

## From the Director: Building Toward Resilience

“Time is long, and there is always time for first steps and next steps. The work of building a resilient society never ends, and it always needs beginning.”

— Bill deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range*

If you had asked me five years ago how working on budgets and preparing board packets related to snowshoeing up Black Canyon or taking an evening stroll at Romero Park, I would probably have struggled to answer. But after a year at the helm of SFWA and nearly four years as a staff member, I can see and feel how these actions are all related to thinking like a watershed – the Santa Fe River Watershed.

The more I learn, the more everything connects back to water, land, community. Even when I am away from the office and off the clock, I can't help but think about these connections. Where am I physically in the landscape? Why does the land look the way it does? What stories live in this place? What does the future hold here? What part has SFWA played? What part do I play? It is a profound feeling of reverence and responsibility to work in my home community alongside such a special organization.

*“Working together and feeling connected is a matter of survival for our watershed community.”*

While much of SFWA's work rightfully centers on actions and deliverables, I would argue that just as important are the feelings our work inspires and has inspired since the beginning. These feelings of connection and commitment to the watershed that have deepened in me as an SFWA staff member are the same feelings that we hope to support in everyone through all our programming, from trash cleanups to field trips. As we have the opportunity to learn together and make watershed connections up close, we will be ever more inspired and motivated to work together to care for this community in all of its complexity.

Working together and feeling connected is a matter of survival for our watershed community. As our collaborator Dr. Courtney Flint highlighted in our recent Stakeholder Priority Report (published on our website in March), connections between community members, stakeholder groups and geographies are essential for genuine community resilience. Such connections – which Dr. Flint refers to as interactional capacity – help us develop trust and empathy, see in systems, and



*Executive Director Morika Vorenberg Hensley shows off her freshly painted fish hat at Love Your Watershed Day, in preparation for the FLOW procession in June 2023. (Bobbe Besold)*

simply know who to call in an emergency. Genuine connections can sometimes be tense, but they are always essential. How can SFWA help increase the interactional capacity in our watershed community, and build toward resilience?

It seems to me that this has been a central question for SFWA throughout its history and is a question which we continue to explore as challenges arise and evolve. Every day is a series of next steps and first steps, guided by our interconnected values of education, restoration, stewardship and advocacy. Additionally, as the SFWA team and I have continued exploring the history of the organization and how we want to carry that legacy forward, we have found ourselves orienting around the principles of healing, connection and collaboration.

*(continued on page 2)*

## From the Executive Director *(cont. from page 1)*

There is deep pain in our community, held in soil, ecological relationships and social dynamics. To move toward resilience, we believe that recognizing old scars and open wounds, and trying to heal together, is essential. The task is daunting, but where better to start, and continue, than with the literal common ground beneath our feet and running through our veins? Everyone has a part to play. With each trash cleanup,

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each riparian planting, each rain garden and, even in a more abstract sense, each email and meeting, we are aiming to help heal the landscape and the communal bonds that depend on it. While it's an endless task, it has the potential to be an empowering one.

That's where connection comes in again. In a time when so much emphasis is placed on our differences and divisions, the river and watershed physically bind us together. To "honor the connection between people and watershed," as our mission statement directs us to do, is to center the common goal of community resilience as we wade through

our complexities and diversities, working side by side on restoration projects or sitting together at public meetings, celebrating together the balm of a strong spring runoff, grieving together and buoying each other through times of fire and drought. The more we see the connections between our needs and the causes we care about, the greater our capacity for resilience and even thriving.

With connection, of course, comes the adjacent but central ethic of collaboration. In addition to differences and divisions, we so often witness a focus on competition and ownership – even within the structure of many nonprofits and community-based organizations. Yet, if our goal is truly to serve the entire community, we must continue to embody a foundational framing of collaboration every day. We can accomplish so much more on every scale if we work together and restructure our systems to support that work. As I reflect on the legacy of SFWA, I am inspired that it truly is one of healing, connection and collaboration, and that our staff, board and community members strive to deepen these principles into the future.

Whether you have been part of the SFWA community since its founding, just happened across our organization for the first time, or anything in between, welcome again. There is so much you can do to help sustain our work: simply caring about and connecting to the watershed; learning about it; contributing your ideas and perspectives; volunteering your time, energy and expertise with SFWA; making a one-time or recurring donation; and sharing your knowledge, passion and generosity with others. Your partnership is baked into the core of everything we do. Thank you for working with us in the endless, infinitely beginning work of building a resilient watershed community.

*Mori*



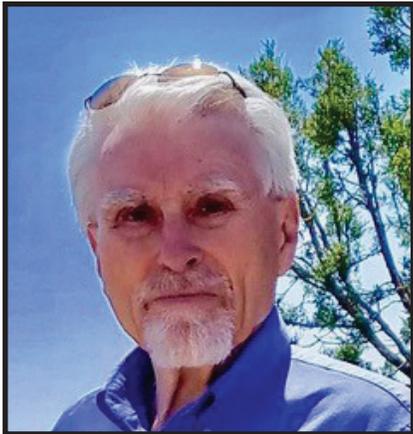
*SFWA partnered with Poetry Pollinators, artist Peter Joseph, the City of Santa Fe, and the Xerces Society to complete this new pollinator habitat near the Camino Escondido Zuni Bowl. It was reverently constructed from the stump of the beloved cottonwood in Harvey Cornell (Rose) Park, which had to be taken down but now has new life as a pollinator refuge and gathering place for people to reflect, read and write poetry, and deepen their connection to the river.*



*Our completed Zuni Bowl at the end of Camino Escondido slows stormwater runoff and protects the riverbank from erosion.*

## From the President: It's Not Just a River

Maybe you, like many of us, have been enjoying the rushing water cascading through the Rio Santa Fe. It certainly makes those walks along the river trail more interesting, and the children splashing in it seem to have the most fun. So, with the Rio flowing, maybe now is a good time to



*Fred Schott, SFWA Board President*

stop and think about from where that water is coming – up in the Sangre de Cristo mountains, up in the Santa Fe National Forest, up there out of sight among the trees and boulders, up there in the Santa Fe watershed. A healthy river and the beginning of healthy water starts with a healthy watershed, and that is what the Santa Fe Watershed Association is about.

One way to keep the watershed healthy is to care for it, and to do that, we have to care *about* it. So, many of the Santa Fe Watershed Association's programs are focused educating persons, young and old, about the watershed and how it works; on how to keep the Rio healthy; and on advocating for the river, the watershed and good stewardship of this precious resource. Like the watershed itself, much of what SFWA does happens out of the public eye, but in this newsletter and on our website, you will find just some of the ways that the Santa Fe Watershed Association is busy promoting and protecting, not just the Rio Santa Fe, but its whole watershed. Read on!

— Fred Schott  
SFWA Board President



*Late winter snowpack and surprising early rains supported river flows that reached far downstream this spring. Here, the Santa Fe River flows near the 599 Bridge in mid-April 2023.*



*The Santa Fe River flows through Agua Fria near Romero Park, with views of the early restoration work, accomplished by SFWA and our partners, that has taken root in the past quarter century.*



*SFWA partner Reese Baker from The Raincatcher, Inc., speaks to the 2023 Climate Masters cohort about stormwater, rain gardens, and mycoremediation at his office's rain garden on Aspen Drive.*

**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.

# Meet Jaclyn Behringer: SFWA's Education Specialist

SFWA was excited to welcome Jaclyn Behringer to the team in late February to support our spring My Water, My Watershed field trips. Over the summer she expanded her role to support more educational programming as well as the Adopt Your Watershed program.



*Jaclyn Behringer, SFWA's new Education Specialist, brings a deep passion for inspiring learners to care for each other and the world around them.*



*SFWA partner Ramon Coriz from the City of Santa Fe supports 5th graders on the My Water, My Watershed field trip as they identify benthic macroinvertebrates. Students learn about tolerant and intolerant species, how they help indicate water quality, and the importance of water conservation. In the past year the program reached 830 students from 39 classes and 19 schools. Since 2010, we have reached almost 10,500 Santa Fe youth!*



*Education Specialist Jaclyn Behringer taught students how to make rain sticks during the Santa Fe Community Educators' Network summer camp series.*



*SFWA partner Alan Hook from the City of Santa Fe speaks to the 2023 Climate Masters cohort about water and forest management in the municipal watershed.*



*Education Specialist Jaclyn Behringer taught students how to make leaf art during the Santa Fe Community Educators' Network summer camp series.*

## Program Feature: “Adopt Your Watershed” Ties Us All together

SFWA flagship programs Adopt-the-River and Adopt-an-Arroyo have merged into the singular program, “Adopt Your Watershed”! While the foundational features and goals will remain the same, our hope is that the new “Adopt Your Watershed” title will help streamline our operations and underscore a more holistic approach in highlighting the connections of the river, arroyos and watershed landscape at large. Changes are being rolled out over time, and ideas are always welcome!

Follow us on social media and subscribe to our e-newsletter to be the first to know about further evolutions including:

- Specialized steward teams
- Monthly volunteer cleanups at different locations around the watershed
- Stewardship trainings
- Tiered sponsorship levels
- More collaboration and partnership with other community groups
- Annual “Love Your Watershed Day” on the first Saturday in May, a community celebration and gathering for the watershed to kick off a week of spring cleaning



*Kevin Myers and the Amma Green team clean the watershed wherever inspiration and need strike! Since July 2022, SFWA volunteers have spent nearly 1,500 hours on 127 occasions collecting over 2,000 bags of trash – that’s more than 15 tons!*



*Lisa Farrand’s incredible “Lovin’ the River” team regularly cleans the river, waters new plantings, and removes tumbleweeds around Frenchy’s Field Park and all the way to Siler Bridge.*



*SFWA participated in the FLOW procession in June 2023 to remember the Rio Chiquito, a small tributary of the Santa Fe River where Water Street is now. SFWA Director of Stewardship and Community Outreach Amara May wore the puppet she made herself! (Gabriella Marks)*

### Introducing: Santa Fe Watershed Fest

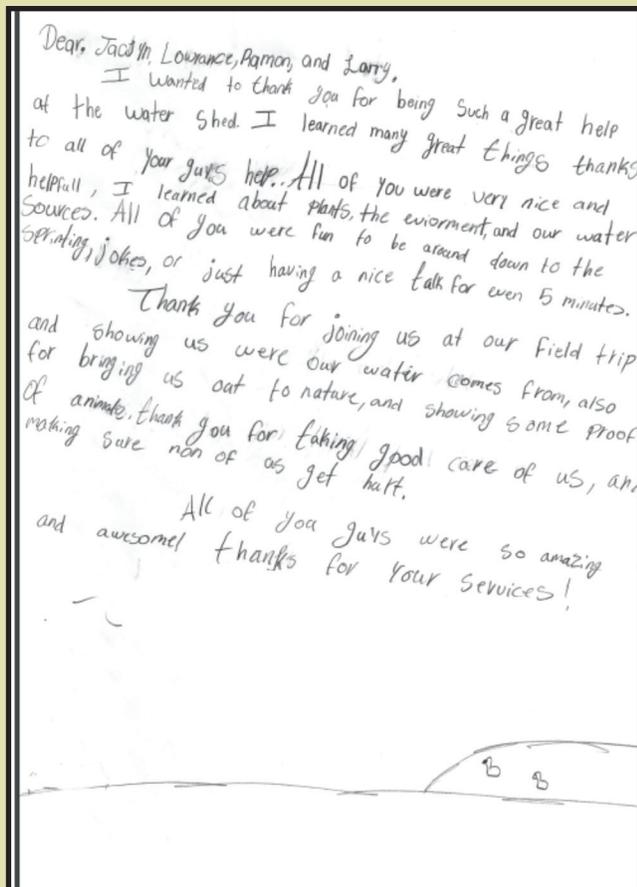
Starting in 2023, SFWA will host our annual film festival as part of a series of watershed-focused events. In addition to a lovingly curated program of regional and international films on tour with the Wild and Scenic Film Festival, Santa Fe Watershed Fest will include a screening and discussion of the local film, *Acequias: The Legacy Lives On*, a community cleanup and recycled-art party, and more.

# To Our Amazing, Generous Community of Donors and Volunteers, Thank You! You Make All of This Possible

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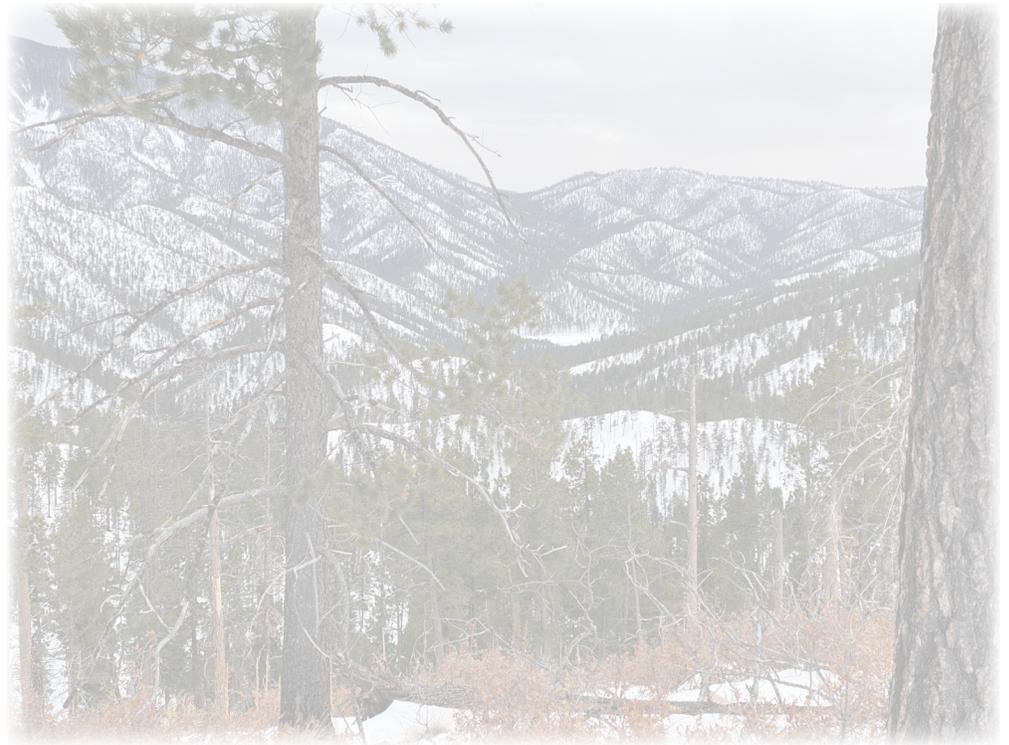
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# Santa Fe WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



## Upcoming SFWA Events

**August 9 - 30, 2023:** City of Santa Fe River Talks

**August 28 - September 16, 2023:** Santa Fe Watershed Fest

**December 14, 2023:** Holiday Open House

**Early 2024:** Monthly Watershed Cleanups

**March 16, 2024:** Adopt Your Watershed Workshop and Clean-up

**May 4, 2024:** Love Your Watershed Day

## Santa Fe Watershed Association

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505/820-1696 • [info@santafewatershed.org](mailto:info@santafewatershed.org)  
[www.santafewatershed.org](http://www.santafewatershed.org)

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SANTA FE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

2023

## SANTA FE WATERSHED FEST

A participatory series celebrating the health and vibrancy of our local watershed, and others.

Featuring:

**ACEQUIAS: THE LEGACY LIVES ON**  
August 28, 6pm, Center for Contemporary Arts

**WILD AND SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL**  
September 7, 6:30pm, Violet Crown Cinema

**COMMUNITY CLEANUP AND ART PARTY**  
September 16, 9am, Oliver La Farge Library

.... **AND MORE!**

updated information and ticket links on SFWA website

