

### Dear Readers

One of our board members recently told me she loves WMG because we're not just focused on what we do, but how we be. In other words, our programs are not just skin deep, they are heartfelt expressions of how we live our lives and our deepest desires for our communities.

You can experience this depth of purpose at our Living Lab & Learning Center in Tucson. Step into the lab and you immediately feel the energy and simple elegance of resilient living. The WMG lab is not just a physical

location though, it is expressed throughout the communities where we work—growing and adapting with every project, training, and workshop we do with you.

Thank you for investing in WMG's community lab and believing in our experiments!



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Writing & Editing: Karilyn Roach, Stephen Thomas, & Lisa Shipek Graphic Design: Cero Wood Graphic Design, Inc.

Watershed Management Group develops and implements 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.

### Direct Impact of Your Dollars

Your donation goes a long way at WMG, and we're proud to share with you the results of your investment!

<sup>\$</sup>50



Funds an educational presentation, free to the community. **See pg 5** to learn about our Water Harvesting Rebate Classes.

<sup>\$</sup>100



Pays for an on-site training for Monsoon Squad members to learn about native plant care. **See pg. 11** 

\$250



Covers the cost to run our Youth River Stewards Program with a high school class. **See pg. 7-8** 

\$500



Funds trees and habitat plants at a Green Streets Demonstration Site. **See pg. 9** 

\$1,000



Funds the translation of a WMG educational resource into Spanish. **See pg. 13** to learn about our Spanish Green Infrastructure manual and other Mexico/border work.

\$5,000



Creates an outdoor classroom at the Living Lab & Learning Center. **See pg. 3** 



## Edible Shade: Mesquite Pancakes Served Up at the Living Lab

This past fall, we opened the doors of the Living Lab for the 1st Annual Edible Shade Mesquite Pancake Breakfast. The festive event centered on (you guessed it!) a feast of mesquite-flour flapjacks served up to a crowd of nearly 500 hungry locals. This tasty tradition began in the Dunbar/Spring neighborhood a decade ago. WMG was proud to host the breakfast in 2014 and carry the torch—or in this case, the spatula.

Delicious as they were, the day was about a lot more than just pancakes. Guests were invited to celebrate the food- and shade-producing benefits of mesquite, pomegranate, olive, and other edible native and desert-adapted trees. The excitement kicked off with a free shade tree distribution courtesy of Tucson Electric Power. Within the first half-hour, all 50 trees had been claimed—destined to provide cooling, energy-conserving relief to happy homeowners in the summer months.

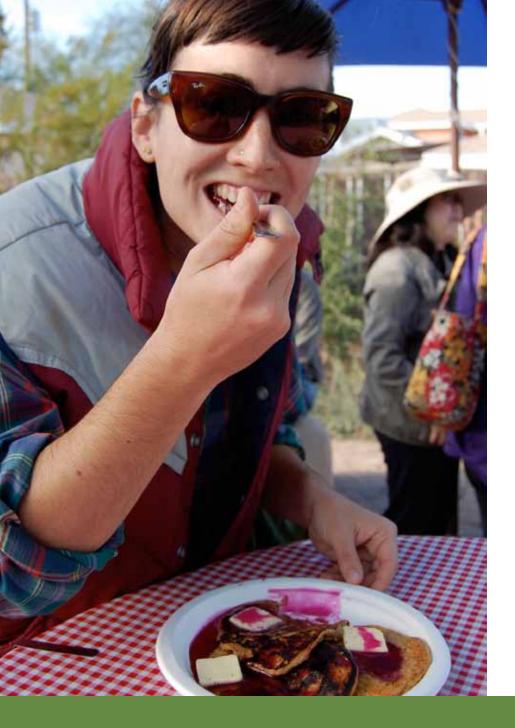
Another Edible Shade highlight was the "Porch Presentation" series. Dozens of people gathered on the cozy north porch of the Living Lab to catch talks from local educators and experts. Our fabulous speakers included local foragers from the Iskashitaa Refugee Network, ecosystem analyst Amy McCoy, and Kino Heritage Fruit Trees project co-founder Jesús García. As the noontime hour approached, WMG's own Brad Lancaster led the crowd onto the Living Lab's Plaza for an interactive "solar angle dance" to learn how the sun's path moves across the Tucson sky throughout the year.

For many guests, this was their first visit to the Living Lab and Learning Center—and the excitement was palpable! An information table staffed by WMG board members was busy throughout the day with people curious about the organization's work and mission. Kids happily explored the Children's Water Conservation Playhouse, which was newly opened that morning with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. And countless people lined up to leave rich deposits in our composting toilet!

What could be more delectable—and quintessentially Tucson—than a sunny morning bike ride in November followed by a piping hot plate of mesquite pancakes? Nothing better comes to mind for us!







We were thrilled to see so many new faces and introduce the Tucson community to the exciting developments at the Living Lab. Seeing the property in action and receiving enthusiastic feedback from our guests was a strong affirmation that we are onto something important. Many people commented on the uniqueness of the Living Lab as a hands-on, exploratory classroom for green living. Instead of simply reading about the techniques and benefits of rainwater harvesting, composting, and sustainable design, visitors were eager to see and experience them in person.

Finally, the last pancakes were flipped and our remaining guests hopped on their bikes to pedal home, full and smiling. We hope to see everyone back at the Living Lab again soon!

Don't miss a single event at our Living Lab – sign up for our Tucson Action Bulletin at watershedmg.org.

### WMG's Monthly Classes Move to Living Lab

The Living Lab and Learning Center is becoming an increasingly popular destination for site tours due to the great diversity of water harvesting and green living systems found on one site. As WMG's most comprehensive demonstration site, we decided to run our popular rainwater and greywater classes from the lab. We offer a monthly 2-hour class covering the basics of rainwater and greywater harvesting, which also fills the educational requirement to get cash rebates on water harvesting systems from Tucson Water. During the class, participants enjoy a tour of the Living Lab and get personalized help on systems for their own home. In 2014, we taught close to 250 people through this class, helping many of these people qualify for rebates up to \$2,000.

WMG's International Lab: Joaquin Murrieta Leads the Way

"Connecting people in the urban environment with their watershed is what we do best at WMG, and this connectivity is bringing hope to provide water for nature and people in different parts of the planet." - Joaquin Murrieta-Saldivar, WMG Project Manager

Project Manager Joaquin Murrieta-Saldivar is uniquely poised to help WMG reach Latino communities, lead bi-lingual training programs, and expand the reach of our educational resources. As a native of Mexico, Joaquin brings a depth of natural resource management experience that crosses borders.

### **Reaching out to students**

In 2014, Joaquin hosted two groups of international students at WMG's Living Lab & Learning Center. Part of the Study of the U.S. Institute, a program run through the University of Arizona and funded by the Department of State, the students were drawn to the simple and impactful solutions that we live with every day at the Living Lab, such as rainwater harvesting to grow food and tippy taps to wash our hands. They were especially amazed by the clean and odor-free composting toilets that turn our waste into soil, which are so different from the latrines they have known.

### **Expanding the minds of professionals**

Through a collaborative partnership with the U.S. Forest Service International, Joaquin trained 30 professionals representing 25 countries who participated in an International Watershed Symposium. We started the training in Tucson visiting the dry Santa Cruz River to see the severe impact of poor water management first hand. The training continued at the Ward I City Council office with a tour of the rain garden and discussion of community-based solutions. Participants were most interested in our Green Living Co-op model and grassroots policy initiatives working with neighborhoods and municipalities.







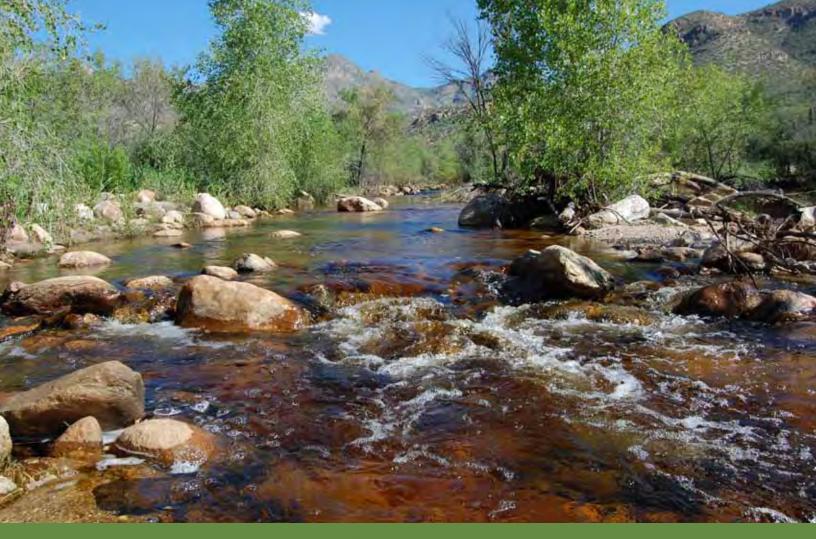
A student from Mexico experiences the tippy tap hand washing station at the Living Lab.

### Transforming cities in Mexico—and beyond

Knowing the widespread impact of our *Green Infrastructure for Southwest Neighborhoods* manual as a practical guide for neighborhoods, professionals, and municipal governments in the U.S., we were thrilled by the opportunity to translate the manual into Spanish and expand its reach. Support from *Raiz de Fondo* and *Niparaja*, two NGOs from La Paz, Mexico, finally made it happen!

Infraestructura Verde para Comunidades del Desierto Sonorense is being used to guide development in the City of La Paz and provides a resource for the millions of Spanish-speaking people that live in the U.S. and abroad. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we offer the publication for free download on our website.

The future looks bright for our international work in Mexico and the border region. *Buenaventura!* 



### **Youth Advocacy for Our Rivers**

At WMG, we have always worked to involve the whole community in our mission. Now we are preparing passionate young people to take on an important role in public outreach and policy advocacy. Through our campaign to restore Sabino Creek—an early jewel in the crown of our 50-year Program—WMG is training local teens to be a voice for our rivers and riparian areas.

With funding from a grant to the Community Water Coalition, WMG's Karilyn Roach developed a 5-day River Stewards curriculum for 14 – 18 year-olds. Charles Swanson, a UA graduate student studying Environmental Education, assisted greatly in developing and teaching this curriculum through a pilot at Western Institute for Leadership Development (WILD) in the fall of 2014.

### This curriculum focuses on three key areas:

- 1) Educating teens about shallow groundwater resources—small pockets of often isolated groundwater found within 50 feet of the land surface
- 2) Making the connection between this unique water resource and flowing streams and riparian habitat in the Tucson Basin
- 3) Giving teens the skills and confidence to spread this knowledge by providing them with presentation skills, direct outreach experience, and easy-to-use advocacy tools to get the message to local leaders

Arturo, a student who participated in the pilot program at WILD, is inspired to spread water harvesting throughout his neighborhood. "I am creating a plan to construct my own rain garden at home," he said. WMG will be building off the success of this pilot to bring this information and experience-based learning opportunity to more schools in 2015.



# Partner Profile: Western Institute of Leadership Development



Youth River Stewards attend a Community Water Coalition event and network with local professionals.

If youth truly are our future, then the leaders of tomorrow are going to come out of the Western Institute of Leadership Development. Known by the fun—and apt—acronym of WILD, this Tucson charter high school involves their students deeply in experiential learning. WMG had the opportunity to partner with WILD on two transformative projects in 2014.

In the spring, students and teachers worked with WMG's

Schoolyard Program coordinator Joaquin Murrieta to design and install one the largest street-side rain gardens in Tucson. These rain gardens support native trees and pollinator plants by capturing the stormwater that flows—sometimes in abundance—down the street in front of the school. Partially funded with a grant from WMG, the project has transformed the school's main entrance into a lush and inviting natural landscape.

Oscar Medina, who teaches Environmental Literacy at WILD, summed up the projects and their impact: "Our focus is to prepare students for college, careers, and civic engagement to make an equitable and sustainable world a reality. **The WMG partnerships provided training and hands on experience that shaped our students into the next generation of water stewards.**"

In the fall, WILD partnered with us to bring our River Stewards Program into their Environmental

Literacy class. It was a tough 5-day curriculum, but the students soaked up the knowledge and ran with it by developing a new student group called United Youth for Sustainability. This group plans to join the Community Water Coalition in 2015 and is already planning activities and events to promote sustainability and bring awareness to environmental issues at their school and throughout the community. Way to go!



WMG's Karilyn Roach teaches students about river flows and groundwater through a watershed model.



What does a 3-inch rainstorm look like in urban Phoenix? Three inches may not sound like much, but for a desert city that receives just 8 inches of rain annually, it's huge. In fact, it's considered a 200-year event, because the probability of the storm is once every 200 years.

In the last year, we have received several of these epic rainstorms, putting our public rain gardens to the test. Fortunately we're prepared; we routinely design our rain gardens and green street features to handle peak storm events. The roots of native plants, mulch, and improved organic content in the soil give rain gardens an amazing capacity to soak up rain like a sponge.

In 2014, with funding from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, WMG installed three new public rain gardens and expanded a fourth site at Primera Iglesia, WMG's first green streets project in the Phoenix Valley.

#### **Glendale Main Library**

The library's landscape used to shed rainwater, diverting it away from plants marooned on top of mounds. WMG and volunteers turned the mounds upside down! With more than 30 volunteers from FedEx, we created shallow basins—with 3,800 gallons of capacity—to spread and sink the rain into the landscape. Now that's a lot of free irrigation!



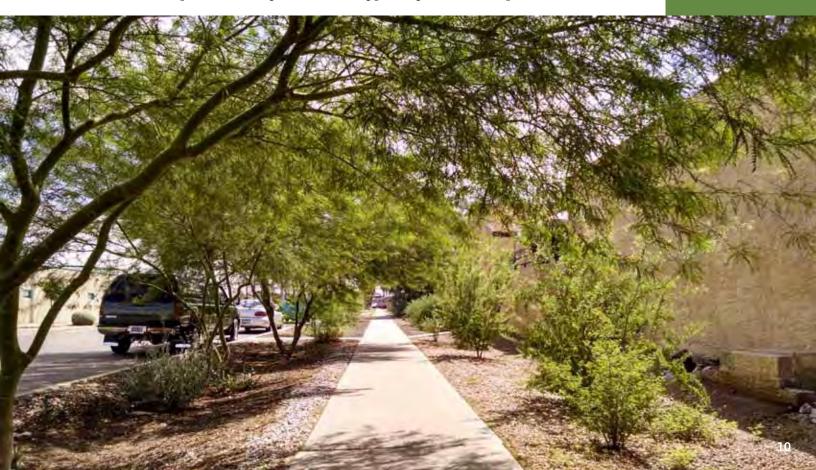
#### **Phoenix Zoo**

The new rain garden at the Zoo's Harmony Farm includes two 1,320-gallon rain tanks to complement their boomerang-shaped basins. Gutters capture rainwater from the roof of the barn and direct it into tanks and away from the sewer. Overflow from the tanks meanders downhill through a series of thickly mulched basins, supporting native landscaping and infiltrating water.



### Primera Iglesia

WMG's first and best example of community green streets in the Phoenix Valley gained additional curb cuts and expanded rain gardens too—harvesting rain from the roof, parking lot, and street. Now this site can capture over 4,300 gallons of rain in each storm! More than 35 volunteers from Bank of America shoveled, raked, and sweated to complete these rain gardens, including planting over 50 desert plants and 7 native trees.





### Failed Experiment - Public Rain Garden Care

Laboratories are places for experimentation, and this means there are often failures along with the successes. WMG's community lab is no different—we've experienced both. Our philosophy is to celebrate the successes and embrace the failures. Failures become lessons learned and they often inform future programming and inspire our most creative community solutions.

### Public Rain Gardens Ruined by Mow, Blow, & Go

In the fall of 2007, WMG installed one of our first public rain gardens at the Ward 3 City Council office in Tucson, AZ. We transformed part of their parking lot into a landscape sponge that soaked up the thousands of gallons of stormwater from their roof, parking lot, and alley. The addition of trees, a pollinator garden, and rockwork created a little oasis with outdoor seating where neighbors could gather. This was the first of four rain gardens we installed at City Council offices in Tucson. The staff at the Ward offices took great care of the garden the first few years, watering by hand from their rain tank and hand pulling weeds.

After several years, care of the gardens at the City Council offices was turned over to the Parks and Recreation Department, who contracts landscape maintenance for most of Tucson's public landscapes. The handoff of landscape care to standard landscape crews was an epic fail. Each time we visited the sites for tours or monitoring, we noticed the rain gardens were degrading. First we noticed herbicide applications that prevented our wildflowers from seeding. Then we noticed poor pruning work and actual removal and spraying of key plants like native bunch grasses. The final blow was when landscape crews systematically raked up and removed all the organic mulch from all the basins! WMG quickly learned that the day-to-day care of the rain garden is just as crucial as proper installation and requires proactive planning and community education.

Instead of the rain gardens improving as they matured, they began reverting back to a typical landscape that fit in with the status quo of a *Mow, Blow, and Go* maintenance regime. In this common regime, landscape care has become "cleaning" instead of gardening, and the landscape is cut, blown, pulled, and thrown away. Years of effort, money, and community education were quickly lost in the name of efficient and cheap landscape "care".

WMG not only saw this problem with sites maintained by the city, but with sites maintained by neighborhoods. Neighbors often do not have the time or resources for proper care, so their rain gardens grow unruly due to lack of attention and suffer the fate of mow, blow, and go crews when someone steps in to help.

So how did we turn this failure to our advantage? This epic fail led to the creation of WMG's Monsoon Squad. In the spring of 2013, WMG negotiated an agreement with Parks and Rec to take over care of the rain garden landscapes at the four ward offices, and since then we've cared for these spaces with the help of trained volunteers. The volunteers conduct weekly visits to help us monitor the sites and do basic gardening. For the first year of the program, the contracted city landscape crew was still doing maintenance at the sites outside of the designated rain garden areas. However, we found time and again, that despite orders, renegade crews would come into the rain gardens and spray herbicides and whack trees

and shrubs. To put a stop to this, **WMG negotiated a new** contract with the city in the Fall of 2014, where **WMG** has full responsibility for the four ward landscapes. This way we are not battling other contractors with different goals.

WMG is thrilled to take on the care of the four ward offices as a pilot with the Monsoon Squad. During this time, we will be planning out improvements for the rain gardens, now that we know they won't be destroyed and removed by landscape crews. We'll add more native plants, establish wildflower seeds, incorporate prunings from the plants back into the basins to improve soil, and add educational signage so everyone can enjoy the benefits of learning from these demonstration sites.

Native plant expert Jonathan Horst, with Tucson Audubon, shows Monsoon Squad members live examples of invasive plants. Below: WMG's Joe Silins leads a native plant hike in the Sonoran Desert.





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### WMG Donor Profile Julie Hall Allison

"I usually tell people that gardening is my hobby," says WMG Stewardship Circle donor Julie Hall Allison. "But what I'm really into is implementing the principles of permaculture in my own home environment."

Since moving to Arizona in 2006, Julie's passion for sustainable living has blossomed through her experiences with the diverse plants that make up our desert environment. "I've come to appreciate the incredible variety of native plants here and enjoy integrating them in my yard. This has been a great learning experience."

Julie has been a financial supporter of WMG since she first learned of the organization in 2011. When asked why, she says she wants people to learn and practice how to live sustainably in the desert. Her contributions as a



Julie Hall Allison cuts a ribbon to open the Children's Water Harvesting Playhouse at the Living Lab

Capital Campaign Donor are having a powerful and direct impact in spreading this knowledge by supporting the development of WMG's Living Lab and Learning Center.

"WMG is in a central position to inspire and educate us in these practices, not only through its Living Lab in Tucson but throughout the state. This is why I'm interested in the work they do and helping them further it."

Last fall, Julie generously donated the money needed to construct a Children's Water Harvesting Playhouse on the Living Lab campus. She supported this project because she believes it will "help open the minds of our children to live more in harmony with our desert."

"I can imagine many families will find their way over for a great outing," Julie says. "Knowing this is actually happening will be very satisfying indeed."

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NOVA Home Loans - Team Volpe

Oasis Water Harvesting

Pima County - Department of Environmental Quality

Renters Alarm Co Romeo Tree Service

Technicians for Sustainability

Terrasophia, LLC Trek Bicycles of Tucson

Tucson Association of Realtors

Tucson Conserve to Enhance

Tucson Electric Power

Tucson Premium Appliance

VIP Mortgage Inc

Water Harvesting International

WestLand Resources

Whole Foods Within Studio

Reflo: Sustainable Water Solutions

### Living Lab & Learning Lenter -An Educational Legacy

A hearty thanks to all the donors who invested their dollars in our Capital Campaign to support the development of the Living Lab & Learning Center. More than 1,000 people attended educational events at the Living Lab in 2014, and this number will continue to grow annually, making the Living Lab our most impactful educational program. Thanks to you, in the last year we installed the central plaza, urban orchard, 10,000-gallon underground rain tank, and Children's Conservation Playhouse.

We are seeking more enthusiastic investors to support the Lab in 2015. Will you help us build a large straw-bale classroom, green parking lot for bikes and cars, interpretive signage, and more outdoor classrooms? To be a part of our Lab Legacy, contact Lisa Shipek to learn more and plan your gift.



### Partners

#### **Tucson Region Partners**

ACE Charter High School American Rivers Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Barrio Hollywood **BICAS** 

Borton Magnet School Center for Biological Diversity Cienega Watershed Partnership

City of Tucson Department of Transportation

City of Tucson Environmental Services Department

City of Tucson Mayor's Office

City of Tucson Office of Conservation and Sustainable Development

City of Tucson, Ward 1 Council Office City of Tucson, Ward 2 Council Office City of Tucson, Ward 3 Council Office City of Tucson, Ward 6 Council Office

Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection Community Food Bank of Southern

Arizona

Community Water Coaltion Conserve to Enhance

David Omick

Desert Ashram

Desert Spring Children's Center

Desert Watch

Drachman Institute

**Ecosystem Economics** 

Fix It Finish It

Garden District Neighborhood Greater Tucson Leadership

Jefferson Park Neighborhood

Kramer's Kitchen

Lil' John Excavating

Living Streets Alliance

Long Realty

Manzo Elementary School

Metro Water

Mountain and 1st Neighborhood

National Park Service

Native Seeds/SEARCH

Palo Verde Neighborhood

Panagia Theotokos Ecclesiastical Retreat

Peter Howell Elementary

Physicians for Social Responsibility

Pima Association of Governments

Pima County

Pima County Dept of Environmental

Quality

Pima County Regional Flood Control District

Primavera Foundation

Rincon Heights Neighborhood

Robison Elementary

Save the Scenic Santa Ritas Sierra Club - Rincon Group

Sky Island Alliance

Skyline Country Club

The Sonoran Institute

Southern Arizona Arborist Guild

Town of Oro Valley

Tucson Association of Realtors

Tucson Audubon Society

Tucson Clean and Beautiful

**Tucson Mountains Association** 

Tucson Parks and Recreation

Tucson Unified School District

Tucson Water

UA Biosphere 2 (Mitchell Pavao-

Zuckerman)

**UA Water Resources Research Center** University of Arizona Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology (Dr. Diane

Austin)

University of Arizona, Department of Soil, Water, and Environmental Science (Dr.

Charles Gerba)

University of Arizona Water Resources

Research Center

Waldorf School

Whistle Stop Depot

Whole Foods Market

#### **Phoenix Region Partners**

City of Glendale

City of Mesa

City of Phoenix Neighborhood Services

Department

City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation

City of Phoenix Street Transportation

Department

Desert Botanical Garden

Maricopa Cooperative Extension

Maricopa Master Gardeners

Mesa Urban Garden

Phoenix Zoo

Primera Iglesia Metodista Unida

Sustainable Cities Network Arizona State University Global Institute of

Sustainability

Valley Permaculture Alliance

#### Santa Barbara Region Partners

City of Santa Barbara Water Conservation Program

**Environmental Defence Council** 

G3 - The Green Gardens Group

Green Gardeners Program

Santa Barbara Association of Realtors

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper

Santa Barbara City College - Center for Lifelong Learning

Santa Barbara City College Environmental Horticulture Program

Santa Barbara City College - Facilities and Operations

Santa Barbara Independent

Santa Barbara Permaculture Network

Surfers Without Borders

Surfrider Foundation Ocean Friendly Gardens

Sweetwater Collaborative

**UC Master Gardeners** 

Water Wise Santa Barbara

Watershed Resource Center

Wilson Environmental Contracting, Inc.

#### **Other Western Partners**

City of Albuquerque (Open Space Center)

City of Sierra Vista, Arizona

Cochise College

Cochise Water Project

Dona Ana Community College

Groundworks, Dona Ana County

Idaho Nursery and Landscape Association

Montana Green Expo

NM Watershed Resources Network

New Mexico - American Society of

Landscape Architect

Oasis Water Harvesting

Prescott College

Prescott Community Center

Prescott Creeks

Querencia Green

Stream Dynamics

Taylor Bird Enterprises

Water Wise Program, University of Arizona

Cochise County Cooperative Extension Xeriscape Council New MExico

#### International Partners

George Washington University, India Women and Water program

**US-Forest Service International** University of Arizona - College of

Education Niparaja

Raiz de Fondo

### **Financial Report**

**Revenue and Support** 

Total support & revenue	\$ 697,021
Donations	\$ 195,853
Grants	\$ 163,833
Program income	\$ 337,334

### **Expenses**

<b>Program service</b>	S
C	

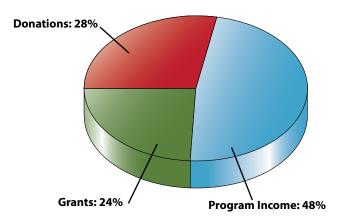
\$ 8,957
\$ 89,307
\$ 136,192
\$ 307,985
\$ 7,849
\$ 2,814
\$ 39,465
\$ 592,568
\$ \$ \$ \$

### **Admin and Fundraising** Administrative

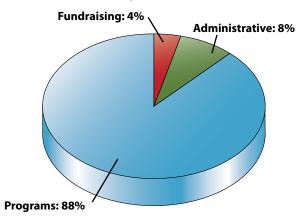
Total supporting services	\$ 81,195
Fundraising	\$ 23,860
Administrative	\$ 57,335

#### Total Expenses \$ 673,762

### Revenue & Support



### Expenses





### **Financial Summary**

WMG continues to enjoy a healthy diversity of income from donations, fee based programs, and grants. Donations are a growing part of our funding and enable WMG to start new strategic programs like our river restoration work. On Arizona Gives Day, our most successful day of fundraising in 2014, WMG raised \$40,000 in 24 hours, earning us a \$10,000 2nd place prize for most dollars raised. Our fee-based programs have experienced the most growth in services to businesses and individuals through our site consultations & design services.

<sup>\*</sup>Report for Fiscal Year of Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2014



### Thank You for being part of WMG's Living Lab!

