

Fall 2021

# A Watershed Moment

A NEWSLETTER OF WATERSHED MANAGEMENT GROUP

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Brian Ellis and Kathy Wilson’s home was featured on the home tour. In 2019, they hosted a WMG Co-op workshop to install a rain garden and a cistern. Since then, they’ve added a laundry-to-landscape system and outdoor shower, showcasing many different water harvesting features.

10th Annual Desert Living Home  
Tour Demonstrates Tangible Models  
for Hydro-Local Future

This year, the first-ever water shortage was declared for the Colorado River, a river that is the principal water supply for many Western cities. While this is grim news, we know it is possible to thrive in the desert without relying on distant watersheds—and the homes and community spaces along the 10th Annual Desert Living Home Tour were proof!

what they were able or chose to attend the tour for free. With a record of 438 attendees at this year’s tour, we were thrilled to see so much enthusiasm about hydro-local living!

The 13 homes and five community spaces along the tour showcased ways to live in cooperation with the desert and produce resources instead of just consuming them—through water and solar harvesting, gardening with native and heritage plants, and composting and mulching with on-site resources.

One primary goal of the home tour was to provide inspiration and resources for people to take action at home. And we’re seeing great results!

**91% of surveyed participants have plans to implement sustainable projects at their home as a result of the tour, with rain gardens, rain tanks, and expanded native habitat being some of the most popular planned actions.**

WMG’s Living Lab and Learning Center was a popular site on the tour, with many visitors arriving on bike, thanks to its central location and easy access along a bike route. To continue offering opportunities to visit throughout the year, we have expanded tours at the Living Lab, including English and Spanish audio tours during the week and docent-led tours on Saturdays. Register anytime at: [Watershedmg.org/Tour](https://Watershedmg.org/Tour).

Every system, big or small, is a step toward our communities utilizing local and renewable water and energy sources—steps on the path away from dependence on dirty energy and distant watersheds, and towards a sustainable future that creates connection and abundance throughout our desert communities and watersheds. In these pages, we hope you’ll find inspiration and resources to take the next step to living hydro-local.

We at WMG believe in a future with climate resilient cities and communities that thrive in harmony with our natural environment. Our cities, neighborhoods, schools, and homes can harvest solar energy and become hydro-local—our word for making use of local, renewable water sources like rainwater, greywater, and annually-renewed groundwater instead of sucking distant rivers and watersheds dry.

The 10th Annual Desert Living Home Tour was a celebration and demonstration of spaces that embody this renewable, hydro-local vision, and by providing public access to these demonstration sites, we begin to remove barriers to the knowledge and technologies, old and new, that make sustainable living in the desert possible.

“The tour did a good job of showing that sustainability doesn’t have to be fancy,” said participant Jessica Radford. We made sure the tour was more accessible this year; WMG offered a sliding scale fee structure, where participants paid



# Living Hydro-Local

## Simple Things Everyone Can Do.

Whether you live in an apartment, townhome, or house with a yard, saving water indoors is something everyone can do! Here are simple habits you can start today, as well as ideas to introduce to your housemates. Together we can value and steward local water supplies, and stop drying out distant watersheds.

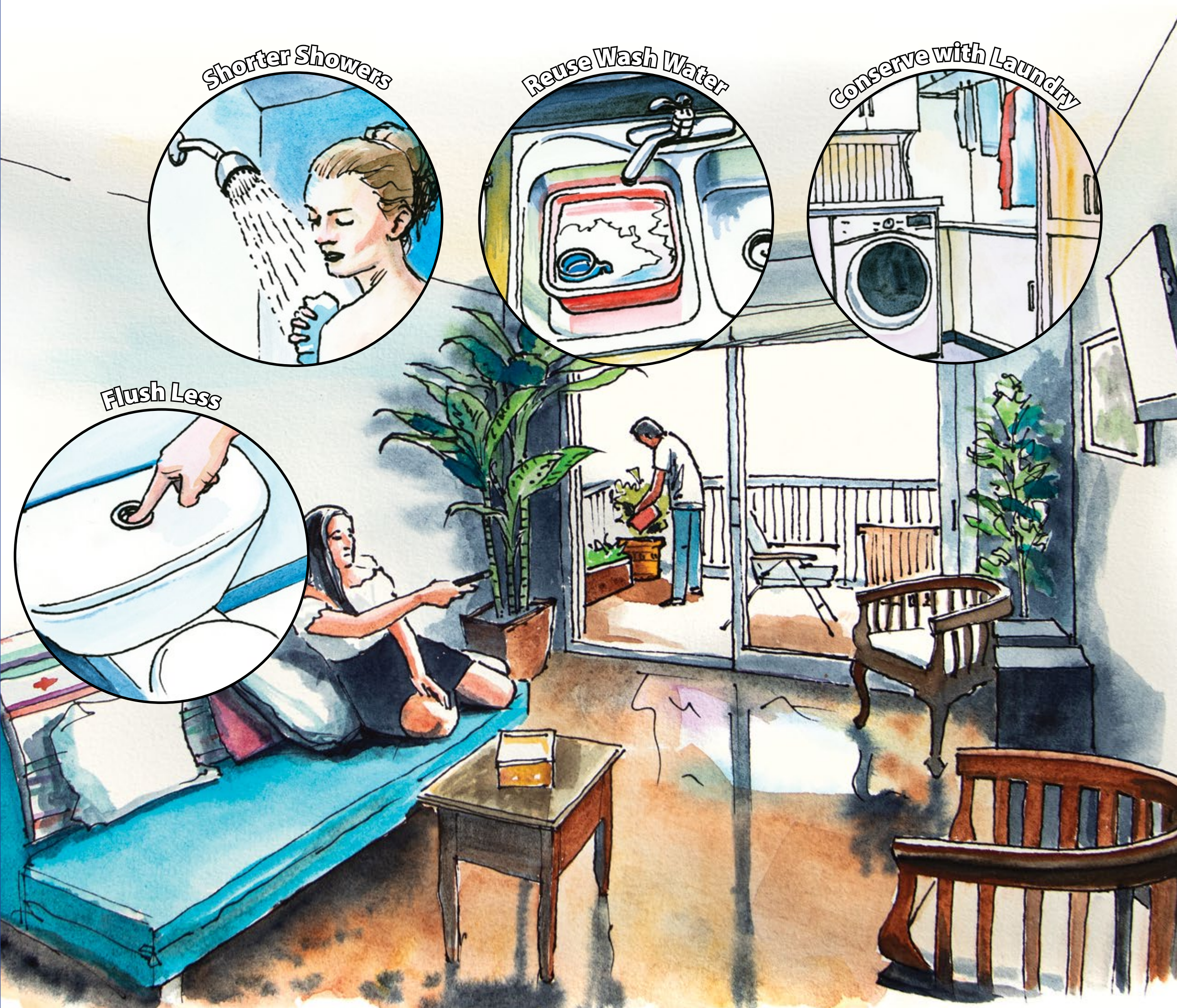
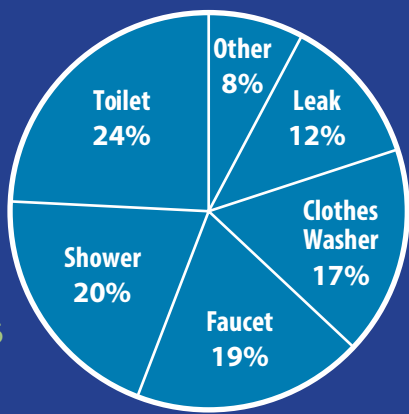
**Flush less water down the toilet.**  
Toilets are the biggest indoor water user! Start by flushing less—if it's yellow, let it mellow. Upgrade to low flow toilets (1.28 gallon or less per flush). And finally, consider a waterless option with a composting toilet.  
*Water saved per year = 3,500+ gallons per person*

**Adjust your shower routine. Wash your hair less!**  
Consider going one extra day without washing your hair to shorten your showers. Turn water off when you're soaping up, and try setting up a timer to keep your showers to 3-5 minutes. In the summer, consider showering with cold water to save energy and ensure shorter showers!  
*Water saved per year = 4,500+ gallons per person*

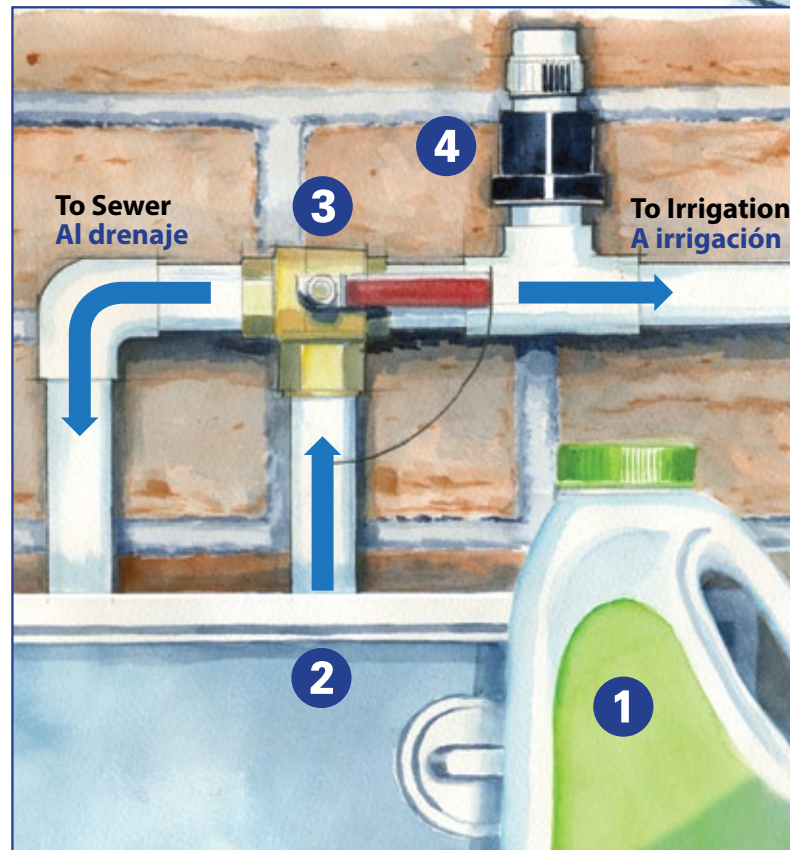
**Reduce and reuse wash water. Bucket and chuck it!**  
Instead of running water while washing dishes, put two containers in your sink, one with soapy water and one with rinse water. Washing this way will save a lot of water, and then you can use the greywater to water your indoor or patio plants. Just make sure to use plant-friendly soaps.  
*Water saved per year = 7,500+ gallons per family*

**Make the most of your laundry.**  
Switch to an efficient front loading washing machine if possible. Other ways to save water and energy include making sure your laundry load is full, using cold water, and hanging laundry to dry.  
*Water saved per year = 2,000+ gallons per person*

**Typical Indoor Water Use**  
Source: Water Research Foundation, Resident End Use of Water, Version 2, 2016







## Laundry to Landscape

### Clean your clothes and water a fruit grove.

Sending washing machine water – commonly known as greywater – to your landscape is one of the easiest ways to repurpose used water in your home. The Laundry-to-Landscape system relies on the washing machine pump to distribute water up to 100 feet from the machine out to your landscape. The flow can be split into up to eight different pipes to distribute greywater around your garden. With some simple plumbing modifications, you can save thousands of gallons of water a year in irrigation and grow fruit trees with recycled water!

### Lave su Ropa y Riegue sus Frutales

Mandando el agua de la lavadora – comúnmente conocida como agua gris- al patio es una de las formas más fáciles de re-usar el agua de su casa. El sistema de lavadora al patio utiliza la bomba de la lavadora para distribuir el agua hasta 100 pies desde la lavadora al patio. Se pueden instalar hasta 8 goteros para distribuir el agua en el jardín. Con unas pequeñas modificaciones de plomería, se pueden ahorrar miles de galones de agua al año en irrigación de árboles frutales.

### Order Your Own Laundry to Landscape (L2L) Kit!

If you want to install your own laundry greywater system, we can get you started with a simple kit that provides all the parts you need. This low-cost system is simple to install, easy to adjust, and no plumber is needed. If you need a little extra help, WMG offers free quarterly classes on how to install the L2L kit.

Learn more and order here: [Watershedmg.org/L2LKit](http://Watershedmg.org/L2LKit)



**1.** Laundry detergent must be low in sodium and have no borax or bleach

Detergente debe ser de bajo sodio y no aditivos de cloro o boro

**2.** Washing machine pump

Lavadora

**3.** Diversion option to safely send your laundry water back to the sewer when needed, especially when using bleach or other harsh detergents

Desviación opción para enviar de manera segura el agua de la lavadora al drenaje cuando sea necesario, especialmente cuando se usa cloro u otros detergentes agresivos

**4.** One-way air vent to prevent a siphon from forming

Ventilador contra corriente para prevenir que se forme un sifón

**5.** Transition from PVC tubing to flexible poly tubing

Transición de PVC pulgada a manguera-negra flexible pulgada

**6.** Outlets with valves to control the amount of flow each plant receives

Goteros con válvula para controlar el flujo para cada planta

**7.** Mulched basin to collect greywater & rainwater

Cuenca con acolchado para coleccionar agua gris y agua de lluvia



**8.** Thirsty fruit tree

Árbol frutal



# WMG Shares Community-based Conservation, Water Harvesting Knowledge in the Land of Enchantment

From sharing water policy expertise to helping cities offer reduced cost greywater kits, WMG has been spreading the word about hydro-local practices in New Mexico!

### What Can Santa Fe Learn From Tucson’s Community-Based Conservation Efforts?

This summer, WMG’s Policy & Technical Director Catlow Shipek met with staff from the City of Santa Fe’s water conservation department and Santa Fe Water Conservation Committee. He shared his experience with community engagement in implementing green infrastructure and ways utilities can promote and increase the use of local, sustainable water sources like rainwater, greywater, and stormwater.

Christine Y. Chavez, Water Conservation Manager for the City of Santa Fe, says, “We’re pursuing many new ideas based on the information Catlow shared, including a Santa Fe version of the Build Your Own Basin project and taking a fresh look at our funding structures. We’re also taking an enthusiastic step forward to move beyond just ‘gallons of water saved’ to seeking out the many other benefits of green infrastructure—everything from shade trees to pollinator species to stormwater infiltration!”

Then, at a New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance forum attended by water professionals from all over the state,

Catlow presented examples of green infrastructure like streetside rain gardens, swales, and chicanes that are thriving in Tucson, and how they can help save municipal water supplies.

“We talked about ways that city governments can collaborate with on-the-ground organizations, including social and environmental justice organizations, to do this work,” Catlow says. “And we looked at how green infrastructure can be adopted in other communities and opportunities to scale it up, asking ourselves, ‘What is the potential for hydro-local water as a community supply?’”

### Building Capacity in Albuquerque to Offer Low-Cost Greywater Kits

When city staff from Bernalillo County—home to Albuquerque—wanted to start offering greywater kits to county residents, they reached out to WMG to figure out how to make it happen. The connection resulted in WMG helping these staff members create a program that offers subsidized laundry-to-landscape greywater kits to residents.

“Through this partnership, we get to learn from Watershed Management Group’s expertise and regional leadership on greywater,” says Megan Marsee, Water



City of Santa Fe Water Conservation staff helping to lead a community educational watershed tour.

Conservation & Resource Manager for Bernalillo County. “I see it as seeds spreading from Tucson to Albuquerque, which builds our own local capacity for greywater.”

WMG provided Bernalillo County 40 laundry-to-landscape kits, which use the power of laundry machine pumps to distribute water into landscapes. We also presented to Bernalillo County staff on how to maintain and troubleshoot these systems, so that their staff could provide homeowners with the proper education to install them. As a result, Bernalillo County is on its way to having a laundry-to-landscape program for residents!

WMG welcomes the opportunity to share our community-based conservation programs and water harvesting knowledge and resources with more communities. If you’re interested in collaborating with us and adopting hydro-local practices at the municipal level, please contact Catlow Shipek at [catlow@watershedmg.org](mailto:catlow@watershedmg.org). Our greywater kits are also available year-round at [Watershedmg.org/L2LKit](https://watershedmg.org/L2LKit)



Christine Y. Chavez, Water Conservation Manager for the City of Santa Fe



Megan Marsee, Water Conservation & Resource Manager for Bernalillo County



# Tucson River Flow Annual Report

## Flow365 Volunteers Capture Record Monsoon Flows & Return of Seasonal and Perennial Flows

2021 was a wild year for Tucson’s creeks and rivers, with historically high flows from the 3rd wettest monsoon on record in Tucson! All year long, our Flow365 community scientists were on the scene, capturing flow data for specific streams throughout the Tucson basin.

While county agencies have flow gauges at some points across Tucson to be able to alert the public about flooding, the data our Flow365 volunteers collect fills a gap in data by recording gentler flows, capturing how flow starts and stops at different times of year, and helping us understand the unique nature of our desert rivers and how they respond to changes in precipitation and groundwater levels. Our Flow365 monitors are in the field collecting flow data on a regular basis, at least once a month, but often weekly or even daily during periods of changing flow. Over time, this data also helps us determine the impact of collective conservation actions on creek flow, as we strive towards our long-term goal of restoring Tucson’s heritage of flowing creeks and rivers.

Initial compiling of this year’s data tells us we had record flows across the watershed during the monsoon season, including in areas where flow was slow and consistent enough to recharge groundwater aquifers. Here are two areas where our data indicates recharging groundwater levels!



## Highlights for the 2021 Water Year: Oct 1 2020 – Sept 30 2021

We’re analyzing our data by water year, which starts October 1st and ends September 30th. Looking at the water year is a better way to analyze river flow than a calendar year, because it takes into account how the seasonal fluctuations of our winter precipitation and summer monsoons impact flow.

### Tanque Verde Bosque, Emerging Seasonal Flow

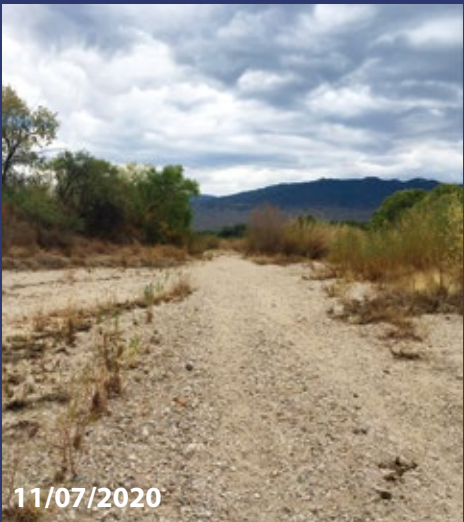
This middle stretch of the Tanque Verde Creek is an area that likely had perennial flow historically. Since groundwater pumping was reduced in the area by the nearby golf course complex in 2005, the aquifer has been steadily recovering, and seasonal flows have been emerging. This shallow groundwater area now supports a riparian forest with cottonwoods, willows, and mesquite trees.

### 2021 Water Year Stats

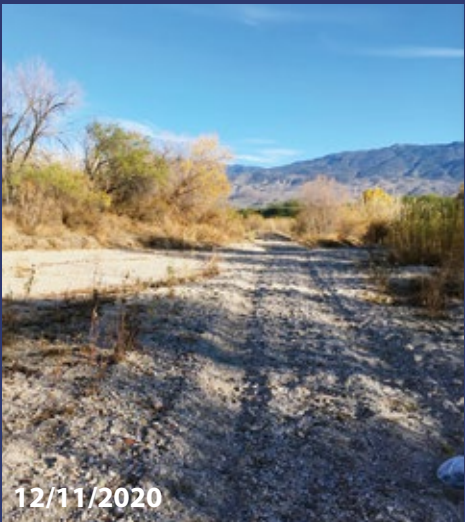
- **Total flow days: 70 days**
- **Most consecutive flow days: 70 days, July 23 – Sept 30\***

*\*Flow continues into the 2022 water year, and has not yet ceased.*

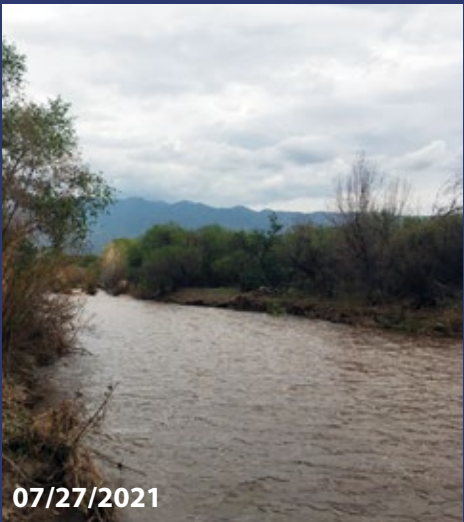
This was an unusual year compared to the last two years. This year all the flow happened July – September with the monsoon rains; whereas the past two years, all the flow occurred March – June, thanks to the winter rains.



11/07/2020



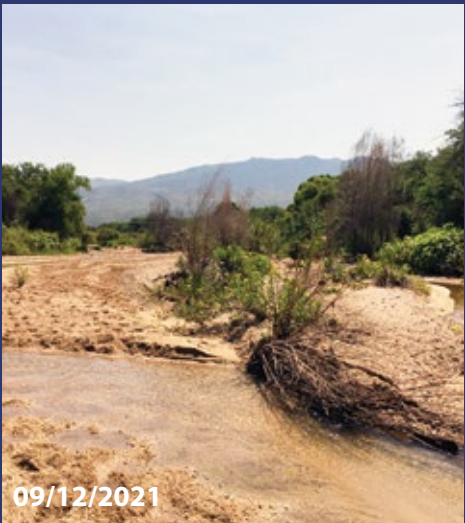
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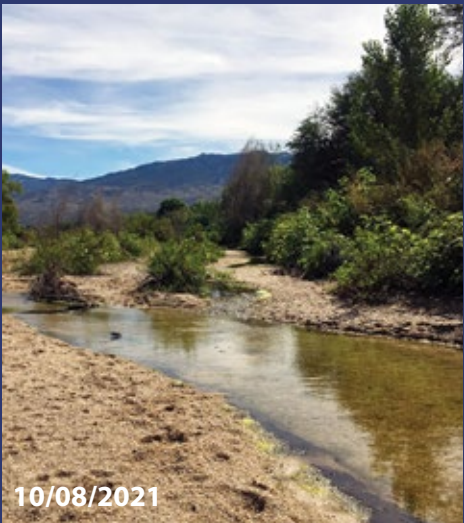
07/27/2021



08/13/2021



09/12/2021



10/08/2021

Thanks to Flow365 volunteer Sara Birtalan for monitoring the Tanque Verde bosque and capturing these photos throughout the year.



# Tucson River Flow Annual Report

## Rillito River at Craycroft Road: Extended Seasonal Flows

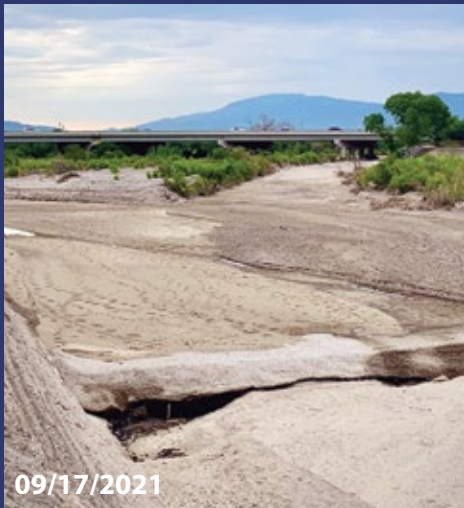
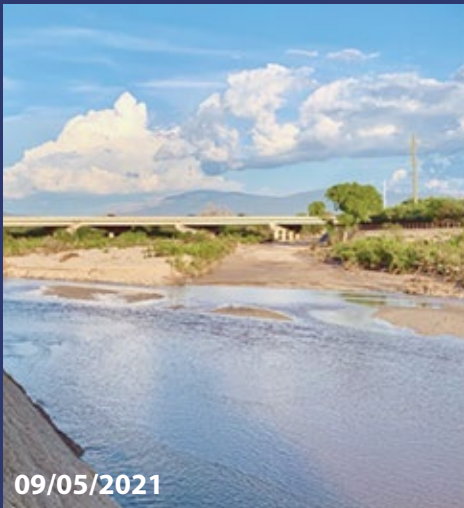
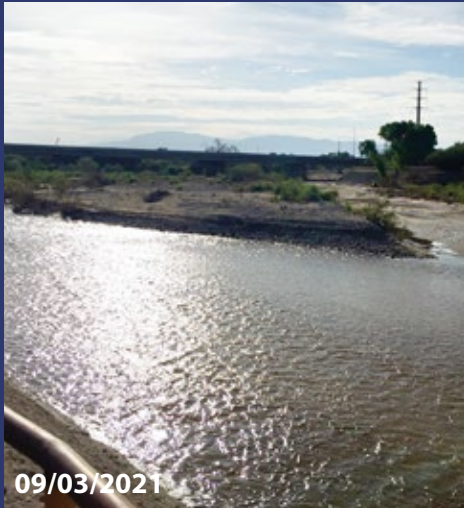
This area is where Tanque Verde Creek and Pantano Creek meet, and is considered a shallow groundwater area that still supports some cottonwood riparian trees. Historically this area had year-round flow through a large ciénega (marsh) and supported a mesquite bosque (forest).

We saw flow during most of the 2021 monsoon at this location, thanks to strong contributing flows from Tanque Verde Creek as well as Pantano Creek.

### 2021 Water Year Stats

- Total flow days: 83 days
- Most consecutive flow days: 56 days (July 23 – Sept 16)

This is by far the most flow we’ve recorded for the Rillito River at Craycroft Road in a monsoon season, as well as the most consecutive days of flow recorded for any time period during the year. As a point of comparison, in spring 2020 we recorded only 21 consecutive flow days, and in spring 2019, there were 50 consecutive flow days.



Thanks to Flow365 volunteers Mike Campbell and Marcia Lambert for monitoring the Rillito River at Craycroft Road and capturing these photos.



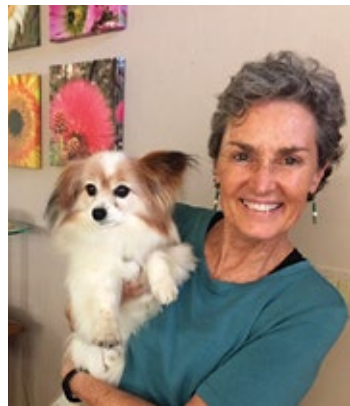
Learn more and join this effort at [Watershedmg.org/Flow365](https://Watershedmg.org/Flow365).

The Rillito River flowed for most of the monsoon at its confluence with the Tanque Verde and Pantano Creeks. This area is easily accessible for pedestrians and cyclists through The Loop bike path.



## Donor Jamie Roach Sets Up Legacy Gift for Tucson's Creeks and Rivers

Jamie Roach recently set up a legacy gift, designating WMG to receive all of her assets! Here, Jamie describes her passion for Tucson's environment and what inspired her to support WMG.



I am not a native of Tucson, but I have lived here most of my life. My family moved here in the early 1970s. I went to Sabino High School and the University of Arizona, then joined the Air Force and moved

away. After I retired from the Air Force I returned here, bought a home, started a small, part-time business, and became an avid hiker. Hiking in the mountains surrounding Tucson made me fall in love with the majestic Sonoran Desert. There was so much beauty to behold—blooming cacti, the (sometimes-running) washes in the canyons, spring wildflowers, and diverse wildlife. However, the growing cityscape I saw from the elevated trails reminded me of the vulnerabilities and fragility of this environment, and the need to preserve it for the next generation and beyond. This awareness changed what I cared about and led me to live a more sustainable life.

"My hope is that whatever is left of my small estate after I leave this world can help educate others about how to preserve Tucson's washes and watersheds, which have brought such joy to my life."

I became an advocate for children, animals, and the environment. I became a vegan. I became the first in my neighborhood to compost, to install a water harvesting system, and to put solar panels on my roof. During this time, I also discovered WMG. I attended a laundry-to-landscape workshop and, one summer, I volunteered as a member of the Monsoon Squad. In an effort to show the younger generation a more responsible way to use our desert resources, I brought kids to the mesquite pancake breakfast at the Living Lab. Some friends and I also went on the self-guided Homescape Harvest Tour [now called the Desert Living Home Tour], and that ended up being my most valuable WMG experience.

I didn't get rich from a career in the military, but because I have no children and am fairly frugal by nature, I was able to save a bit of money. Over the years, I invested some of my earnings and made small charitable contributions to organizations which align with my values, including WMG. When I needed to update my will, I gave a lot of thought about where I should leave my "nest egg leftovers" after I'm gone. I feel my small estate can make more of an impact with a small, local organization than it could with a bigger non-profit.

For those of us who choose to live in a desert, I believe it's imperative that we pay attention to our water usage and wisely consider how we can make best use of our limited rainfall. WMG's staff, board, and volunteers have channeled their passion, skills and Herculean efforts towards finding solutions to our local water crisis.

It just so happened that I recently read an article in the WMG newsletter about Patricia DeWitt's legacy gift, and I was profoundly moved by it. I did not know Patricia, but after reading the article, I felt she and I had similar sensibilities. So, I contacted WMG about becoming a legacy donor too. My hope is that whatever is left of my small estate after I leave this world can help educate others about how to preserve Tucson's washes and watersheds, which have brought such joy to my life. And if I could inspire others to do the same, like Patricia did for me, that would be a legacy I could be proud of.



"Hiking in the mountains surrounding Tucson made me fall in love with the majestic Sonoran Desert. There was so much beauty to behold—blooming cacti, the (sometimes-running) washes in the canyons, spring wildflowers, and diverse wildlife."

The Catalina mountains as seen from Tanque Verde Creek, lush and green from the record 2021 monsoon rains.



WMG's Cultural Ecologist, Joaquin Murrieta-Saldivar, and River Run Network & Docent Program Manager Lauren Monheim teach a BYOB workshop at the Living Lab.



## Build Your Own Basin Turns Rain Garden Classes Into Action ¡Cuéncamelos Todo Transforma Nuestras Clases de Jardines de Lluvia en Acción!

Native plants, wood mulch, soil, and rainwater: these are the basic ingredients that make up a rain garden. This simple yet powerful way to landscape our yards is what Build Your Own Basin (BYOB) is all about!

This fall, WMG engaged over 150 people in a series of nine BYOB workshops where participants learned how to build their own basins and rain gardens, and then were given rain garden construction kits free of charge to turn their new knowledge into action at home.

“Our BYOB workshops help make sure community members can access the benefits of rain gardens no matter where they live or how much money they have,” says Luis Salgado, WMG’s Green Infrastructure Coordinator. “Our fall workshops continued this vision of spreading rain gardens far and wide throughout our community.”

Plantas nativas, acolchado de madera, suelo, y agua de lluvia: estos son los ingredientes básicos para crear un jardín de lluvia. Esta forma simple pero poderosa de transformar nuestros patios ¡es lo que Cuéncamelos Todo significa!

Este otoño, WMG convocó a más de 150 personas en una serie de 9 talleres de Cuéncamelos Todo, donde los participantes aprendieron cómo construir sus propias cuencas y jardines de lluvia, y luego se les entregaron kits de construcción de jardines de lluvia totalmente gratis para tomar sus nuevos conocimientos y ponerlos en acción en sus casas.

“Nuestros talleres de Cuéncamelos Todo aseguran que los miembros de la comunidad tengan acceso a los beneficios de los jardines de lluvia, sin importar donde vivan o qué tanto dinero tengan,” dice Luis Salgado, Coordinador de Infraestructura Verde en WMG. “Nuestros talleres de otoño continuaron esta visión de extender los jardines de lluvia a lo largo y ancho de nuestra comunidad.”

### BYOB Workshops: Plan, Build, and Plant!

We were thrilled to offer many of our workshops in person this fall at WMG’s Living Lab in addition to our virtual classes. Through our one hour workshop, participants learned how to plan, build, and plant their basins, and got to see beautiful rain basin examples at the Living Lab with mature, native plants.

WMG’s BYOB workshops had a big impact with our 148 participants who took home kits.

- 83% agreed that they feel confident about building their own basin after taking our class!
- 83% agreed WMG’s BYOB workshop and kit helped motivate them to build a rain garden at their home or community space.

We helped bring rain gardens to folks who couldn’t afford them otherwise.

- 22% of our participants said they would not be able to afford to build a rain garden without assistance from WMG through the free workshop and complimentary BYOB kit.

### What Did Workshop Participants Have To Say?

Some responses from our BYOB workshop survey:

“...[My son] is a full-time college student and works very part-time. His current income is less than \$10,000 per year. He would not be able to build a basin without the free BYOB kit. This was fantastic!”

“So helpful! Wait’ll you see my before and after pics. It’s going to be SUCH an improvement. Get ready for questions when I come to pick up my kit.”

“Will share the update of the implementation of BYOB in Tropics and sub Tropics of India and also will share some lessons from Clay soils.”

I’m very grateful for this virtual workshop! As someone with physical limitations, I really appreciate this.”

### Talleres de Cuéncamelos Todo: ¡Planifica, Construye, y Planta!

Estuvimos encantados de ofrecer muchos de nuestros talleres en persona este otoño en el Laboratorio Vivo de WMG además de nuestras clases virtuales. A través de nuestro taller de una hora, los participantes aprendieron cómo planificar, construir y plantar sus cuencas, además de ver hermosos ejemplos de cuencas de lluvia en el Laboratorio Vivo con plantas nativas maduras.

Los talleres de Cuéncamelos Todo de WMG han tenido un gran impacto con nuestros 148 participantes que llevaron kits a casa.

- 83% de los participantes ¡se sintieron seguros en construir su propia cuenca en su casa después de haber tomado nuestra clase!
- 83% confirmaron que el taller de Cuéncamelos Todo y el kit de WMG fueron de gran ayuda para motivarlos a construir sus propios jardines de lluvia en sus casas o en sus espacios comunitarios.

Ayudamos a llevar jardines de lluvia a personas que de otra manera no podrían pagarlos.

- 22% de nuestros participantes dijeron que no podrían costear la construcción de un jardín de lluvia sin la ayuda de WMG a través del taller gratuito y el kit de cortesía.

### ¿Qué Dijeron Los Participantes Del Taller?

Algunas respuestas de nuestra encuesta sobre el taller de Cuéncamelos Todo:

“... [Mi hijo] es un estudiante universitario de tiempo completo y trabaja medio tiempo. Su ingreso actual es de menos de \$10,000 al año. Él no hubiera podido construir una cuenca sin el kit gratuito de Cuéncamelos Todo. ¡Esto fue fantástico!”

“Our BYOB workshops help make sure community members can access the benefits of rain gardens no matter where they live or how much money they have.”

Luis Salgado  
WMG’s Green Infrastructure Coordinator

“Nuestros talleres de Cuéncamelos Todo aseguran que los miembros de la comunidad tengan acceso a los beneficios de los jardines de lluvia, sin importar donde vivan o qué tanto dinero tengan.”

Luis Salgado  
Coordinador de Infraestructura Verde en WMG





Families attended Build Your Own Basin workshops at WMG's Living Lab and were able to take home BYOB kits after the workshop.

"Really inspiring content – very knowledgeable and friendly instructor. This made me excited about trying to connect with people in my neighborhood more around water harvesting."

"I really appreciate the request for pronouns. It helped me feel safe and included."

"I recently started desert landscaping my yard. My only regret is that I didn't see this workshop first. It was very helpful and I'm very excited to get outside and start digging."

#### **Build Your Own Basin in South Tucson**

In October, WMG staff taught a BYOB workshop at the YWCA House of Neighborly Service in South Tucson—a community hub that has provided outdoor community space and indoor meeting space for grassroots organizations for almost 75 years.

"The BYOB workshop brought people together, and that's always a special thing for our campus," says Amanda Martinez, Site Coordinator at the YWCA House of Neighborly Service. "We started with a little patch of weeds and dirt, and by the end, people who didn't really know each other made this beautiful area with agaves and grasses for the whole community to enjoy. Workshops like this one make these types of conversations and connections possible, and WMG staff make it a fun learning experience where people can ask questions and try things for themselves!"

WMG will be continuing to deepen the partnership with the House of Neighborly Service and South Tucson residents by offering more workshops in 2022. In year two of our BYOB effort, we will also connect with the families who took home rain garden kits to help with caring for the new rain gardens and expanding efforts with their friends and family.

"¡Muy útil! Esperen a que vean mis fotos del antes y después. Será MUCHO mejor. Prepárense para responder a mis preguntas cuando vaya a recoger mi kit."

"Compartiré la actualización de la implementación de Cuéncamelito Todo en los trópicos y subtrópicos de la India y también compartiré algunas lecciones de los suelos arcillosos."

"¡Agradezco mucho este taller virtual! Como alguien con limitaciones físicas, realmente aprecio esto."

"Contenido realmente inspirador - instructor muy informado y amigable. Esto me entusiasmó a intentar conectarme con la gente de mi vecindario más en torno a la recolección de agua."

"Realmente aprecio la solicitud de pronombres. Me ayudó a sentir un ambiente inclusivo y seguro."

"Recientemente comencé a hacer jardinería del desierto en mi patio. Mi único arrepentimiento es que no vi este taller primero. Fue de mucha ayuda y tengo ánimos por salir y empezar a cavar."

#### **Cuéncamelito Todo en el Sur de Tucson**

En Octubre, personal de WMG implementó un taller de Cuéncamelito Todo en YWCA Casa de Servicio Vecino en el Sur de Tucson—un centro comunitario que ha proporcionado un espacio al aire libre a la comunidad y un espacio interior para reuniones para organizaciones de base durante casi 75 años.

"El taller de Cuéncamelito Todo unió a la gente, y eso siempre es algo especial para nuestro campus," dice Amanda Martínez, Coordinadora del sitio en la Casa de Servicio Vecino de la YWCA. "Comenzamos con un pequeño parche de maleza y tierra, y al final personas que realmente no se conocían hicieron esta hermosa área con agaves y pastos para que toda la comunidad la disfrutara. Talleres como este hacen posible este tipo de conversaciones y conexiones, y el personal



de WMG hace que sea una experiencia de aprendizaje divertida en la que las personas pueden hacer preguntas y probar cosas por sí mismas."

WMG continuará profundizando la asociación con la Casa de Servicio Vecino y los residentes del Sur de Tucson al ofrecer más talleres en 2022. En el segundo año de nuestro esfuerzo Cuéncamelito Todo, nos conectaremos con las familias que se llevaron a casa kits de jardín de lluvia para ayudar con el cuidado de sus nuevos jardines y expandir los esfuerzos con sus amigos y familiares.

WMG staff and South Tucson community members added more native plants to the rain garden at the House of Neighborly Service. Then, volunteers took home their own BYOB kits.

**Visit [Watershedmg.org/BYOB](https://watershedmg.org/BYOB) to see all our bilingual BYOB resources.**





# Family Saturdays

Offers Bilingual Fun in Nature for Kids at the Living Lab!

## Sábados Familiares

Ofrece Diversión Bilingüe en la Naturaleza para Niños en el Living Lab!

If you've passed by the Living Lab on the third week of the month recently, something new might have caught your eye: a white and green banner spread out on the main gate, with children and their families digging with a garden spade and observing a butterfly on the front. The text, written in English and Spanish, welcomes people walking by and residents of the apartments across the street to Family Saturdays—a free educational program now offered on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month, where families can explore nature, enjoy bilingual story time, and get familiar with all the sustainable features at the Living Lab!

The program was launched in May of this year thanks to Cindy Hu, WMG's Community and Youth Education Manager, and an amazing cohort of WMG docents that help staff the events. Cindy has developed curriculum and activities to engage kids of all ages and the adults who tag along.

Si ha pasado por el Living Lab en la tercera semana del mes recientemente, algo nuevo podría haber llamado su atención: una pancarta blanca y verde extendida en la puerta principal, con una imagen de niños y sus familias cavando con una pala de jardín y observando una mariposa en el frente. El texto, escrito en inglés y español, da la bienvenida a las personas que pasan y a los residentes de los apartamentos al otro lado de la calle a Sábados Familiares, un programa educativo gratuito que ahora se ofrece el 3er sábado de cada mes, donde las familias pueden explorar la naturaleza, disfrutar de la hora del cuento bilingüe y familiarizarse con todas las características sostenibles en el Living Lab.

El programa se lanzó en mayo de este año gracias a Cindy Hu, Gerente de Educación Comunitaria y Juvenil de WMG, y a un increíble equipo de docentes de WMG que ayudan en los eventos. Cindy ha desarrollado un plan de estudios y actividades para involucrar a los niños de todas las edades y a los adultos que los acompañan.



Cindy Hu, WMG's Community and Youth Education Manager, introduces a family to a Living Lab hen at Family Saturday.



**“The Living Lab is a thriving green space right in the Palo Verde neighborhood that provides an accessible, safe, and fun experience in nature for kids and their families—just a short walk, bus, or bike ride away.”**



WMG docent Dan Stormont shows kids the 10,000 gallon cistern at the Living Lab.

“It’s important to reach kids when they’re really young,” Cindy adds. “We know that children in nature are happier, and we need to get kids to spend time outdoors because they’ll be the future stewards of the planet.”

In many cities, going “outdoors” may feel inaccessible to people with limited means or knowledge about outdoor activities. But the Living Lab is a thriving green space right in the Palo Verde neighborhood that provides an accessible, safe, and fun experience in nature for kids and their families—just a short walk, bike, or bus ride away.

“Working with Cindy and other volunteers to create kid-friendly activities has been such an enjoyable challenge,” says Sara Birtalan, a docent who has volunteered at several Family Saturdays. “It’s fun to introduce families to the Living Lab for the first time, and I get to learn which of the campus’s sustainable features they find most interesting.”

Each Family Saturday has a theme: from the National Recycling Day event in November that taught kids about different types of composting to turn typical household wastes into garden resources, to the beaver-themed August event that included a build your own beaver dam activity, scavenger hunt, and even a beaver play acted out by Cindy and WMG

“Es importante llegar a los niños cuando son muy pequeños,” dice Cindy. “Sabemos que los niños en la naturaleza son más felices, y necesitamos que los niños pasen tiempo al aire libre porque serán los futuros administradores del planeta.”

Andar “al aire libre” puede parecer inaccesible para las personas con medios limitados o conocimientos sobre actividades al aire libre en muchas ciudades. Pero el Living Lab es un próspero espacio verde justo en el vecindario de Palo Verde que ofrece una experiencia accesible, segura y divertida en la naturaleza para los niños y sus familias, a solo un corto paseo, en bicicleta o en autobús.

“Trabajar con Cindy y otros voluntarios para crear actividades agradables para los niños ha sido un desafío divertido,” dice Sara Birtalan, una docente que se ha ofrecido como voluntaria en varios Sábados Familiares. “Es entretenido presentarles a las familias el Laboratorio Vivo por primera vez, y yo he podido aprender cuáles de las características sustentables del campus les resultan más interesantes.”

Cada Sábado Familiar tiene un tema: desde el evento del Día Nacional del Reciclaje en noviembre que enseñó sobre los diferentes tipos de compostaje para convertir los residuos domésticos típicos en recursos de jardín, hasta el evento de



WMG intern Sally Rae Rivera leads an activity about identifying beaver tracks.

volunteer Jana Segal-Stormont. Two Family Saturdays had the theme “Rain Gardens For Kids,” offering kid-friendly workshops about how to build their own rain gardens at home. And since June, Family Saturdays have included bilingual story time—a fun way to get kids up to dance and act out stories, while providing more children and their families access to environmental concepts in their native language.

“It’s important that I’m heading up this effort as a first-generation Mexican-American, bilingual educator,” Cindy adds, “so underrepresented and Latino kids can see someone who looks like them leading this work.”

WMG is excited to keep planning fun-packed Family Saturdays that help kids learn to steward our watershed, and we are continuing to build a bilingual presence at these events to reach more families. We hope you’ll help spread the word and join us at upcoming Family Saturdays!

**Visit [Watershedmg.org/Family](https://watershedmg.org/Family) to see upcoming monthly themes, activity schedules, and to register for events.**

agosto con temática de castor que incluyó una actividad de construcción de su propia presa de castores, búsqueda del tesoro e incluso un juego de castores realizado por Cindy y la voluntaria de WMG Jana Segal-Stormont. Dos Sábados Familiares tenía la tema “Jardines de Lluvia para Niños,” al enseñar talleres de jardines de lluvia para niños. Desde junio, los Sábados Familiares han incluido la hora del cuento bilingüe, una forma divertida de hacer que los niños bailen y actúen historias, al tiempo que brindan a más niños y sus familias acceso a conceptos ambientales en su idioma nativo.

“Es importante que encabece este esfuerzo, como educadora bilingüe, mexicana-americana de primera generación,” Cindy agrega, “para que los niños latinos y con poca representación, puedan ver a alguien que se parece a ellos liderando este trabajo.”

WMG se complace en seguir planeando sábados familiares llenos de diversión que ayudan a los niños a aprender a administrar nuestra cuenca, y continuamos construyendo una presencia bilingüe en estos eventos para llegar a más familias. ¡Esperamos que ayudes a correr la voz y te unas al Sábado Familiar!

**Visite [Watershedmg.org/Family](https://watershedmg.org/Family) para nuevos temas mensuales, horarios de actividades, y para registrarse a los eventos!**

**"Pero el Living Lab es un próspero espacio verde justo en el vecindario de Palo Verde que ofrece una experiencia accesible, segura y divertida en la naturaleza para los niños y sus familias, a solo un corto paseo, en bicicleta o en autobús."**





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