



**SKY
ISLAND
ALLIANCE**

Protecting our Mountain Islands
and Desert Seas

Sky Island Alliance

2013 Annual Report



Dear Friend of the Sky Islands,

As a long-term supporter and member of the board of directors for over 15 years, I am very proud of what our organization has accomplished since its inception. One of Sky Island Alliance's greatest successes is to increase public understanding and appreciation of our region — encouraging a sense of place to support a broader vision for conservation. Worksite by worksite, mile by mile of trail and stream, we are safeguarding a future for black bears and jaguars, trogons and hummingbirds, tortoises, butterflies, and so much more.

In 2013, Sky Island Alliance added the ADAPT program to address impacts of rapid climate change. We are focusing on water — our life-giving springs — to increase the resilience of healthy ecosystems and conserve the rich diversity of species we cherish.

Thank you for being an important part of Sky Island Alliance this year. The support, participation, and generosity of our community are what make Sky Island Alliance effective. Working together, we are making a real, tangible difference for wildlife and wild places in the Sky Islands. I hope we can count on your support for many years to come.

Steve Marlatt
President, Board of Directors
2014



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A Pledge for the Future

In a very meaningful way, you can contribute to the protection and restoration of wildlife and wild places of the Sky Islands for future generations. A legacy gift to Sky Island Alliance offers an opportunity to fulfill the promise of our mission, enacting your values and achieving your vision for conservation.

Supporters like you generously and passionately give time, talent and assets to support our mission. From cash donations to charitable bequests, each donation gets us closer to our conservation goals and to securing long-term financial stability.

If you want to protect the wild places, native animals and plants you treasure, please consider naming Sky Island Alliance in your will or trust, today. There are many ways to contribute to a legacy of Sky Island protection and restoration. We encourage you to seek counsel from a trusted advisor to plan a gift that best suits your wishes and situation.

Thank you to those of you who have already made a pledge to Sky Island Alliance through a will, retirement or other estate plan.

If you would like to disclose your intent to join our growing list of legacy donors or have questions, please contact Development Director, Keri Dixon at 520.624.7080 x15.



ADAPT

The Sky Island region is in the throes of climate change. Through the ADAPT program, we are conserving the diversity of plants and animals and protecting the ecosystems on which they depend.

Saving Springs

This year we completed a breakthrough project to protect springs. Over two years, volunteers contributed 2,250 hours to help us survey 61 springs in the Ciénega Creek Hydrogeologic Area. With the information collected, we are improving restoration and protection of these ecosystems. In cooperation with the Springs Stewardship Institute, we launched the online Springs Inventory Database for all to use. This is a critical tool to improve understanding, protection, and restoration of springs.

Developing Strategies In May, we hosted a workshop attended by 120 partners, including land managers and scientists. We developed adaptation strategies with goals that include responding to fire and improving wildlife habitat connectivity. Together, we are implementing innovative projects that will safeguard wildlife and ecosystems in the face of climate change.



In 2013, we discovered **11** new springs, collected important information about water quality, and identified plants and animals that rely on these oases.





PROTECT

Through the PROTECT program, we safeguard high-value wildlife habitat and roadless, wild places. By promoting Wilderness values, advocating for special designations on public lands, and defending healthy ecosystems, we are protecting native animals, plants and vast Sky Island landscapes.

What does Wilderness look like?

Nature in its most pristine state includes diverse landscapes and healthy ecosystems. It includes a rich diversity of native plants and animals. In 2013, we led teams of volunteers into the Mescal, Whitlock, Turtle and Gila Mountains to document qualities that support quiet recreation for human visitors and help wildlife migrate and thrive.

To secure first-hand knowledge of wild, rugged places and make informed recommendations to help protect them, we traveled 275 miles on backcountry roads and hiked 32 miles with cameras and GPS units in hand. Through face-to-face outreach to businesses, individuals, and organizations, we continue to build support for future protection of the Land of Legends.

Protecting the Patagonias A critical wildlife linkage, the Patagonia Mountains, allows north-south migration in the borderlands of the Sky Islands. Their natural beauty and biodiversity are seriously threatened. In 2013, Sky Island Alliance worked to halt numerous proposals for destructive, high-impact projects threatening wildlife and human health and quality of life.

We led workshops to help community members understand the issues, find effective ways to defend their home and learn to mobilize others. Volunteers from the area participated in a 24-hour BioBlitz led by our EXPLORE and CONNECT program staff. Data they gathered is supporting defense of their home.



RESTORE

Through the RESTORE program, we connect people to native species, healthy and diverse ecosystems, and natural evolutionary processes in the Sky Island region. We are increasing ecosystem resilience to the stresses of land management and climate change.

Celebrating the Return of Native Frogs

2013 marked a turning point in the Pajarito Mountains for native frogs. After years of removing non-native invasive bullfrogs, their numbers have declined sharply, and native leopard frogs are naturally re-colonizing. Volunteers invested 720 hours to help native amphibians and other wildlife. Our efforts are assisting recovery of the threatened, federally protected Chiricahua leopard frog.

Investing in a Flyway We enhanced habitat for neotropical migratory birds on three major river systems in Sonora. Through our partnership with the Instituto Tecnológico Superior de Cananea, dozens of Mexican students joined us to create wetlands and plant native riparian species. We helped local landowners and communities fence cattle out of important riparian areas.



In a 7-part series during 2013, **130** volunteers from the U.S. and Mexico contributed over **1,500** hours to restore a ciénega in Sonora and plant **1,400** willow trees.



CONNECT

Through the CONNECT program, we protect the ability of wildlife to move and to thrive throughout the region. We connect people with wildlife and engage them as advocates and leaders in conservation. With science, we build support for sustainable land management decisions.

Promoting Safe Passages

To reduce roadkill and connect habitat for native wildlife, in 2013 we spearheaded plans for a wildlife overpass over Interstate-10 near the Dragoon Mountains; we also witnessed the construction start on two of six planned wildlife-crossing structures.

Our advocacy for wildlife is informed by data collected by over 100 trained volunteers. With their help this year, we learned about mountain lions, black bears and other native wildlife in 23 study sites in 9 different Sky Island mountain ranges and wildlife linkages. We maintained 19 motion-activated wildlife cameras in the region and collected more than 9,000 photos of wildlife.



Breaking Down Barriers By connecting people with their landscape, we connect with each other. Through educational talks, outreach, field trips and workshops, we engaged almost 1,000 new people in northern Sonora. Breaking the barriers of language and politics, community members join forces with a common goal of conservation. We successfully challenge habitat fragmentation and destruction of the borderlands.



EXPLORE

Through the EXPLORE program, we visit understudied areas of the Sky Islands and build critical knowledge to inform conservation and restoration priorities. We engage local communities in exploration and conservation of the region's biodiversity and are training a new generation of scientists.



Defending Diversity A hotspot for destructive hard-rock mining exploration and development, the Patagonia Mountains are also incredibly rich in biodiversity. On our expedition in the Patagonias, we documented rare species including Arizona blue star and Patagonia eyed silkmoth. These findings bolster defense of this mountain range, protecting wildlife and human health.

Launching Scientific Expeditions

This year we led major expeditions to the Patagonia Mountains and the Sierra la Púrica, as well as minor expeditions to the Sierras Aconchi, las Avispas, and la Mariquita. We bring professional and volunteer scientists into areas where there is great potential to support ongoing conservation efforts, inform protected area management, and advance research.



In 2013, we added **7,173** animal and **4,831** plant observations to Sky Island Alliance's Madrean.org database.

Over 350 people contributed thousands of hours and expertise in 2013. Volunteers who contributed 20 hours or more are listed below. (Names in **bold contributed 100 hours or more in 2013.)**

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Thank you. Your dedication to protecting and restoring the Sky Islands is a gift. Your generosity makes our work possible. Sky Island Alliance is committed to making the most of every donation. We appreciate support from our anonymous donors and the following individuals, families, businesses, organizations, agencies, and foundations:

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The MET Foundation
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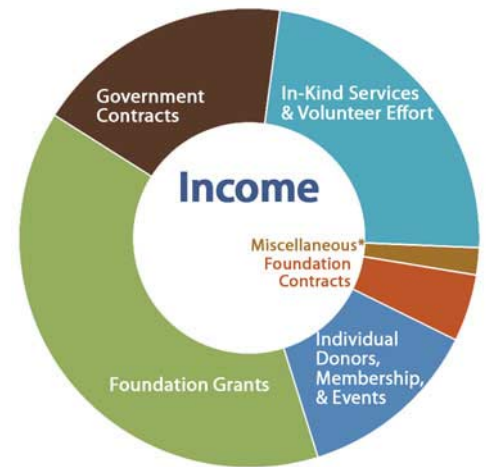
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Financial Summary January through December 2013

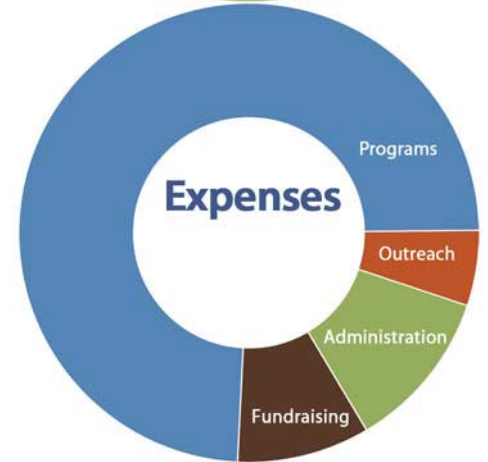
Income

Individual Donors, Membership & Events	13%	135,284
Foundation Grants	39%	408,342
Foundation Contracts	5%	49,717
Government Contracts	18%	191,043
In-Kind Services & Volunteer Effort	24%	247,654
Miscellaneous*	2%	20,223
		1,052,263



Expenses

Programs	74%	
ADAPT		152,812
CONNECT		114,628
EXPLORE		54,909
PROTECT		138,526
RESTORE		193,301
Outreach	5%	46,873
Administration	11%	100,059
Fundraising	9%	82,397
		883,504



Sky Island Alliance's final audited statements will be available online or by calling our office after August 1. 520.624.7080 x15

*Miscellaneous income includes fiscal sponsorship fees. Sky Island Alliance is the fiscal sponsor for the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection and Tucson Mountains Association. For more information about these organizations, please contact them directly.

All photos by and © Sky Island Alliance unless otherwise noted. Cover: Sierra La Púrica, Chip Hedgcock. Page 2: SIA staff photo, Chip Hedgcock; Mustang Mountains landscape, Bob Van Deven. Page 3: Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) on Mountain oxeye (*Heliopsis parvifolia*) in the Sierra La Púrica, Patagonia eyed silkmoth (*Automeris patagoniensis*), Chip Hedgcock; Black bear cub (*Ursus Americanus*), Tim Cook. Page 4: Mexican campion (*Silene laciniata*) blooms in Sierra La Púrica, Michael McNulty. Page 5: Dragoon Mountain landscape, Marc Trink. Page 6: Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) in Sierra Huérfana, Doug Danforth. Page 7: Wildlife Linkages Volunteers, Ken Ludwig. Page 8: *Amsonia* in Flux Canyon, James C. Rorabaugh; Nine-spotted ladybug (*Coccinella novemnotata*) in Sierra La Púrica, Chip Hedgcock. Page 9: Madrean Archipelago Biodiversity Assessment expedition in Sierra La Púrica, Chip Hedgcock. Page 10: Santa Catalina Mountain sunset, Wendy Mitchell. Page 11: Red-spotted toad (*Bufo punctatus*) in Sierra La Púrica, Western-spotted orbweaver (*Neoscona oaxacensis*) in Sierra La Púrica, Chip Hedgcock.

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Sky Island Alliance is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of the rich natural heritage of native species and habitats in the Sky Island region of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. Sky Island Alliance works with volunteers, scientists, land owners, public officials and government agencies to establish protected areas, restore healthy landscapes and promote public appreciation of the region's unique biological diversity.



Your generosity makes our work possible. Thank you.