

Nourish and Sustain

BOLD PLANS FOR THRIVING
COMMUNITIES AND ECOSYSTEMS

The Sonoran Institute's mission is to connect people and communities with the natural resources that nourish and sustain them.

We envision resilient communities living in harmony with the natural world, where flowing rivers and healthy landscapes enable all people and nature to thrive. Our work transcends borders, bringing together diverse communities to promote civil dialogue about complex conservation issues that know no boundaries. All aspects of our work are guided by inclusivity and collaboration to create positive environmental change in the western United States and northwestern Mexico.

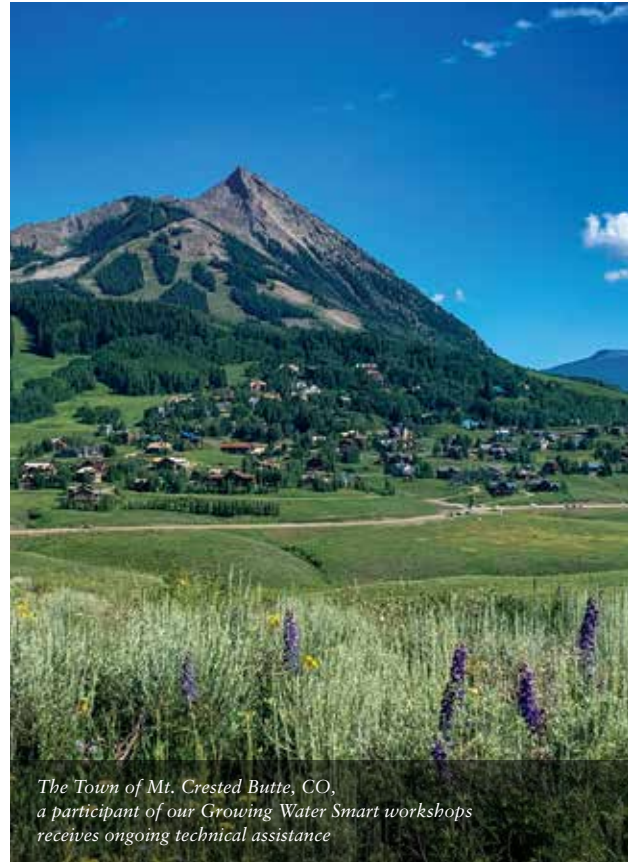
VISION 2020-2025



SONORAN
INSTITUTE

THRIVING. RESILIENT. IN BALANCE.

The western United States and northwestern Mexico have experienced remarkable growth and economic gains over the past decades, but the assumptions and policies that have propelled this growth no longer best serve the needs of future generations. In particular, changes in climate, from long-term drought to extreme weather events, will continue to have a profound impact on this region with significant implications for our quality of life.



The Town of Mt. Crested Butte, CO, a participant of our Growing Water Smart workshops receives ongoing technical assistance



Morelos Dam, US-MX Border. Our binational efforts address water security and river health in both countries

Water is the Foundation of Health and Prosperity

Since 1990, the Sonoran Institute has brought together diverse interests to successfully forge effective and enduring conservation solutions. Through civil dialogue, collaboration, and capacity building, we work with local communities and partners toward a shared vision of lasting prosperity.

As we look to the future, the availability of water will increasingly be a major driver of change. Prolonged drought and extreme weather events have made our water supplies more vulnerable, while continued population growth is causing a major shift in water demand from agriculture to urban areas. The decisions we make about how we allocate, conserve and reuse water will have profound implications for our quality of life, spurring Sonoran Institute to focus our efforts on water to create the greatest impact.

Investing in Local Ideas (and Local Action)

In 2020, the Sonoran Institute adopted a new strategic framework that sharpens our focus in tackling the challenges facing the West over the next five years. This framework recognizes that the world we live and work in will be defined by how we steward our water and other natural resources. Success will require that the Sonoran Institute be agile, while ensuring that our organization, the communities we assist, and the landscapes and quality of life we seek to protect have the necessary resources to remain resilient.

First and foremost, economic prosperity is positively related to environmentally responsible practices. This requires that we live and work in greater balance with nature, using our water and other natural resources more efficiently and equitably.

Second, communities must be constructively engaged in defining their own future as beneficiaries and stewards of conservation. Positive, lasting change will more likely be embraced from the “bottom up,” where diverse communities learn from their peers, and policy makers respond to “on the ground” results. This is why we will continue to make significant investments in community-based conservation.



Staff member and family at home in Francisco Murguía, BC, MX; just outside our Laguna Grande restoration site



OUR PROMISE TO COMMUNITIES

The challenges communities face are varied: from long-term drought, flooding, and wildfire to shifting demands on our water resources. But, together, we can become more resilient in the face of new vulnerabilities and uncertainties.

Kayaking at Laguna Grande restoration site during Family Saturday events



The Santa Cruz River flowing near Tumacácori, AZ

We will work across multiple watersheds and landscapes —with an emphasis on the Colorado River Basin.

Depleted rivers and degraded wetlands are not acceptable. We support sustainable investments in water resources and infrastructure in response to drought and climate change, and will continue to advocate for dedicating water to the environment.

Science-based, field-tested methodologies are required for ecological restoration and integrated water and land use planning. Our team uses sound science to measure changing ecological conditions and to demonstrate how our work benefits communities and watersheds.

Binational efforts in the Colorado River Basin must be designed to reach a more secure future for all water users including tribes and the environment. We will freely share and promote collaborative conservation models with other cross-border watersheds.

We will build broad and diverse constituencies that will advocate for actions and policies that serve the needs of this and future generations.

Our staff reflects the region’s diverse communities. Listening to local voices, we engage and support efforts to address the impacts of growth and change by identifying, mobilizing, and connecting community leaders and stakeholders.

Inclusive community partnerships will foster new ideas and approaches that inform policymaking at the state, regional, and federal level. Together, we will inspire and motivate people and communities to plan for, and own, a future that provides both economic opportunity and a healthy environment that nourishes and sustains.



Mexicali residents and our staff during park dedication. Fluye project

WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE

We are optimists.

The benefits of our work are felt by many, and will continue to grow through civil dialogue, collaboration, and on-the-ground efforts:

We will work with communities in the Colorado River Delta in Mexico to restore riparian habitat and reconnect the river with the sea.

Five years from now, we will have restored more than 1,500 acres. Through dredging and securing new water flows, we will connect the river to the sea most days of the year. Our efforts will aid in the recovery of endangered and threatened species; provide green jobs to local, rural people; and lay the groundwork for lasting funding to support the Delta for generations.

Along Arizona's Santa Cruz River, we will enhance in-stream flows and wildlife habitat that benefits both the environment and communities.

We will continue to raise awareness of this “living river” and the benefits recycled wastewater has on communities and wildlife. Ongoing monitoring of river conditions and community preferences will provide data for river management plans. We will also seek creative, permanent and equitable binational agreements, as well as state and local policy reforms, to ensure water flows in the river for generations to come.

We will assist communities in making better land-use decisions given limited water resources and uncertainties caused by drought.

More than 40 communities in Colorado and Arizona have received training and assistance to grow “water smart” resulting in new plans, policies, and actions that will increase water efficiency, and enhance collaboration among jurisdictions and water providers. In the next five years, we will expand our training and assistance to other states and communities on both sides of the US-Mexico border.

We will ensure that underserved communities continue to benefit from our conservation efforts.

We will secure funding for investments in water and wastewater infrastructure that result in improved water quality and water dedicated for environmental purposes. We will look to scale up green infrastructure to measurably reduce urban flooding and heat island effects. And we will rehabilitate urban and agricultural washes, arroyos, and canals to create greenways and parks where none exist.

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The Santa Cruz River and communities in Santa Cruz County, AZ

We prioritize engaging underserved communities; everyone has a seat at the table in conservation.

We empower communities to thrive in greater balance with nature by using our water and other natural resources more efficiently and equitably.

We are making sure that water flows in the rivers of the West for generations to come.



**We need your help to
nourish ecosystems and
create sustainable communities.**

Please consider a gift to Sonoran Institute to ensure water flows for generations to come.

For more information on philanthropic giving please contact Darcy Hill, Senior Director of Development, 480-407-7254 or dhill@sonoraninstitute.org

To make a gift please visit
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