

Arizona Open Land Trust

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The Buckelew Family Farm

The Arizona Open Land Trust (AOLT) has an option to purchase 500 acres near Three Points in the Altar Valley – a valley boasting uninterrupted vistas, dark night skies, a handful of ranching families, and important wildlife habitat. Just west of Three Points, the Buckelew Family has owned property in the valley since the 1950's. The Arizona Open Land Trust (AOLT), working closely with Nick and Laurie Buckelew, found that a partnership with Pima County could protect this significant property: the northern gateway to the Altar Valley. The Pima County Board of Supervisors voted today to acquire AOLT's option on the property as a first step in implementing **the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan – a Multi Species Conservation Plan that has received national recognition.**

The property is a key piece in the efforts of landowners all along the Valley to protect the entire Altar Valley and the Brawley Wash that runs through the valley. Dr. William Shaw, Chair of the Science and Technical Advisory Team for the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan says: "As we begin to build the conservation system envisioned by the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, this property is important to protect." The Altar Valley Alliance, a small group of ranching families in the Altar Valley applaud the acquisition as it will allow them to move forward on restoring the Brawley Wash, a significant stream channel affecting the entire valley.

Like many families in the Altar Valley the Buckelew's have worked the land for generations and developed close ties to it. Nick's father's strong beliefs about conservation underpinned the process: "If we don't maintain clean air and water, life will deteriorate." In working with the Arizona Open Land Trust and Pima County to protect this land the Buckelew family has made a significant step toward preserving the Altar Valley for generations to come.