



In the January 2024 edition of *The Sonoran Post*, explore the Sonoran Institute's impactful strides. From practical low-water gardens to fortified water plans, communities move towards sustainability. Dive into updates on the annual fish survey, revealing the health of aquatic life. Discover the progress of Mexicali Fluye, transforming water management. As we embrace 2024, your support is crucial for resilience and positive change. Join us in making this year impactful. [Donate now](#) to support these initiatives and be a part of the transformative journey toward sustainable communities.

SANTA CRUZ RIVER: ANNUAL FISH SURVEY

Sonoran Institute's annual fish survey, led by Claire Zugmeyer on November 6 & 7, received broad support. A collaborative effort saw participants from federal, state, and county governments, the University of Arizona, and private organizations joining forces with staff and volunteers. The survey, spanning the Santa Cruz River from Nogales Wash through Marana, provided a comprehensive assessment of aquatic life. This collective commitment highlights Sonoran Institute's dedication to environmental cooperation and collaborative research, crucial for preserving the Santa Cruz River ecosystem.



FLOWING SUCCESS: MEXICALI FLUYE

The Sonoran Institute's Mexicali Fluye project is achieving remarkable milestones. Our successful Board of Directors meeting in Mexicali included the launch of our partnership with the community, US and Mexican government representatives, and private foundations and companies. Notably, the Sempra Foundation's generous \$200,000 support on November 9 and the Gonzalo Rio Arronte Foundation's approval of a substantial Phase II funding of 26,920,320 pesos on November 23 are significant financial boosts. New Board member Gabriela Luken Marce adds dynamic leadership to environmental advocacy. Workshops, project presentations, and progress in hiring for the Colorado River Delta Program underscore the project's comprehensive approach, reflecting the Sonoran Institute's commitment to sustainable water management in Mexicali.

GROWING WATER SMART AWARDS FOUR GRANTS

Empowering communities with technical assistance grants, our Growing Water Smart (GWS) initiative progresses. In Commerce City, Colorado two low-water gardens reflect updated land-use codes. Frederick, Colorado fortifies its Water Shortage Contingency plan in collaboration with Central Weld County Water District. Superior, Colorado modernizes its Drought Management plan to meet the latest best practices. Indio Water Authority, California pioneers two drought-tolerant landscape designs. Meanwhile, Rialto, California navigates Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) codes, crafting a public-use MWELO Guideline Handbook. These grants, intertwined with the GWS vision, spark transformations, nurturing resilience and water efficiency.



[CLICK HERE TO DONATE!](#)

[BECOME A MEMBER!](#)



A LIVING RIVER/UN RÍO VIVO, NOGALES 2023

A Living River: Santa Cruz River Conditions from Nogales Wash to Amado is a *Living River* report that highlights recent achievements along the river in the border region and river conditions from Nogales Wash to Amado during the 2022 water year (October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022). *Living River* reports were launched in 2008, when Sonoran Institute began monitoring conditions of this stretch of Santa Cruz River in Santa Cruz County that flows year-round.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL REPORT!](#)

POWER OF PROGRESS

Our 2023 Annual Report, titled "Power of Progress," is now available featuring achievements like a proposed state park and a \$4.3 million partnership. Discover how Growing Water Smart and the One Basin initiative are addressing water challenges. Celebrate the Santa Cruz River's three decades of restoration and community engagement. Your support has powered these accomplishments. Dive into the [REPORT](#) and consider a meaningful year-end gift to sustain our progress. [DONATE TODAY!](#)



A MESSAGE FROM CEO, MIKE ZELLNER

The Sonoran Institute looks forward to an amazing 2024 with a host of opportunities before us.

With the Colorado River negotiations for a 2026 agreement entering full swing this year, the Sonoran Institute is actively working with communities on the ground to help them become more resilient. Our Growing Water Smart program is providing tools and policy support from Colorado and Arizona to California and the US-Mexico border.

Of particular importance to the Sonoran Institute are communities that traditionally have not been at the negotiating table, many of whom are facing the direst circumstances of the Colorado River crisis. Our One Basin Initiative will continue to support the Tribal Nations in their efforts to build water capacity. Our Mexicali Fluye program is a pioneering community partnership to generate a New, New River. And the Santa Cruz River program is building knowledge with community-based science like the Annual Fish Survey.

All these initiatives are successful because of the outstanding dedication and commitment of the Sonoran Institute staff and you—our partners, donors and friends. Thank you for sharing your time and resources with us! We are proud to have you with us in 2024!



SONORAN INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHT - ELIZA STOKES

Meet Eliza Stokes, the Program Manager for Growing Water Smart (GWS) at the Sonoran Institute. Joining in 2022, Eliza trains and assists communities in strategic water resource planning. With a background in non-profit work, she excels in building coalitions, policy advocacy, and communications. Eliza's expertise was honed at Tucson's Watershed Management Group, where she championed community-based water conservation.

Now leading GWS Arizona, Eliza brings a wealth of experience to support the online Peer-to-Peer Network. Outside work and her pursuit of a master's in Public Policy at the University of Arizona, you'll find her exploring the Sonoran Desert with her Great Pyrenees, Maggie.



Photo by Spencer Harding

YOU'RE INVITED: RIVER CLEAN UP & WILDFLOWER PARTY - JAN 20, 2024

Get ready for a day of community, nature, and fun! Join us on January 20th, from 9 am to noon, along the heritage stretch of the Santa Cruz River for our "River Cleanup and Wildflower Party." This family-friendly event, in partnership with Ironwood Tree Experience, includes a river trash cleanup, wildflower-bomb making, a DJ, food trucks, live reading from Logan Phillips, and crafts for kids. Thanks to the Tucson Ward 1 Participatory Budget De la Gente grant and our sponsor TEP, we aim to remove 2000 lbs of trash and spread wildflower seeds. Save the date, bring your friends and family, and let's make a positive impact on our community together! [REGISTER NOW!](#)



Interested in becoming a sponsor for this event?

Contact Melissa Cordero (520) 505-0034 | mcordero@sonoraninstitute.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN 18 *Green Drinks Tucson* - Free Event - Tucson, AZ [CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)

JAN 20 *River Cleanup & Wildflower Party* - Free Event - **Tucson, AZ** [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

JAN 22-24 *Growing Water Smart: Winter 2024 - Phoenix, AZ* [CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO](#)



Did you enjoy Dragonfly Day? Would you like to learn more? Check out and subscribe to UArizona's Santa Cruz River Connections page [HERE!](#)

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.

[BECOME A MEMBER!](#)

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE!](#)