



# Currents

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Dear Santa Fe Watershed Community,*

Six months into serving as your Executive Director, three things are entirely certain: The Santa Fe River cannot be ignored, it wants to be a "Living River" again on this particular place on Earth, and our role here is to help. So where do we stand? All of our board members have been extremely giving of their time and expertise to review and research what's going on in the watershed and to understand the challenges. The staff and all of our past executive directors have provided a detailed history to address our stream of questions (pun intended). I want to give special thanks to my dedicated trainer, former Executive Director Felicity Broennan.

Probably our greatest challenge has been to get a handle on all of the programs and proposals that are in place for the benefit of the watershed. At least 30 different non-profit groups, governmental agencies, and private landowners have plans for some part of the watershed. Many of these plans are years in the works. Some are simply in the mind's eye of one or two dedicated individuals. We have identified a real need to track all of these projects in one transparent location, thus the planned creation of a Projects and Assessments Committee comprised of all of the stakeholders in the watershed.

At SFWA, we have dedicated ourselves to creating an atmosphere of accountability: if we say we are going to do something, we do it. We create definable and verifiable goals and meet them. We are tracking revenues and expenses for each program; planning with verifiable milestones; and using a methodical, logical approach to problem solving. Raquel Baca-Tompson is trained to do our day-to-day accounting and payroll in house. This gives us the ability to adjust quickly to changes in our revenue stream and to insure that we stay within our program budgets.



Top (l-r) Eileen Everett, Andy Otto, Raquel Baca-Tompson  
(l-r) Keely Jackson-Kennemore & Gabrielle Beans

As of mid-March, Gabrielle Beans is our new River Coordinator. She has done a great job of creating graphics and reports to help our Adopt-the-River Sponsors to know what's going on with the Santa Fe River as a whole and their particular reach of the river. Gabby has also been making our website more reflective of our current work, enhancing our transparency as an organization.

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## *Our Mission*

*The mission of the Santa Fe Watershed Association is to protect and restore the health and vibrancy of the Santa Fe River and its watershed for the benefit of people and the environment. We achieve this through education, restoration, stewardship, and advocacy. From the River's headwaters to the Rio Grande, we honor the connection of people and the watershed.*

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**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

*Dear Friends of the Santa Fe Watershed,*

One of the highlights of 2014 has been the flowing Santa Fe River. Last fall, the City of Santa Fe began draining first Nichols and then McClure reservoir, which together supply about 40% of Santa Fe’s drinking water. The reservoirs were emptied in order to repair their water intake and outlet structures—but a delightful side benefit has been many months of a vibrant, living river. (See page 3)



©:Anna C. Hansen

The repairs will soon be finished, but flows in the river will continue thanks to the Living River Ordinance, which was championed by the Santa Fe Watershed Association and enacted by the City in 2012. This ordinance made Santa Fe the first community in the state to dedicate some water every year to its river.

The flow is not only beautiful, it also makes a powerful difference, recharging groundwater aquifers, and nurturing the cottonwoods and willows that sustain many species of birds and other wildlife.

The Living River Initiative is only part of SFWA’s work, which ranges from bringing grade-school children into the Upper Watershed to learn where their water comes from, to working with local hotels to reduce their water and chemical use in our Green Lodging Initiative, to organizing hundreds of Adopt-the-River Stewards who remove thousands of bags of trash from the river and arroyos each year.

Just as water is the key ingredient that turns the Santa Fe River into a ribbon of green connecting our community, enthusiastic and dedicated Santa Feans are key to keeping our watershed healthy and thriving. I am so grateful to all of you who have joined us for a river clean-up, watershed hike, tree planting, Climate Masters class, City Council meeting, or volunteered your time in other ways. It’s truly inspiring to be working with you to ensure that the Santa Fe River will flow for generations to come.



**Kristina G. Fisher, President of the Board**

## How Strange — There's Water in the River!

The big talk around town among many Santa Fean's is "Why is the Santa Fe River running for such a long time?" Part of our job at the SFWA is to let you know why these things happen.

So, why has the Santa Fe River been flowing since September 2013? This is a curious occurrence for Santa Fean's for the Santa Fe River was dammed a long time ago to provide the City of Santa Fe with water. After much investigation, the City of Santa Fe reached the conclusion that it is time to restore the two water intake towers located in the reservoirs found in the upper watershed. The water intake tower in the Nichols Reservoir was the first to be demolished and rebuilt. The new version of the first tower was completed this May, 2014.



©Gabrielle Beans

The river water we are seeing, enjoying, and wondering about this summer is coming from McClure, our second reservoir. The water intake tower will undergo the same process the Nichols tower did last year. Construction of this tower is expected to begin this September and to be completed in the Spring of 2015.

75 year-old water intake towers brought about the necessary draining of both Nichols and McClure reservoirs that contain 40% of our city's drinking water. After a survey of these cylindrical towers, engineers concluded that the structural integrity of the towers was insufficient and vulnerable to seismic activity due to their location near the Nambe fault.

Another safety issue other than age was also apparent; Only a year ago, the external and internal mechanics of these towers were checked by boat or by an incredibly dangerous walk across a frozen surface followed by a climb between five to 60 feet depending upon seasonal water levels. After the top of the tower was safely reached an entry into a five foot diameter hole was the only way to access and maintain valves, pipes, and electrical lines. The new water intake systems meet both structural and personnel safety requirements. Entry into the intake system is far better than entering a giant pipe. Instead, the water intake built by RMCI of Albuquerque, is box like. It is attached to the crest of the dam where it descends down the earthen embankment to rest at the bottom of the reservoir. Inside this long hallway are concrete steps, improved lighting, and extra head room. Sangre de Cristo Water Division employees can now easily access valves, pipes, and other equipment anytime. Read more about this project; find data documenting the daily, monthly and annual water releases; and much more on the City of Santa Fe's website ([www.santafenm.gov/water\\_division](http://www.santafenm.gov/water_division)).



### Board News: WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS JOHN ALEJANDRO AND MICHELLE HENRIE



For more than ten years, John has worked with Fortune 500 high-tech and clean-tech companies to develop renewable energy projects and become industry leaders. He focuses on creating innovative public-private partnerships, developing federal policies to scale-up the U.S. renewable energy industry, and executing communications and government relations campaigns. John is a nominee to the Sustainable Santa Fe Commission, the founder of the New Mexico and Santa Fe Alliances for Clean Energy, and a volunteer with Got Sol New Mexico. He has written about energy-related topics for numerous publications including a piece on the ethanol industry appearing in *The Washington Post*, and an op-ed related to global warming and economic development in developing countries appearing in *The Economist Online*.

Michelle Henrie is the founder and owner of MHenrie Land Water Law, which focuses on project development, water law, land use, real estate, energy, environmental law, and development of natural resources for projects throughout NM. Before opening her own firm in 2007, Michelle practiced with Rodey, Dickason, Sloan, Akin & Robb, P.A. and Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber, Schreck, P.C. Michelle holds degrees from Vermont Law School, the University of Chicago, and Utah State University. She is LEED AP (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-Accredited Professional), rated among top NewMexico lawyers in water supply litigation by Chambers USA; and active with NAIOP, American Water Res. Assoc., Pecos River Resolution Corp., and Lambda Alpha Intl.



## First Hikes

Do you remember your first hike? I for one, do not. I've taken many hikes throughout my life and hope to take countless more, but I can't remember my first hike.

2014 marks an important year for those who enjoy hiking and the solitude of the outdoors, because we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. On September 3, 1964, President Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law setting aside more than 9 million acres of land as wilderness. The Act states, "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Today, more than 100 million acres of land in the U.S. are designated as wilderness. Our closest wilderness area is the Pecos Wilderness in the Santa Fe National Forest, including 10,000 acres of the uppermost Santa Fe Watershed.

Just a few miles downstream from the Pecos Wilderness, we lead groups of youths, introducing them to the ponderosa forest of the Upper Santa Fe Watershed. We explore the forest-thinning that's been designed to greatly reduce the potential of a catastrophic wildfire to this important resource above Santa Fe. During this past spring and summer, we brought roughly 750 of Santa Fe Public School's fourth and fifth graders on field trips to identify aquatic macroinvertebrates, explore dendrochronology, and observe wildlife during a three-part program that we call My Water, My Watershed. This program also includes six field trips for the City's Summer Youth Program.

Today, on a hot, dry June day, 23 kids, ages 9-12, came with us into the Upper Watershed. As we were walking into the forest, one of the kids turned to me and said, "How many hikes have you been on?" I said, "Um... uh... hmm.... I don't know. A lot. How about you?"

This was his first hike. When we bring students into the Upper Watershed, they often comment that they've never been hiking before and that Nichols Reservoir is the largest body of water they've ever seen. This is important work that we do, bringing children on their first hikes.

I wonder how many first hikes I've been on with these students over the past decade.

And I wonder, where was your first hike? And did you ever have the opportunity to explore the watershed where you grew up?

*Eileen Everett*



## Welcome Gabrielle Beans

In March, we welcomed Gabrielle Beans as our new Adopt-the-River Coordinator. Gabby is also helping Education Director Eileen Everett with the Upper Watershed Education Programs.

Gabby is half-Spanish and half-American, a global traveler who has lived in six countries and speaks three languages—and she's loving Santa Fe and its beautiful surroundings. She has been in love with nature since an early age, studied biology in Spain, and worked there as an environmental educator in 2003, teaching Mediterranean water and wetland conservation to school-age children.

Gabby earned her Master's Degree in Wales studying the evolution of snake venom, and her Ph.D. in New Zealand in 2012 studying Antarctic Penguins (and celebrating Christmas in summer).



©:Gabrielle Beans



## Santa Fe Prep Adopts More Than the River

Childhood experiences inspired Rob Madril to take stewardship of the Santa Fe River to another level. Rob is a physics teacher and fencing coach at Santa Fe Prep. Santa Fe Prep officially adopted a reach of the river just upstream from Patrick Smith Park, but Rob also introduced his students to the arroyos that he knew and loved. When he and his students enter the arroyos, Thursdays during the school year, they enter another world. They call themselves the Arroyo Ratz. Here's a bit of Rob's story.



"I was born in Tucumcari — we moved to Santa Fe when I was 10 years old. I loved exploring the arroyos because they kept changing and there were always "treasures" to be found...."

"Santa Fe Prep participates in the Teen Action Program (TAP), the goals of which are to inspire social responsibility, leadership, and personal discovery. On a whim, I took the kids into Arroyo Mascaras between Fort Marcy and Carlos Gilbert Elementary School. I thought there'd be some litter to pick up—but I was shocked at just how much there was. I had never, ever seen so much trash in the arroyos. As a kid we'd run into abandoned cars, cans that had been used as target practice, and occasionally we'd see a pile where someone had dumped their trash—but I had never seen so many beer bottles, cans, vodka and whiskey bottles, fast-food wrappers and containers, and much, much more. I decided right there and then that this was the TAP that I wanted to do. That was ten years ago...."



"What I want the kids to realize most is that there's an entire unseen world that's quite literally just under their feet. They're confronted with the plight of the homeless, the realities of drug and alcohol abuse, and the conflict between keeping the environment clean and allowing people to camp in those places. I also want them to have a sense of accomplishment and to know that it doesn't take very much time to make a real difference. They do have to deal with the frustration of going back to a place we cleaned a few weeks past only to see that it has been trashed again. That's an important experience for them as well."

## Our Simple Acts Engage More Than We Could Engineer

This spring, after another rewarding year of tending the river with you, I handed over the Adopt-the-River reins to Gabrielle Beans (see page 4). Instead of running the Adopt Program, I got some friends together to adopt a reach of the river ourselves—because I think that tending the river in person makes a bigger difference than we can imagine.

It's Father's Day as I write. My dad was a doctor. He said that he could put sutures in to close a wound, but he couldn't tell you how the wound healed. As skilled as he was, he saw his hands as crude tools in light of what else was at work in the process of healing.

Our hands are like his hands, as we do what we can for the river and the watershed, one careful gesture at a time. I can't tell you how we're going to negotiate the social, political and economic obstacles that stand between Santa Fe today and a community that lives within the carrying capacity of its watershed... any more than I can say how an injury heals. But we can make a good future more possible.

**Marty Peale**



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## Thank You Loyal Watershed Community!

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## *From the Executive Director* continued from the cover

Our Green Lodging Initiative held a Forum in April, recognizing the 12 lodging properties that have completed the training and implemented the conservation measures. Approximately 2,000 pounds of toxic chemicals, 1.5 million gallons of water, and 1.2 million kilowatt hours of electricity are being conserved every year by these 12 businesses in the City of Santa Fe alone. The program's success led the City of Santa Fe to proclaim its own Green Lodging Initiative in June 2014 and to allocate money in the 2014-2015 budget to continue this program.



Angela Rodden from Eldorado Hotel & Spa, Evadne Giannini of HospitalityGreen LLC

Who else but Eileen Everett would take more than 600 school children exploring in the Upper Watershed as part of their school curriculum? Well, she didn't take them all at once, so our young people had exceptionally high-quality experiences up there. The planning and communication needed for the My Water, My Watershed education program is beyond compare. These children are the river stewards of our future, and they'll be better prepared than we ever were, thanks to Eileen's work today.

Volunteer Coordinator Keely Jackson-Kennemore is working with more and more volunteers, not only in river Stewardship but in other areas as well. On Love Your River Day, more than 120 volunteers showed up—surpassing all previous turn-outs for community river clean-ups. Keely handles the logistics for these projects with skill and good humor. She has also been able to more efficiently utilize the skills of the volunteers for additional projects including willow thinning in the Canyon Road area and needed office improvements.

Marty Peale has stayed engaged in special projects such as wildfire-preparedness educational outreach. To date, approximately half of the 61 property owners adjacent to the river close to the forest service boundary have implemented fire-suppression measures on their own properties. Marty also researched and developed the insert on wildfire preparedness which is part of the City's July utility bill mailings.

Threats to the Santa Fe River persist: more demand than water, inadequate groundwater recharge, incomplete implementation of the watershed management plan, and worse, a general malaise about the state of the River.

We will continue to be a voice for the Santa Fe River and its watershed. With your help and support, we will continue to show up to make sure that the River is represented at every discussion that involves its future. The Santa Fe River will have a seat at the table.

Twenty years from now, Santa Fe must be able to say that we were there, paying attention, educating, speaking up for, working for, and advocating for the overall health and well-being of the Santa Fe River and its watershed.



**Andy Otto, Executive Director of SFWA**

## FAST FACTS ABOUT THE SANTA FE RIVER

- The Santa Fe River Watershed is 285 square miles.
- The Santa Fe River is 46 miles long.
- The river runs from Lake Peak (12,408') in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the confluence with the Rio Grande at Cochiti (5,220').
- At Lake Peak, precipitation averages 35 inches/year; at Santa Fe 14 inches/year; at Cochiti 10 inches/year.
- 10% of the watershed area (17,400 acres) and approximately 12 miles of the river are above the City of Santa Fe, within the Santa Fe National Forest.
- An acre-foot (af) of water covers one acre (43,560 square feet) with water one foot deep. This equals 325,851 gallons. (An Olympic swimming pool holds two af of water.)
- The average annual flow from the Upper Watershed (1914-2008) is just under 5,000 af.
- The stream gauge below McClure Reservoir has recorded annual flows as high as 19,000 af (in 1919) and as low as 1,530 (in 1950).
- Santa Fe residents used an average of 58 gallons/day at home in 2012.
- The average per capita use in the City of Santa Fe in 2012 — including commercial, industrial, multi-family, and public usage — was 106 gallons.
- In 2013, the City delivered ~10,000 af to water consumers. Of that, 32% came from our watershed (the Upper Watershed and the City wells along the river). Just four years earlier, the watershed provided for 60% of the City's needs.



*Santa Fe*  
**WATERSHED**

**ASSOCIATION**

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The SFWA takes environmentally responsible business practices seriously. We have chosen to work with a certified Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) printer. This means that both the print company and the paper used were rigorously reviewed and controlled to ensure that the paper came from eco-responsible sources, which helps limit the impact this project will have on the environment.



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**GET SOCIAL WITH SFWA!** Have you liked us on Facebook, followed us on Twitter, or connected with us on LinkedIn? If not, we would love to have you as friend, follower, and connection. SFWA has been working hard to keep its friends and followers updated on current events as well as sharing fascinating photos and articles. We also have a channel on YouTube that includes several videos related to our watershed. Check us out!

Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn search: Santa Fe Watershed Association  
Twitter: @SantaFeH2O

**LA MONTANITA CO-OP SUPPORTS ITS VOLUNTEERS — AND OURS!** Are you a member of La Montanita Co-Op in Santa Fe? If so, did you know about their Volunteer program? La Montanita is one of our Adopt-the-River Sponsors, and it offers a significant discount to volunteers for their time. Volunteers get one card for each hour of service, and each card allows the cardholder one shopping trip at an 18% discount. The Santa Fe Watershed Association is in partnership with La Montanita, so volunteering for us counts! For more information, call them (505-265-4631) or go to their website ([lamontanita.coop/volunteer](http://lamontanita.coop/volunteer)).



**GIVE GRANDE RAISED \$2,000 FOR SFWA** On May 6, 2014, SFWA participated in Give Grande NM (GGNM). GGNM is a unique, 24-hour online giving event that inspires individuals in our community to donate to non-profits that improve quality of life in New Mexico. Thank you to all who donated to our organization. This first year of GGNM proved to be successful and helped SFWA raise \$2,000. Thank you GGNM — we'll see you online next year!

**JOIN US! ARE YOU A PROUD MEMBER OF SFWA?** If so, thank you! If not, we'd love to have you on board! What's in it for you? Our members receive first notifications of hikes into the Upper Watershed and other upcoming events. You'll also receive this biannual newsletter, *Currents*, a window sticker and email updates. To sign up for membership, please contact Raquel ([raquel@santafewatershed.org](mailto:raquel@santafewatershed.org))