



# *The Flow*

November 2024

Friends of the Santa Cruz River Newsletter

## President's Report Protecting a Connected Ecosystem

**By Ben Lomeli  
President**

Friends of the Santa Cruz River (FO-SCR) was formed in 1991 to "ensure a continued flow of the river's surface waters, promote the highest river water quality achievable, and to protect and restore the riparian ecosystem and diversity of life supported by the river's waters."

Our nonprofit, all-volunteer group focuses on the portion of the river from its headwaters in the San Rafael Valley in Arizona, south into Mexico, and then north through Santa Cruz County, to the Pima County line. We work with riverside landowners, government agencies, other citizens, local schools, and community groups to keep the river flowing, its banks clean and green, and its environment bountiful to both wildlife and people.

### Gratitude

The upcoming holiday season is a stark reminder that we should be thankful for what we have. Let us reflect and be grateful for the peace, freedom, and public lands we enjoy in our beautiful America.

Every day, not only on Veteran's Day,

let us remember and be ever thankful to those who served, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice so we can keep enjoying these precious gifts and privileges.

As our unique river valley continues to face increasing challenges we meet each challenge with hope, optimism, dedication, resilience, perseverance,

turing, building, and expanding our partnerships with other community organizations. We are deeply grateful to all our partnerships, volunteers, donors, allies, and supporters.

Through coordinated teamwork FO-SCR has realized several important accomplishments and we look forward to many more. (See related article in this issue of the FLOW).



Drone photo taken by FOSCR Vice-president, Nohe Garcia, of Cottonwoods lining the Santa Cruz River with the foliage showing the changing of the seasons.

scientific facts, and gratitude for the valued teamwork amongst our many esteemed partner organizations and volunteers.

### Partnerships are Key

We look forward to continuing nur-

### Protecting a Rich Heritage

Through our recruitment efforts, FOSCR has gained some fantastic new board members that bring renewed energy and hope.

As president, I want to express our wholehearted support for the official designation of an Urban National Wildlife Refuge from the international border with Mexico in Santa Cruz County to the Town of Marana in Pima County.

We emphasize the importance of the Santa

Cruz River as a whole, connected ecosystem in Southeastern Arizona with strong spiritual, cultural, historical, economic, and environmental connections.

FOSCR is specially focused on the Santa Cruz River along its length, with an emphasis on protecting the waters and riparian cor-



### President's Message, con't.

ridor in Santa Cruz County which provide a viable nature-based restorative economy.

Santa Cruz County residents need and want to see our river corridor protected in perpetuity and remain accessible to the public.

The riparian corridor of the Santa Cruz Valley has fostered thousands of years of habitation, and as such is one of the oldest continually inhabited agrarian human communities in North America as recognized by its recent designation as a National Heritage Area.

The corridor is rich in geographic

### Friends of the Santa Cruz River

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Skye Leone  
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**The Flow** is published by Friends of the Santa Cruz River (FOSCR), a nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to ensuring the continued flow of the Santa Cruz River, the life-sustaining quality of its waters, and the protection of the riparian biological community that it supports.

© 2024 The Flow is published as often as we can get enough articles, time, and energy together to produce an issue. Illustrated by Joel Floyd, a FOSCR founder. Photos by credited photographers.

Opinions expressed in guest articles are those of the author's and not necessarily those of FOSCR.

Please direct correspondence to:

FOSCR

P.O. Box 4275

Tubac, AZ 85646

E-mail: [riverfriends@foscr.org](mailto:riverfriends@foscr.org)

Web site: [foscr.org](http://foscr.org)

and architectural cultural features including the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, Mission Garden, Tumacácori Mission and National Historic Park, Historic Canoa Ranch and San Xavier Mission.

The ecologically and culturally rich Santa Cruz River flows from the San Rafael Valley in Santa Cruz County into Mexico, makes a 35-mile loop and returns to Arizona. It is the only river that crosses the United States border twice.

### Restore and Protect

After generations of population growth, settler diversions, and groundwater overdraft, the perennial surface flows vanished, with the river all but drying up except during heavy seasonal rains, and a few effluent dominated reaches.

We recognize that the people of Santa Cruz County have various numerous Indigenous ancestral spiritual and familial ties to the flowing Santa Cruz River and the lands around it. The Santa Cruz River has roots in Spanish, Mexican, and American colonial history, starting in the late 1600s.

The river corridor and its major tributaries offer abundant recreation opportunities, including birdwatching, hiking, equestrian, and peaceful solitude.

Recognition of this corridor honors the water, people, habitat and wildlife of the Santa Cruz River for our community and enables further protection and restoration of the beautiful mesquite bosques and cottonwood/willow galleries that are our refuge.

The substantial acreage of the specific parcels proposed for the refuge in Santa Cruz County can serve as a model for the region by ensuring public access to the river corridor and by conserving the ecological function of adjacent lands that are an integral part of the riverine ecosystem and wildlife habitat.

We urge everyone to support this designation to preserve the river's past, present and future.

Let's enjoy this holiday season with hope, gratitude and positive energy. There is much yet to be achieved.

Thanks again to all who care and help us out! The river needs all of us. Please get involved and visit our evolving website.



Photo of the Santa Cruz River by FOSCR Secretary, Wendy Islas.



# Friends of the Santa Cruz River Recent Activities and Accomplishments

By Skye Leone and Wendy Islas  
FOSCR Board Members

Friends of the Santa Cruz River (FO-SCR) was formed in 1991 to help keep the river flowing, its banks clean and green, and its environment bountiful to both wildlife and people.

FOSCR's non-profit, all volunteer group focuses on the upper portion of the river, especially the north-flowing part between the U.S./Mexico border and the Pima County/Santa Cruz County line.

FOSCR monitors the river's condition, educates about the river's value, threats, and benefits it provides, and advocates for its protection.

## RiverWatch

RiverWatch exists, as part of the Friends of the Santa Cruz River and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Arizona Water Watch program, to monitor and report water quality indicators for the Upper Santa Cruz River, to help protect and restore the health of the riparian ecosystem supported by the river's waters.

Using data collection protocols set by ADEQ our volunteers collect data monthly at five different sites: four on the river and one on the Nogales Wash. Data collected include measuring the

river's flow, turbidity (relative water clarity), dissolved oxygen, pH, electrical conductivity, water temperature, and barometric pressure and E. coli levels.

RiverWatch also reports subjective observations regarding fish, invertebrates, algae, animal tracks, and garbage found at each site.

Monthly data is sent to ADEQ for review and is then sent to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) database, and to the USGS as a courtesy. This information is available to the public.

## Santa Cruz River Clean-Ups

FOSCR periodically organizes river clean-up events attended by 100 or more volunteers. FOSCR also joins other clean-up events organized by other organizations such as Santa County Shining AZ. FOSCR is in the process of considering becoming a formal partner with Keep America Beautiful.

## Voluntary Environmental Stewardship Program ADEQ Award

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) awarded FO-



SCR in June 2023 the Copper Level of Recognition from the Department's Voluntary Environmental Stewardship Program for "educating and advocating with passion for the Santa Cruz River, conducting numerous trash cleanups and partnering with ADEQ on the Community Science program, collecting more than 1,200 water quality records to help monitor the health of our waters, and informing measures to protect our waters for future generations."

## Advocacy

FOSCR representatives are regularly featured in local newspaper articles and other media outlets concerning activities impacting the health of the Santa Cruz River. These include impacts from the South32 Hermosa Mine Project; untreated sewage flowing into the River from Nogales, Sonora; river trash from flash flooding and illegal dumping; around water quality and quantity is- ➡



True Friends of the Santa Cruz River: The RiverWatch crew wearing their new windbreaker logo jackets.

# Urban Wildlife Refuge Becoming?

By Pam Lemske

FOSCR Member and Contributor

The Santa Cruz River has been in the news this year, and one of the most exciting developments has been

the potential creation of the Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge.

FOSCR representatives, notably Ben Lomeli our President, frequently speak on panels regarding water issues related to the Santa Cruz River. Recent examples include the Mexican Consulate panel on water and sewage issues in Nogales, Sonora; a Mine Think presentation sponsored by the Calabasas Alliance addressing impact of dewatering the Hermosa Mine including heavy metal migration into the Santa Cruz River Watershed; and the Water Think town hall meeting in Tubac addressing water quantity and quality issues in Santa Cruz County.

Ben Lomeli was a panel member for the past several years on the Advisory Panel on the South 32 Hermosa project working towards creating a draft agreement to help ensure adequate protection from the South32 Hermosa Project activities in Santa Cruz County.

International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) Citizens Forum—Ben Lomeli has served on this forum since they started in 2002. Ben Lomeli is the longest standing member and is co-chair.

## Restoration

Restoration projects such as erosion control at the Guy Tobin Trailhead with high school students and dormant pole plantings along South River Road have been done in the past. FOSCR members join volunteer teams sponsored by the Tubac Nature Center doing invasive species removal along the river.

## Education

Several FOSCR board members are currently involved with the University of

the movement to designate it an urban national wildlife refuge. This movement was started by a coalition of approximately forty non-profits and individuals intent on protecting the river's rich cul-

Arizona, Santa Cruz County Cooperative Extension Emerging Leaders Program for high school students. Activities include classes about the Santa Cruz River Watershed and instructional field trips to the river.

## Santa Cruz River Refuge Coalition

FOSCR is a founding member of the Santa Cruz River Refuge Coalition whose mission is to help sections of the Santa Cruz River in Tucson, and along the I-19 corridor become designated as the first U.S. Fish and Wildlife Urban River National Wildlife Refuge in the state of Arizona. Years in the making, once the designation is finalized, the Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge will include thirteen miles of the River from Ruby Road north in Santa Cruz County, and nine miles of Josephine Canyon.

## You Can Make A Difference Volunteer Today!

Help with...

- Monthly monitoring of water and habitat quality through our River-Watch program.
- Help pick up trash along the river and trails.
- Educating through guided river walks, public talks, school programs, and workshops.
- Organizing membership, events, volunteers, website management, etc.
- Attend our monthly Board of Directors meetings.
- Direct the future of FOSCR by joining our Board of Directors.

Contact Us  
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tural history and biological diversity for future generations. Friends of the Santa Cruz River is one of the non-profits participating in this effort. Arizona has nine national wildlife refuges, but if the Santa Cruz River becomes an urban national wildlife refuge, it will be the state's first. So, what's an urban national wildlife refuge, and how will this benefit the river and our local communities?

Urban national wildlife refuges are located within twenty-five miles of population centers and help protect green space from development, improve wildlife habitat, foster education, and remove barriers to outdoor recreation so everyone feels welcome in these spaces. If the Santa Cruz River becomes Arizona's first urban national wildlife refuge, it will consist of a patchwork of protected properties along the river corridor extending from Nogales to Marana. Due to the willingness of a local landowner to make lands available for the refuge effort, approximately 7,800 acres of wildlands, including thirteen miles along the river, are in Santa Cruz County.

The development and management of the refuge lands would be a collaborative effort involving governments, and the 180 Friends of the Refuge non-profit groups, and individuals. Only willing landowners would become part of the refuge. Some properties would be acquired, while conservation easements would be created on others; in the same way, ranchers and private landowners currently grant community members access to the Anza Trail. This would improve recreation opportunities for area hikers, cyclists, and birders and bring increased eco-tourism dollars to our local economy. Critical habitat and migration corridors for wildlife would be protected, and no further development would occur within a half mile of the river on either side.

The process of becoming an urban wildlife refuge occurs in three phases. We are in the second phase, the Land Protection Strategy. After





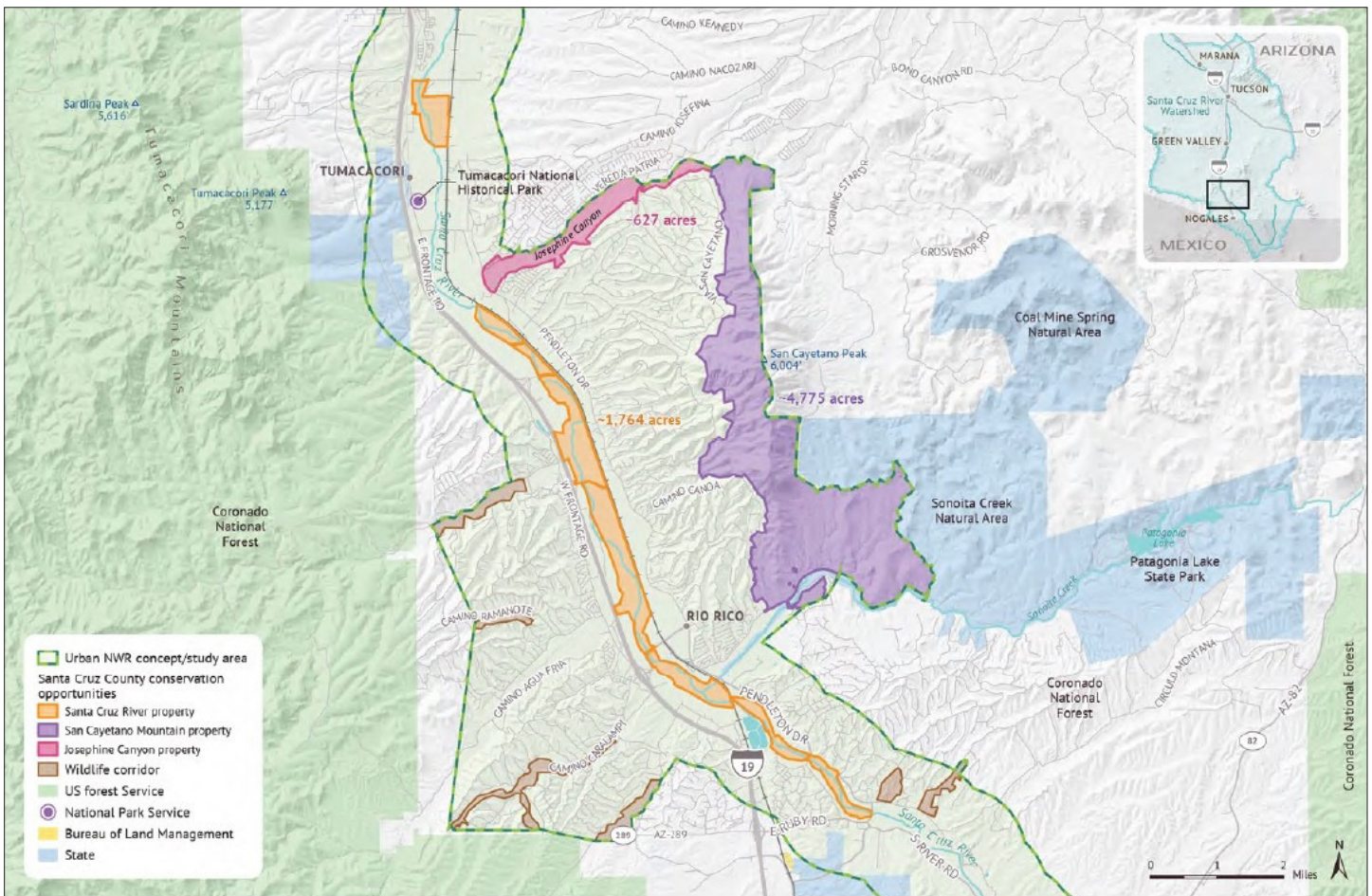
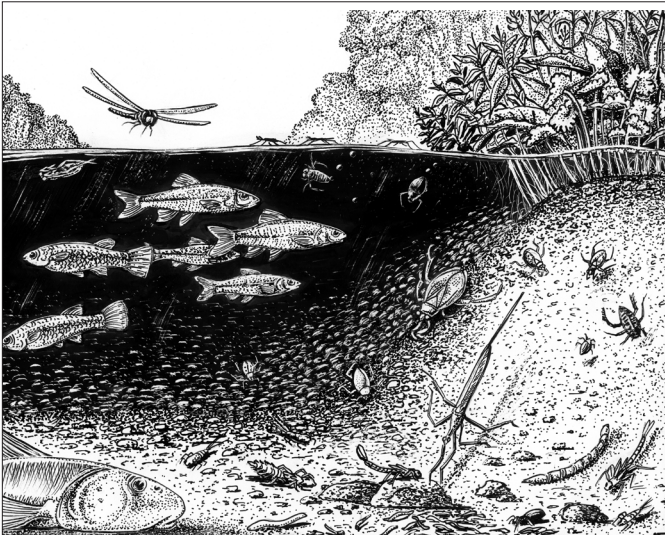
this phase, Fish and Wildlife will summarize the work, including the available properties, their ecological benefit,

and community interest. This phase is expected to be completed sometime in early 2025 when the results will be available for public review. If this process goes smoothly, we will enter the third phase, the Land Protection Plan. During this final phase, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will determine how they plan to establish the refuge and will have access to federal resources. This phase takes an additional 1-2 years.

Santa Cruz County, Pima County, and the city of Tucson have all

written letters to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland supporting the refuge's creation. Governor Katie Hobbs also wrote letters to the Secretary of the Interior as well as Director Martha Williams of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expressing her support for the Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge designation.

You too can sign a letter supporting the refuge's creation here: <https://santacruzriver.org/letter-of-support/>. To learn more about the proposed refuge, visit the Sonoran Institute and the Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge coalition website. Like and follow Friends of the Santa Cruz River on Facebook and Instagram to stay current on the latest developments related to this effort.



## Baca Float #3 - Santa Cruz County Conservation Opportunity

ARIZONA

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# The Santa Cruz River as

By Laurinda Oswald  
FOSCR Board Member

Since early times humans have used rivers, including the Santa Cruz, as travel and trade routes because of access to food, water, and other humans. 11,000 years ago the Clovis culture hunted Mammoths in the region, and for at least the last 4000 years there has been continuous human presence along the river. In the 1690's when Father Kino rode into the



A statue of Father Eusebio Kino—recognized as a bridge builder among cultures and often referred to as the saint of the borderlands—in the Capitol Building in Washington D.C.

valley from the South he followed the numerous indigenous trails that connected the little, culturally related villages along the river. In the 1860 census of Tucson there were 925 people living there, however after the surrender of Geronimo in 1887 there was a large influx of settlers into the region, including the Santa Cruz valley. Indigenous dirt trails were widened to accommodate the wagons and stagecoaches of the time, until automobiles were invented, then those same trails got straightened and paved for the new form of transportation.

In the 1920's the Nogales to Tucson highway was turned into Route 89 that eventually went from Mexico to Canada; whereas Route 66 went East to West, Route 89 went North to South. There are people on YouTube who have followed Route 89 from top to bottom and have said that Route 66 is for history buffs, and Route 89 is for scenery buffs.

## Blessing the Travelers

A choice fragment of this history is visible along the East Frontage road between Tubac and Tumacacori. There used to be multiple altars along this stretch of road where travelers would have prayed and left offerings to the travel gods. The only one visible these days is up against the hill on the West side of the road behind the first cluster of houses when you head South out of Tubac. I am grateful that

it is still being maintained. As one continues heading south more historical structures are visible along the road, culminating in the Mission. Of special interest is 2001 E Frontage which has a long history going back to an Indigenous campsite.

The first structure built was a Line house in the late 1890s where the cowboys would stay marking the edge (the line) of the Baca Float Land Grant. In the 1920s and '30s it was a homestead attached to a dairy that operated out of 2005 East Frontage, and in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s it was Ted Gould's Trading post with the old bill-



The image of the Lady of Guadalupe, which first originated in the Mexican territories around 1531 can be found in altars and shrines in the borderlands and throughout southwest.

board still visible.

The first section of I-19 to be built was from I-10 to Valencia in 1962, and in 1963 a 3 mile section was added in Green Valley. The Mariposa to Palo Parado stretch was completed in 1968, and the final Green Valley to Rio Rico run was completed in 1978. The reason it is measured in Kilometers is because President Jimmy Carter needed a pilot project to help the US adopt the metric system, and since the road was 100 kilometers long and would be welcoming to the Mexicans driving into the US who are used to the metric system it was chosen as the pilot project.

After decades of driving up and down I-19 I would like to ➡



# a Human Travel Corridor

share some of my observations. I like to drive at about 68 miles per hour so I can better observe the world outside, and the amazing thing is that I am not alone in the slow lane.

## Tailings and Trash

Let's start with the trash that blows out of the backs of pickup trucks that litter the freeway, constantly. Please, if you drive a pickup truck don't put empty bottles, food wrappers, or other light trash in the bed of your truck as it will blow out and litter our scenic roadways.

The Coppermine tailings West of Green Valley have always fascinated me. In the early 1980s the tailings were benched and there was an attempt to grow Eucalyptus trees, but today it is the Mesquites and Catclaws that have colonized the tailing piles.



Penstemon flowers; photo by Dalina Gracia at Avalon Gardens. (Photo bombed by Pantera.)

The newer tailings to the North have not been benched and are dotted with native growth, because nature abhors a vacuum, and they are survivors!

## Riparian Paradise

There are 3 crested (mis-shapen) Saguars that I know of North of Sahuarita. The first is the big, very visible fan just North of the Sahuarita exit, best seen heading South. Another is at Kilometer marker 84; on the East side of the road is a Saguaro that I call Pudgy, because it is, and on the West side, behind some trees, is Lumpy, who is young and cresting nicely. The third took me 40 years before I saw it while stuck in traffic. Heading South out of Tucson, before the San Xavier bridge over the river, is Martinez Hill and part way up, close to the Western edge, is a massive fan.

Also on the East side of the San Xavier bridge is a young Cottonwood forest starting to grow, which is great news



A flowering Saguaro. Photo by Dalina Gracia.

because it means the water table is high there. And it is hard to miss the Saguaro forest that has popped up above the creosotes in the last 7 years on the Tohono O'odham reservation land. Those seedlings probably germinated in the wet years of 1980s and '90s and took decades before they were visible from the road.

In closing, every year the wildflower show along I-19 is

spectacular, the poppies and penistemons, the bluebells, Palo Verdes, and Saguars create a vibrant landscape



Bright yellow poppies standing out among the wildflowers. Photo by Dalina Gracia at Avalon Gardens.

to be aware of, so slow down and enjoy the view, as human have done here for thousands of years.



# Featured FOSCR Board Members

(See Activities and Accomplishments article co-written by Skye and Wendy on page 3)

## Skye Leone

Skye Leone moved to Tubac in 2019 after living in Santa Cruz, California for 43 years. Skye is a retired educator. Skye joined the board of Friends of the Santa Cruz River in 2023.

Skye is a founding Board Member of The Calabasas Alliance/La Alianza Calabasas (2023), and a founding Board Member of Friends Foundation International (1991).

Skye, like so many, is completely enchanted by the Santa Cruz River and its cottonwood gallery riparian corridor. Since 1980, when his mother moved to Tubac, he has walked along the Santa Cruz River at least once a year, every year. He now frequents the river many times each season and has discovered each time the experience is

very different from the last.

Skye brings a wealth of knowledge and experience. He was the Director and an instructor at the Sierra Institute, University of California Santa Cruz teaching Wilderness Studies. As a lecturer at UCSC he taught environmental and education classes. He was a part-time faculty member at San Jose State University teaching botany and zoology labs. He also was a public high school life science teacher in Santa Cruz County, CA. Skye participated in the California New Teacher Project as a Master Mentor in Science. Before retiring he worked as a Senior Recreation Supervisor for the UCSC Recreation Department.

Experiencing, understanding, and being informed by watersheds are Skye's lifelong passions. Water is his enlightenment. Protecting and improv-

ing the health of the Santa Cruz River, as well as educating others about the river, particularly its value and challenges, are Skye's goals.



## Wendy Islas

Wendy has served the public in government for thirty-six years. She has served and assisted on nonprofit boards and organizations, respectively, in which she contributed to website



administration, events, and fundraising. She is also a photographer and has also collaborated with and volunteered her photography with various organizations, non-profits, chambers of commerce, tourism, and event photography, and donated her time for graduation photo shoots. She enjoys hiking, exploring, road trips, camping, backpacking, and photographing Arizona's nature and landscapes.

As a 21-year resident of Santa Cruz County, Wendy is passionate about this bio-diverse region including the Santa Cruz River. She participates in river and trail clean-ups.

Wendy's passion is evident through her photography. Her work was recently included in the Decagon Gallery Envi-

ronmental Challenges & Paradises Exhibition, July – September 2024; the 2023 Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area photo contest exhibit, and the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center's 2023 photo contest.

Wendy's work was also in the Tubac Center of the Arts "Celebrate Santa Cruz Valley" Exhibit, September – November 2023, the Tumacacori National Historical Park's 2018 and 2019 "Art In the Park" Exhibitions; Tohono Chul's "Pollen Path" Exhibition in February 2019, Tohono Chul's "Queen of the Night" Exhibition in June 2019 and June 2023, Tohono Chul's Dia De Los Muertos Exhibition 2021, Tohono Chul's Coloring Book Art, and art fundraisers for Tohono Chul in 2019, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Wendy also has photographs published in the Discover Southern Arizona Magazine from 2019-2024. Her photography has been included in Arizona Highway's "Photo of the Day."



# Volunteer retires after decades of monitoring Santa Cruz River

by By Angela Gervasi • Nogales International May 3, 2024 Updated May 9, 2024

*Reprinted with permission from the Nogales International Newspaper. Photos by Angela Gervasi*

Shaded beneath the brim of a baseball cap, Roberta “Birdie” Stabel nimbly walked along the bank of the Santa Cruz River Monday morning. The 83-year-old Tubac resident expertly waded through calf-high water in rubber galoshes, gathering small tubes of river water, maneuvering measuring devices, and offering pointers to a new volunteer.

Examining a sample, Stabel explained what she was looking for: turbidity, or cloudiness, which can illustrate the volume of solid particles within the river water.

“The lower the number, the better it is,” she added.

For more than 30 years, Stabel has not only admired the Santa Cruz River, but acted as a caretaker for the waterway. Working with local volunteer group Friends of the Santa Cruz River, Stabel has monitored water quality on a monthly basis, measuring acidity, E. coli and chlorine levels among other benchmarks of the river’s health.

Those efforts have culminated in decades of data – and Friends of the Santa Cruz River volunteers continue to provide insight on the river’s health

in particular: Stabel and her husband, Nicholas Bleser.

Stabel began volunteering along the river in the 1990s. Monday marked her



to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, using equipment provided by ADEQ.

Throughout Arizona, there are approximately 30 volunteer groups that regularly monitor water quality, according to ADEQ Senior Scientist Meghan Smart.

To her knowledge, Smart said, Friends of the Santa Cruz River is the oldest volunteer group to do so.

Speaking to the NI, she connected that dedication to two local residents


retirement from RiverWatch.

“My life is certainly richer,” Stabel said that morning, reflecting on the years of volunteer work.

“We’ve seen so much change,” Bleser noted. “In the group, and the processes—”

“And the river,” Stabel added.

Years ago, Stabel recalled, she’d been horseback riding along the Santa Cruz River when she noticed something she’d never seen before in the waterway: fish.

Pollution and contamination had significantly reduced the presence of aquatic life in the binational river. Then, in 2009, the International Boundary and Water Commission upgraded an already-existing sewage water treatment plant in Rio Rico, allowing notably cleaner effluent to flow north into the river. As healthier water flowed, fish reappeared – 





including the endangered Gila topminnow.

While Stabel is retiring, Friends of the Santa Cruz River remains an active group, recruiting volunteers for its RiverWatch program, sending samples to ADEQ, and monitoring spills of untreated sewage water.

And throughout the decades, Stabel said, she and her husband found joy in monitoring the river.

"We didn't say, 'Oh, gosh, we have to go out and do this again?' No." Stabel smiled. "And every time we were out there, we were just so thrilled."

## 'RiverWatch'

As a high school teacher in rural Montana, Stabel gravitated toward nature: She developed a course on conservation, leading her students to the nearby Bitterroot River. Once, she recalled, a flock of bulbous trumpeter swans surrounded the class; the sound was deafening.

Later, she landed a position at Saguaro National Park in Tucson, eventually making her way down to Santa Cruz County as a resident.

Over the years, she explored a number of jobs: substitute teaching, seasonal work for U.S. Customs and Border Protection. And, Stabel told the NI with a grin, she founded and operated a local, one-woman chimney sweep



business – self-taught.

One thing remained constant: Stabel and Bleser's commitment to monitoring the river.

In the 1990s, when volunteers began the practice of river-watching, the early group reached out to ADEQ for guidance. The state-led department began collaborating with volunteers, lending equipment and organizing workshops on how to gather data from the river.

In the early days, Stabel recalled, many aspects of the Santa Cruz River were different: Initially, volunteers gathered data from a site near the Guevavi ruins by South River Road. Today, the

stretch of riverbed remains largely parched, outside of the monsoon season.

But decades ago in the area, "the river used to run," Stabel noted.

Pollution also manifested differently: Often, Stabel said, chemicals from small businesses in Nogales, Sonora made their way into the river.

"Mom-and-pop operations like car painting, shops, and that sort of thing," Stabel recounted. "And they didn't have a proper way to dispose of their stuff."

Hans Huth, a veteran hydrologist with ADEQ, often crossed into the neighboring border town, conversing with business owners about more sustainable waste disposal methods, Stabel said.

Contamination issues continue to loom for the Santa Cruz River and nearby tributaries. Earlier this year, untreated wastewater flowed from a malfunctioning plant in Nogales, Sonora at one point reaching the bed of the Santa Cruz River – according to volunteers like Stabel, who'd continued monitoring the river's health during the spill.

"Water flowing in the wash was obviously highly contaminated with untreated sewage," a February report from Friends of the Santa Cruz River noted.

The International Boundary Wastewater Commission chlorinated the untreated wastewater, an IBWC spokesperson told the NI at the time. ➡





Amid the spill, Friends of the Santa Cruz River continued its regular monitoring. And on Monday, volunteers were back at work again – marking Stabel's last day on the job.

While challenges continue for the river's well-being, Stabel and Bleser described certain improvements – pointing in particular to the upgraded wastewater treatment plant in Rio Rico.

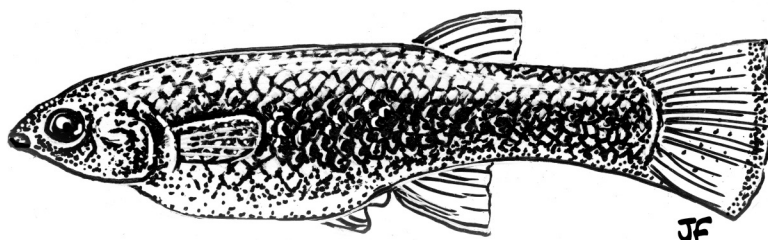
Asked whether today's river was a different one than when they'd first started volunteering, Bleser responded firmly: "Yes."

As the group departed Monday morning after a celebratory breakfast, Stabel called out to her colleagues.

"Thank you all," she said. "I'm truly overwhelmed."



# MONITORING ADVOCACY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS



## FRIENDS OF THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER

### Membership/Donation Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

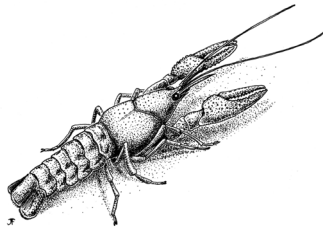
Memberships: \_\_\_\_\$5 Student \_\_\_\_\$15 Single \_\_\_\_\$25 Family  
\_\_\_\_\$50 Supporting \_\_\_\_\$100 Sustaining \_\_\_\_\$500 Life Member \_\_\_\_\$ Other: \_\_\_\_\_ (Amount)

Mail form and check to: FOSCR • P.O. Box 4275 • Tubac, AZ 85646

Or join through PayPal: [foscr.org/join-us/](https://foscr.org/join-us/)

Have you received "A Rambler's Guide to the Santa Cruz River?" (Free with membership!) Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_





**Crayfish**

