



SONORAN
INSTITUTE

Together We Thrive



- 2018 ANNUAL REPORT -



Together We Thrive

Collaboration. We are convinced it’s the best way to build resilient communities in the West. Every team and every project at Sonoran Institute brings together people with diverse interests. Rather than resist our differences, we understand competing views, and we work through them together. When we meet with understanding and respect, we’re able to work together to assure that people and wildlife live in harmony, and that clean water, air, and energy are assured.

We convene, we cultivate civil dialogue, and we listen.

This is what makes Sonoran Institute unique. It is also what produces conservation success that endures.

Dear Friends,

Thanks to you, this has been another year of exciting accomplishments. At the Sonoran Institute, we understand that people arrive at conservation from many angles: recreation, business, academia, agriculture, cultural heritage, and art. We believe everyone’s voice should be heard, and their values considered. This commitment to collaboration has been the hallmark of our approach to natural resource conservation since our inception in 1990, and it is the reason we succeed.

Our work brings together people from two countries and tribal nations to improve the landscapes, waterways, wildlife habitat, and communities we all love. This is the story of who benefits—rural families in Colorado who will be less vulnerable to wildfires and drought; city dwellers in Tucson who experience less monsoon flooding and more shade; families from urban Mexicali who can discover a forest and learn about the Colorado River Delta’s renewal; hikers along the historic Anza Trail in Tubac or cyclists on The Loop in Tucson who enjoy a flowing, living Santa Cruz River.

Message from the CEO and Board Chair

COLLABORATION LEADS TO BENEFITS WE SHARE THROUGHOUT THE WEST

In the Colorado River Delta, where binational collaboration drives our restoration efforts, our work took another momentous leap forward with the signing of Minute 323 in September 2017. For the next nine years, this new water-sharing agreement between the US and Mexico will support continued restoration and ensure a more secure water future for Colorado River water users.

In Colorado, our Growing Water Smart workshops are bringing West Slope and Front Range communities together to find water management solutions. We’re excited to announce that a significant multiyear grant from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, a critical partner in our work, will give communities the assistance they need to implement the Colorado Water Plan.

In Arizona, we are a key partner in the Central Arizona Conservation Alliance, a coalition of over 60 organizations and municipalities. This group will soon release a Regional Open Space Strategy and Vision to protect the most vital conservation priorities of Maricopa County, the fastest-growing county in the nation.

Within our own organization, collaboration is a constant source of energy and innovation. Recently, we gathered expertise from across Sonoran Institute to greatly expand our strategic plan and vision for the Santa Cruz River. We can’t wait to tell you more in the coming months!

Finally, collaboration with an engaged board of directors is the foundation of success for any organization, and our board works hard and participates fully. We thank Chris Perez for his outstanding leadership as our Board Chair these past two years. With his guidance, our board has grown with great diversity of age, gender, geography, and professional backgrounds.

In this time of endless vitriol and blame in public discourse, we remain committed to an open table. Thanks to your support, we provide a space where everyone who has a stake in the future of the North American West is welcome. The positive results we see, and your loyal and generous support, reassure us that we are on the right path.

Stephanie Sklar

Stephanie Sklar
CEO

Dan B. Kimball

Dan B. Kimball
Board Chair



Together We Inspire

CELEBRATING LAGUNA GRANDE'S NEW INTERPRETIVE CENTER

On April 6, traditional Cucapah songs mixed with the rustle of cottonwood leaves and the gentle streaming of water in the Colorado River. This ancient combination of sounds, essentially silenced in the Colorado River Delta for decades, signified the rebirth of a natural environment and cultural heritage. For Sonoran Institute, it also encapsulated everything we mean when we talk about the power and potential of collaboration.

That day, over 100 people representing the nations, organizations, government agencies, community leaders, and donors who have worked with us to restore the Delta gathered to celebrate the unveiling of the Laguna Grande Interpretive Center, and the 20 years of partnership that made it possible.

The center is housed in a small structure donated by local businessman and supporter, Don Ramón Santillán Perea. Featuring beautifully handcrafted exhibits and interactive displays, it tells the story of the Colorado River in Mexico, the restoration of the Delta, the plants and animals of Laguna Grande, and the ways people can help with the ongoing restoration effort. School groups and other visitors to Laguna Grande will be oriented here before heading out on guided tours of the restoration area.

At the unveiling, Cucapah Elder, Antonia Torres, blessed the museum as participants gathered, and Cucapah children sang and danced. Guests then split into groups to view the exhibits, kayak on the river, and birdwatch in the ever-expanding forest.

TOGETHER WE THRIVE

The celebration continued the following day with a community tree-planting event. These events, typically drawing busloads of mainly high school and university students from urban Mexicali, have helped us plant more than 200,000 trees and restore 700 acres. As a result, Laguna Grande is the largest and most dense stand of native riparian habitat along the Colorado River in Mexico.

On this day, 150 volunteers from the local community, including family members of our staff, joined in to celebrate the efforts of our 25 field employees.

Teamwork!



“The farmer from the Mexicali and San Luis valleys owes his life to the Colorado River, and I think the least we can do is give something back; it deserves that and much more. That is why our company supports Sonoran Institute’s restoration efforts, and has donated the building for the Laguna Grande Interpretive Center.”

— Don Ramón Santillán Perea, President of NH3 Servicios



Mexicali Fluye for a Green City

Everyone deserves healthy landscapes. By working with Mexicali neighbors and partners, we’re helping children walk to school without having to cut through mounds of garbage, and have transformed dumping sites into green corridors and parks. Our Mexicali Fluye program removed 5,500 tons of solid waste and 1,760 tires from 3.25 km of neglected agricultural drains.

New Binational Agreement Expands Restoration

After restoring 700 acres of riparian habitat in the Colorado River Delta, we are setting our sights beyond the river channel. Minute 323, signed in September 2017, expanded our scope to include the estuary and surrounding wetlands. With partners, we will restore an additional 1,300 acres of habitat in the next five years.

Family Saturdays at Laguna Grande

Offered six times a year, this program brings families to the Laguna Grande Restoration Area for a day of fun education, with activities like birdwatching and kayaking. Often with multiple generations traveling an hour from urban Mexicali, these families work together and with others, building community and strengthening bonds while learning about the Colorado River.





Together We Revive

THE ART OF A LIVING RIVER

The Gila topminnow are back in the Santa Cruz River! In November 2017, during an annual fish survey with our partners in the Tucson stretch of the river, a researcher saw some small fish flitting around in the shallow water near the bank and asked the crew to stop and identify them. Hardly expecting it, we had just rediscovered the federally endangered Gila topminnow, marking the first time the species had been recorded here in over 70 years.

Celebrating the topminnow’s return has inspired our staff to find creative ways to raise awareness of the river and the many ways a healthy river benefits the community. We teamed up with Pima County and Tucson artist Kimi Eisele on a unique approach: a public art project. For anyone biking, walking, or pushing a stroller on The Loop multi-use path that runs along the river in the Tucson area, these tiny fish are now part of their journey. Stenciled images of topminnow “swim” along the pavement to tell the story of this fish and its remarkable return.

To inaugurate the artwork, we invited the community to participate in activities such as crafting topminnow costumes and gathering for a picnic dinner near the river. Public response has been enthusiastic, and locals are using these fun and informal events to tell us their ideas for improving the river and to ask questions about the fish and water. With time, new art pieces will appear in urban locations to continue drawing people to the flowing river and abundant habitat it supports so close to the city.

While the art project is new, our partnership with Pima County is longstanding. Since 2012, we have collaborated on the *Living River* reports that have tracked the improving health of the river in that area following the county’s significant wastewater treatment plant upgrades. The improved water quality has made it possible to see species of fish returning, lush vegetation maturing, and more people enjoying the river. We are now working with Pima County to promote water security for the river to help make these improvements permanent.



“Sonoran Institute brings a strong and much-needed voice for river conservation. Together, the artist, government, and non-profit can use our respective skills to highlight the environmental, economic, and cultural benefits of this amazing community asset.”

— Brian Powell, biologist, Pima County

Award-winning Reports Illustrate River Health

In February, the *Living River* reports received the National Association of Clean Water Agencies’ 2018 Environmental Achievement Award for Public Information and Education. The report series demonstrates the benefits of improved water quality to the community, and has influenced public consciousness about the Santa Cruz River’s transition from an environmental liability to a community amenity.

Rain Garden to Address Flooding

Monsoon rains flood the area around New Hope/ Nueva Esperanza United Methodist Church, making streets dangerous for children walking to school and drivers in the Elvira neighborhood. With funding from Royal Bank of Canada, we collaborated with the church, Watershed Management Group, and neighbors to reduce flooding by creating a garden that channels floodwater to basins supporting native plants.

Identifying Critical Conservation Needs in Maricopa County

Hundreds of stakeholders from across the region joined in a visioning process identifying the Gila River and 31 conservation opportunity areas throughout Maricopa County. The Regional Open Space Strategy and Vision, performed through collaboration with the Central Arizona Conservation Alliance, outlines a regional approach to protect the most vital places in America’s fastest-growing county.



Together We Respond

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Wildfires, water scarcity, flooding, extreme weather. For communities in the West, some of these threats are immediate, some are looming. Some are happening right now. The need to respond to today’s emergencies makes it difficult to take the time to develop a comprehensive plan to prepare for future climate change impacts. Whose responsibility is it, and how do communities know where to focus their resources? The issues are very complex and cross over traditional departmental and jurisdictional lines. But the cost of not adequately preparing could be devastating to property, local economies, and human lives.

That’s why we developed the Resilient Communities Workshop as part of our joint program with long-time partner, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. In February, leadership teams from three communities in Colorado—Eagle and Archuleta counties and the City of Arvada—gathered for training designed to provide the knowledge and tools necessary to build their community’s resilience.

No conference calls, no webinars. At these workshops, each team works together to come to a consensus on the biggest risks facing their community. Next, they identify the places most vulnerable, ideally down to the neighborhood and street level, and explore how to address these threats. At the end of the three-day workshop, the teams leave with a short-term plan ready to begin implementing when they get home.

Collaboration is built into the program. Teams are encouraged to bring a diversity of representatives, including a mixture of elected officials, technical staff, nonprofit and business organizations, and city and county officials. This broadens perspective and expertise, and also helps secure buy-in for the plan once back in their own organizations. Participants leave not only with a plan but also with a list of contacts ready to help them succeed.

An expanding network of leaders trained in resiliency means municipalities can better manage water supplies, homes are more protected from wildfire, insurance and repair costs are lower, and industries better understand drought and fire. Communities are stronger, and people are safer.



“We really appreciate the spirit of innovation and collaboration that Sonoran Institute promotes. Talking with your peers and being together physically, in the same room, for three days is so valuable. And I see that face-to-face contact less and less. It really benefited us.”

— Enessa Janes, community resilience coordinator, City of Arvada, CO



Resilience Tools at the Ready

Community planners and developers have new online resources to plan for extreme weather events, align development with future water supplies, and evaluate readiness for a range of possible futures in the face of climate change. See the tools at resilientwest.org, a website we launched in 2017 with our partner, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Fulfilling Colorado’s State Water Plan

Through our Growing Water Smart workshops we trained over 40 community representatives and impacted the lives of close to 500,000 Coloradans in the last year. We hope to assist 24 communities by 2019, covering more than 20% of the state’s population.

Financial Summary

FY 2018: JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018

Revenue		Expenses	
Contributions:	\$ 1,072,418	Water and Ecosystem Restoration:	\$ 716,844
Foundation Grants:	\$ 649,070	Climate Resilience:	\$ 528,947
Government Grants:	\$ 201,150	Sonoran Institute México:	\$ 686,150
Contract Income:	\$ 1,101,204	Sustainable Landscapes and Communities:	\$ 626,088
Other Income:	\$ 198,032	Fundraising:	\$ 271,584
		Administration:	\$ 457,975
Revenue Total:	\$3,221,874	Expenses Total:	\$3,287,588

Reporting based on unaudited FY18 results. The Sonoran Institute is audited annually by Keegan, Linscott & Kennon, PC. and a copy of the audit is posted on our website as soon as it becomes available. *In addition, resources for FY18 include estimated net assets of \$669,775 carried forward from previous years and restricted for use in future fiscal years.

Thank You

With your support the Sonoran Institute made positive change. Our community-based approach benefits people throughout the North American West with a more sustainable future.

The Sonoran Institute is grateful to all our donors for their support. Please note, this list reflects contributions for the period July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. We apologize for any errors or omissions.

\$100,000 AND UP

Anonymous
Anonymous
Gates Family Foundation
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
Anonymous
Anonymous
The Tinker Foundation Inc.

\$25,000-99,999

Bonneville Environmental Foundation
Pamela Grissom
Hunter Industries, Inc.
Ann K. Hunter Welborn
and Dr. David Welborn
Kathryn J. Lincoln and Christopher M. Perez
Anonymous
Giles W. and Elise G. Mead Foundation
The Nature Conservancy
United States Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service
The New Belgium Family Foundation

\$5,000-24,999

Nadine Mathis Basha
Rowene Aguirre-Medina and Roy Medina
Mary Alexander
Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation
Arizona Public Service
Kathy and B.K. Borgen
Harry G. Bubbs
John and Patricia Case
Anonymous
Belmont Owners Group
Bob and Kim Eck
El Dorado Holdings, Inc
Samuel and Bea Ellis
Louise and Jim Glasser
Michael and Beth Kasser
Bonnie Kay
Dan and Kit Kimball
Don Moon
Laurinda Oswald
Lollie Benz Plank
Steven C. Leuthold Family Foundation
Kara and Rich Teising
Tucson Electric Power Company
William B. Wiener, Jr.

\$1,000-4,999

Carolyn Bass
Henri and Pam Bisson
Fred and Diane Bowden
Elizabeth Knight Campbell
and Dr. Carlos Clinton Campbell
Linda Campbell
Center for Performance and Civic Practice
Kitty Collins
Anonymous
Elizabeth B. Denison
Charis Denison and Scott Hummel
Paul and Downing Denison
Andrew and Elizabeth Downs
Diamond Ventures, Inc.
Bill Doelle and Linda Mayro
Renee Downing and Edgar Dryden
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
Evim Foundation
The Fanwood Foundation
Lorraine Gillespie
Barbara Green
Anonymous
Peggy Hitchcock
Nyda Jones-Church
David and Nancy Landon
Lee and Lisa Leachman
Ron and Jane Lerner
Dennis and Marty Minano
Dwight Minton
Bryan and Axson Morgan
Catherine Morton
Jan Rickert-Mueller
The Prudential Foundation
Anonymous
Bill and Alice Roe
Arbeth L. Sackett
Anonymous
Richard and Stella Schaefer
Anonymous
Stephanie Sklar and Jeffrey Wilkinson
Bill and Carol Smallwood
Buzz and Holly Thompson

\$250-999

R.A. Ainsworth
Patsy Batchelder and Andy Wiessner
Michelle Bonito
Emily Brott and Chris Martin
Susan and Peter Culp
Cynthia Dickstein and Frank Grundstrom
Michael and Carol Gass
Anonymous
Paul and Wendy Greeney
Harley Higbie
Anna Hill Price
Martha Hunter and Charlie Henderson
Fritz and Gayle Jandrey
E. Courtney Johnson
Nancy Laney and Timothy Dennehy
Suzanne Lewis
David C. Lincoln
Scott and Deborah Livingston
Kevin and Jill Madden
Dr. Pamela A. Maher
Anne Maley and Tim Schaffner
Michael and Linda McNulty
Michael Milczarek
Winnie Mitchell
Jan Mulder and Greg Bedinger
Jeffrey and Sharon Rosenblum
John Shepard and Carol Evans
Harriet Silverman and Paul Smelkinson
Sarah and David Smallhouse
Audrey and Sean Spillane
Anonymous
Hester Van Heemstra
Lisa F. Warneke
David Wegner and Nancy Jacques
Wildlife Corridors Fund
Page B. and Pearre Williams

- Hummingbird Circle Donor
 - Sonoran Institute Board Member

Up to \$249

Amazon Smile Foundation
Conrad Anker and Jennifer Lowe
Anonymous
Joseph Ballard
Jon Bauer
Kathleen Broadman
Duncan Brown
Theresa and Larry Bucher
Toni Bullington
Lorene Calder
Emily Clark
Claudie Clerc
Claud Cluff
Arlan M. Colton
Mary Dahl
Karen Davidson
Anonymous
Dino and Elizabeth Murfee DeConcini
Ian Dowdy
Norm and Jeanne Eggert
John Elliott
David Engel
Chris English
Anonymous
Guillermo Higuera Franco
Alberto Gallardo
John Geddie
Susan and Phillip Gerard
Andrea Gerlak
Susan and Richard Goldsmith
Thomas A. Gougeon
Bruce L. Granger
Steven Granger
Anika Hanisch
Charlotte Hanson
Robert Harrington
Andrew C. Harris
Paul Heffron
Mark Homan

Horst Engineering
Michael Hughes
Gordon Hunt
Carole Hunter
Colleen Iuliucci
Bill and Jane Jackson
Evan Jensen
Kate Jensen
Charles and Karen Jonaitis
Robert P. and Beverly Jones
Jonathan and Janet Kempff
Edgar and Alice Kendrick
Richard and Christine Kovach
Dyann and David Kutob
Sandra L. Laursen
Karen Leigh
Robert W Linehan
Richard and Lillian Lund
Christina Manriquez
Steven Marlatt
Sarah and Stephen Martin
Felicia and Warren May
Anonymous
Gary McNeil
Chuck Minckley
Richard and Mary Ann Miya
Robert and Kay Moline
Anonymous
Sarah S. More
Paul and Tomi Moreno
Terry L. Murphy
Anonymous
Edward and Sandra Notz
Elaine OHara
Michelle Olson
Carlos Mario Gerardo Ortiz
Nick Paretti
Beverly J. Parker
Bruce M. Plenck

Amy Plopper
Nathan Porter
Helen S. Price
Julie Ragland
Nancy Robertson
Deborah Roth
Sherry Sass and Carlton Baker
Katherine Schmidt
Karl Shaddock
Leota Shaner
Eve Shapiro and Paul Gordon
Betsy and Arthur Sickler
Paula Simmonds
Mary and William Singer
Diane L. Sipe
Dean and Ilene Sipe
Sue Sirkus
Tutti and Gary Skaar
Amanda Smith
Patricia Smith
Alice F. Stowell
Daniel Sylvester
Nancy Terrill
TisBest Philanthropy
Anonymous
Nina Trasoff and Rodney Jilg
Susan and Donato Valdivia
Valley of the Sun United Way
Peter and Reyn Voevodsky
Karen Wade
Cynthia Wallace
Luann Sewell Waters
Margaret W. Weesner
Teri Weissgerber
John Wise and Evelyn Wachtel
Brian Wood
Francisco and Rocio Zamora
Tessa Zugmeyer
Claire Zugmeyer and Sky Jacobs

GIFTS WERE MADE IN HONOR OF

Bruce and Cheryl Alver
Jessie Crown
Leila Gass
Nyda Jones-Church
Joe Kalt
Dan and Kit Kimball
Jake Kittle
Sarah Martin
Denny Minano
Bryan Morgan

IN KIND GIFTS

Don Martin and Charlotte Hwang
Owls Club
Tucson Museum of Art

GIFTS WERE MADE IN MEMORY OF

Mazie Adams
Elsie Townsend Small
Pedro Joab Aguirre
Maria Arvizu
John Perry Barlow
Shaw Kinsley
Jim Luiz
Bill Mitchell
Bernice Schmidt
Judy Shearer
Kathleen Zavatsky

Sonoran Institute Staff

Stephanie Sklar
Chief Executive Officer

Seth Cothrun
Senior Director of Marketing & Development

Oscar Delgado
Chief Finance and Administration Officer (previous)

Teresa Eierdam
Chief Finance and Administration Officer (current)

John Shepard
Senior Director of Programs

Ian Dowdy
Director, Sustainable Landscapes and Communities

Sarah Martin
Development Manager

Edith Santiago Serrano
Associate Director, Water and Ecosystem Restoration

Karen Schlatter
Associate Director, Water and Ecosystem Restoration

Jeremy Stapleton
Director, Climate Resilience

Ryan VanDero
Manager of Human Resources and Accounting

Francisco Zamora-Arroyo
Director, Water and Ecosystem Restoration

USA AND MÉXICO

David Alfaro Rodríguez
Celedonia Alvarado Camacho
Yolanda Arellano Rodríguez
Raúl Arias Navarro
Laurel Arndt
Karina Bañuelos Bátiz
Rodrigo Bayona Miranda
Eduardo Blancas Gómez
Leticia Brumbaugh
José Luis Cabrera Negrete
Elise Christmon
Francisco Javier Cisneros Soto
Jesús Fernando Contreras Zarate
Rafael Díaz Camarena
Rosa Elizabeth Díaz Argumedo
Angelica Cruz Favela
Edgar Emilio Flores Alvarado
Guadalupe Cristino Fonseca Molina
Cristal Galindo Jiménez
Rocío Berenice García Villanueva
Rodolfo García Aristegui
Toni Garcia-Bullington

Gabriela González Olimón
Humberto González Salazar
Rosa María González Gómez
José Guadalupe Gutiérrez Luna
Kasandra Judith Gutiérrez Perez
Deus Dedit Hernández López
Ezequiel Hernández Cárdenas
Michelle Valerie Hernández López
Rabí Eduardo Hernández Pérez
Daniel Aarón Herrera Chávez
Leobardo Raymundo Herrera Mendoza
Miguel Herrera Chávez
Moisés Jiménez Fuentes
Fátima Luna
Corinne Matesich
Angela Meléndez
Emilio Mendoza Celaya
Mario Mendoza Ortiz
Alma Lidia Merendón Cerega
Rogelio Mora Cañez
Cara Nassar
Sandra Eloísa Ortiz Acosta

José Humberto Pacheco
Teresa Patlán García
Karla Cristina Perea Olguín
Francisco Pérez Fabela
Alba Ramos
Aidé Ramos Wong
Tomás Enrique Rivas Salcedo
Estela Berenice Rivera Hernández
Ana Carolina Romero Jiménez
Alejandro Cruz Rosas Palafox
Enrique Rosas Garza
Sandra Luz Rosas Zavala
Dzoara Elizabeth Rubio López
Brandon Ruiz
Mauricio Ruiz Zapién
Helen Salazar Arteaga
Amanda Smith
Harold Thomas III
Pedro Zapata
Alfredo Zavala Hernández
Claire Zugmeyer

Sonoran Institute Board of Directors

Rowene Aguirre-Medina | Mesa, Arizona

Mary Alexander | Scottsdale, Arizona

David Baumgarten | Gunnison, Colorado

Henri Bisson | Tucson, Arizona

John Case | Scottsdale, Arizona;
Marquette, Michigan

Andrew Downs | Chicago, Illinois

Louise Glasser | Tucson, Arizona;
Lake Forest, Illinois

Allison Green | Atlanta, Georgia

Barbara J.B. Green | Boulder, Colorado

Anna Hill Price | Rhinebeck, New York

Ann Hunter-Welborn | Encinitas, California

Nyda Jones Church | Rancho
Santa Fe, California

Joe Kalt | Tucson, Arizona; Bridger, Montana

Dan Kimball | Tucson, Arizona;
Grand Haven, Michigan

Lee Leachman | Fort Collins, Colorado

Gabriel López | Tijuana, Baja California

Laurinda Oswald | Amado, Arizona

Chris Perez | Scottsdale, Arizona

Lollie Plank | Tucson, Arizona;
Banner, Wyoming; Long Lake, Minnesota

Richard Schaefer | Tucson, Arizona

Matt Teeters | Denver, Colorado

Kara Teising | Nashville, Tennessee

Buzz Thompson | Stanford, California

David Wegner | Tucson, Arizona;
Durango, Colorado



**SONORAN
INSTITUTE**

100 N. Stone Ave., Suite 400
Tucson, AZ 85701

sonoraninstitute.org



Our Mission

The Sonoran Institute's mission is to connect people and communities with the natural resources that nourish and sustain them. We work at the nexus of commerce, community, and conservation to help people in the North American West build the communities they want to live in while preserving the values which brought them here. We envision a West where civil dialogue and collaboration are hallmarks of decision making, where people and wildlife live in harmony, and where clean water, air, and energy are assured.

Where We Work

COLORADO RIVER BASIN | DESERT SOUTHWEST | ROCKY MOUNTAINS

All photos ©Bill Hatcher/Sonoran Institute, 2018
except: p. 8 by Lucas Ludwig and Natasha Miller