

Written by Kyley Warren

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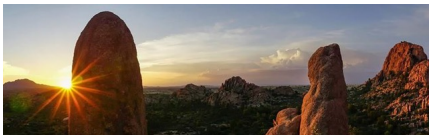
Photo of Jessica Hernreich.

The future certainly appears to be female at the Ecosa Institute, a nonprofit educational organization in Prescott that promotes design education as a means to cultivate sustainable, natural solutions to global issues.

In May of 2017, the Institute appointed Jessica Hernreich as the Executive Director. Since then, Ecosa has adopted a more modern and hands-on approach to projects, with the Institute even looking to revise their current curriculum towards a focus on the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, the international standard to promote prosperity while protecting the planet.

"Both my age and my gender are an asset to not only Ecosa, but the industry at large. My greatest hope is to bring the Ecosa curriculum and our philosophy to the forefront of design education," says Hernreich. "To really design sustainable, human ecosystems, it requires an understanding of the interconnectedness between buildings and landscape, between products and resource availability, and of all of those pieces as they relate to building economies and communities."

Hernreich is currently serving as the leader for one of the Ecosa Institute's largest undertakings: the Forever Dells Campaign. Ecosa owns a portion of unique, ecologically-diverse land in the Granite Dells, which is located just north of Willow Lake in Prescott, Arizona. Through the Forever Dells Campaign, the Institute is working to establish a conservation easement for 47 of the acres. This easement would not only preserve the land as it stands now, but it would also guarantee that the land could never be developed.



The Granite Dells landscape. Photo courtesy of Matt Turner.

A conservation easement is the most stable and long-lasting approach to preserving the area in perpetuity, regardless of who owns or manages the land.

The campaign's fundraising goal is \$55,475. Though it's a daunting number, it's a small price to pay for what is regarded as a guarantee of permanent protection for the Granite Dells property.

The total cost covers transactional fees, permanent stewardship from the Central Arizona Land Trust – who would regularly monitor the management of the land to ensure that the terms of the easement are being met – as well as legal defense, which would preserve the land regardless of any arising infringements against the easement.

"We are working with a multifaceted fundraising approach. We are crowdfunding, we're seeking business sponsorship as well as putting out for grants."

The Institute is about half way toward reaching their overall goal, thanks in part, to the supportive community and hands-on residents of Prescott.

Ecosa isn't just working to preserve the land though, they're also trying to implement additional strategies that would encourage recreational use of the area for visitors and locals alike. Currently, they are collaborating with the City of Prescott to try to create a trail system throughout the property that would connect to the City's already expansive trail system.

"If there's one legacy that I want to leave and that I want my organization to leave in Prescott and in Arizona, is to be able to say that we preserved 47 acres of this incredibly unique landscape, so that everyone can enjoy it in perpetuity."

Jessica Hernreich of Ecosa Institute is Cultivating Change and Preserving the Granit

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For more information on the Ecosa Institute's Forever Dells Campaign, visit its official [website](#).