

Joint Education Program Proposal

April 22, 2022

To whom it may concern of the Cascabel Conservation Board,

Two score and three years ago, a few Cascabel residents welcomed a group of students, including myself in the valley. After tasting the practical nature of low maintenance living, wholistic ranching, alternative energy usage, and community created projects, I was hooked. People were actually walking the talk. I quit my life and moved to Cascabel. I knew I wasn't the only fish on the line. The Yavvs had been here along with desert harvesters.

Now a few students from the U of A, the Liverman Scholars, have visited and want to return. We have something to offer. Specifically, an accredited fellowship which helps students receive credit and Cascabel fulfill its labor needs. As someone who was looking for something similar, I see benefit in an Education Program that can effectively coordinate the success of new laborers and reimburse wizened members for their time teaching.

With so many people wondering about a solution for the future of Cascabel, I urge you to consider forming a jointly funded Education Program with Saguaro Juniper and Sweetwater Center. An Education Program mutually supported by these interdisciplinary organizations is a solution that preserves a way of life and provides new comers with agency. The shared principles of community run livestock and agriculture, landscape preservation and attentive stillness would formally be recognized and reflected by members and newcomers alike.

If the current goat walking project were to be a part of something, this would be the ideal collaborative space.

Draft Program Structure

The proposed joint Education program would be divided into; an Educational director (s) position, a community outreach fund and a living stipend fund for fellows (also known as apprentices). The educational director fund could be merged with the community outreach fund if a non-hierarchical structure was favored.

The structure of this program could be monitored by the current boards under a one-year pilot period. In this time, selected constituents from each organization would form an Education committee and set specified program goals (help organizations fulfill labor needs, apply for outside funding to support core programs, engage in data collection related to grazing or watersheds, create a cascabel fellowship program, host a Mesquite milling workshop, fund the next community fair).

If specified goals were met during or by the one-year mark, a discussion about this program's long term development could be considered. Ideally, each organization would partially fund the fixed pilot period budget.

Ultimately, we need; 1) A way of reimbursing community members that welcome and coordinate new labor in the valley. 2) The ability to prosper financially by investing in local business and grants (this would help diversify our portfolio in addition to the talk of stocks or external assets).

Estimated Budget – Pilot Program

The allotted first year budget of \$7,000 – 25,000 could be divided into:

\$10,000 –20,000 Managerial Fund

This fund provides a fixed stipend(s) for Educational Director(s)

- Director(s) would be managed by a small group of community liaisons (at least one spokesperson to represent each involved organization SJ, CCA & SW)
 - Director(s) would: attend board meetings
- Apply for grants deemed important by the supporting agencies
- Develop a money making program for the valley (goat walking or another venue related to agriculture)
 - Coordinate labor scheduling for most fellows and volunteers
 - Make decisions in the front county and field (i.e., how gates should be left, where wood should be piled, supplies runs, performance reviews).

\$2000 – 4,000: Organizational Outreach Fund

This fund would be available to community members that coordinated individual educational events pertaining to one of three of the organizations. This would mean visits from the Livermann scholars, Rosemarys students, Desert Harvesters, even finding housing for Edith and Andrew could be reimbursed internally.

Members that coordinated an educational event could report their monthly hours to the Education committee for reimbursement

\$3000 – 5,000: Living Stipend Fund for Fellows

This fund provides a comfortable living wage for fellows to work and live in Cascabel temporarily.

- \$500 per month: clean housing, utilities, transportation, etc.
- Fellow(s) would be interviewed and selected for candidacy by Educational Director(s)
- Fellows would report to Educational directors for a concise work schedule
- Work schedules would remain diverse and cover the highest priority tasks from each organization (host a mesquite milling workshop, organize a hand crew, thin pastures at El Potrero, collect data up Hot springs, touch base with private landowners, help in goat or cattle herd care, develop position descriptions, engage in written work for the conservation committee, write grants, renew leases, map active drinkers, pull mesquite, irrigate pastures, turn compost buckets, check drinkers, provide Bovine and Capri herd care, options are endless).

*These figures are subject to change and are open for discussion

What is stopping us from building the future we want to see with the past we can hear?

There are many ways to skin a cat. The organic nature of Cascabel is extremely important. For one thing, I have been able to live an unstructured life here. For another, I have felt

unconditionally pulled in directions which have made me curious about a formal comprehensive plan to this region.

If we choose to negate the concept of this proposal, our organizations will continue to plan and work independent of one another. This will inhibit our ability to come together and define what we think we need for future generations to be here. Hence our way forward will silently be directed by uncoordinated communication, intermittent visitors, and burned-out laborers.

If we chose to move forward in a collaborative fashion, a joint educational program could provide a coordinated venue for visitors to become involved, give fellows a sense of agency and inspire hope around the reflective future of Cascabel.

Your consideration and time are much appreciated. I look forward to discussing your amendments, negotiations, approvals and hopes in as open process possible.

Sincerely,

Andrew Volz