

Southwest Biological Science Center

Sonoran Desert Research Station

The Sonoran Desert, home of the giant saguaro cactus, stretches from the lowlands of Arizona into northern Mexico. Within it are some of the fastest-growing municipalities in both countries. This exceptional urban growth and increasing recreational use are causing excessive pressure on the region's natural resources and sensitive species.

The Sonoran Desert Research Station, located at the University of Arizona (UA), collaborates with the Advanced Resources Technology Laboratory in the School of Renewable Natural Resources (SRNR) to gather and manage natural resource data and to provide natural resource information to land managers throughout the desert region. The station maintains a node on the Federal Geographic Data Committee's Geographic Data Clearinghouse.

Lead scientists and staff at the Sonoran Desert Research Station conduct research on issues related to the ecology and management of desert resources. In doing so, the station provides technical assistance to the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Defense, and other client agencies on issues related to the development and implementation of plans to manage desert lands and their resources.

Some examples of ongoing research include surveys of plants and animals in land management units of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts; assistance to land managers on natural resource monitoring programs; understanding the effects of and developing techniques for the removal of alien species such as buffalograss and bullfrogs; understanding the effects of fire in the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts; understanding the decline of amphibians in the Southwestern deserts; describing the ecology of rare and threatened plants and animals; and developing information management systems that will increase the efficiency of natural resource management and increase cooperation among various land management agencies.



Lead Scientists

William L. Halvorson, Ph.D., Research Ecologist,
Professor in SRNR, UA

- Endangered plant species ecology
- Vegetation science
- Ecosystem monitoring
- Landscape ecology
- Ecosystem management

Cecil R. Schwalbe, Ph.D., Ecologist,
Assistant Professor in SRNR, UA

- Ecology of Southwestern reptiles
- Ecology of Southwestern amphibians
- Effects of fire on Southwestern biomes
- Effects of landscape destruction on Southwestern biomes

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