



In this edition of the **Sonoran Post**, we dive deep into community, educational opportunities, and looking toward supporting solutions for difficult issues facing our water ways today. You can support this work by **donating today!**

SANTA CRUZ RIVER: SUMMER ACTIVITY HEATS UP

June and July often mark the beginning of a sleepy summer in the Santa Cruz River watershed, but that has not been the case for the Santa Cruz River team. In June, the Santa Cruz River Program and Growing Water Smart advanced the Pathways and Corridors Project. The program also completed a three-year \$1.6 million Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona (WIFA) grant that produced two major studies: a Santa Cruz River Restoration Master Plan from the U.S.-Mexico border to Green Valley and a first-of-its-kind economic study of the benefits of a flowing river. We've also been working on the Santa Cruz River Wildlife Refuge and encourage all Santa Cruz enthusiasts to fill out **this survey**. Additionally, we welcomed University of Arizona interns Delaney and Hannah, who will support our Living River projects.

Finally, our team has been busy at work putting together this year's Santa Cruz River Dragonfly Festival, a September-long event in collaboration with The University of Arizona School of Natural Resources, many Pima County offices, and local businesses. Information on all events, sponsors, and partners can be found at this landing page: **[Santa Cruz River Dragonfly Festival/Festival de las Libélulas](#)**.



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY IN MEXICALI

To celebrate World Environment Day, we participated in the environmental fair organized by PIMS Mitsubishi, welcoming company employees to our demo booth. As part of the PIMS-MITSUBISHI environmental fair, two talks were given to company employees about the Delta Wetlands.

At the CIDEA middle school campus, we presented on the Colorado River Delta Wetlands and provided our online course to teach students about environmental restoration and waste management.

Volunteers and community members supported El Huerto de Misión del Ángel community garden by cleaning and caring for plants, while taking advantage of the morning together to connect and coordinate the garden's ongoing care.

We presented on Sabados Familiares at the Baja California Heritage Day celebration.

COLORADO RIVER NEGOTIATIONS, PATHWAYS AND CORRIDORS, AND MORE!

In June, the Growing Water Smart and Santa Cruz River Program advanced the Pathways and Corridors Project, identifying opportunities in Santa Cruz County and southern Pima County to create green spaces, connect trails, and benefit people and wildlife.

We had a record turnout for our July 16 Peer Network webinar on the Colorado River negotiations, with over 150 attendees! We'd like to extend a huge thank you to our featured speakers, Karen Schlatter and Dr. Sharon B. Megdal, for providing their time and expertise at this event. The webinar enabled an important conversation about the dynamics of the Colorado River negotiations, including the history of the river allocations and what to expect moving forward. If you missed it, a recording of **the webinar is available here**.

Additionally, we are currently hiring for the director of Growing Water Smart position. The director will be responsible for the overall leadership, strategic direction, implementation, and long-term success of the Growing Water Smart program, which advances integrated water and land use planning throughout the Colorado River Basin and the U.S.-Mexico border region. The director will lead the design, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the Growing Water Smart program, including workshops, technical assistance, and related initiatives. The director will serve as the primary representative for the program, cultivate and maintain strategic relationships with funders and partners, and promote opportunities that strengthen and grow the program's impact. **Apply here.**



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WHERE WATER AND COMMUNITIES CONNECT

It's no secret - conditions are changing in the American West. We're seeing higher temperatures hit the Colorado River Basin communities sooner and for longer periods of time each year. While many folks can turn on their tap and get water, not everyone in the basin has this same access. Smaller, rural, and tribal communities are having to plan for more water supply uncertainties to their water supplies. As economic and population growth continue in the region, we see changes to the landscape, including habitat loss in delicate ecosystems, like the Sonoran Desert.

With a 36-year track record of success, Sonoran Institute works to implement practical, collaborative, and place-based solutions that take the voices of communities to heart and turn solutions into action.

From Colorado through Arizona and California to Baja California, we convene leaders to build more resilient communities through our Growing Water Smart program, restore rivers and landscapes along the Santa Cruz River in Arizona and the Colorado River Delta in Baja California, and work alongside community partners to revive urban canals in Mexicali.

Our work relies on the support of our communities. From attending events, sharing our story with your network, and donating time and expertise to financially supporting Sonoran Institute through donating on a cycle that best fits your ability, you ensure we continue our impact in the Colorado River Basin. Your donation helps launch a new cycle of restoration, fieldwork, community engagement, and water-smart solutions.

SONORAN INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHT: GRECIA SANCHEZ ROSALES



Grecia Dayana Sanchez Rosales is a monitoring technician in the hydrology department at the Sonoran Institute. She holds a degree in Biotechnology in Aquaculture from UABC Ensenada and completed her Master's in Life Sciences with a focus on Marine Biotechnology at CICESE. Her research involved studying the transcriptomic resilience to climate change in two populations of clams cultivated in the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean. She also interned at the ecophysiology laboratory at CIBNOR La Paz. She is passionate about applied science and contributing to the movement towards a sustainable environment. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, hiking, and baking.



A MESSAGE FROM CEO MIKE ZELLNER

Across the Colorado River Basin and the U.S.-Mexico border region, changing conditions are creating increasingly complex challenges for our waterways, communities, and ecosystems. Higher temperatures, uncertain water supplies, population growth, and habitat loss reinforce the importance of practical solutions grounded in science, collaboration, and the voices of our communities. This summer, Sonoran Institute teams have been turning those principles into action.

Along the Santa Cruz River, our team advanced the Pathways and Corridors Project, exploring opportunities for green spaces and connected trails that benefit both people and wildlife. We also completed a three-year, \$1.6 million Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona grant, resulting in a Santa Cruz River Restoration Master Plan from the U.S.-Mexico border to Green Valley and a first-of-its-kind economic study of the benefits of a flowing river. Meanwhile, preparations are underway for September's Santa Cruz River Dragonfly Festival, bringing together community members, partners, and local businesses to celebrate this remarkable watershed.

Across the border, our teams continue connecting restoration with education and community engagement—from teaching students and businesses about the Colorado River Delta Wetlands to supporting volunteers at El Huerto de Misión del Ángel community garden and advancing restoration at Laguna Grande.

We are also creating opportunities to learn together. More than 150 people joined our recent Growing Water Smart Peer Network webinar on Colorado River negotiations—a record turnout that demonstrates the urgency and shared commitment surrounding the river's future.

For 36 years, Sonoran Institute has worked alongside communities to transform difficult challenges into collaborative, place-based solutions. That work is possible because of our extraordinary staff, partners, volunteers, supporters, and community members.

Whether you attend an event, share our work, contribute your expertise, or make a financial gift, you help launch the next cycle of restoration, fieldwork, community engagement, and water-smart solutions.

Thank you for being part of this work and the future we are building together.

UPCOMING EVENTS

20 August: Green Drinks, Tucson AZ

ALL September: Dragonfly Festival, Pima and Santa Cruz County AZ

3 September: Bugs & Bites, Tucson AZ

17 September: MOCA presents Green Drinks, Tucson AZ

19 September: Sonoran Sashay, Tucson AZ

20 September: Santa Cruz Guided Dragonfly Tour, Santa Cruz County AZ

26 September: Pima County Guided Dragonfly Tours, Pima County AZ

26 September: El Tour Loop de Loop, 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.

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