

2008 ANNUAL REPORT





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Inside Front Cover – Cactus by Niamh Wallace; Northern Rockies Staff by Kim Ragoutzkie; Colorado Dusk by Victoria Collier.

Page 1 – Luther Propst by Ian Wilson.

Page 2 – Housing Development by Jennifer Boyer.

Page 3 – Moose by Joseph Gilpin; Mountaintops by Sarah Pitcher.

Page 4 – Top, courtesy of Joe Kalt; Santa Cruz Three Uses by Amy McCoy.

Page 5 – Colo. Delta by Mark Lellouch; map by Theresa Reindl Bingham.

Page 6 – Gas Well, Sonoran Institute file photo; Mt. Crested Butte by Joe Marlow.

Page 7 – Desert Sign by Stephanie Weigel; Urban Edge courtesy of City of Phoenix Archives.

Pages 8 & 9 – Large Saguaro, Sonoran Institute file; Volunteer Mapping by Sarah Studd; all others by Cheryl McIntyre.

Page 10 – Paddling the Colorado by Mark Lellouch; Media Tour by Ian Wilson.

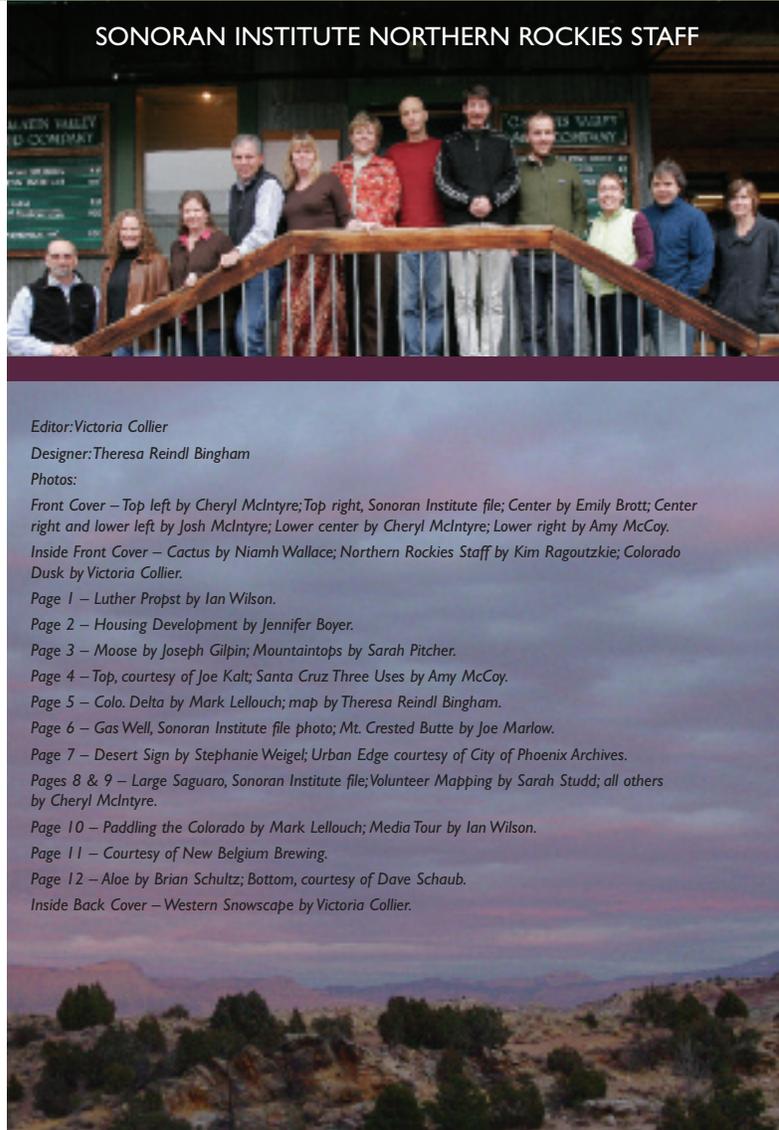
Page 11 – Courtesy of New Belgium Brewing.

Page 12 – Aloe by Brian Schultz; Bottom, courtesy of Dave Schaub.

Inside Back Cover – Western Snowscape by Victoria Collier.

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Friends,

2008 was indeed a noteworthy year. The global financial crisis and momentous election captured public attention in a way we haven't seen in decades. Considering these events with a focus on the West, I see three fundamental opportunities to change policy at the federal level.

The election will change public land policies that have undervalued, neglected and undermined the West's natural assets and quality of life. The election revealed a marked contrast between the Old West and the New West, much of it explained by economics and demographics. President Obama carried Denver, college counties, tourism/resort counties from Sun Valley to Las Vegas, largely Hispanic communities, and some Native American areas. Senator McCain carried the rest. No matter how they voted, communities across the region should have better opportunities to protect land, prosperity and quality of life with an administration that is more likely than the previous one to balance natural values and local interests with resource extraction.

I see significant opportunity to better protect public lands. The Sonoran Institute places special emphasis on working with the Bureau of Land Management, which oversees more land in the West than any other agency. Although underfunded and under intense political pressure to facilitate energy and mineral development, BLM staff does a remarkable job. In the 1990s, Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt created the National Landscape Conservation System to protect BLM lands with the highest conservation values. Now we have an opportunity to give these lands permanent protection. I also see the prospect of better cooperation between BLM managers and adjoining communities to address issues such as conservation, developing wind or solar energy, and the impacts of energy and resource development on quality of life and a sustainable local economy.

We will see a major push to develop renewable energy – especially wind and solar power. Several factors will drive this: President Obama committed to develop alternative energy resources; Western states, led by California, are strengthening their commitment to clean, renewable energy to meet their demand for electricity; and wind and solar are closing their cost gap with traditional energy sources. This movement promises to bring sustainable economic benefits to rural communities. Colorado's San Luis Valley is leading the way in developing solar power as the foundation for economic prosperity. Renewable energy resources are necessary to combat climate change and to strengthen national security; however, we must be more thoughtful than we have been with recent

oil and gas development as we make decisions about where to place wind, solar, and geothermal facilities and transmission lines.

Finally, it is time for the federal government and Western states to rethink our over-reliance on highways. For five decades, the priority for public spending on transportation has been to build new roads into virgin landscapes around cities, which opens up these lands to development. We can no longer afford the high costs of low-density, sprawling development patterns and long commutes. It is no mystery that the highest foreclosure rates in Phoenix, Las Vegas and other cities are on their edges, where the automobile is about the only choice for getting around. It is time to invest in intercity trains and light rail, bicycle paths, and downtowns and neighborhoods where people can walk or bicycle to work, school and shopping.

The Sonoran Institute welcomes these opportunities for creating a more sustainable West – Wallace Stegner's West with a "society to match the scenery." More than ever, conservation and smart growth must be grounded in sound economic analysis; collaborative, big-picture approaches; consideration of local values; and stewardship of our land and water. These values – the basis for our work – bring about more than conservation; they also create vibrant, prosperous communities where people want to live and enjoy this special region.

These values and approaches underlie the stories in this report. With the support of our donors and partners, the Sonoran Institute works with communities on some of their most pressing problems. We use our diverse expertise to understand the challenges and help people find enduring solutions.

It is as true in today's topsy-turvy world as it was when I first wrote it several years ago: **"We can either be victims of change or we can plan for it, shape it, and emerge stronger from it."**

Thank you for your continuing support of the Institute's work for the West's land and communities. Enjoy this splendid place in 2009 and strengthen your commitment to keeping it healthy.



Luther Propst
Executive Director



Working Both Sides of the Conservation

One side of the land conservation coin is fairly obvious: protecting fish and wildlife habitat, farms and ranches, scenic vistas and other rural assets. The flip side may be less appreciated: the role of development in conserving open spaces and other resources.

“Creating towns where people want to live may be as important for the survival of grizzlies, elk and antelope as protecting wildlands and open space,” says the Sonoran Institute’s Northern Rockies Director Dennis Glick. “It’s a different approach to conservation, but essential for 21st-century challenges.”

Integrating the two sides of the coin, the Institute has a project in the Northern Rockies that seeks to create sustainable communities and another that seeks to conserve rural landscapes. Both benefit wildlife and people.



In 2006 the Institute published “Building from the Best of the Northern Rockies,” culminating a two-year effort to identify “best development practices” that enhance communities and protect the environment. The book illustrates these practices with innovative urban and rural developments in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

While the book earned accolades from developers and conservationists alike, the real jackpot is adoption of the best practices. The Institute is promoting that step at rural design workshops where county commissioners, planning board members, developers and other land-use decision-makers learn how to create communities that are great places to live while conserving natural values like open space and wildlife habitat. Respected architects and builders help participants draw up plans for small town and rural developments.

Following one workshop (see sidebar), Robin DeBolt, land development coordinator for Sheridan County, Wyoming, told the local newspaper that “clustered development is a new idea here, and it is a different way of thinking. But it is a great way to preserve open space, which is one of the reasons people love Sheridan so much.” Workshops in Fremont and Lemhi counties in Idaho and Gallatin County in Montana sparked similar epiphanies.

SHERIDAN WORKSHOP DRAWS A FULL HOUSE – AND A SUBDIVISION!

November’s subdivision design workshop in Sheridan, Wyoming, drew a capacity crowd of 66, with representatives from city and county government, community organizations, and area businesses. Professor Wendy McClure of the University of Idaho discussed the principles and practices of good subdivision design before the group divided into eight teams to visit and design subdivisions for a vacant town site and a rural site. Eight architects volunteered as team facilitators. Turnout for the workshop was boosted by the efforts of the Sheridan Community Land Trust (SCLT), a local group that secures conservation easements and works on historic preservation and affordable housing issues. In his introduction to the workshop, SCLT Chair Mark Kinner described the Trust as a direct outgrowth of the Successful Communities Workshops the Sonoran Institute presented in 2003.

Coin

The other side of the coin is the focus of an Institute project, supported by a Doris Duke Charitable Foundation grant, to help the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP) implement its new Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy.

TAILS

Wildlife and People Win Through Better Rural Land Use Management

The Strategy identifies threats to Montana's rich natural heritage and actions needed to conserve these valuable assets. Of note, the major challenges facing many fish and wildlife species are sprawl and poorly planned development. State wildlife officials spend increasing amounts of time and resources monitoring and commenting on the environmental impacts of proposed developments.

The Sonoran Institute is collaborating on a curriculum and training program to give MDFWP staff, county officials and rural landowners tools and knowledge to better protect critical habitats and wildlife corridors from sprawl.

"As it turns out, many of the most important wildlife habitats are hazardous for human habitation due to wild-fire and other threats," says Tim Davis who heads up the Institute's Montana Smart Growth Coalition. "Better growth management tools and training will benefit both people and wildlife."



NEW Offices, Directors, Energy

A native of Colorado's West Slope, Clark Anderson brought his energy and expertise in land use, community design and water management to the Sonoran Institute in November as director of the Western Colorado Legacy Program (WCLP) in our new Glenwood Springs office. Clark says, "Building sustainable communities is the common thread running through our projects here. Protecting the region's character, quality of life, and natural assets depends on how our communities are planned and designed as they grow. We will work with local partners on growth management, watershed health, a renewable energy economy and climate change impacts."

With support from the Argosy Foundation, Clark is already working with partners in Garfield County to advance sustainable energy solutions through a New Energy Communities grant from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the Governor's Energy Office. The Institute will identify opportunities to reform local development codes to promote energy efficiency by improving land use patterns and community design. Lessons learned will inform the next presentation – in the fall of 2009 – of our Community Energy Futures Institute (CEFI), training to help communities develop sustainable energy plans and practices.

The WCLP is also developing the *Confluence Initiative* to provide training and assistance to help communities and watershed stakeholders plan for growth while minimizing the impacts of development on rivers and water resources.

The Institute also opened a Colorado Policy Office in Denver earlier in 2008 and hired Rich McClintock, who has broad experience in transportation, community development and resource management, as director. The Colorado Policy Program's core focus areas are transportation, state barriers to planning in rural areas, and oil shale development. Read more about Colorado policy work on page 6.

Watershed's Value Holds Up for Millennia

donor profile



PROFESSOR SEES OPPORTUNITY TO "GET IT RIGHT"

Joe Kalt believes in the Sonoran Institute's work enough to commit both time and money to it.

A native of Tucson and a part-time Montana resident, Joe sees challenges and opportunities presented by growth in the West, especially in the Sun Corridor.

That fast-growing mega-region, stretching from north of Phoenix to south of Tucson, faces pressures on its water resources, air quality, open space and wildlife. The opportunity this presents, Joe believes, "is the chance to get it right."

An avid traveler, Joe feels that the North American West – in particular the Sun Corridor – can be a model for other fast-growing areas worldwide. He thinks the Institute's collaborative approach puts it in a position to take a lead in this important work.

Professor Kalt serves on the Institute's board of directors. He is the Ford Foundation Professor of International Political Economy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a senior economist with Compass Lexecon. He is recognized for his work on economic development for American Indian reservations and Canada's First Nations.

For thousands of years, people in the arid West have built communities near rivers that supply drinking water; serve as navigation corridors and support plants and wildlife. The Santa Cruz in southeast Arizona and northeast Sonora, Mexico, is such a river; having sustained human communities for more than 3,500 years.

"In cities we build infrastructure, but riparian areas provide basic infrastructure for free," says ecologist Amy McCoy who leads the Sonoran Institute's

work in the Upper Santa Cruz watershed, which supports one of the largest cottonwood-willow riparian forests in North America. "It would require millions of dollars to replicate the flood control, water filtration, erosion control and other services supplied by riparian trees, roots and soils."

The watershed also helps recharge groundwater, offers recreational opportunities and attracts visitors. The Institute's work includes identifying such watershed services and promoting policies to protect them.

"Many Arizona rivers are dying due to groundwater pumping and climate change," Amy says. "The Upper Santa Cruz is still alive, largely due to a wastewater treatment plant that discharges treated effluent into it daily. This additional and consistent source of water makes this a river that can be saved."

Through a competitive national grant program, the Environmental Protection Agency supports the Institute's Santa Cruz project, selecting it because the river is salvageable and an important corridor for wildlife, people and commerce.

"IN CITIES WE BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE, BUT RIPARIAN AREAS PROVIDE BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE FOR FREE."

The project also has, Amy notes, "potential as a showcase for innovative conservation tools to determine a river's health by looking at its vital signs – its heartbeat and blood pressure, if you will – and to devise plans and policies to achieve and maintain good river health."

The Institute, working with Santa Cruz County, Friends of the Santa Cruz River and the University of Arizona, has completed the first map of riparian vegetation along the Upper

Santa Cruz (www.co.santa-cruz.az.us/com_development/index.html) to inform land managers, landowners and policy-makers about the distribution, extent and species of the riparian forest. In the area mapped, 2,514 acres were classified as having high conservation priority. Santa Cruz County's Director of Community Development Mary Dahl calls the map "a vital foundation to create comprehensive riparian conservation and floodplain protection."

Institute staff helped draft water harvesting ordinances — the first of their kind in the country — adopted by the city of Tucson in October that will conserve groundwater in the Santa Cruz watershed. Also, we are working on a riparian health scorecard to help policymakers, stakeholders and water managers to understand and respond to the watershed's health.

Recently, Santa Cruz County voters overwhelmingly upheld zoning densities defined in the county's 2004 comprehensive plan rather than increase residential densities along the river. This vote reaffirms the county's vision to preserve its historic, cultural and ranching character and to protect and restore the river.



The last time a major flood hit Mexico's Colorado River Delta, three friends there on a boat trip became lost and were rescued the next morning by Lorenzo González, a Cucapá Indian. Their adventure would mark the beginning of a long-term commitment to restoring the Delta.

Ten years later, Francisco Zamora has been leading the Sonoran Institute's projects in the Delta for seven years, and his two companions work on Delta restoration with the Mexican conservation organization Pronatura.

Adopting the Colorado River Delta

The two groups are major partners in the area and, with others, aim to double the Delta's wetlands by protecting and restoring more than 160,000 acres over 20 years. To accomplish this, they are working to acquire more than 50,000 acre-feet of water for an annual base flow and 250,000 acre-feet for a pulse flow every four years. They also promote land and water policies that will sustain restoration efforts.

Integrating science, economics and policy reform and partnering with local groups, including the indigenous Kwapa people, and Mexican and U.S. government agencies, the Institute's systematic approach is producing results, such as 60-plus acres of restored riparian habitat in 11 areas along the Rio Hardy and the Colorado River. More than 1,500 people helped to restore these sites and plant 5,000 native trees.

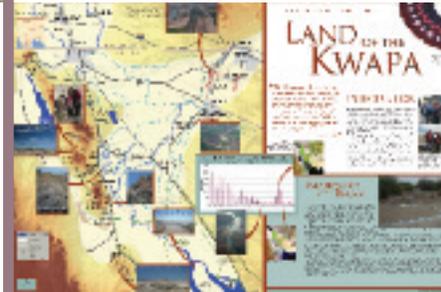
Such on-the-ground projects are especially important as they demonstrate that the wetlands can be improved, and they inspire local citizens who, Dr. Zamora says, "are beginning to feel that they can make a difference. They are expressing interest in leading restoration efforts."

Several local groups and government agencies have joined the Institute's Adopt-the-River Program, and Dr. Zamora expects they will become long-term stewards of the Delta. Other supporters, including some in the U.S., are being invited to adopt restoration sites.

Increased river flows are essential for restoration efforts to succeed and expand. The Institute worked with Pronatura to establish Mexico's first water trust, Fideicomiso de Agua, to secure water for Delta restoration. The trust has already obtained 1,300 acre-feet of water, which it will manage in perpetuity. Pronatura, AEURHYC (Ecological Association of Users of the Colorado and Hardy Rivers), and the Institute obtained the rights to manage more than 1,000 acres of Mexican federal land for conservation, ensuring that the water is delivered to target restoration areas. The Institute, the University of Arizona, the University of Baja California, AEURHYC and Pronatura are also investigating reconnecting the Colorado River with its estuary by breaking through sandbars that block incoming tides.

CULTURAL MAPPING WITH THE KWAPA

The Sonoran Institute believes that restoration in the Delta will be more successful if it respects the relationship between nature and culture. A cultural mapping project with the Kwapa tribe (Cocopah in the U.S. and Cucapá in Mexico), whose ancestors have lived along the lower Colorado River for more than 2,000 years, is nearly complete. Draft maps in English and Spanish, with site names in the Kwapa language, were presented to the Tribal Council in November. The Institute, along with INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía) and the University of Baja California museum's Cultural



Investigations Center, created the maps to promote understanding and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the area's indigenous people. Gathering information for the map included field visits to the traditional Kwapa cemetery, the rock window where boys were initiated in the use of bows and arrows, important mountains in Kwapa mythology, ancient trails, and a biznaga cactus garden where buds were harvested for traditional recipes. The mapping team also surveyed the region from the air.

WESTWIDE ROUNDUP



COLORADO POLICY OFFICE SPRINGS INTO ACTION

The Sonoran Institute's new Colorado policy office got off to a fast start in 2008 supporting Governor Ritter's ballot measure that would have increased oil and gas severance fees to fund education, clean energy and wildlife protection. Institute Economist Joe Marlow's white paper showing that the measure would not significantly impact consumer prices received extensive media coverage. While the measure did not pass after record spending against it by oil and gas companies, it drew attention to the need for responsible oversight of the industry and generated discussion in the Legislature about raising the severance fees to be in line with other Western states. Colorado Policy Director Rich McClintock also worked with a coalition of groups to urge reform of antiquated Colorado law that allows development of 35-acre parcels without county review. As a result, Senator Gail Schwartz has convened a task force representing agriculture, counties, development, and conservation, including the Institute, to address smart rural land-use development planning. During the 2009 legislative session, the policy office staff will also work on reforming transportation policy and funding and strengthening regional land use planning.

STUDIES EXPLORE MINING'S IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMIES



Two 2008 Sonoran Institute studies explored potential economic impacts of mining – one in southeast Arizona and one in Gunnison County, Colorado. Both

places exemplify the West's changing economy, luring residents – and visitors – with clean air and water, small communities, and scenery, recreation and other attractions of public lands. Southeast Arizona's federal lands have seen increased mineral exploration and development in recent years, raising local concerns about impacts on the economy, the environment and communities. Senior Economist Joe Marlow's study indicated that proposed mining activities would bring economic benefits – employment, business purchases and local taxes paid – and costs – decreased recreation and tourism revenues; decreased property values; increased commuting; and reduced appeal to retirees and knowledge-based businesses. Mining would also bring water depletion and environmental degradation that could seriously impact the local economy long after the mine closed.

In 1872 when Congress enacted legislation for staking claims and mining on federal land, miners were flocking into Gunnison County for the silver and gold ores in the abundant public lands. For the past 30 years, skiers, hikers, retirees, second-home owners and New Economy workers have been flocking to the area to enjoy those same federal lands. Marlow's study indicates that if the proposed Lucky Jack mine near Crested Butte goes into operation and displaces only a small percentage of tourism-related spending in the area, the economic loss could be significant. The study ties nearly 40 percent of the county's jobs to tourism. "This report shows exactly why the 1872 Mining Law should be reformed - it's no longer appropriate for mining to be prioritized above all other uses," says Dan Morse, public lands director for High Country Citizens' Alliance in Crested Butte. "Federal mining law must recognize that the West has become a very different place in the past 136 years, and mining is not always the most economically beneficial use of our public lands."

CITIZENS WRANGLE WITH COUNTY'S FUTURE GROWTH

The Citizens Land Use Roundtable was stuck on defining a framework for Chaffee County, Colorado's future growth and development when they brought in the Sonoran Institute's Marjo Curgus in August 2007 to facilitate the struggling public process. Since then stakeholders representing heritage, water, development, local government, sustainable growth, agriculture and other interests have worked in small groups, and on November 13, 2008, they reached consensus on recommendations. In December, the County

Commissioners adopted the Citizens Roundtable's recommendations, which include a new zoning proposal, increased development options including clustering, overlay incentives for historic sites and production agriculture, and improved development standards. Next step: the policy recommendations will be converted into a new land use code that promotes quality development that respects the area's rich cultural and natural heritage.

MORONGO BASIN GROUP PROGRESSES ON REGIONAL CONSERVATION

Stephanie Weigel joined the Sonoran Institute in March 2008 as regional land use planner for the community-based Morongo Basin Open Space Group in Southern California near Joshua Tree National Park. The group's activities since then have included public forums on regional conservation efforts; GIS-based conservation mapping; identification of open space for community buffers and regional trails; and using community values and existing conservation science and plans as the basis for a regional conservation plan, which will identify specific priority sites and strategies for their protection. Lands in the group's area of interest are 70% federal, 3.5% protected state and local, and 26.5% private. The group is engaging all jurisdictions and local and state decision-makers in the process.



SEEING RED HELPS RESIDENTS PLAN FOR GROWTH

"The Sonoran Institute's growth model turns statistics and numbers into a visual that helps citizens discuss how growth might change their community," says Rick Hartz, planner for Beaverhead County in Montana. "When you see the outline of your county fill up with red dots over time, it is a real eye opener." The Institute's Jennifer Boyer, Tim Davis and John DiBari are working with a citizens' group as they develop a growth plan for the county. The growth model's red dots show the committee and others what their county's future development patterns might look like using information from past patterns. Status-quo projections show what growth might look like if business-as-usual development were to continue. The community can then decide whether to steer growth in another direction. Many communities recognize current development patterns are fiscally unsustainable, or they want to protect agricultural lands, water quality and wildlife habitat. The growth model can reflect citizens' ideas affecting land use, for example, to show how development patterns might change by protecting prime agricultural soils or elk winter range or by encouraging growth around existing communities. Plugging in such land use policies, the model produces alternative growth scenarios that help citizens, planners and decision-makers see how their ideas may affect future development patterns and shape the character of their community.



URBANIZATION EDGES UP TO PROTECTED PUBLIC LANDS

Many of the West's protected public lands were once far from urban centers; however, unprecedented growth, particularly in Arizona and Nevada, has created a more abrupt edge between the built environment and some of these lands. In January 2008, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy – Sonoran Institute Joint Venture facilitated the "On the Edge" workshop to promote better understanding of this edge interface. Public land managers, local government representatives, and developers explored planning and development practices that can minimize disruption to the natural patterns and processes vital to our protected public lands. They concluded that a collaborative approach between private and public interests is needed to better manage the edge interface, along with federal, state and local involvement supported by active citizen engagement. The Joint Venture plans to publish initial best practices for managing "the edge" in the spring of 2009.

TEAMING UP TO SAVE DESERT GIANTS

The iconic giant saguaro cactus of the Sonoran Desert is up against a small, but powerful, foe.

Non-native buffelgrass not only crowds out native plants and spreads like wildfire, it provides profuse fuel for wildfires. The saguaro and other natives are defenseless against fire – an extremely rare desert occurrence until now. Buffelgrass, however, comes back aggressively after fires.

Saguaro National Park ecologist Dana Backer calls buffelgrass “the greatest threat the park has ever faced because it directly threatens the survival of the saguaro cactus.” If the invasion continued undeterred on lands surrounding Tucson, saguaro-studded hills and carpets of spring wildflowers could be converted into disturbed grassland. This could have a dramatic impact on tourism, a cornerstone of the area’s economy. According to studies by the University of Arizona, 3.5 million annual visitors support nearly 40,000 jobs in Pima County.

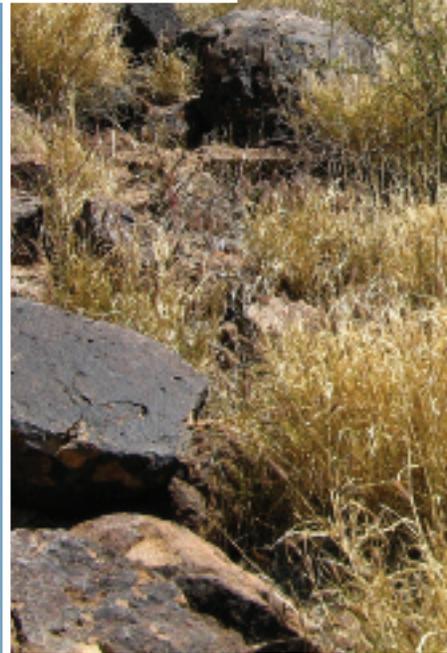
Assessing landscape health and developing tools that promote better public land management are specialties of the Sonoran Institute’s Ecosystem Science Team led by Cheryl McIntyre. Recognized as experts in mapping invasive plants, the team has collaborated on such mapping at six National Park Service units and, in 2008, reached the milestone of 10,000 acres mapped on Bureau of Land Management land in Arizona.

Most recently, the team has been mapping buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*) at Ironwood Forest National Monument near Saguaro National Park’s western district. Results of the mapping allow public land managers to develop and prioritize strategies to combat the invading species.

Numerous organizations and agencies are teaming up to fight the intruder. The Buffelgrass Working Group representing more than 20 entities, including the Sonoran Institute, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management, formed in 2007. The newly established Southern Arizona Buffelgrass Coordination Center will organize efforts across jurisdictions. For more information, visit www.buffelgrass.org.



Buffelgrass poses a high fire risk as this sign warns residents of a foothills neighborhood in northern Tucson.



Research assistant Lindsay Fitzgerald-DeHoog maps buffelgrass using a handheld PC. Following rains, buffelgrass can be lush green and rapid-growing, but it quickly dries to a straw color.



Pale yellow buffelgrass takes hold on a rocky slope at Ironwood Forest National Monument.



A sea of buffelgrass engulfs cacti and palo verde trees in southern Arizona.



The Sonoran Desert's giant saguaro cacti face a serious threat from a non-native invader.



A volunteer maps a large patch of buffelgrass at Saguaro National Park.



Known buffelgrass locations (in red) in southern Arizona.



Local community leaders, including Saguaro National Park Superintendent Sarah Craighead (right-center front), tour buffelgrass hot spots in the Tucson Basin.

This desert tortoise would be no match for a fire fueled by buffelgrass.

More 2008

MEDIA TOUR SPOTLIGHTS NLCS TREASURES

In 2008 the Sonoran Institute helped in the effort to permanently protect the National Landscape Conservation System – a 26-million-acre collection of national monuments,

wilderness areas, rivers, and scenic and historic trails in the West – considered

the crown jewels of Bureau of Land Management lands. These specially designated, publicly owned lands are protected only by administrative rules, not federal laws. The Institute was chosen to lead a national media tour of NLCS properties in Arizona, including the Sonoran Desert National Monument and Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The resulting media attention helped to convince the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee to vote in favor of permanent protection. Congress is expected to vote in 2009 on the National Landscape Conservation System Act, which would make the NLCS a permanent system of conservation lands.



TRAVELING THE COLORADO FROM SOURCE TO SEA

Adventurer, writer, photographer and Sonoran Institute fellow Jon Waterman began a journey in April down the Colorado River from its source in the Rocky Mountains to Mexico's Sea of Cortez. He will complete the trip in early 2009. Institute staff joined him for portions of his travel in the Rockies, below the Grand Canyon and in the Limitrophe, where the river forms the border of the U.S. and Mexico. Funded in part by a National Geographic Society grant, Waterman will create a portrait of a river in crisis due to drought, climate change and rapid growth and will propose solutions for its restoration, particularly in the river's delta where impacts of upstream water diversions are most acute. NGS and the Institute plan to inform the public about challenges to the river with a National Geographic Adventure magazine feature, a PBS documentary, books, a photo exhibit and a take-action campaign.

YEAR-END VICTORY FOR MONTANA STATE TRUST LANDS

Late 2008 brought good news about the 5.2 million acres of land Montana holds in trust to generate revenue for education. The lands also provide wildlife habitat, open space and recreational opportunities. In December, the Montana Land Board unanimously approved rules for governing the sale or development of state lands. The rules will protect much rural state trust land from being developed, engage communities in planning for state lands around them, focus development in and around towns, and help ensure that schools receive the greatest value for the fewest number of acres sold or developed. The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy-Sonoran Institute Joint Venture has been involved since the beginning in the long process leading to the new rules, with the Sonoran Institute's Tim Davis taking an active role in drafting the rules and the 2005 Record of Decision they are based on.

PROPST PRESENTS AT COLORADO SUMMIT

Sonoran Institute Executive Director Luther Propst gave a keynote address on public policy issues affecting water quality and river health at the 2008 Colorado Conservation Summit in October. The first-of-its-kind gathering in the state drew more than 260 sportsmen, conservationists, farmers and ranchers, outdoor enthusiasts, and representatives of government agencies, business, and the land trust community to discuss and commit to action for the state's lands, waters and wildlife.

News & Accomplishments

RESORT GROWTH CALLS FOR REGIONAL DIALOGUE

Growth in booming resort communities like Jackson Hole, Wyoming, is “spilling over” into adjacent counties, creating a need for dialogue about regional common interests, according to a 2008 report by the Sonoran Institute. The high cost of housing in Jackson Hole and Teton County, Wyoming, means long commutes for workers and financial impacts for neighboring counties and towns, which must provide schools, water, roads and other services for those workers. “The ripple effects of rapid growth do not respect city, county or state borders,” said Dennis Glick, director of the Institute’s Northern Rockies office and an author of “Growth Impacts in the Teton Region of Wyoming and Idaho.” This study suggests that collaborating across jurisdictions on a regional approach to development, housing and land use is key to maintaining prosperity and quality of life for all concerned. The report is available at www.sonoran.org.

PLANK RETURNS TO BOARD

Louise “Lollie” Benz Plank rejoined the Sonoran Institute Board of Directors in 2008. She had previously served on the Board from 1996 to 2007. “I believe strongly in the Institute’s mission, and I’m pleased to be part of it,” Lollie says.

CREWS MONITOR DIRT AT NATIONAL PARKS

Five national parks in Arizona were the scene of a new activity in 2008. Field crews spent weeks – sometimes months – at each park hiking the backcountry to monitor vegetation and soils. Crews also monitored streams at four additional National Park Service locations. These boots on the ground are the result of the Sonoran Institute’s Ecosystem Science Team and the NPS Sonoran Desert Network collaborating to implement ecological monitoring at 10 parks in Arizona and one in New Mexico. Institute and NPS ecologists jointly analyze the collected data and will publish their results in 2009. Monitoring the health of rivers, deserts, grasslands and forests helps public land managers assess management effectiveness and understand changes occurring on their lands. Vegetation and soil monitoring measures current and past conditions and helps predict potential future conditions under different management and climate scenarios.

donor profile

STEWARDSHIP IS PART OF NEW BELGIUM’S BREW

New Belgium Brewing in Fort Collins, Colorado, is owned by its employees, who believe in a triple bottom line: People, Profits, Planet. This conviction is evident in the preponderance of bicycles over cars in the parking lot. Founders Jeff Lebesch and Kim Jordan built the brewery near the town center to encourage alternate modes of commuting. Further encouragement comes in the form of the free bike employees receive on their one-year anniversary.

The state-of-the-art brewing facility is beautiful and “smart,” too, producing 15 percent of its own electricity through a process water treatment plant and methane gas capture. And New Belgium is exploring more ways to incorporate sustainability in its beer-making process. Sustainability Coordinator Katie Wallace notes that “preserving natural resources is good for making good beer, too.”

In 2008 New Belgium became a supporter of the Sonoran Institute because, Katie says, “The Institute supports a new generation of environmental work—a multi-faceted approach involving policy reform, land use planning and social justice.”

Environmental stewardship is one of New Belgium’s founding, core values. “We strive to honor the environment at every turn,” Katie says. This commitment attracts employees who share these values. With all the good stuff those employees are doing at New Belgium, they make some great beer as well.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FY 2008: July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008

The statement of financial position, statement of cash flows and notes to financial statements are not included in this presentation.
The Sonoran Institute is audited annually by DeVries CPAs of Arizona, P.C.

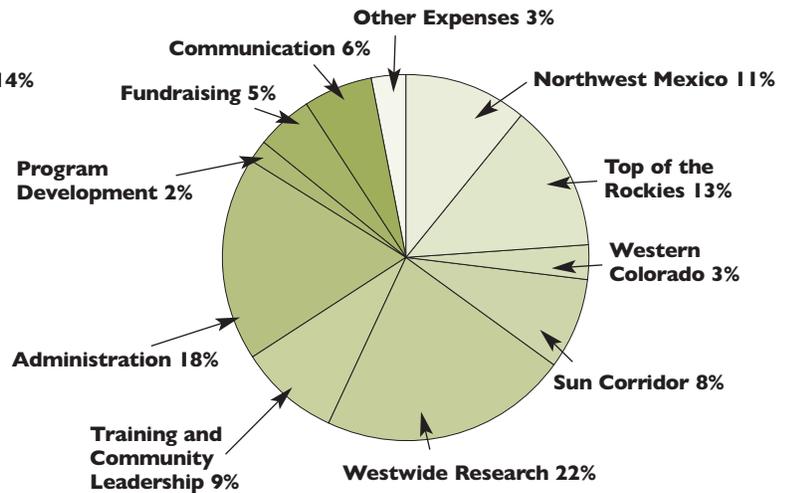
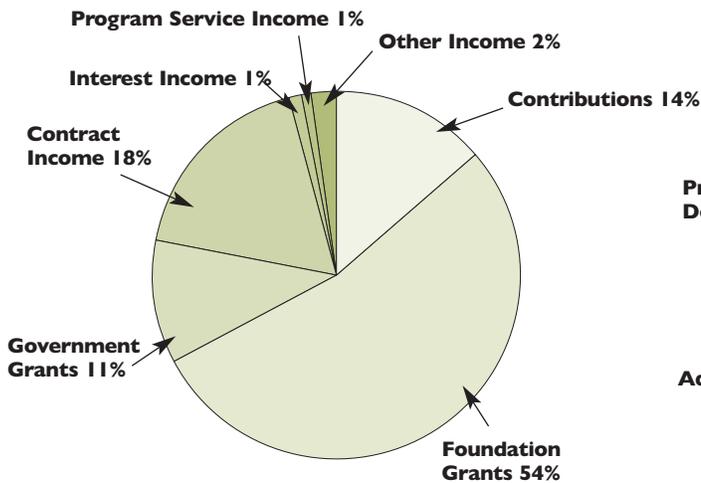
Revenue

Contributions	\$712,205	14%
Foundation Grants	\$2,747,609	54%
Government Grants	\$554,660	11%
Contract Income	\$923,456	18%
Interest Income	\$26,252	1%
Program Service Income	\$42,221	1%
Other Income	\$76,613	2%
Total Revenue	\$5,083,016	100%

*In addition, resources for FY08 include \$1,350,208 in multi-year grants carried forward from previous years. Of this amount, \$1,233,256 was restricted for use in this and future fiscal years.

Expenses

Northwest Mexico Legacy Program	\$556,732	11%
Top of the Rockies Legacy Program	\$654,977	13%
Western Colorado Legacy Program	\$157,409	3%
Sun Corridor Legacy Program	\$399,602	8%
Westwide Research	\$1,131,985	22%
Training and Community Leadership Program	\$455,505	9%
Administration	\$896,877	18%
Program Development	\$79,205	2%
Fundraising	\$302,146	5%
Communications	\$303,178	6%
Other Expenses	\$104,996	3%
Total Expenses	\$5,042,612	100%



donor profile

BOZEMAN BUSINESSMAN BACKS INSTITUTE

Dave Schaub, one of the owners of Refuge Sustainable Building Center in Bozeman, Montana, has multiple reasons for supporting the Sonoran Institute. His business promotes sustainability in the built environment; he sees the Institute's work first-hand in Gallatin County; and his parents encouraged charitable giving in their children.

Dave's mother has long given to environmental causes, and his father has a history of supporting a variety of moderately conservative causes. The Sonoran Institute blends the goals of Dave and both his parents in what he sees as the new era of conservation. "The Institute has broken ground in bringing diverse groups to the table, groups that might otherwise be pitted against each other," he says.

Dave understands that providing unrestricted support is crucial to the health of an organization and allows more flexibility to address critical issues.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT Gifts & Pledges January 1 to December 31, 2008

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