



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

**WATER RESOURCES  
RESEARCH CENTER**



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

# Water Resources Research Center

[wrrc.arizona.edu](http://wrrc.arizona.edu)





## GREATER DEPTH, BROADER PERSPECTIVE FOR A CLEAR WATER FUTURE

We tackle key water policy and management issues, empower informed decision-making, and enrich understanding through engagement, education, and applied research.

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**2024 Annual Report**  
**Previous WRRC Annual Reports**  
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# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), a University of Arizona unit based in Cooperative Extension, connected with the public through numerous programs and products in 2024. We are proud of our engagement through our *Weekly/Summer Wave* e-newsletter, webinars, annual conference, and activities, which are described in this Annual Report. As always, the WRRC shared program information via our website, e-newsletter, and other platforms and remained unwavering in our efforts to be a trustworthy source for reliable water information. Events of note in 2024 include onboarding a new associate director and commendations by review panels on WRRC performance. On April 1, 2024, Dr. Jamie McEvoy joined the University of Arizona as WRRC Associate Director and Extension Specialist in the Department of Environmental Science. Dr. McEvoy has already had a huge impact on the WRRC's capacity to deliver programming. In March 2024, the US Geological Survey notified the WRRC of the results of its most recent five-year review. The USGS determined that the WRRC, the federally authorized Water Resources Research Institute for Arizona, is performing at an outstanding level. In September, the University of Arizona Office of Research, Innovation & Impact, which conducts periodic reviews of all university centers, reauthorized the WRRC for another seven years. The reauthorization letter noted that the WRRC "plays an important role at the University and in our communities, has a robust administrative structure and function, and has strong strategic and resource plans in place to continue its positive impacts." In addition, I was pleased to learn that my endowed C.W. & Modene Neely Professorship was reconfirmed for another five years. I hope, after perusing this calendar year 2024 Annual Report, you will agree that the WRRC is well positioned to continue serving as a bridge connecting the University of Arizona with individuals and communities throughout Arizona and beyond. In a time of unprecedented water challenges to Arizona and the region, engagement and partnerships remain key to our applied research, engagement/outreach, and education mission. We look forward to your continuing participation in and support of our events and programs and welcome your suggestions and communications.



Sharon B. Megdal

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharon B. Megdal".

## About the Director

WRRC Director Sharon B. Megdal oversees programs and operations of the WRRC and engages with multiple partners on projects that investigate water resource policy issues and inform a range of audiences. Publications, conference and workshop participation, and lectures have focused on approaches to water management in a drying climate. Strong demand for learning about managed aquifer recharge and potential opportunities to close the gap between water demand and supply in the Colorado River Basin kept Dr. Megdal busy throughout 2024 with invited presentations, article writing, and interviews involving local and global media outlets. She once again taught her graduate course, Water Policy in Arizona and Semi-arid Regions. Service activities included serving on the Board of the Kasser Joint Institute for Food, Water, and Energy Security and as a member of the Colorado River Basin Water & Tribes Initiative. A detailed listing of her professional activities can be found [here](#). A member of the Extension faculty in the Department of Environmental Science, Megdal is the C.W. & Modene Neely Endowed Professor for Excellence in Agriculture and Life Sciences and University Distinguished Outreach Professor. She also holds numerous courtesy appointments in departments and colleges across campus. In 2024, she was named a Fellow of the American Water Resources Association.

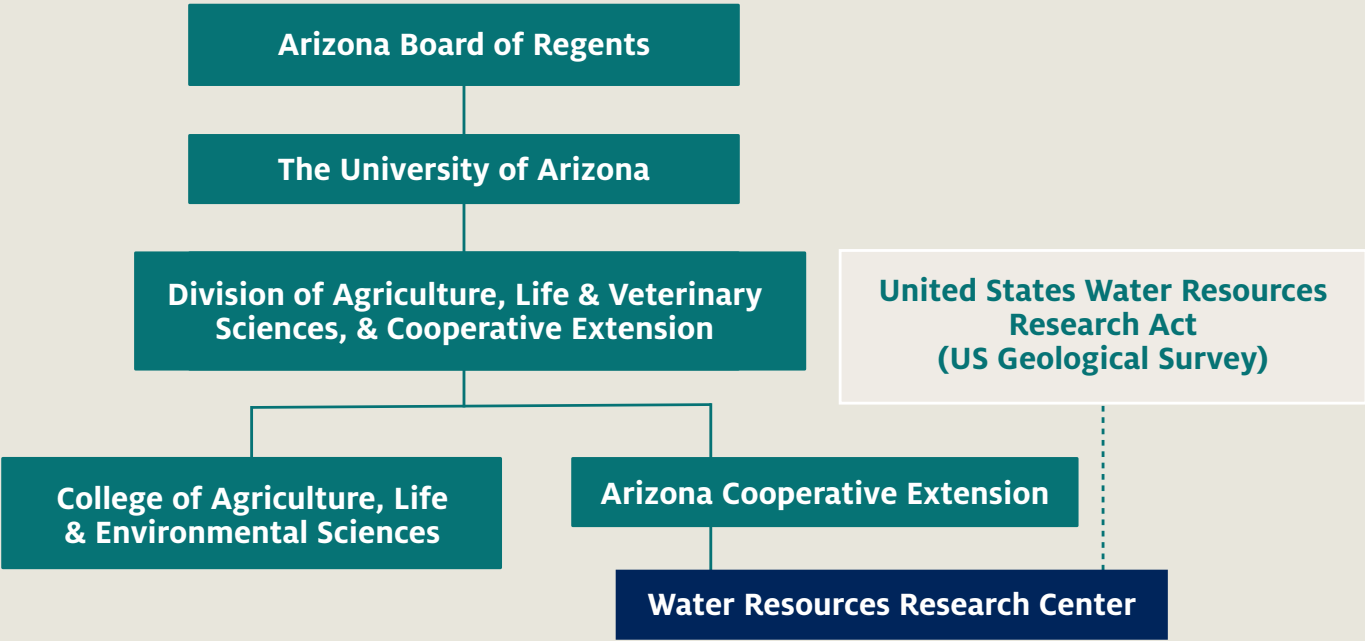
# EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EAC)

The members of the committee and their affiliations as of December 2024 are listed below.

<b>Bradford, Shawn</b> EPCOR Water USA, Inc.	<b>Hauter, Jason</b> Akin Gump Strauss Hauter & Feld LLP and Attorney for the Gila River Indian Community	<b>Schneider, Fred</b> Arizona Water Company
<b>Burman, Brenda</b> Central Arizona Project	<b>Kmiec, John</b> Tucson Water	<b>Schonek, Kimberly</b> The Nature Conservancy
<b>Buschatzke, Tom</b> Arizona Department of Water Resources	<b>Lacey, Michael</b> Freeport-McMoRan	<b>Smith, Alexander</b> Bureau of Reclamation
<b>Campbell, Cynthia</b> City of Phoenix	<b>Leenhouts, James</b> USGS Arizona Water Science Center	<b>Take, John</b> Stantec
<b>Collings, William</b> Maricopa Consolidated DWID	<b>Matas, Randy</b> Arizona Department of Environmental Quality	<b>Tenny, Warren</b> AZ Municipal Water Users Association
<b>Dadgar, Maria</b> Inter Tribal Council of Arizona	<b>McKenna, Juliet</b> Montgomery & Associates	<b>Volpe, Christopher (Kip)</b> The Estes Co.
<b>Davis, Tom</b> Yuma County Water Users' Association	<b>Meyers, Leslie</b> Salt River Project	<b>Wegner, Dave</b> Woolpert Engineering, Inc., National Academy of Sciences, Water Science Technology Board
<b>Denby, Michael</b> Arizona Public Service	<b>Olsen, Joe</b> Metro Water	<b>Wilson, Sid</b> Retired (Central Arizona Project)
<b>Fleming, Ron</b> Global Water Resources, Inc.	<b>Orme, Paul</b> Attorney	<b>Wong, Brian</b> BKW Farms
<b>Forrest, Alan</b> AF Engineering	<b>Porter, Sarah</b> Kyl Center for Water Policy, Morrison Institute for Public Policy, ASU	<b>Zamora, Francisco</b> Sonoran Institute
<b>Groseta, Andy</b> Groseta Ranches		

## ORGANIZATION

The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center is Arizona’s federally authorized water institute pursuant to the Water Resources Research Act (WRRA), as administered by the US Geological Survey (USGS).





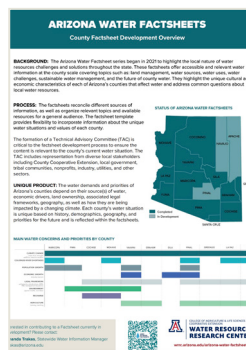
# PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

(Note: Links to webpages are provided when available.)

In 2024, the WRRC was once again called upon by various stakeholders and partners to be a trusted source of Arizona water resources information. Throughout the year, the WRRC's role in helping to facilitate water resources discourse in Arizona and beyond has been reaffirmed through many research and engagement efforts.

## Arizona Water Factsheets

**Arizona Water Factsheets** for all 15 counties were completed in 2024 and are available on the WRRC website. These county-level factsheets were designed to answer common questions about water resources and foster understanding of the local nature of Arizona water resource challenges and solutions. The factsheets for each county were developed through an iterative review process with local Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and additional external reviewers from municipal, nonprofit, Extension, county, state, and federal partners. The final product, an attractive 4-page (or expanded 8-page) information resource, includes text, maps, and figures and fills an information gap: accessible and comprehensive water information at the county scale. Topics covered include land management, water sources, water demands, water challenges, sustainable water management, and the future of county water. A **factsheet development overview document**, which explains the process used to develop the factsheets, is also available on the WRRC website. The factsheets have been well-received and are posted on different local government websites. The WRRC and its partners have used the factsheets for outreach and engagement with local communities. For example, in March 2024, the WRRC partnered with Yavapai County Cooperative Extension, The Nature Conservancy, and Arizona Public Service to host an in-person event where Director Sharon B. Megdal presented information from the Yavapai County Factsheet, along with presentations by other speakers. The engagement led to a new, funded project with The

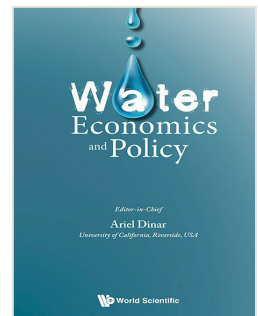


Nature Conservancy to develop a StoryMap and water history timeline for the Upper Verde Watershed.

## Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program (TAAP)

Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program (TAAP): The WRRC continues to contribute research and leadership as a partner in the federally authorized Transboundary Aquifer Assessment Program.

Director Sharon B. Megdal continues to serve as its lead University of Arizona PI. During calendar year 2024, consultants Dr. Eylon Shamir and Dr. Elia Tapia worked with Megdal and other project partners on additional analyses and collaborations. The Binational Study of the Transboundary Santa Cruz Aquifer is undergoing final review in English and Spanish. Discussions held over a two-day workshop in September 2024 in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico, laid the groundwork for additional binational efforts along the Arizona-Sonora border. Interest in transboundary aquifer assessment and management is high regionally and globally, and in 2024, team members participated in many panels and informational exchanges. Two publications connected to TAAP were released in 2024. **"Crafting Binational Groundwater Agreements: Preconditions for Progress Along the Mexico-U.S. Boundary,"** by Mumme et al. was published in *Water Economics and Policy* in early 2024. Due to the delays in publication of ***The Water Diplomacy Handbook***, the WRRC posted a pre-publication version of Director Megdal's case study, **"Factors that Contribute to Successful Diplomatic Outcomes: Case Study of the Colorado River Basin Cross-boundary Institution."** The seven factors listed in the case study were well received, including at the Stockholm World Water Week panel on Institutions for Water, Peace, and Cooperation. Legislation introduced in 2023 to extend and modify slightly TAAP's authorizing act did not make it through the 118<sup>th</sup> United States Congress. Discussions of re-introducing the legislation are ongoing.





## Middle East Water

Director Sharon B. Megdal's **Middle East water** activities in 2024 continued to center on serving as one of two University of Arizona board members for the Kasser Joint Institute for Global Food, Water, and Energy Security (KJI), a unique partnership of the U of A, Jewish National Fund-USA, and the Arava Valley in the South of Israel. KJI's agrivoltaics work includes working with the Makueni community in Kenya. Additional efforts focused on aquaponics, where the goal is to combine production of fish feed with growing the fish. In November 2024, the six-person binational board, which meets regularly via Zoom, held its first in-person meeting since 2022 over three days, with two of the three days hosted at the WRRC. Through lectures and other commentary, Megdal shared information and insights about Middle East water policy and management.

## Multi-University Collaboration on Groundwater-Dependent Agriculture

The **five-year USDA-funded project**, "Sustaining Groundwater and Irrigated Agriculture in the Southwestern United States under a Changing Climate," began its fourth year on September 1, 2024. Led by University of California, Davis, the small team at the University of Arizona focuses on Pinal AMA agriculture. In January 2024, the WRRC co-hosted the annual project-wide symposium, which, in addition to featuring outside experts and team members as speakers, included a field trip to Ak-Chin Farms. As a member of the project's Executive Committee, Extension team, and groundwater team, Director Sharon B. Megdal has been involved in overseeing and coordinating the Arizona portion of the project and providing regular input on the project's activities and progress. Graduate Research Associate Simone Williams, who was awarded a PhD in Arid Lands Resource Sciences in August 2024, focused on collecting and processing additional data for SWAT modeling calibration and validation (e.g., evapotranspiration, cropping and irrigation practices, point source discharge, and water quality). Soil Health Extension Specialist Debankur Sanyal is working on research related to soil health and cover cropping. The WRRC team is actively collaborating with project team members from California and New Mexico. In addition, in 2024, the data for an article by Sanyal et al., "**Evaluating Forage Cover Crop Mixes for the Desert Southwest**," was **published** via Ag Commons, as now required by USDA for their funded research projects.

## Water Research and Planning Innovations for Dryland Systems (Water RAPIDS)

The **Water RAPIDS Program** works at regional, state, watershed, and local levels to build capacity within communities for water resources and watershed planning. The Water RAPIDS program fosters holistic approaches that integrate water planning with land use planning.

*Assisting the Town of Superior in Understanding Environmental Flows for Queen Creek:* In 2024, the Water RAPIDS Program continued to provide coordination and facilitation services in support of the Town of Superior and the Queen Creek Working Group, including the Queen Creek Restoration Project and Green Stormwater Infrastructure Projects. Queen Creek Working Group members finalized a Project Partnership Agreement with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to secure \$2.25 million in funding to rehabilitate and install infrastructure that will restore base flow to reaches of Queen Creek through the Town. With WRRC support, the Town of Superior also secured approximately \$245,000 in Bureau of Reclamation funding for integrated watershed planning and \$140,000 to develop another Green Stormwater Infrastructure Project.

*Water History Timeline Upper Verde Watershed:* In 2024, the WRRC secured a contract with The Nature Conservancy to begin a new water history timeline project in the Upper Verde River Watershed. The project draws on the WRRC's previous experience creating shared water histories in the Upper Gila Watershed (2013) and the Cobre Valley Watershed in the Globe-Miami area (2016). The new project aims to develop a shared understanding of key events in the Upper Verde River Watershed and present the information via a StoryMap with engaging narratives, images, maps, and videos. WRRC Associate Director Jamie McEvoy and Yavapai County Extension Director Matt Halldorson are leading the project. Over the next six months, they will continue to work with graduate and undergraduate research assistants to organize stakeholder meetings, conduct interviews, collect archival materials, and engage stakeholders to collaboratively produce the water history timeline StoryMap.

*Community Partners:* The Water RAPIDS Program continues to provide support to assist community partners with watershed planning. Due in part to multiple questions from community partners, the Water RAPIDS program has initiated a report, in partnership with Resolution Copper Mining, to describe water use and copper mining in Arizona. This report will explain



regulations and policies affecting water quantity and quality, contextualize mining water use by describing mining demand and economic impacts using available data and studies, and describe the evolution of water use efficiency under advancing mineral extraction technologies. The Water RAPIDS Program has also been working with the French National Centre for Scientific Research, Cienega Watershed Partnership (CWP), Friends of Sonoita Creek, and the Lower San Pedro Collaborative to begin extending CWP's watershed indicator process to other watersheds in Southeastern Arizona. These indicators will help evaluate and improve the effectiveness of land management decisions for the WRRC's community partners. These durable partnerships and relationships have helped further the overall Water RAPIDS outreach mission, including the development of multiple workshops to support community needs. Water RAPIDS staff and volunteers provided support to develop planning efforts in the Sonoita Creek Watershed and to answer questions related to water management and Active Management Area formation in the Willcox Groundwater Basin.

## Expanding the WRRC Engagement

The WRRC continues efforts to include more voices in water resources programs and dialogues, including its annual conference. The April 2023 paper reporting on WRRC's initial research, "**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in Water Dialogues: A Review and Conceptualization**," was named the Paper of the Year in 2024 by the *Journal of Contemporary Water Research and Education*. The WRRC surveyed directors or designated staff from the 54 federally authorized water resources research institutes within the National Institutes for Water Resources (NIWR) on their water dialogues outreach efforts. A report has been drafted based on survey results. WRRC Associate Director Jamie McEvoy, Research and Outreach Program Officer Susanna Eden, and Director Sharon B. Megdal are evaluating the applicability of the findings for the WRRC programs.

This year, the WRRC also continued its Indigenous Water Dialogues efforts. In addition to co-sponsoring the **Native Voices in STEM** seminar series, the WRRC hosted a **Water Webinar** titled "Meaningful Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on Inland Waters in Australia" and co-hosted two presentations related to Tribal water rights settlements in Arizona. In August, Director Megdal attended **Stockholm World Water Week 2024**, which featured programming focused on elevating Indigenous voices from around the world. The WRRC maintains

ongoing collaboration and communication with Indigenous water professionals in Arizona and beyond.

## Water Resources Research Act Programs

The year 2024 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the WRRC and Water Resources Research Act that established the 54 institutes charged with undertaking multidisciplinary water research. To mark this occasion, the WRRC hosted a **Water Webinar** on November 12 with short presentations about past accomplishments and current programs as well as comments by colleagues, partners, and former WRRC student workers. The EAC luncheon in December 2024 was also part of this 60th Anniversary celebration. Importantly, 2024 also marked the 60th anniversary of the Universities Council on Water Resources (UCOWR), the National Institute for Water Resources (NIWR), and the American Water Resources Association (AWRA). The three organizations hosted a joint conference from September 30–October 2 in St. Louis, MO, to commemorate this milestone. Director Megdal **delivered remarks** on behalf of NIWR at the celebratory conference reception.

The WRRC is the federally authorized water resources research institute for Arizona under the Water Resources Research Act (WRRA). The WRRA base 104(b) funding supports a portion of the WRRC's information transfer activities and a competitive research grants program, which is open to research personnel at any of the three Arizona universities. A key criterion for these small grants is that the proposed project shows significant student training. In November, the WRRC hosted a **Water Webinar** featuring the research findings from the two projects funded in the 2023–2024 project year. For the 2024–2025 project year, one project was selected for funding: "Indian Water Rights Settlements in Arizona: An Analysis of Their History and Potential Future." Director Megdal was the PI on this project advising Aminta Menjivar, who was awarded her PhD in American Indian Studies in May 2025.

WRRA responsibilities extend to the highly competitive Section 104(g) National Competitive Grant Program. The WRRC solicits proposals from researchers at any of Arizona's three state universities for submission to the US Geological Survey. In 2024, the WRRC submitted two 104(g) proposals, but neither was funded. The webpages for the 104(b) and 104(g) grants have been updated to show a current list of previously funded projects. Annually, the WRRC reaches out to faculty and students at the three state universities to solicit applications for both grant programs.



# OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

The WRRC engages with partners, stakeholders, and the public throughout Arizona and beyond through multiple media platforms. The communications team meets weekly to coordinate work on outreach activities and products. WRRC personnel routinely respond to requests for information and media interviews. Additionally, a wide range of external news and information outlets featured WRRC personnel and programs in 2024.



**IMPLEMENTING  
WATER  
SOLUTIONS  
THROUGH  
PARTNERSHIPS**

Beyond the many local and regional outreach efforts in which the WRRC routinely engages, 2024 featured several international programs. In March, Director Sharon B. Megdal organized a Water Webinar on World Water Day, featuring speakers from Football for Peace's Rehydrate the Earth campaign and the Indigenous Women's Leadership Network. In May, Megdal spoke at six sessions at the 10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia, where she highlighted the importance of collaboration and inclusive engagement, as noted in a **Reflections** essay on the Forum.

## Weekly Wave e-News Digest

In 2024, 36 editions of the *Weekly Wave* and 7 editions of the bi-weekly *Summer Wave* were published. Each edition included WRRC and water community news, events, publications, and announcements. In addition, the *Weekly Wave* publishes Director Megdal's **Reflections** commentary series, which are also posted on the WRRC's website; she authored eight *Reflections* essays in 2024. In October, the WRRC transitioned to the university's new content delivery platform, Trellis, and the *Weekly Wave* got a makeover. This updated delivery system offers a sleeker, more condensed layout for easier reading. As of December, the *Weekly Wave* distribution list included over 3,800 subscribers. Its reach is enhanced through posting on the WRRC's website and further distribution by recipients.

## Annual Conference

The WRRC's 2024 **annual conference**, *Implementing Water Solutions Through Partnerships*, was held March 12–13, 2024, at the University of Arizona Student Union, with free livestreaming. Its theme focused on the value of partnerships and featured University scientists

and students, government officials, journalists, industry representatives, and non-governmental organizations. The conference was dedicated to the late Dr. Thomas Meixner, who was a hydrologist, professor, and head of the U of A Department of Hydrology and Atmospheric Sciences. Keynote speakers, including Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs and Stephen Roe Lewis, Governor of the Gila River Indian Community, noted the value of working together on securing Arizona's water future. To develop the conference agenda, the WRRC issued a Call for Solutions, inviting proposals for presentations and posters, from which the staff worked with a Conference Advisory Committee to develop an engaging one-and-a-half-day program. The conference attracted 246 in-person attendees and over 400 virtual attendees on the Zoom livestream. Feedback received during and after the conference confirmed that it was a well-organized program featuring diverse perspectives and solutions. The WRRC 2024 conference agenda and session recordings can be found on the **conference website**, including bios for the 46 speakers and moderators, information about the WRRC's many conference sponsors, and archived materials from past WRRC conferences.

Planning for the **2025 Annual Conference**, *Shared Borders, Shared Waters: Working Together in Times of Scarcity*, was well underway in 2024. The Conference Advisory Committee was formed in August 2024 and provided input on the conference agenda through monthly Zoom meetings and emails. This conference focused on the challenges and successes of collaborations across borders, with a primary focus on Arizona and the Colorado River Basin. Discussions covered collaboration on waters shared by the United States and Mexico, as well as cooperation across borders shared with sovereign Tribal Nations, interstate borders,

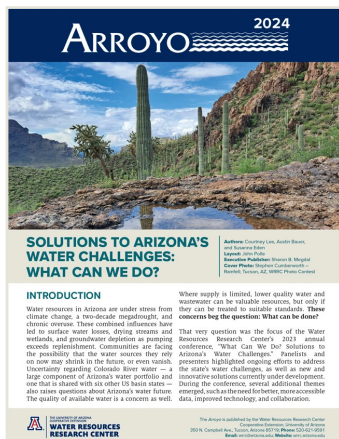


and borders within Arizona. The conference was held in Tucson at the University of Arizona Student Union on May 20–21, 2025. On the morning of May 20, Professor Aaron Wolf of Oregon State University conducted a pre-conference workshop, titled “Better Listening to Help Transform Water Conflicts.” Wolf also gave the opening keynote address at the conference.

## Arroyo

In 2024, the **Arroyo**, the WRRC’s annual publication, focused on the theme of the previous year’s conference: *What Can We Do? Solutions to Arizona’s Water Challenges*. More than a synopsis of the knowledge and perspectives shared during the conference, the **2024 Arroyo** explores the conference themes, augmenting conference presentation content with broader research. Austin C. Bauer and Courtney M. Lee, two AmeriCorps members serving with the WRRC for the 2023–2024 academic year, developed the first draft of the *Arroyo*, contributing innovative design ideas, such as QR codes and integrated links to additional resources, such as recorded conference presentations. After internal review, the draft received external reviews from conference advisors and speakers (listed in the acknowledgements) and was revised in accordance with their comments. In June 2024, the completed *Arroyo* was sent to email and print subscribers, including libraries, schools, firms, agencies, and nonprofits, and additional copies have been distributed through various organizations and events. Funding from the Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF) and the 2024 conference sponsorships at the *Arroyo* level by Southern Arizona Water Users Association, Stantec, City of Tucson/Tucson Water, and HDR supported the 2025 *Arroyo*.

Work on the 2025 *Arroyo* began in mid-2024. Bauer and Lee attended the WRRC 2024 Annual Conference: *Implementing Water Solutions Through Partnerships*, which provided the foundation for this *Arroyo*. During their remaining time at the WRRC, they extracted conference themes and developed an *Arroyo* outline organized around those themes. Bauer, acting as an independent contractor, developed a draft based on the outline. The 2024 conference sponsorships at the *Arroyo* level by Southern Arizona Water Users Association, Stantec, City of Tucson/Tucson Water, and HDR support the 2025 *Arroyo*.



## WRRC Water Webinars

In 2024, the WRRC continued to deliver the **Water Webinar** (formerly Brown Bag Seminar) series, attracting broad audiences to presentations on a range of water topics. The WRRC held 11 webinars in 2024, featuring state, national, and international experts. On average, 102 people attended these Water Webinars, with an average of 161 registrants. Notably, a Water Webinar in July on “**Post-2026 Colorado River Operational Guidelines: An Overview of the Lower Basin’s Alternative**” was particularly highly-attended. Subject to speaker permission, the WRRC website posts webinar recordings and copies of the slide presentations for each Water Webinar.

## Public Events, Presentations, and Outreach

In addition to Water Webinars, the WRRC hosted or co-hosted **a variety of special events**, including the annual Chocolate Fest and a book signing by author and photographer David Showalter. Among the WRRC’s 14 co-sponsored events were the January 2024 Arizona Association of Women in Water & Agriculture Annual Meeting and the **Native Voices in STEM (NVIS)** seminar series, a collaboration with the U of A’s **Indigenous Resilience Center**. NVIS seminars feature Native scientists, engineers, activists, community members, and leaders sharing their personal and professional journeys.

## WRRC Website and Communications

The WRRC maintains **a robust website** featuring news, events, and programs as well as many publications and other resources, such as recorded Water Webinars. In 2024, the WRRC continued to employ social media, specifically **Facebook**, X – formerly Twitter (**@AZWRRC**), **LinkedIn**, and Instagram (**@uofawrrc**), to share program updates and events and highlight publications. In 2024, X was the WRRC’s primary social media platform.

Each year, the WRRC hosts the **WRRC Photo Contest**. The submitted photographs are used in multiple ways, including in the annual report, in the *Arroyo* and other publications, and on the WRRC website. In 2024, the WRRC returned to a broader theme: Water in Arizona. Winning photographs were selected by a team of judges, consisting primarily of WRRC staff. All submitted photographs are maintained in a gallery on the WRRC website.



# AFFILIATED PROGRAMS

## Arizona Project WET

As an extension program physically housed at the Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), **Arizona Project WET (APW)** aims to bring attention to water-use practices that influence availability, reliability, access, and sustainability. The program actively engages teachers, students, and community members to promote water stewardship while integrating science,



In class groundwater presentations, Sunnyside water festival, professional development for teachers. Image: Alexia Smith

technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) education with practical relevance. APW's mission is "to meet the needs of our community by employing relevant, research-based educational strategies and techniques that empower individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective water stewardship." Offering both school-site and place-

based modules, APW prioritizes experiential learning outcomes in its environmental education programming. In 2024, the program made significant strides by:

- enhancing water-related content knowledge for over 850 educators through professional development workshops and volunteer training sessions;
- delivering real-world water education to more than 30,400 youth through classroom instruction, festivals, field programs, and educator workshops;
- facilitating collaboration with over 115 municipalities, water providers, and partners who generously supported APW initiatives.

## Water, Environment, and Energy Solutions Initiative (WEES)

The WRRC received significant funding in 2024 from the Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF). The **WEES initiative** invests TRIF dollars in cutting-edge research, cross-campus collaborations, and innovative partnerships that promote fresh ideas, technologies, and effective resource management practices. Since 2021, control of TRIF funding has been under the Arizona Legislature, which initiated a new approach to distributing TRIF monies. The WRRC is grateful for continued TRIF funding, although for a shorter duration, through the University of Arizona Senior Vice President for Research and Innovation.

# PERSONNEL NEWS

In 2024, the WRRC had several staffing changes. The team welcomed two new staff members: Jamie McEvoy as the new Associate Director and Garland Speight as the Project Manager for the Water RAPIDS program. Ashley Hullinger, who was the previous Program Director for Water RAPIDS, continues to be engaged with the WRRC

as a volunteer Designated Campus Colleague. The WRRC also welcomed four new students: Noah Rios, a Coverdell fellow pursuing an MPH in Environmental and Occupational Health, who worked on research and community outreach efforts in the Town of Superior; Aminta Menjivar, a PhD Candidate in American Indian



Studies with a minor in Law, who assisted with a semester-long research project on the history and potential future of Tribal water settlements in Arizona; Ian Cann, an undergraduate student pursuing an Honors BS in Geography with an emphasis in GIS and a minor in climate change studies, who, as a research assistant, helped with the development of a StoryMap for the Upper Verde Watershed water history project; and Luna Falk, an incoming student in the Water, Society, and Policy program at U of A, who joined the WRRRC as a Graduate Research Assistant on the Upper Verde Watershed project in November 2024. Also in November, the WRRRC welcomed Julia Denton, a new AmeriCorps member, who brings more than 20 years of editing and writing experience. Last but not least, Alice Templeton, who serves as Client Relations Specialist at Stantec, joined the WRRRC's conference planning team as a Designated Campus Colleague to help plan the 2025 annual conference.

The WRRRC continued to receive assistance from Business Manager Jennifer Rascon, Accountant Nic Propp, and Finance & Administration Manager Kevin Teres through the shared business office that provides service to the WRRRC, Department of Environmental Science (ENVS), and School of Plant Sciences. The University has moved to a centralized model for Human Resources services.

In March 2024, Postdoctoral Researcher Valerisa (Val) Gaddy completed her two-year postdoctoral position at the WRRRC and started a new position as the Community Conservation Director with the Watershed Management Group in Tucson. In July, Statewide Water Information Manager Amanda Trakas, who was working remotely from Indiana, accepted a new position with the Alliance of Indiana Rural Water. At the end of December 2024, Water RAPIDS Project Manager Garland Speight left the WRRRC to pursue opportunities as an independent consultant. Speight remains affiliated with Water RAPIDS as a Designated Campus Colleague. The process for hiring a new Water RAPIDS lead began in late 2024 and Anne Gondor was hired in 2025 as an Associate in Extension for the Water RAPIDS program. In June, the WRRRC bid farewell to AmeriCorps members Courtney Lee and Austin Bauer, although Bauer continued to work on the 2025 *Arroyo* as an independent contractor. Graduate Research Associate Simone Williams completed her PhD, but remained affiliated with the WRRRC as she worked on journal articles based on her dissertation research. Another student, Taylor Simmons, completed her master's degree in May 2024, after which she accepted a position at Tucson Water.

To learn about the current staff and students, please visit the **WRRRC Personnel Directory**. Selected staff contact information is as follows:

- For anything and everything: Sharon Megdal, [smegdal@arizona.edu](mailto:smegdal@arizona.edu)
- Conference, 104 Program: Jamie McEvoy, [jmcevoy@arizona.edu](mailto:jmcevoy@arizona.edu)
- Communications (*Weekly Wave* and Water Webinars): Jessie Hampton, [jessiehampton@arizona.edu](mailto:jessiehampton@arizona.edu)
- Water RAPIDS: Anne Gondor, [gondora@arizona.edu](mailto:gondora@arizona.edu)
- Graphics, Website, Photo Contest, *Weekly Wave*: John Polle, [jpolle@arizona.edu](mailto:jpolle@arizona.edu)
- Admin Support, *Weekly Wave*: Rose Veneklasen, [trvene@arizona.edu](mailto:trvene@arizona.edu)
- *Arroyo*: Susanna Eden, [seden@arizona.edu](mailto:seden@arizona.edu)

## STAFF (2024)



**Sharon B. Megdal**  
Director



**Jamie McEvoy**  
Associate Director



**Susanna Eden**  
Research Program Officer



**Jessie Hampton**  
Communications Coordinator



**Valerisa Joe-Gaddy**  
Postdoctoral Researcher



**John Polle**  
Media Specialist



**Garland Speight**  
Project Manager,  
Water RAPIDS Program



**Amanda Trakas**  
Statewide Water  
Information Manager



**Rose Veneklasen**  
Administrative Associate



## Business Office Personnel



**Nic Propp**  
Accountant



**Jennifer Rascon**  
Business Manager



**Kevin Teres**  
Manager, Finance  
and Administration

## Students

**Ian Cann**  
Undergraduate Research  
and Outreach Assistant

**Luna Falk**  
Graduate Outreach  
Assistant

**Aminta Menjivar**  
Graduate Research  
Associate

**Noah Rios**  
Graduate Research  
Assistant/  
Coverdell Fellow

**Taylor Simmons**  
Graduate Outreach  
Assistant

**Simone Williams**  
Graduate Research  
Associate

## AmeriCorps

**Austin Bauer**  
Communications and  
Outreach Assistant

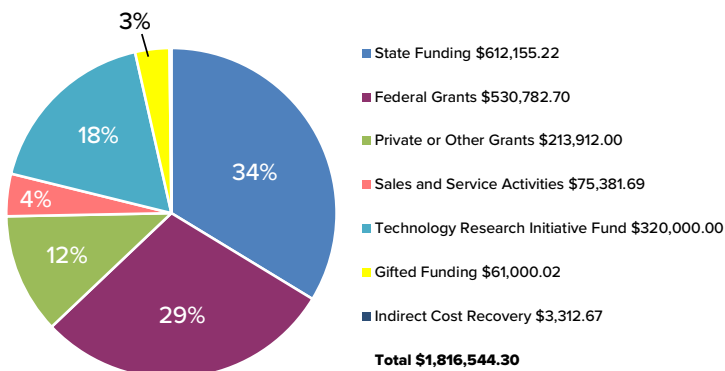
**Julia Denton**  
Communications and  
Outreach Assistant

**Courtney Lee**  
Communications and  
Outreach Assistant

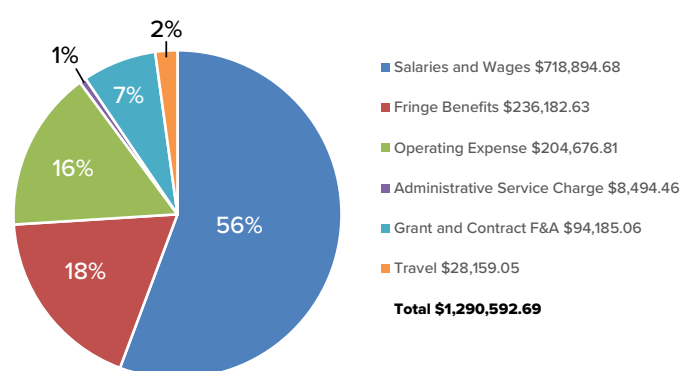
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY CY 2024

To create the CY 2024 Financial Report, the WRRC worked with Business Office personnel and University Analytics and Institutional Research to update the process for building the Financial Report. While there have been some shifts within WRRC funding, programs, and expenses, the overall budget for the Center has remained stable. In addition to state funding, financial support continues to come from grants, sales and service activities, and gifts. Of the WRRC's total 2024 revenue, 52 percent came from state funds, 29 percent came from federal grants, and 12 percent came from private grants. The voter-approved Technology and Research Initiative Fund (TRIF), now under control of the Arizona Legislature, provided support in 2024. Support for staff and appointed personnel accounted for 74 percent of total expenses and WRRC operations accounted for 16 percent of total expenses.

**Operating Support & Revenue**



**Operating & Program Expense**





# WEEKLY WAVE

The *Weekly Wave* e-news digest is distributed on Fridays and contains WRRRC news, events, and much more.

[wrrc.arizona.edu/subscribe](http://wrrc.arizona.edu/subscribe)

## Photos

Front cover: Shiloe Fontes – Desert Water, Tucson 2021

Table of contents: Andrew Dixon – San Pedro Research, Sierra Vista 2024

1. Dave Wilson – Burro Creek, White Mountains, 2024

3. Wendy Islas – A Night to Remember, Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, 2024

6. Michael Nelson – Goldwater Lake Dam, Goldwater Lake, Prescott 2023

8. Emily Ayers – Thousands of Tendrils, Prescott, 2024

8. Emily Ayers – Soggy Dunes, Black Canyon, 2023

Back Cover: Nicole Bies Hernandez – River Trail, Lees Ferry, 2024

All photos were submissions to the **2024 WRRRC Photo Contest**.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

**WATER RESOURCES  
RESEARCH CENTER**

[wrrc.arizona.edu](http://wrrc.arizona.edu)

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