

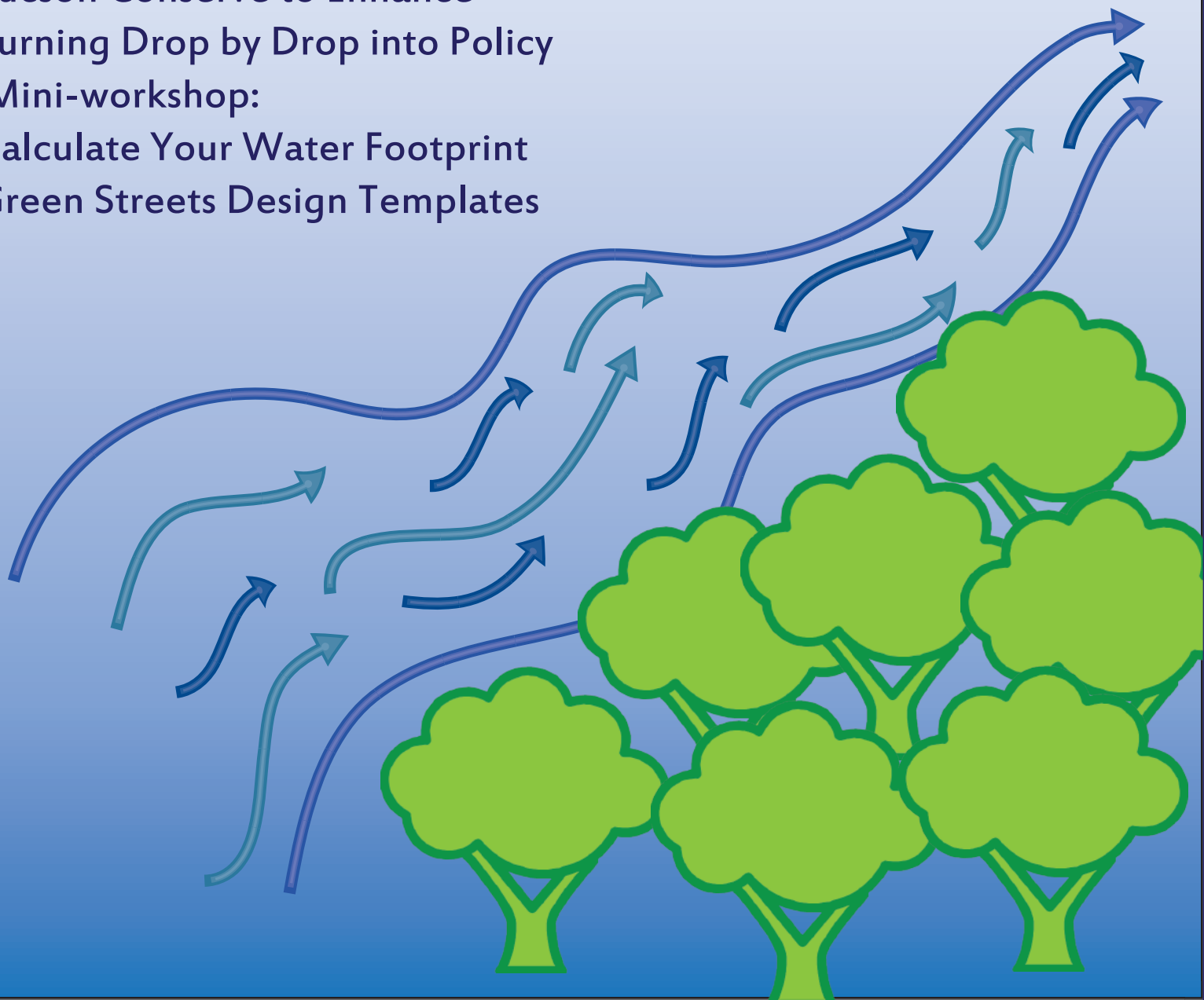
# A Watershed Moment

Fall 2010

## Healthy Rivers:

### Securing Adequate Water Flows for Watersheds

- ◆ When the River Runs Dry
- ◆ Tucson Conserve to Enhance
- ◆ Turning Drop by Drop into Policy
- ◆ Mini-workshop:  
Calculate Your Water Footprint
- ◆ Green Streets Design Templates



# When the River Runs Dry



**◀ Lisa Shipek,**  
*Executive Director*

What happens when a river runs dry? Is the river, its life-giving water, wildlife, and beauty lost in the memory and imagination of the community it flowed through? If a river ran dry decades ago, is the community no longer aware of the services that river used to provide? Has the community forgotten the right of that river to have flowing water?

In arid communities, our rivers' survival is threatened by the growing water needs of people. Rivers in the western U.S. have actually gone extinct; what were once perennial water bodies have become dry sandy channels that only flow when it rains.

The Santa Cruz River that historically flowed through the heart of Tucson is today more likely to have people, dogs, and horses travelling along the sandy river bed than flowing water. For many Tucson newcomers, a dry river bed is just part of living in a desert environment.

The loss of healthy, flowing rivers is a problem throughout the western United States. The Colorado River, formerly one of the most grandiose rivers in America, is now the most dammed and over-allocated river in the country. Every available drop of water has been allocated to meet the needs

of people. To make matters worse, the Colorado River Compact was negotiated in 1922, during a period of above average rainfall, and the annual flow was estimated about 3 million acre-feet more than what we now know as the historical average. Therefore, the Colorado was over allocated; more water has been designated annually for cities,



agriculture, and industry than the average flow available in the river each year.

Most years, the Colorado River does not even reach the Gulf of California – its outlet to the ocean. Not a single drop of water was allocated to remain in the river for the purpose of supporting the integrity of the river itself! Instead the river system has been transformed into a very large plumbing project, designed

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Dear Readers,

With the launch of our new Conserve to Enhance program this fall, we are focusing this issue of The Watershed Moment on the importance of water flows for healthy rivers.

Make sure to also check out the various free resources offered by WMG to help neighborhoods green their streets on page 7.

I would also like to specially thanks all our donors who contributed to our summer matching campaign. We raised \$25,000—double what we have raised in any previous campaign.

Sincerely,

Lisa Shipek, *Executive Director*

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to support the growth of the West.

This oversight is indicative of water policy in the United States. Though the eastern and the western United States operate under different water policies, neither has a mechanism to ensure there is adequate water available for the health of our watersheds – including our aquifers, rivers, lakes, and wetlands.

### Should Environmental Flows Be a Defined Right?

Do our rivers have a right to water? This is the fundamental question behind a growing movement to designate water for the environment. ‘Environmental flow’ is the provision of water within rivers and groundwater systems to maintain healthy ecosystem functions and their benefits amidst competing water uses for people. The U.S. does not mandate environmental flows in any water policy. Yet there are countries, like Australia and South Africa, that prioritize environmental flows and are providing leadership in policy development.

Will we desert dwellers continue to let our rivers run dry? Or will we be moved to make environ-

mental flows a priority, perhaps even a right, for our rivers?

### Healthy River Systems Ensure Environmental Services

When our watersheds are healthy, they can adequately provide environmental services for the benefit of people and wildlife. Environmental services are services provided by natural ecosystems that produce resources or process waste. These services benefit human communities and are provided to us free of charge.

Riparian (river) ecosystems serve a very important role in providing environmental services. They are the arteries of the land – moving, infiltrating, and recycling water essential to all life. Riparian systems infiltrate water into our groundwater systems. Riparian vegetation protects river banks and surrounding land from the erosive forces of flowing water. Rivers are havens that support a diversity of plants and wildlife and serve as corridors for migratory animals like birds.

At the most basic level, healthy rivers play an important role in ensuring that humans have clean water.

### Giving the Environment a Piece of the Water Pie

The environment needs to be represented when developing water policy, water allocations, and water management plans. The environment can be



included through two primary mechanisms: changing water policy or using market-based solutions. While western water policy may be very complicated and unwieldy to change in the short-term, market-based solutions may be adapted more quickly. Conserve to Enhance is an example of a market-based solution in which customers designate cash saved from water conservation to purchase water to support local riparian areas. To learn more about this approach, read Joanna Nadeau’s article on page three.

You can help ensure the environment has a voice by speaking up on its behalf. Become part of an effort to make environmental flows a priority and shared value in your community. If you live in Tucson, we encourage you to join the Conserve to Enhance program. Otherwise, contact your water utility, local legislators, and environmental groups to find out if there are any programs in your community to promote environmental flows for healthy rivers. 💧

### Environmental Services of Rivers

- Move and recycle water
- Infiltrate water into our groundwater systems to replenish supply
- Protect surrounding land from erosion through riparian vegetation
- Provide a habitat to promote diverse plant and animal life
- Serve as a buffer to wildfires



# Conserve to Enhance: Program Development and Pilot



Joanna B. Nadeau, *Guest writer*  
Joanna is a Research Analyst at the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center.

Amidst growing demands for water in almost all sectors, meeting environmental water needs in addition to supplying consumer demand requires innovative strategies. In the absence of sweeping state or local policy changes, securing water for the environment requires raising funds to purchase water from existing users and water providers.

## Conserve Water, Enhance the Environment

Studies have shown that people are more likely to participate in water conservation programs that directly address environmental concerns (e.g. Syme et al., 2000). Though environmental concerns motivate users to conserve, no mechanism allows customers to ensure their conservation efforts directly benefit the environment.

The University of Arizona's Water Resources Research Center (WRRRC) found that many environmental restoration projects in Arizona have insufficient water supplies for environmental enhancement. They began exploring solutions to provide additional water supplies to the environment in a tightly controlled western water market. With extensive stakeholder input from community leaders and

water and environmental professionals, the researchers developed Conserve to Enhance (C2E), a program that connects individual water use behavior with environmental concerns (Megdal and Schwarz, 2007; Megdal, 2008; Schwarz and Megdal, 2008). The basic program offers municipal water customers the option of voluntarily donating the money they save through water conservation to a fund that purchases water supplies for local restoration projects.

## Participate in C2E—Tucson

Applications are being accepted for the C2E pilot program until December 22, 2010. Forty-five \$500 subsidies for pilot participants are being offered to install water harvesting practices through WMG's Co-op program. For more information and to apply, visit [www.watershedmg.org/c2e](http://www.watershedmg.org/c2e).

## Piloting the Concept

WRRRC, The Sonoran Institute, and WMG partnered to develop a C2E pilot program in Tucson, being launched in January of 2011. Pilot participants will install water conservation features at their home, track water conserved on their water bill, and donate the amount of money saved to the C2E to benefit river restoration projects in Tucson.

Several other western communities have expressed interest in piloting C2E. Once a simple, non-bill based water accounting and education tool is developed for use with participants, the mechanism can be applied in any community.

Each pilot program must be tailored to the community's assets and water conservation opportunities. As the C2E pilot is applied, UA WRRRC researchers

*(Continued on page 4)*



# Improving Water Quality in the Santa Cruz Watershed

♦ **Emily Brott**, *Guest writer*



The Sonoran Institute is a nonprofit conservation organization whose mission is to inspire and enable community decisions and public policies that respect the land and people of Western North America. In 2007, the Sonoran Institute was awarded a Targeted Watershed Improvement grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to connect science, policy, and on-the-ground restoration projects in the Santa Cruz River basin to improve river health.

The Santa Cruz River is a tributary to the Colorado River, which flows through Southern Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. We track river health in the Santa Cruz basin in our annual *Living River* reports, which document changes in critical indicators of aquatic and riparian health.

Some examples of indicators include: dissolved oxygen, ammonium, metals, aquatic macroinvertebrates (i.e., bugs), fish, depth to groundwater, groundwater variability, and extent and type of vegetation.

Our most recent *Living River* report showed marked improvement in river water quality following a recent upgrade to the wastewater treatment plant that provides water to the river. Among other things, we documented an encouraging increase in native fish populations! While the *Living River* report currently focuses on a 20 mile stretch of the Upper Santa Cruz River between Rio Rico and Amado, Arizona, it is our goal to expand its scope to include other portions of the wa-

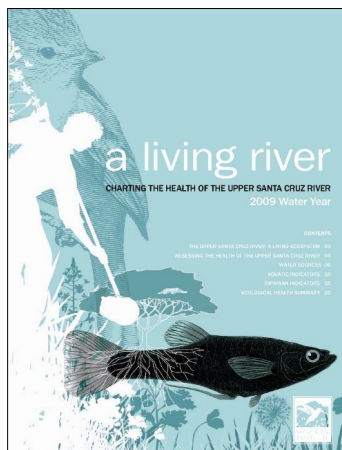
tershed, including the stretch through Tucson. Download the full report at:

[www.sonoraninstitute.org](http://www.sonoraninstitute.org).

Through funding from the Targeted Watershed Improvement grant, Sonoran Institute is a co-facilitator of the Conserve to En-

hance program. We are working with Watershed Management Group to implement an EPA-sponsored small grants program that will offer \$30,000 in subsidies to C2E pilot program participants to install water harvesting features in their homes. ♠

*Emily Brott is a Project Manager for the Sonoran Institute's Sun Corridor Legacy Program.*



(Continued from page 3)

are recording emerging ideas for variations on the original concept, creating a template of options to draw from when the program is developed in other areas.

## Fundraising for Environmental Water Needs

Avion Water Company in Bend, Oregon and the water utilities in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico, offer their customers donation programs that generate funding to pay for local riparian enhancement. Checkbox donation options such as these that allow customers to donate through their water company may be useful for establishing a pilot C2E program.

C2E engages individual water users to actively participate in a more sustainable water future where the environment is “at the table” as a water user. Locally, a C2E program has the potential to expand a community’s water conservation efforts, as well as increase awareness of local environmental enhancement projects. ♠

Megdal, S.B. 2008. Conserve to Enhance. *Arizona Water Resource Public Policy Review*.

Megdal, S.B. and Schwarz, A. 2007. Water Conservation Banking: Municipal Water Conservation to Support Environmental Enhancement. Tucson, AZ: WRRRC and US Bureau of Reclamation.

Schwarz, A. and Megdal, S.B. 2008. Conserve to Enhance. *Journal of the American Water Works Association* 100 (1), 42-53.

Syme, G.J., Nancarrow, B.E., and Seligman, C. 2000. The evaluation of information campaigns to promote voluntary household water conservation. *Evaluation Review* 24 (6), 539-578.



# Turning ‘Drop by Drop’ into Policy



• **Lindsay Ignatowski**, *Outreach & Program Coordinator*

Tucson water activist Madeline Kiser became fascinated with water during her time in the small town of Volcán, Costa Rica, as a Peace Corps volunteer in the late 1980s. She and her husband Oscar Beita were greatly affected by the strong local movement to fight the power of produce giant Del Monte, one of the area’s major water consumers.

Locals in this small town of 5,000 people were beginning to grow concerned about the sustainability of their water systems. One man, who later became Madeline’s father-in-law, said that despite his sixth grade education, he knew that Del Monte’s practice of excessive irrigation in the dry summer months couldn’t possibly be ecologically sound. “I remember these residents, who knew nothing about water systems, still knew that this just couldn’t be right,” Madeline said.

Madeline and her husband began working with local residents who has organized themselves to address concerns about the way their Volcán River was being used. They wrote letters to national and then international water experts and conversation groups. “It was a way of trying to say, ‘Are we doing all we can?’” she said.

Today, Costa Rica’s Water and Sanitation Institute (AyA) works with a series of local water boards that oversee the use of over a quarter of the country’s potable water through a local water management system that divides the land into geographically-defined watersheds. “It all started with sitting down to write a couple letters,” she said.

Madeline cautions that writing a couple letters is not sufficient. “What we need is political will,” she said — change at a large scale in addition to grassroots movements. “Drop by drop, street by street is not enough,” she said.

Grassroots movements can be the precursor to spur the large-scale change needed. Madeline explains that we are at a critical point where individuals must come together to bring about policy changes — and that this can be accomplished by educating the pub-



**The Volcán Watershed Commission learns about river health**

lic. “It’s important to have a garden,” she said, “but it’s [even more] important to understand the big picture.” Instead of working in isolation, we need to pool our collective resources and knowledge to work at a higher level.

Madeline points out that the United States has no national water policy. She explains the need for policy like the [Brisbane declaration of 2007](#), which brought together scientists, economists, engineers, resource managers, and policy makers from 50 nations to create a global action agenda dedicated to protecting rivers and declaring them to be “the foundation of our social, cultural, and economic well-being.” Besides Australia, South Africa and the United Kingdom are known for their policies protecting environmental water flows.

“We have to set an ethical north to declare water as a right of the environment and of the people,” she said. Madeline explains how water for the environment is not a political issue, but a practical one. Taking care of the natural flow pattern of rivers provides water for nature, which in turn provides water for civilization. For humans to have water, rivers must also have water.

Madeline concludes, “This is a huge moment and we have to step up to the plate.” 💧

# Mini-workshop: Calculating Your Water Footprint



Christine Donley, WMG Intern

You turn on the faucet and water comes out. The water company calculates your use; you pay the bill. But how much water are you really using? The amount of water embedded in daily activities, such as traveling, eating, and consumer behavior, accumulates to leave a water footprint greater than just the usage listed on a water bill.

Water use can be measured in two ways: direct use (monthly water bill) and virtual, or indirect, use (as calculated by water footprint calculators). By combining direct consumption figures calculated on your water bill with calculations of virtual water use, you can develop a clearer understanding of your water consumption. You will quickly realize how water is related to almost every activity in your life.

## Calculating Indirect Water Use:

### What is Your Water Footprint?

Calculating carbon footprints has become fairly widespread; however, did you know you can also calculate your water footprint?

A comprehensive water footprint calculator will include all the water you use at your home, plus the total volume of freshwater needed for the food you eat, products you consume, and energy you use.

The following websites offer tools that calculate water use based on personal habits and lifestyle:

[www.h2oconserve.org](http://www.h2oconserve.org):- This calculator incorporates household data, diet, and consumer habits. Its detailed results provide insight on how to save water.



[www.waterfootprint.org](http://www.waterfootprint.org): Primarily based on dietary habits and some household features, this website also provides a calculator for corporations.



## Calculating Direct Water Use:

Pick up your monthly water bill or find your utility services statement online. Become familiar with the amount and unit of water consumption. Companies often charge different rates depending on how much water your household consumes — high-water-use households often pay more per gallon.

### Sample water bill

Jan: 4 Ccfs	July: 9 Ccfs
Feb: 5 Ccfs	Aug: 9 Ccfs
Mar: 6 Ccfs	Sept: 10 Ccfs
Apr: 6 Ccfs	Oct: 8 Ccfs
May: 7 Ccfs	Nov: 7 Ccfs
June: 10 Ccfs	Dec: 5 Ccfs

Add all of your monthly figures to get your annual total. Household total: 86 Ccfs per year

Convert Ccfs (hundred cubic feet) to gallons. One Ccf = 748 gallons

$86 \text{ Ccfs} \times 748 \text{ gallons/Ccfs} = 64,328 \text{ gallons}$

Assuming a two person household:  
 $64,328 / 2 = 32,164 \text{ gallons per person}$

Daily use:  $32,164 / 365 = 88 \text{ gallons/person/day}$

This is a water conscious household—the U.S. average daily water use is closer to 150 gallons/day

Looking at both charts, we can see the value of calculating water use in more ways than one — virtual water use can be several times that of the direct use listed on a water bill! 💧

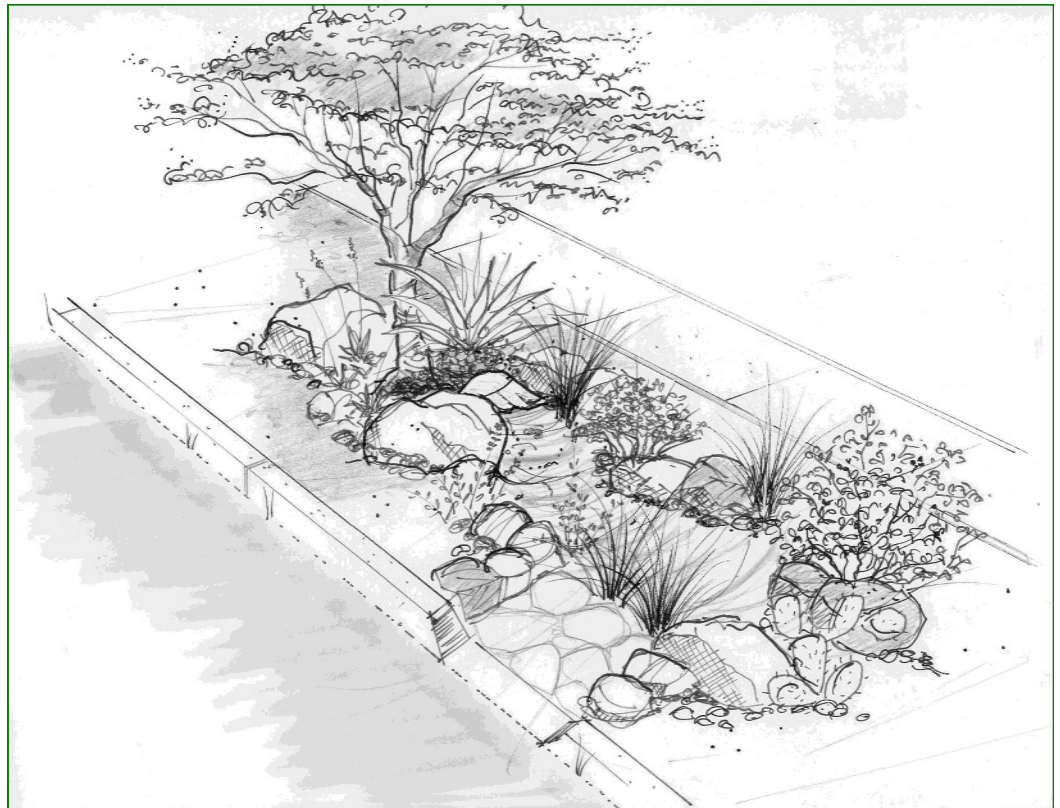
# Turn Your Neighborhood's Streets Green!

Does your neighborhood or city have too much pavement, concrete, and empty lots and not enough trees, vegetation, and natural areas? If so, WMG wants to help you turn your grey streets into green streets. WMG is pleased to offer you the following resources to help achieve your goal:

- "Green Infrastructure for Southwestern Neighborhoods" manual. Download for free at:  
<http://watershedmg.org/green-streets>
- Street design standards for capturing stormwater and growing vegetation with water harvesting chicanes, medians, traffic circles, street-width reductions, and right-of-way improvements. These designs have been approved by the Tucson Department of Transportation, and are available for free download at:  
<http://watershedmg.org/green-streets/resources>
- A series of free public webinars with national and international partners to address the development of community-based green infrastructure strategies (Spring & Fall 2011, dates will be announced early 2011)
- Customized 2-3 day GI trainings for various cities in Arizona
- Neighborhood Leaders training for up to a dozen Tucson community leaders. Training includes the design, installation, and maintenance of GI practices in their own neighborhoods. For more information, visit: <http://watershedmg.org/green-streets>



WMG's Green Infrastructure manual includes various GI designs with conceptual drawings, plan designs, and cross-sections. The design below is an example plan design of a street basin w/ curb cut



WMG is able to offer an expanded variety and scope of services to promote Green Infrastructure thanks to recent grants from the Environmental Protection Agency and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.

For more information on any of the above resources or programs, please contact James MacAdam at [james@watershedmg.org](mailto:james@watershedmg.org). 💧



# New Staff Bring New Workshop Offerings to You

## ◀ Catlow Shipek, Senior Program Manager

Watershed Management Group is growing quickly, and our programs are taking off! This summer, we added four new staff members to lead educational, hands-on workshops and to expand our Greening Urban Watersheds program.

My intention was to introduce you to the four new staff members. However, I am quickly realizing that it has actually been they who have already been introducing the greater community to WMG! Please welcome James DeRoussel, Tory Syracuse, Adam Schwartz, and Chris Stenken.

## James DeRoussel, Project Manager



James DeRoussel

James brings his talents and experience as a Landscape Architect and owner of ForeSite, LLC, to develop WMG's outreach to the commercial sector and implement community demonstration sites. James will also provide sustainable landscaping consulting services to residents, businesses, and organizations; teach sections of our Water Harvesting Certification course; and lead Co-op workshops.

## Adam Schwartz, Workshop Instructor

Adam became involved with WMG through our Co-op program as a passionate volunteer, and then completed our Water Harvesting Certification Course. Adam has proven to be a quiet but determined force of change and will provide workshop instruction for the Co-op program. Adam is also developing new Co-op workshop offerings such as solar oven workshops.



Adam Schwarz

*"As I've started to work with WMG, I find that I have a slight addiction to power tools."*

## Tory Syracuse, Project Manager

*"Through my work with WMG, I hope to help reconnect people to their communities - the natural, cultural, and urban landscapes we both impact and create, and the flora, fauna, and human beings who inhabit them."*



Tory Syracuse

Tory has a depth of experience in environmental education, including teaching courses in, landscape architecture, urban planning, and creative writing programs coupled with a Master's degree in Urban Planning. Most of Tory's time is spent coordinating events and trainings with WMG's Green Streets – Green Neighborhoods program and new Watershed Technical Trainings. Tory has also plunged into developing WMG's Schoolyard program; she has coordinating the school grants and will begin leading classroom activities and workshops this spring.

## Chris Stenken, Apprentice Workshop Instructor

Chris brings to WMG an avid interest in urban agriculture systems and fluency in Spanish. With experience as an apprentice in South American permaculture communities, he brings knowledge about food production systems and a passion for promoting sustainable practices. Chris is currently training as an apprentice with WMG; he will be primarily leading a variety of Co-op workshops. 💧



Chris Stenken

# Co-op Member Profile: Martha Retallick

## ❖ Rhiwena Slack, Co-op Coordinator

Originally from Pennsylvania, Martha Retallick moved to Tucson in the early 1980s for a better job market and year-round biking. Martha now works from her home, chosen for its proximity to the University of Arizona campus and downtown, as a freelance website developer, photographer, and community volunteer.

She travels by bike, public transport, and rideshare to arrive at assignments and the plethora of volunteer activities she is involved in.

Martha has been a Co-op member since the program's inception in 2007, and she has volunteered over 90 hours. Martha continues to volunteer both for the learning aspect of Co-op workshops, and also to earn a discount on her own projects. For Martha, these projects are "the future of adult education -- learning to be more self-sufficient and then enabling others to do the same without spending big bucks".

Martha enjoys learning new things at each workshop, as each group of volunteers and workshop instructors brings their own unique perspective and set of skills to provide a continual

source of fresh ideas. As an example, she points to a striking turquoise and red brindled rock placed strategically in her rockery at the entrance to her property. This vibrant artwork owes its placement to the vision and muscular effort of three workshop participants. Such attention to detail would have been less likely had she hired a landscaper and Martha would certainly not have

been able to move it alone.

Martha has hosted three workshops at her own home, with plans for more in the future. Prior to working with WMG, Martha contoured her property so that water would soak in around the greenery and stay away from the house, but without help or experience, her efforts met with only partial success. The first WMG Co-op workshop at her house in August 2008 addressed this issue. Thanks to the expertise that she has gained through work with the Co-op, she is confident that she has the skills to successfully remedy similar situa-

tions in the future.

Cost is an important consideration for Martha. When she moved into her home, she planted low-water-use plants in her essentially bare yard and installed low-flow faucets and toilets to keep her water costs low. The Co-op offers Martha an affordable way to improve her home and yard. She mentions a neighbor who hired a contractor for a job similar to the xeriscape rock garden that she built during her second Co-op workshop "The neighbor quoted me a price of \$3,000 for the work on his property," she said. "The total cost of my project? \$824.24." With this price comes high-caliber work. She describes the excavation job to knock down her crumbling brick retaining wall as "so well done that it was like watching a ballet dance with a backhoe." In addition to saving on water bills, tree planting will reduce Martha's cooling needs as the trees grow and shade her house.

*"Co-op workshops are the future of adult education – learning to be more self-sufficient and then enabling others to do the same."*

Martha's yard is an ongoing project. She has plans for a small cistern and a kitchen garden, at which

point the use of space in her small 3600 square foot lot will be maximized, but no doubt the learning and volunteering will continue. You can follow Martha's workshops on her blog at [www.westernskycommunications.com/blog/topics/xeriscapes/](http://www.westernskycommunications.com/blog/topics/xeriscapes/) ♠



## Presenting WMG's

# Local Foods Iron Chef



Save the date! You are invited to celebrate the New Year with WMG on February 5, 2011, at the WMG Local Foods Iron Chef. Five aspiring chefs from among the ranks of WMG supporters will compete in a cooking competition using fresh, local foods selected from local farmers markets - including a secret ingredient! Come join us in sampling the food and choosing the winner at St. Marks Church.

This event will be the capstone to our New Year Fundraiser to help us reach our \$15,000 goal. Tickets are \$25 per person and include samplings of five gourmet dishes, wine, and live piano music. Contact Lindsay at (520)396-3266 or [Lindsay@watershedmg.org](mailto:Lindsay@watershedmg.org) to reserve your spot now!

## Thanks to Our Many Individual Donors

### International

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Connie and Jeff Woodman

#### River Basin Level

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Jared Buono and Sowmya

Somnath

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Kevin Dahl

James DeRoussel

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### Donation Levels

- Dewdrop: \$25
- Silver Raindrop: \$50
- Flowing River: \$100
- River Basin: \$500
- Int'l Watershed: \$1,000



# Professional Training in Green Streets Design with WMG



WMG will launch its new Watershed Technical Trainings program with an advanced training in Green Infrastructure being offered January 20-22, 2011. This training, the only one of its kind in the Southwest, offers professionals, teachers, and community activists a chance to advance their knowledge of green infrastructure in an experiential, workshop-based setting.

The Green Infrastructure Technical Training and Certification provides hands-on, comprehensive training in site assessment, planning, design, implementation, and maintenance of GI projects. Certification can be earned, if desired, after completing the course and passing the exam.

We are accepting applications on a rolling basis, with a final deadline of January 3rd, 2011. For more information, please visit WMG's [Watershed Technical Trainings website](#), or contact Tory Syracuse at [tsyracuse@watershedmg.org](mailto:tsyracuse@watershedmg.org) or 520-396-3266.

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**Painted Cave Cattle Company**

### Special Thanks

- Thank you to Evan Canfield for making 70 ceramic mugs for WMG's Cabeza Cerveza fundraiser.
- Thank you to Mac Hudson, Sky Jacobs, Chaz Bufe, David Yerkey, and Jack Strasburg with Cabeza Cerveza for hosting our Pints for WMG! Fundraiser.
- Thanks to all the farmers who participated in our Local Film and Food Fest market.

Watershed Moment is a quarterly newsletter written by WMG staff and guest contributors, with graphic layout by Lindsay Ignatowski and final editing by Lisa Shipek. If you are interested in submitting to The Watershed Moment, please contact Lindsay at [lindsay@watershedmg.org](mailto:lindsay@watershedmg.org) or at 520-396-3266.

The mission of Watershed Management Group is to develop community-based solutions to ensure the long-term prosperity of people and health of the environment. We provide people with the knowledge, skills, and resources for sustainable livelihoods.