

# Watershed Management Group



Mission: To improve people's lives through grassroots projects that integrate community development and conservation.

a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2003 and based in Tucson, Arizona.

# Annual Report 2008

# From the Board Chair

## Contributing to Change

Change is in demand not just in the national agenda but also in the organization and priorities of local communities. WMG believes in fostering change by empowering community members through practical educational activities that build skills and develop community networks. This includes individuals adopting backyard conservation practices, high school students creating native and edible gardens on school properties, neighborhoods reducing non-point source pollutants and flooding problems, and social organizations retrofitting community housing units to be green. Ask a WMG board member what we most enjoyed this past year and overwhelmingly the response is contributing to this positive change taking place. Ask a volunteer why they repeatedly attend our free, public work-



shops and they will tell you that they enjoy contributing to visible change in their community while learning desired skills and knowledge simultaneously. Ask a WMG staff member what they like most about their work and they will share stories of enabling community members to effect change through educational workshops.

Effecting change at the grassroots level requires patient and enduring work but is immensely rewarding! This is what WMG excels in as evidenced by our accomplishments this past year. Most

notable has been our ability to assist underserved communities in partnership with established organizations such as the Primavera Foundation, Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation, and Toltecalli Academy in South Tucson. The Water Harvesting Co-op continues to grow in membership and serves to make the implementation of these sustainable practices affordable and assessable to everyone.

This next year the Board of Directors is committed to increasing the organizational capacity of WMG in order to serve communities near and abroad. The Board will engage in expanding our individual and business donor base to provide stable funding sources and recruiting new board and advisory board members to fill technical and knowledge gaps. Our biggest limitation is clearly not the generation of program or project ideas but the ability to fund these new programs and expand existing programs to meet community needs. We are committed to providing sustainable solutions that meet your needs. We look forward to continuing to build on our successes and strengthen our programs to serve you.

- Catlow Shipek

### 2008 Board of Directors

Pierre Bondoumbou  
Ross Bryant  
Jared Buono  
Gina Chorover  
Emmy Creigh  
Torey Ligon  
Catlow Shipek  
Adam Springer

### 2008 Community Advisory Committee

Evan Canfield  
Greg Corman  
Dustin Garrick

## From the Executive Director



I am pleased to share that Watershed Management Group has virtually doubled its activities in the last year. 2008 has seen the creation of three new WMG programs in addition



to the two already active. Our work continues to focus on Tucson, Arizona, however our work is expanding into new and diverse audiences within the Tucson community. Our mission to work with disadvantaged communities has blossomed in the last year through work with two schools in low-income communities along with three housing facilities for homeless and low-income residents.

The best that WMG has to offer is exemplified in our new Water Harvesting Co-op program. This program was launched in the summer of 2008 without any startup capital. Its inception was sparked by the many requests from WMG volunteers to have a workshop at their own home with a crew of enthusiastic volunteers and a skilled workshop leader. WMG workshops at public sites often feel like an “extreme makeover,” where a large crew of volunteers descend upon a site and transform it within 4 to 5 hours. Who wouldn’t want to host an extreme makeover in their own backyard, while saving some hard-earned cash!

More details on the exact workings of the Co-op can be seen in the program descriptions below, however, I would like to share a couple highlights. Currently our Co-op program has 70 members, and we are averaging about 2 workshops a month. When we started the Co-op program, we realized we needed more trained workshop leaders along with workshop leaders who spoke Spanish to lead workshops with the Spanish speaking communities in Tucson. This led to the development of the Apprenticeship program. Our original idea to train 2 to 3 people turned into an 10 month program with 10 participants. There has been substantial interest in the apprenticeship program, so we have decided to offer it annually. We just recently received grant funding from the Center for Watershed Protection to support a basic and advanced course in the summer of 2009.



Looking back on new program development, they appear to develop seamlessly; as one program builds momentum it meanders and overflows to create a new program. At WMG, it is our goal to be a progressive force, always two steps ahead of the needs of the community and the environment. It is our belief that as we continue to work with a diverse group of individuals, neighborhoods, and partner organizations, our work will continue to be fresh and adaptive. Please stay tuned over the coming year to new developments in our Co-op program along with some new program areas such as conservation technology design contests and riparian restoration.

- Lisa Shipek

# Program Snapshots

## **Water Harvesting Demonstration Sites (started fall 2006)**

Water harvesting practices are simple, low-tech practices that conserve water, improve water quality, reduce flooding and erosion, and promote vegetation. The purpose of the Demonstration Site program is to create visible models of water harvesting practices while training the public in their implementation. To ensure that the program would be available to all participants, WMG partnered with public sites to ensure the sites were free to visit and also offered all educational workshops free of charge. All sites focused on capturing rainwater and greywater to irrigate landscapes with native and edible plants. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation funded this program for its first two years; currently the program continues through money generated by new site partners.



## **School Yard Water Education (started fall 2007)**

The School Yard Water Education Program was developed to teach water conservation to Tucson's next generation. Through hands-on education, students learn basic water conservation techniques as they help improve their school grounds. Students participate in activities that teach concepts of the water cycle, indoor water conservation, rainwater harvesting, greywater harvesting, and native and edible gardens. The program culminates in the actual implementation of a water harvesting garden on the school grounds through a weekend workshop with students and parents. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation funded this program for its first year, and current projects are funded through smaller grants and funds generated by new school partners.

## **Water Harvesting Co-op (started spring 2008)**

WMG's Water Harvesting Co-op is based in the barn-raising model, where homeowners help each other build water harvesting earthworks, greywater systems, and cisterns. Through volunteering their labor, Co-op members reduce the cost of water harvesting improvements while at the same time earning discounted rates for workshops at their own home. Sixteen hours of volunteering will earn Co-op members up to a 40% discount on hiring water harvesting instructors. The Co-op also offers frequent grants and subsidies to make projects affordable for low-income members. Capacity building is an essential part of the Co-op; WMG water harvesting instructors share their knowledge on water harvesting design and implementation. Instructors also teach integrated design concepts that promote passive heating and cooling, food production, and wildlife habitat.



## Water Harvesting Apprenticeship (started summer 2008)

The Water Harvesting Apprenticeship program is a hands-on training course to earn certification as a Water Harvesting Instructor. The goal of the first apprenticeship program was to train water harvesting instructors for the greater community and train instructors to hire for WMG's residential Water Harvesting Co-op program. The apprenticeship program is a 10 month program that began in July 2008 and included the following:

- 8 major weekend training workshops with local experts in cistern installations, greywater systems, water harvesting landscape design, and native gardening
- Mini workshops on site design and maintenance
- Reading assignments to support training workshops
- Practicum co-leading 4 workshops through the Water Harvesting Co-op program

The first apprenticeship program was funded by a grant from the Arizona Community Foundation.

## A Neighborhood Model for Addressing Urban Stormwater (started summer 2008)

Through a grant from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, WMG is conducting a two year water quality education and improvement project in a neighborhood just south of the University of Arizona in Tucson. The focus of the program is reducing

“non-point source” pollution (NPS)—pollution that comes from dispersed sources like pet waste, auto oil, grease, household and lawn chemicals, sediment, and yard waste. The main goals of the project are:

- Increase public awareness of local water quality and NPS issues, particularly as relates to local washes
- Reduce pollution by changing residents' behaviors like littering and dumping pollutants in washes and neighborhood streets
- Empower neighborhood residents to take action by teaching and demonstrating Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater quality
- Create a model for retrofitting an established urban neighborhood, and share with people from other watershed and neighborhoods

A central feature of the project is the installation of BMPs like bioretention basins, berms, curb cuts, and buffer strips on 10 blocks throughout the neighborhood, via a series of educational, hands-on public workshops. The project also includes educational presentations and outreach efforts on water quality issues, training for residents from other neighborhoods and watersheds, and the production of a manual with tools for community leaders and neighborhood residents.



# Program Highlights

## Water Harvesting Demonstration Sites:

The original project, funded in 2006 by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, proposed to implement 6 demonstration sites and educate 150 people about water harvesting. When the two year project was completed in the fall of 2008, WMG had run over 20 free weekend workshops and trained and educated approximately 440 people, almost three times as many as we proposed. The workshops have been the primary way WMG built its volunteer base, which by the end of the 2007 fiscal year, reached 224 people. Six public demonstration sites were created at the following sites: The Nature Conservancy office; Ward III Council Office; a transitional housing facility for homeless veterans called Esperanza en Escalante; an undeveloped urban lot in central Tucson; and two local businesses: Originate Natural Building Materials Showroom and Argentina Polo and Leather.

## School Yard Water Education:

In the spring of 2008, WMG conducted a series of lessons with 90 third grade students on water conservation and water harvesting principles at Rivera Elementary. Rivera Elementary, in South Tucson, serves a student population that is 99% Hispanic with most students either English language learners or first generation American. Following the student lessons, WMG conducted a student-parent workshop to create a water harvesting and pollinator garden on the Rivera Elementary campus.



The primary function of the garden was to create an outdoor learning space for the school community. In addition, it serves as a unique place on the school campus that attracts wildlife and harvests thousands of gallons of roof run-off into the garden to sustain native plants. The workshop at Rivera was attended primarily by students and their mothers along with one grandmother and a couple of energetic fathers. Attendees moved loads of heavy rock, created beautiful rock work around the basin for erosion control, planted shrubs and trees, and mulched the entire garden. Several volunteer Spanish translators were on hand to ensure that the lessons learned were understood by all workshop participants.

## Water Harvesting Co-op:

One of the major goals of the Co-op program is to provide subsidies for low-income families to implement water harvesting features at their home. The Co-op greatly reduces the cost of installing water harvesting features through a rotating volunteer base and earned discounts through volunteering. To make it truly affordable for everyone, we strive to offer partial and full subsidies to cover costs of materials and the workshop leader's time. We received two grants to support low-income families in 2008 from the Central Arizona Project (CAP) Charitable Contributions program and from the Arizona Community Foundation. The CAP grant of \$1,000 was offered through our Co-op to two different families as \$500 subsidies. Through the Arizona Community Foundation, we received \$10,000 to work with 10 low-income families who live in southern Tucson. These workshops are currently in progress.



## Water Harvesting Apprenticeship

The original intent of the apprenticeship program was to train two to four people to become water harvesting instructors suitable to lead workshops through our Co-op program. Once we realized the level of interest in the program, we decided to accept ten applicants from a total pool of 25. Priority was given to applicants who spoke Spanish, as the practicum for the apprenticeship was to lead workshops in southern Tucson which has a large Hispanic population. To encourage the development of appropriate vocabulary, we had the majority of our workshop instruction interpreted into Spanish by native Spanish speakers.

## A Neighborhood Model for Addressing Urban Stormwater:

WMG began a new program to raise awareness and improve water quality in Tucson's Rincon Heights neighborhood in September 2008. The kickoff event for this two-year grant from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality was a cleanup of High School Wash, a normally dry streambed that runs the length of the neighborhood. Volunteers from WMG, Rincon Heights, the University of Arizona's Peace Corps Fellows program, and the wider community picked up trash and removed invasive buffelgrass from the length of the wash through the neighborhood. WMG staff also trained several neighbors and UA students in methods for assessing wash health using indicators of nonpoint source pollution, stream dynamics and invasive species. Marking the significance that WMG's work has in raising awareness, one Rincon Heights resident commented that the event was the first time he had set foot in the wash in his 33 years in the neighborhood.



# Program Highlights

# 2008 Financials

## Fiscal Year 2007 – 2008

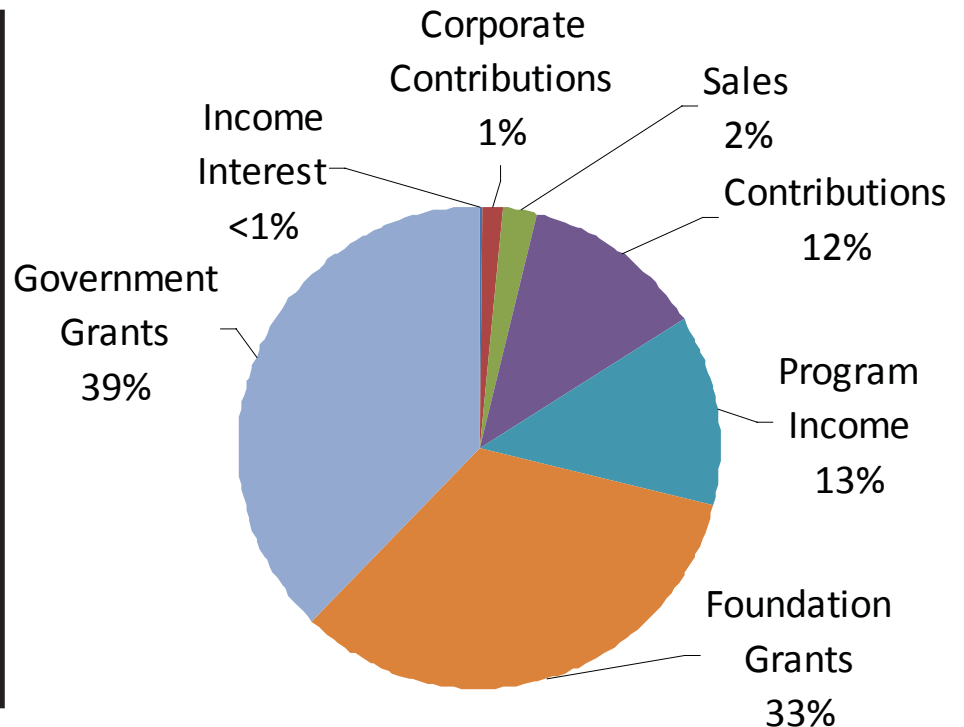
INCOME	Percentage	Amount
Income Interest	0%	\$229.51
Corporate Contributions	1%	\$1,070.00
Sales	2%	\$1,908.43
Contributions	12%	\$10,416.10
Program Income	13%	\$10,756.02
Foundation Grants	33%	\$28,250.00
Government Grants	38%	\$31,791.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$84,421.13</b>

### Major Funders – Grants

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality  
 Arizona Community Foundation  
 Central Arizona Project  
 Food Conspiracy Co-op  
 U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

### Business Sponsors/Donors:

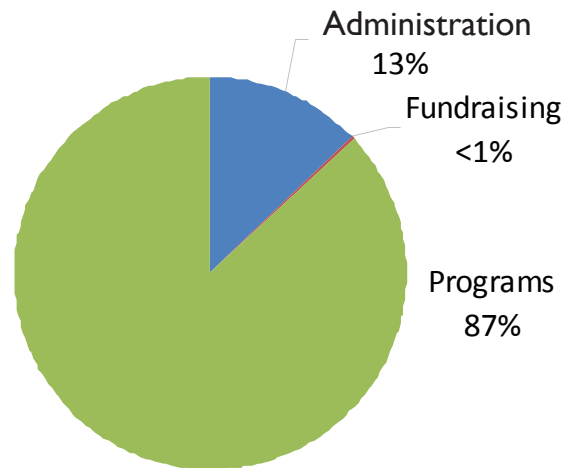
Ace Hardware  
 Brooklyn Pizza  
 Desert Survivors Nursery  
 Food Conspiracy Co-op  
 Nighthawks Nursery  
 SCF Arizona  
 Southern Arizona Rain Gutters  
 Sunflower Market  
 Trader Joes  
 Trees for Tucson  
 Tucson Botanical Gardens  
 Tucson Clean and Beautiful  
 Tucson Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)



# 2008 Financials

## Fiscal Year 2007 – 2008

EXPENSES	Percentage	Amount
Administration	13%	\$7,793.20
Fundraising	0%	\$212.86
Programs	87%	\$53,524.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$61,530.06</b>



## Project Partners

### Non-Profit Organizations

Desert Survivors  
 Esperanza en Escalante  
 Greater Tucson Leadership  
 Ironwood Tree Experience  
 Primavera Foundation  
 Sonoran Institute  
 Southern Arizona Aids  
 Foundation  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 Trees for Tucson (Tucson  
 Clean and Beautiful)  
 Tucson Botanical Gardens  
 Volunteer Center of  
 Southern Arizona

### City of Tucson

Department of Conservation  
 and Sustainable Development  
 Department of Transportation  
 Ward I Council Office  
 Ward III Council Office  
 Ward VI Council Office

### Schools & Neighborhood Associations

Miles Exploratory Learning  
 Center  
 Rivera Elementary  
 Toltecalli Academy  
 Star Academic Center

### Sky Island High School

Rincon Heights Neighborhood  
 Association  
 Grant/Campbell Neighborhood  
 Association

### Other

Master Watershed Stewards  
 Originate Natural Building  
 Materials  
 Tohono Chul  
 Tucson Plant Materials  
 Center – NRCS  
 University of Arizona



# 2008 Contributors

## **Contribution Levels:**

International Watershed: \$1,000

River Basin: \$500

Flowing River: \$100

Silver Raindrop: \$50

Dewdrop: \$15



## **Individual Donors**

### **International Watershed**

Donna Lines

Donna & Scott Ryburn

Ed Thompson

### **River Basin**

Kim & Jim Afinowich

Eva Charbonneau

### **Flowing River**

Nicole Buono

Bill & Robin Charles

Rachel & Dwight Crandell

Emily Creigh

Tamarha & Keith Evert

Marguerite Fisher

Toby Freebourn

Diana & David Freshwater

Paul & Jill Grimes

Terese & Peter Ireland

Henry & Ruth Jacobson

Esther Kim & Todd Shipman

Holly Lachowicz

John McCutcheon & Noelle

Fukushima

### **Silver Raindrop**

Pierre Bondoumbou

Evan Canfield

Debra & Charles Cochran

Sharon & Alex Dely

Patricia DeWitt

Diane Doolittle

Jeanne Duguay

Donald Eydenberg & Lisa Cozzetti

Ethelyn Fennell

Dustin Garrick

Lynn & Gregory Helseth

Ian Johnson

Nancy Laney

Kenneth Laux

Susan Lobo

Amy McCoy & Brian Anderson

Christopher & Lucy Peerenboom

David Shipek & Miss DeFoor

Gay Townsend

### **Dewdrop**

Lisa & Paul Barker

Rebekah Barlow

Evelyn & Thomas Cavanaugh

Susan Danos

Nkounkou Duclos

Sara Habhab

Lillian Holten

Martha Retallick

Richard Roati

Terry Sheridan

Susan Willis

## **Community Recognition**

Lisa Shipek, Executive Director of WMG, was awarded the 2008 Community Xeriscape Leader award. Lisa was awarded the honor based on her achievements in promoting water harvesting and native landscaping in the Tucson community. The contest, organized by the Arizona Department of Water Resources in partnership with the Tucson Botanical Gardens, concluded in an evening ceremony at the Tucson Botanical Gardens on May 15th. A contest official praised Shipek saying, "Lisa is one of Tucson's unsung heroes who hasn't been in the limelight, but who has been in the trenches. For the past five years Lisa has worked tirelessly to spread the word about water harvesting to people and organizations throughout our community. She doesn't just talk about it, she gets out there and DOES water harvesting!"



*Lisa Shipek, WMG Executive Director, awarded 2008 Community Xeriscape Leader award.*

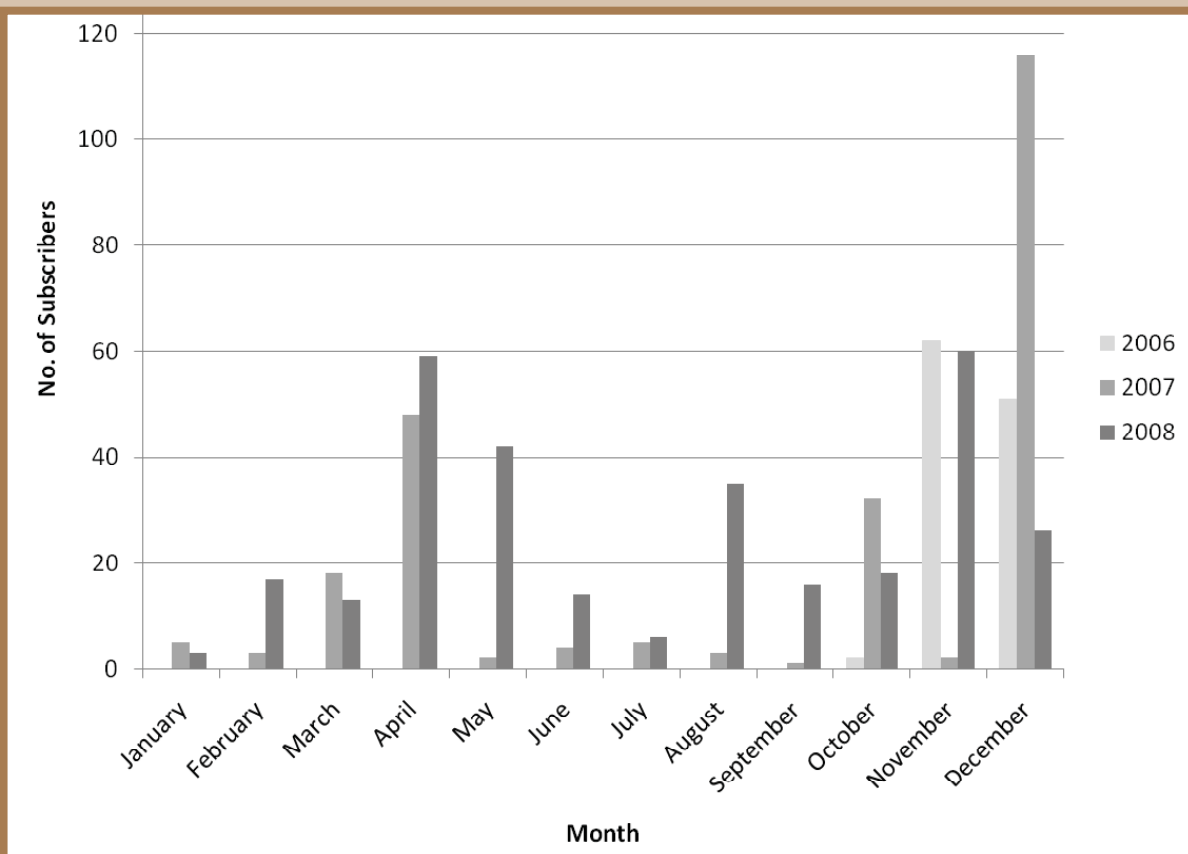
# Community Outreach

Watershed Management Group participated in a variety of outreach activities in the 2008 fiscal year which included: electronic newsletters, presentations, and tabling events. Presentations were given to neighborhood associations, social groups, and as brown bag talks.

One of WMG's major outreach venues is its website. In 2008, we had 9,500 unique visitors to the website, and 950 hits to our quarterly newsletter. By the end of the 2007 fiscal year, there were 244 people on the newsletter distribution list and 224 people on the volunteer email list. During the year, 123 people signed up for the newsletter, and 181 signed up for the volunteer list.

Another way we outreach to the community is through internships with staff members. Last year we had 5 interns, who contributed about 450 hours of volunteer service. Intern's volunteer hours are a substantial way for WMG to provide in-house cost match on various grants.

**Total Number of New E-mail Subscribers by Month & Year**





Watershed Management Group

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