



In this edition of the **Sonoran Post**, we work with communities to connect with nature and create a deeper understanding of the interaction of water, land, and people. From municipal workshops, virtual events, and in-person festivals, conservation starts when we come together for a shared vision of the Colorado River Basin. [Donate today](#) to continue connections!

## SANTA CRUZ RIVER DRAGONFLY FESTIVAL

The Santa Cruz River program and our Marketing team have been hard at work with our regional partners on the Santa Cruz River Dragonfly Festival! Dragonfly Festival (formerly Dragonfly Day) is a month-long celebration of these colorful, dazzling insects that are flourishing in the clean waters of the Santa Cruz River. Be sure to check out [the event page](#) to register for our events, pick up a Nature-to-Go kit at Pima County libraries, and to learn how you can collect valuable data that will support our Living River publication.

The first event hosted by Sonoran Institute and supported by Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area is [Bugs & Bites](#) at Playground Bar & Lounge, September 18th from 6-9 p.m. This event is family-friendly and will be available in English and Spanish.



## FROM COLORADO TO THE BORDER - WE'RE GROWING WATER SMARTER

Our Growing Water Smart team has been in full swing as we gear up for our 11th Colorado Growing Water Smart Workshop where community leaders in Fort Collins, Fort Lupton, Lafayette, Larimer County, Johnstown, Mead and Little Thompson Water District will come together to solve water and land use issues unique to each community. In August, our border water smart program released [a full report \(in English and Spanish\)](#) documenting the Ambos Nogales Growing Water Smart workshop that took place in June. This report describes all the key workshop details, discussions from presentations and work sessions, and relevant outcomes from the action plans of participating teams. As our first binational workshop between sister city border communities, we are excited to leverage these learnings to improve our workshops and continue to support cross-border communities in the future. Our next binational workshop will be between the communities of Calexico and Mexicali on November 19-20 in Mexicali.

## ECOLOGY IN ACTION!

At the beginning of August, eight members of the Sonoran Institute Mexico team participated in a bird-watching training with Mujeres en Parvada in Ensenada. This training aimed to enhance their skills for leading bird-watching workshops and community events at our urban wetlands and restoration sites.

Earlier in the month, the team distributed information about the Mexicali Fluye initiative to the community in Colonia Solidaridad Social in Mexicali. On August 27, we hosted a consulting forum focused on agricultural water reuse as part of the Las Arenitas project, funded by The Nature Conservancy and the Gonzalo Río Arronte Foundation. Additionally, we hosted a virtual conference, "Mexicali Flows, The History Continues." Project Manager Claudio Hernandez and Community Participation Coordinator Iliana De Jesús, highlighted the achievements and ongoing efforts of the Mexicali Fluye initiative.



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# BECOME A SONORAN POST SPONSOR EMAIL MARKETING MANAGER MELISSA AT MCORDERO@SONORANINSTITUTE.ORG



## WE ARE HIRING – JOIN OUR TEAM IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN!

**Senior Director of Development and Marketing** – Leads our fundraising and outreach efforts to generate resources and brand recognition for the Sonoran Institute.

**Director of the Growing Water Smart program** – Oversees the design and implementation of workshops, budget, and metrics programs. Director is also the lead in cultivating donors, partners, consultants, and sponsors for the program.



## SONORAN INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHT: CLAUDIO HERNANDEZ

Claudio Hernandez – Claudio has been with the Sonoran Institute since 2022 and is the leader of the Mexicali Fluye project. This project involves generating collaboration between different neighborhoods, Sonoran Institute and the city government to achieve conservation outcomes along the drains in Mexicali. Claudio and the

team have excelled at bringing these partners together for a shared vision of a Transforming the face of Mexicali's drains.

Born and raised in Mexicali, he is driven by his desire to contribute his time and knowledge to social and environmental causes in his community. His experience leading educational and social programs focused on promoting sustainability and environmental protection led him to become the Project Manager of the Mexicali Fluye project at the Sonoran Institute. He strongly believes that we are a great team, and with everyone's support, he has "had the fortune of getting to know and work as a team with our communities and is excited to know that everyone's effort will soon be reflected in better spaces."



## COOLING OFF AND CLEANING UP

As temperatures are beginning to cool in the Basin, we look forward to getting back into our rivers to clean up! While our trash trap in Nogales has been helping reduce upstream flow this summer, we're gearing up to bring communities together to care for our rivers. Mark your calendars for a Santa Cruz clean up October 12 in Tucson. Our Mexicali team will also be working with a local neighborhood on a river cleanup and beautification project along the urban rivers.

Help the work we do in the Colorado River by joining our [membership program, Sonoran Sustainers](#)



## A MESSAGE FROM CEO MIKE ZELLNER

As our team and its partners continue to make strides in environmental and community initiatives, we are preparing for major events, reflecting on recent accomplishments, and expanding their team to support ongoing projects and future goals in the Colorado River Basin.

The Growing Water Smart team is preparing for its 11th Colorado workshop, where leaders from various communities will address local water and land use challenges. In August, a report on the Ambos Nogales workshop was released in English and Spanish, documenting the event's key discussions and outcomes. This was the first binational workshop for sister city border communities, and future workshops will build on these insights.

In Mexico, the team engaged in various activities: bird-watching training with Mujeres en Parvada, information distribution in Colonia Solidaridad Social, and a consulting forum on agricultural water reuse in Mexicali. A virtual conference on the Mexicali Fluye initiative was also held, led by Project Manager Claudio Hernandez and Coordinator Iliana de Jesús.

The Santa Cruz River program is gearing up for the Dragonfly Festival, a month-long event celebrating dragonflies, featuring educational activities and data collection opportunities.

These strides are possible due to leadership and hard work of our staff in Colorado, Arizona, and Baja California. You can be a part of our mission to connect people and their environment through education, stewardship, and research-based conservation efforts.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- September** [Santa Cruz River Dragonfly Festival](#) Tucson and Marana, AZ
- Sept 9-11** [Colorado Growing Water Smart Workshop](#) Estes Park, CO
- Sept 18** [Bugs & Bites](#) Tucson, AZ
- Sept 19** [Green Drinks Tucson](#) Tucson, AZ
- Sept 20** [Colorado River District Annual Water Seminar](#) Grand Junction, CO
- Sept 28** [Dragonfly Festival Tours](#) Tucson and Marana, AZ
- October 3** [Happy Hour with Colorado APA Conference](#) Loveland, CO
- October 12** [Santa Cruz River Cleanup](#) Tucson, AZ

At Sonoran Institute, we believe that by connecting people and nature today, we can create a positive future for all. We are dedicated to protecting and restoring the Colorado River Basin, and to ensuring that our communities have access to the water they need to thrive. Join us in our mission to create a sustainable future for the Colorado River Basin and beyond.

5049 E BROADWAY BLVD, SUITE 127 TUCSON, AZ 85711 | 520-290-0828 | SONORANINSTITUTE.ORG

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