From our Executive Director

Dear Friends of Sky Island Alliance,

We all know the Sky Islands are unparalleled in its biodiversity. Sky Island Alliance is unique in the ability to bring us all together to meet the challenges we face protecting and restoring our landscape’s wild lands, wildlife, and waters.

Your support means replacing invasive plants with native pollinators so that monarch butterflies don’t disappear from the world. It means restoring springs so that bats, frogs, and mountain lions will have water during drought. It means creating safe passages across roads for tortoises, bears and coatis. It means reaching people like you who care, and empowering them to protect – and enjoy – the Sky Islands.

We depend upon skilled volunteers for wildlife tracking, ecosystem restoration, springs assessments and monitoring. We depend on our partner’s expertise and collaboration. We depend on our funders, members and donors who generously lend their financial support. This collective vision of people-powered conservation, of which you are the backbone, makes our future even better.

Will you bring a friend to our next event to expand our efforts? Or make a generous donation before year-end, so that the Sky Islands will continue to amaze, provide and flourish into the future? It’s because of you, and for you, and with you that this Alliance thrives. Thank you.

Jan Holder
Executive Director

Staff

Jan Holder
Executive Director

Keri Dixon
Development Director

Sergio Avila-Villegas
Conservation Director

Carianne Campbell
Conservation Director

Louise Misztal
Conservation Director

Maggie Trinkle
Operations Manager

Jessica Moreno
Conservation Manager

Tom Van Devender
Conservation Manager

Christopher Morris
Conservation Coordinator
From our Board President

Dear Friends,

Within these pages is just a thumbnail sketch of the outcomes achieved by a very dedicated staff, generous donors, and a group of tireless and enthusiastic volunteers. We are an alliance with a shared vision. We see the Sky Islands as a place where open space, clean water, and nature thrive, where people are deeply connected to the region and its innate ability to enrich our lives.

This alliance is one with all the players in this community: private and public landowners, agencies and the people inhabiting this unique place. Sky Island Alliance has proven itself a leader in conservation policy development and implementation, a role well recognized by planners of regional projects. The work we do, from climate change adaptation to restoration to water issues, results in a healthier ecosystem for us all.

With the impressive 2014 outcomes presented in this report, it is clear our ambitious goals for the future are within reach. I encourage you to review this Annual Report, share it with others, and continue to support Sky Island Alliance.

Howard Frederick
President of the Board, 2015

“What makes the work of Sky Island Alliance so important is the connections that we make. We not only help people learn more about this amazing region, but also help them feel truly invested in these places, as they restore, connect, protect, and explore the world around them.”

– Bryon Litchenhan

2014
Board of Directors
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Larry Fisher, Vice President
Howard Frederick, Treasurer
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Richard Krueger
Sadie Hadley
Exciting Successes of 2014

Wildlife on the Move

Citizen scientists shared wildlife sightings near roads with our Sky Island Nature Watch project, surveyed wildlife tracks and checked cameras. With this data to back up our advocacy, we helped build several wildlife crossings across State Routes 86 and 77. Deer, tortoises and mountain lions have already begun using them – some without waiting for construction to finish!

Jaguar Conservation

Volunteers Tim Cook and Brit Oleson documented jaguar tracks in the Santa Rita Mountains in January. This contributed to the knowledge of jaguar movement and presence in the Sky Islands, and supplemented our detailed comments and habitat analysis for the draft Jaguar Critical Habitat Plan. Critical Habitat was designated two months later.

Sister Parks

“Sister Parks” is a new partnership among three Arizona national parks and monuments, and eight national parks and reserves in Sonora, Mexico. We share techniques and strategies, cross-train, and exchange data and information. This collaboration across political boundaries has exciting potential for Sky Island conservation.

Restoration

We are improving restoration techniques and sharing the importance of biodiversity through the Sky Island Restoration Cooperative (SIRC). This collaboration of government agencies, private landowners, scientists, and restoration practitioners is helping landscape restoration start at a local scale.
A Place Worth Protecting

The Madrean Sky Islands contain more than 7,000 species of plants and animals, including over half of the birds in North America. The San Pedro River alone contains more native vertebrate species than Yellowstone National Park. Plants, animals and habitats of the Great Plains grasslands and Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts connect right here with Colorado Plateau and temperate north and the Sierra Madre Occidental and neo-tropical south. This is where jaguar and black bear meet, and chiltepin pepper and Arizona canyon grape grow side-by-side.

Oh, the places you’ll go: where we worked in 2014

In 2014 we took volunteers and staff north and south, high and low, in hot weather and wet, to protect and restore this valuable treasure we call the Sky Islands. These are all the places where we put boots on the ground this year:

"Many hands make light work… I am consistently blown away by the impact we make with the help of our many partners and incredibly capable conservation volunteers. Together, we move tons of rocks, plant thousands of native plants every year, and protect precious wildlife waters.”

– Carianne Campbell, Conservation Director
We launched our seasonal monitoring program, Adopt-a-Spring, in which citizen scientist volunteers help us collect data on water quality and quantity (as well as data on wildlife and plants) at critically important springs in the Sky Islands.

Volunteers

A total of 397 volunteers contributed 15,170 hours in 2014. This is the equivalent of nine full-time staff, or $349,972* in volunteer match – an incredible effort that directly contributed to our success. Thank you!

*The national estimated value of volunteer time in 2014 is $23.07/hr (Latest figure from 2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics data, indexed by Independent Sector in March 2015).

300+ hours: Ana Lilia Reina Guerrero | Jefferson Carter | 200+ hours: Guillermo Molina Padilla | John Palting | Steve Minter | Tim Cook
100+ hours: Chip Hedgcock Dale Turner | David Bygott | Diego Barrales | Eric Wallace | Francisco Islaas Ochoa-Gutiérrez | Gary Alpert | George Farmer
Glenn Furnier | Gooch Goodwin | Jeanette Hanby | Katy Brown | Kimberly Hansen | Larry Jones | Mario Ciret | Omar Gutierrez | Patrick McCormack
Robert “Chaca” Torres | Rosy Jiménez-Maldonado | Steve Buckley | Sue Carnahan

20+hours: Abi King | Aida Castillo-Flores | Al Ksiner | Alina Levine | Alan Yañanah | Alex Hreha | Alex Smith | Alfredo Andrade Sosa | Alishia Montoya | Allison Boyd | Amanda Smith | Amber Nappier
Andrea López | Ángel Árias-Barreto | Annmarie Schaecher | Ashlee Simpson | Axhel Munoz | Barbara Coon | Barbara Miller | Beth Morgan | Billie Hughes | Birdie Stabel | Brian DeArmon
Brit Oleson | Bruce Gungle | Bryon Lichtenhan | Carl Tomoff | Carlos Alfredo Cohen-Valencia | Carol Falk | Carol Hilton-Bonchak | Carolanne Treadaway | César Hinojo-Hinojo | Charles Sanchez
Charlotte Cook | Chris Cokinos | Chris Pfeffer | Christian Martin Garcia | Christine St. Onge | Claudia Johnson | Cliff Hirsh | Cody Mosley | Curtis Smith | Cynthia Hernandez | Cynthia Sosa
Dan Gusset | Dave Eerkes | Dave Prival | Dawn Sellers | Debbie Friesen | Denise Avila | Dennis LeBlond | Don Jones | Doug Danforth | Dulce Espinoza | Ed LaGrande | Edna Molina-Freaner
Edward Haley | Elda Maria Contreras Felix | Elena Martin | Elizabeth Cosgrove | Enrique Vescas | Eric Bodnicky | Eric Murphy | Eric Sophia | Eric Yeudial Aros-León | Eric Emerson | Erika LaPante
Exuel Hernandez Nogales | Felicia Lowery | Félix Corrales-Cabreros | Fernando Javier-Ordaz Ponce | Frances Eremaker | Frances Trotta | Francisco Abarca | Francis Molina-Freaner | Gail Dawkins
Gayle Jandrey | George Ferguson | Gilberto Montañó | Gus Glass | Hayley Says | Héctor Manuel Izarraras-León | Humberto Amiola | Hunter McCall | Ibeth Marisol Garcia-Padilla | Ignacio Lagarda-Lagardilla
Isabel Amorous | Jack Lasseter | Jacques Mauger | JD Trebec | Jean Havix | Jeff Boyd | Jennifer Oliver | Jeri Sober | Jerrí DeMoss | Jesús Áán Queijada-Bojórquez | Jesús Emilio Ruelas-Carranza
Kathleen Pasierb | Kathy Cooper | Kate Ballard-Fleming | Kelly Fleming | Kelly Robertson | Kelsey Bearden | Ken Lamberth | Kenneth Ludwig | Kenneth Mead | Kristina Stramel | Lara Upton | Laura Arvizo | Laura Lichtenwalner | Laurie Bryant | Lee Burton | Lee Rogers | Lee Westfall | Leslie Schupp | Leslie Selgren | Linda Hirsh | Linda Jakse | Linda McNulty | Livia Crowley | Lorrie Firth | Lynn Davidson | Mabel Alsina | Maclom McGregor | Margarethe Brummermann | Marina Acuña | Marisa Rice | Marianne Schnarr | Martin Turner | Martin Cuen | Mary Ann Marazzi-Hassan | Mary Gloudemans
Matt Minjares | Maya Kapoor | Maya F. Munugia-Vargas | Meg Quinn | Melissa Donovan | Merrit Collot | Michael Bissonzt | Michael Bosela | Michael Hughes | Michael McNulty | Michael Stabile | Michele Giraud | Mike Headrick | Mike Ingram | Mike Manning | Mike Neal | Molly McCormick | Nicholas Czaplewski | Nikki Burns | Noah Horton | Nora Lilia Vilaneuva-Gutiérrez | Norberto "Tito" León del Castillo | Norm Watson
Sandie Rego-Ross | Sandra Ochoa | Sharon Vera | Sidney Coon | Sky Jacobs | Steve Hale | Susan Mast | Susan Qashu | Theo Palting | Tina Wessanen-Neil | Tom Jones | Tom Skinner | Treven Hooker
Vicki Wolfe | Victor Quirorga-Acuña | Walter Ferg | Wayne Van Devender | Wendy Russell | Will Jaremko-Wright | William Merriman | Wynne Brown

Guillermo Molina Padilla, 2014 Volunteer of the Year

The Volunteer of the Year Award is given to a Sky Island Alliance volunteer in recognition of his or her generous contribution of time, effort and dedication to scientific inquiry, restoration and protection of the Sky Island region.

“For me it’s an honor to be awarded with SIA’s 2014 Volunteer of the Year award given the enormous significance that it represents. Not only is it a recognition of my personal efforts but I also consider it an extension of the efforts put forth by many of my students and my fellow teachers at the Instituto Tecnológico Superior de Cananea (ITSC) who were right by my side during many of the activities with Sky Island Alliance. At the same time, this award speaks to our commitment to environmental conservation and restoration.” – Guillermo Molina Padilla, 2014 Volunteer of the Year
2014 Audited Financial Statements

We are committed to transparency and want you to know how we use your generous donations. We use every dollar Sky Island Alliance receives with careful attention to effectiveness and efficiency and hold ourselves accountable to our donors, partners, and you. Sky Island Alliance is a five-star rated Great Non-Profit.

INCOME
- Membership & Individual Gifts (32%) 330,530
- Foundation Grants (50%) 510,933
- Government & Foundation Contracts (15%) 155,793
- Other (sales, events, etc.) (2%) 25,240
Total $1,022,496

EXPENSES
- Conservation Programs (87%) 833,883
- ADAPT to climate change (20%) 190,085
- RESTORE watersheds & biodiversity (17%) 161,138
- CONNECT wildlife (10%) 96,989
- EXPLORE & discover new species (9%) 90,787
- PROTECT Ecosystems (5%) 49,928
- Fiscal Sponsorship (conservation programs) (25%) 244,957
- Admin (3%) 32,362
- Fundraising (10%) 97,595
Total $963,840

Gifts Were Made in Memory of: Bob Van Deven | Matt Caron | Nancy “Z” Zierenberg

In-Kind Supporters: Axle Canyon Preserve | Bob Beatson | Brooklyn Pizza | Christopher Cokinos | ConserVentures & Exploring Overland Cory Lee Jones | Cyndi Tuell | Dagmar Cushing | Diana Hadley | Dr. James “Big Jim” Griffith | Dr. Ron Pulliam | Howard “Chip” Hedgcock | Jack Dykinga Janet Tyburec Consulting | John & Kathy DeKeizer | Julie St. John | Ken & Karen Lamberton | Lawrence Dunham Vineyards | Mike Quigley | Moia Group, LLC Nancy Neel | Pima County Regional Flood Control District | Pinau Merlin | Renee’s Organic Oven | Richard Shelton | Roseann & Johnathan Hanson | Stream Dynamics The Coronado National Forest | The Nature Conservancy Aravaipa Preserve | Tim Cook | Trudy Christopher | Zuzi Dance Theater
Thank you for helping us grow

Our members and supporters provide us with strong roots to nourish our programs, withstand challenges and branch out toward even more ambitious goals. We couldn’t do this without you! Thank you.

Sky Island GEM (Giving Every Month) Members (in bold) are incredibly important to the work we do. Your automatic online monthly gift keeps your membership current and allows us to make the most of your donation. Learn more and sign up at www.skyislandalliance.org.

Biodiversity Discovery

Our Madrean Archipelago Biological Assessment (MABA) expeditions lead scientists, photographers, and students, into the wild, to explore and discover new species. This year we led close to 60 people to both Sierra Los Ajos near Cananea, Sonora, and Sierra Huérfana near Hermosillo, Sonora. A total of 15,180 species observations were added to our database at madrean.org. Among them were species new to science, including a new bog orchid, a Stevia plant, a dragonfly, a sand cockroach and an ant.

A Leap in the Right Direction for Frogs and Springs

“Springs are among the most biologically and culturally important features on a landscape and, despite the fact that they are so threatened, they have been protected inadequately and have been only lightly studied.” – Guillermo Molina Padilla, 2014 Volunteer of the Year

Restoration includes the creation of new habitat to bring biodiversity back from the brink. We hosted a collaborative Wetlands Creation and Restoration Workshop in the Chiricahua Mountains, where we created new aquatic habitat at Ash Spring. Within just a few months, sixteen species of bats were drinking from the water source, and tadpoles of the Threatened Chiricahua leopard frog (Lithobates chiricahuensis) were swimming in the water. This project created, restored and enhanced habitat at ten springs to benefit bats, frogs, pollinators and wide-ranging carnivores. We built “frog ramps” to allow small animals access to water without drowning. We are sharing our data and working with state and federal stakeholders to ensure that Chiricahua leopard frogs do not become extinct on our watch, and that our springs remain vibrant and healthy.
Protecting Wilderness
When it comes to protecting wild and rugged places as Wilderness, we start with our boots on the ground. We surveyed and mapped potential new Wilderness areas and hit the streets to gather support for permanently protecting our Land of Legends: the Dragoons, Whetstones and northern Chiricahuas.

A Meeting of Minds
We are serving a leadership role with the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative, an international partnership that addresses landscape conservation in Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico. We co-organized the Desert LCC’s first conference to address climate change and other large scale ecosystem threats, discuss potential bi-national pilot projects, and explore possible solutions to the challenges of collaborative, trans-boundary conservation.

Raising Hands to Save Wild Lands
Working with landowners is one of the joys of our mission – to connect with people and share a land ethic and love for this landscape and its diversity of life. Our Madrean Archipelago Biological Assessment (MABA) expedition to Sonora, Mexico’s Sierra Huérfana was one of the largest we’ve held, with nearly 60 scientists, students, and volunteers participating from all over the world. We found a new ant species discovered rare and endangered cycad plants called *Dioon sonorense*, which once dominated the dinosaur forests of the Jurassic period. Our excitement was contagious. Many local community members joined us and discussed conservation on a working landscape. Shortly thereafter, the community – largely private landowners and ranchers – voted unanimously to designate 32,000 acres of their own private lands in the Sierra Huérfana as a new natural protected area. The designation will create a protected place where people live and work in harmony with the unique landscape and the wildlife it supports.
For the Benefit of a Mountain

Our participation in the Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Advisory Committee led to improved fire management and predator management agreements in the Catalina Mountains. These agreements saved the lives of more than 20 mountain lions per year, safeguarded female mountain lions with young, and promoted a natural predator-prey interaction between bighorn and mountain lions. By the end of 2014, five newborn lambs were born, and the herd was holding its own. We hope this collaborative and ecosystem-based model for species reintroduction soon becomes standard practice.

Sky Island Alliance Receives Prestigious Award

The Walden Woods Project, founded by music legend Don Henley, presented Sky Island Alliance with the prestigious 2014 Environmental Challenge Award for creating solutions to specific environmental challenges at a regional level. Our accomplishments were presented in Boston, Massachusetts in an award ceremony that included Robert Redford receiving the 2014 Global Environmental Leadership Award. The event concluded with a live concert performance by The Eagles. This award is a testament to the hard work and success of Sky Island Alliance, and indicates that we are becoming known outside our region for our binational focus, successful science-based conservation, and volunteer engagement.

“Waiting behind the blue curtain backstage with Robert Redford was a surreal experience. Redford paused to give a nod in our direction during his speech. As Don Henley praised Sky Island Alliance and the importance of our work and our jaguar photos flashed overhead, we stepped into view of 3,600 people to shake his hand. It was emotionally overwhelming, and gratifying, to have Sky Island Alliance’s work recognized by The Walden Woods Project this way.” – Jessica Moreno, Conservation Manager

“I have only lived in Tucson a couple of years and have found a family of extremely dedicated professionals that I embrace not only with time, but also emotional gratitude for the necessary work they accomplish. Thank you Sky Island Alliance for what you do and allowing me to contribute to protecting the quality of life that Southeast Arizona and Northern Sonora offer.” – Jim Chumbly
Our mission is to protect and restore the biodiversity and natural heritage of the Sky Islands. We use science, education, and advocacy to connect the binational landscapes, people, and wildlife of the Sky Islands for the benefit of all.

We envision the Sky Islands as a place where open space, clean water, and nature thrive, and where people are deeply connected to the region and its innate ability to enrich our lives.

Do you love what we do?
Become a Member.
Leave a Legacy.
Invite a Friend.
Volunteer.
Donate.

“Sky Island Alliance is amazing! I am grateful for all the work that Sky Island Alliance does in our region to protect and preserve the sky islands – and especially grateful for all the work they’ve done and continue to do in the little corner of the Patagonia Mountains that I call home!” – Wendy Russell

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