds available for tree regeneration, to the impacts of warm, dry climate conditions in determining post-fire conifer regeneration. Observations from over 10,000 sites show that warmer, drier conditions are leading to less tree regeneration after wildfires. The good news is that management interventions that reduce wildfire severity can partially offset these climate-related declines in tree regeneration. The next few decades offer a window of opportunity over which management could minimize the likelihood of fire-caused forest loss.

## SCIENCE

“Our research reveals that thinning more trees – which lessens water competition – could reduce tree mortality under drought conditions by 25 percent. In a do-nothing scenario, 50 percent of the trees would die.”

– **Lisa McCauley**,  
TNC in Arizona’s  
spatial scientist



## 4FRI project

Based on forest and climate modeling within the 4FRI project area, TNC’s collective research shows that in addition to reducing wildfire risk, scaling our work on the ground would increase carbon storage by **15-percent**, increase tree growth by **30-percent** and streamflow by **20-percent** and reduce tree mortality by **25-percent** even under a changing and variable climate.

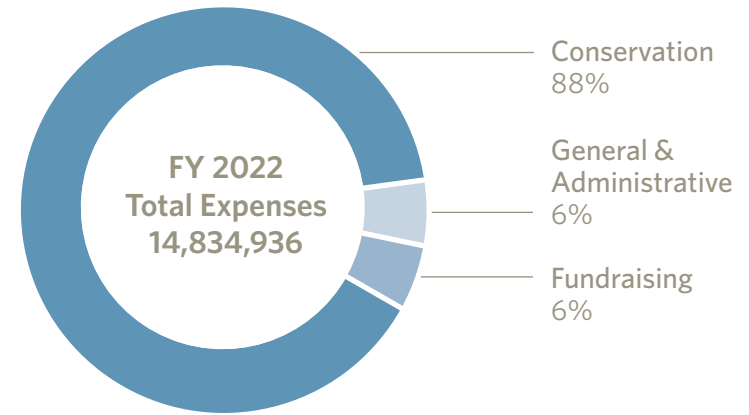
# Your Support Matters

We strive to make use of every dollar donated to The Nature Conservancy with respect for the generosity and trust of every member, every supporter and all who have a stake in the conservation of the world’s natural resources.

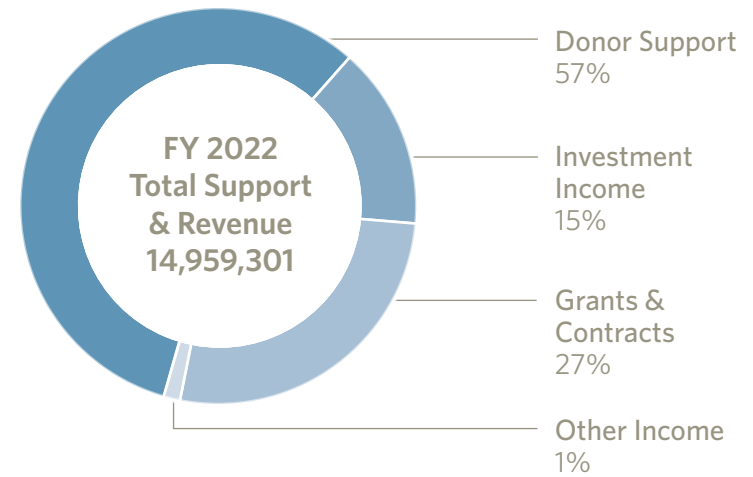
## THE NATURE CONSERVANCY IN ARIZONA STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	At June 30, 2022	At June 30, 2021
Operating Cash & Investments	\$5,618,722	\$1,375,929
Reserve and Land Cash & Investments	\$30,016,246	\$30,724,726
Endowment Cash & Investments	\$34,494,655	\$38,566,608
Pledges, Government Grants & Contract Receivables	\$5,863,541	\$7,404,868
Conservation Lands & Easements	\$47,720,597	\$50,447,394
Other Assets	\$2,391,930	\$2,911,558
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$126,105,691</b>	<b>\$131,431,083</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>\$860,119</b>	<b>\$1,623,449</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$125,245,572</b>	<b>\$129,807,634</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$126,105,691</b>	<b>\$131,431,083</b>

### Programmatic Efficiency



### Support & Revenue



\*These financial results are unaudited and chapter-specific. Please check nature.org for TNC-wide audited financials that are GAAP compliant.






The Nature Conservancy  
 Arizona Chapter  
 1819 E. Morten Ave #100  
 Phoenix, AZ 85020

[nature.org/arizona](http://nature.org/arizona)

Tucson Conservation Center  
 1510 E. Fort Lowell Rd.  
 Tucson, AZ 85719

Nonprofit Org  
 US Postage  
 PAID  
 Tucson, AZ  
 Permit #2216

**STAY CONNECTED WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!**

-  @NatureConservancyArizona
-  @nature\_arizona
-  @tnc\_Arizona

CLOCKWISE Coatiimundi © Henry Johnson; Red-spotted admiral butterfly © Tana Kappel/TNC; Hart Prairie Preserve © Abe Snider; Ramsey Canyon Kids Camp © Taylor Hanson/TNC; Aravaipa Canyon © Michael Greene/WildMoments



**CREATE A LEGACY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.**

For our children and grandchildren, let's leave a world where people and nature thrive. Fortunately, you can support conservation and at the same time meet your financial goals, by making a planned gift to The Nature Conservancy. The Conservancy offers ways for you to maximize income and minimize taxes. We also accept gifts of real estate and appreciated assets.

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT**

Mark Ryan, [mdryan@tnc.org](mailto:mdryan@tnc.org), 520-547-3429

