



Seascapes

a publication for the membership of the Sonoran Sea Aquarium
Volume III Issue I Summer 2003

Arizona's Rivers to Mexico's Sea of Cortez

Sonoran Sea Aquarium

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear Friends of the Sonoran Sea Aquarium:

Welcome to the Summer 2003 newsletter! So much has gone on in the last year that we need to catch everyone up on... The past year has been a year of tremendous disappointment as well as tremendous excitement and opportunity.

The most prominent issue the SSA has faced was Rio Nuevo. Rio Nuevo is a City of Tucson project to revitalize its downtown. The SSA attempted to participate in the Rio Nuevo project in what turned into a multi-year quest only to encounter development barriers and have the City change their mind about the role an aquarium should play within Rio Nuevo. During this period the SSA focused on downtown Tucson for its site and tax increment financing for much of its development.

The Sonoran Sea Aquarium project was launched and deemed feasible prior to becoming involved with the City of Tucson's Rio Nuevo downtown re-development project. We are now regrouping and focusing our efforts on moving forward with development of an educational aquarium facility in the Tucson metropolitan area - as we had prior to the City of Tucson's Rio Nuevo project.

During the past year we have had some very exciting developments in the project as well. Our Outreach and Education Program is growing ever stronger - Education about biodiversity and sustainability is the focal point of the Aquarium's outreach efforts. This important mission has been accomplished by means of various education programs. Following are highlights of the Education and Outreach Program's recent accomplishments:

- Development of continuing aquatic educational support for area teachers.
- Aquarium's Education and Outreach Program capacity broadened with 25% more children reached

per year. (*Over 115,000 children reached in the program to date!*)

- Programs for underprivileged schools- free outreach services provided to 2,400 students in 2002.

Kudos to Julie Xelowski-Brooker, our Education Director, for her outstanding work!

In the fall of 2002, the SSA began to partner with the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum's (ASDM) Education Department. The SSA is doing joint programs with the ASDM and SSA outreach is being marketed by the ASDM on their website and mailings. This partnership allows the story of the Sonoran Desert region to be told more completely.

The partnership with the ASDM continues to grow. In April the SSA moved its offices to the ASDM. Being at the ASDM facility allows for even more exciting interaction between members of the ASDM staff and the SSA!

The SSA is also partnering with the ASDM as well as CEDO, World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International and others to put on The Gulf of California Conference 2004. The Conference will be held June 13-15, 2004 at Westward Look Resort in Tucson. It is aiming to be a comprehensive scientific conference on the Gulf of California. Its aim is to facilitate communication between researchers doing work in the Gulf to help with long term conservation of the Gulf.

The SSA has received a \$50,000 grant from Arizona Game and Fish Department to tell the freshwater story of Arizona's Rivers. The SSA has also received a \$40,000 grant from the Martin Foundation to help support our Education Program and update our Website.

The second half of 2002 and the first half of 2003 have been a time for regrouping and getting our goals back on track. I feel like we are progressing well.

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In the upcoming year the SSA needs to focus on a number of issues.

- Strengthening Arizona Sonora Desert Museum relationship
- Expansion and further development of the education outreach program
- Updating feasibility study
- Site selection
- Updating web site – developing and putting more educational content and teacher materials on web site
- Continue fund raising development efforts

Thanks to all of you for continuing to support our mission and dream of educating Arizona's children about Arizona's Rivers and the Gulf of California! I urge you to renew your memberships to continue to support these efforts.

Sincerely,
Shannan Marty, President, Board of Directors

WHALE WATCHING EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

February 21-29, 2004

Sonoran Sea Aquarium Board Member David Rabb is volunteering to escort a trip for intrepid travelers and adventurers to the amazing San Ignacio Lagoon to experience gray whales up close and personal.

The adventure will be primarily a camping trip with a few nights (optional and at your own expense) in hotels. Roads will primarily be paved and the trip should be suitable for RVs. There will be some optional excursions to areas of cave paintings, or missions that may require 4x4 vehicles. Everyone will be expected to provide their own food and food preparation except while at San Ignacio Lagoon.

Included in the price of the trip:

- At San Ignacio Lagoon, meals will be provided by a local family.
(Lunch, dinner, breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- Three whale watching experiences on the lagoon with a naturalist on every boat.

The trip home is on your own, although the group will likely carpool for the return trip

Itinerary:

- First night – camping in the mountains of northern Baja
- Second & Third nights – Boojum Tree forest
- Fourth night – Pacific coast
- Fifth night – San Ignacio (town)
- Sixth night – San Ignacio Lagoon
- Seventh night – either San Ignacio Lagoon or town
- Eighth night – return trip

Cost:

\$400.00 per adult

\$250.00 per child (12 & under)

The Gulf of California Conference 2004

June 13-15, 2004

Westward Look Resort
Tucson, Arizona

Themes & Topics

Biodiversity, Islands, Colorado River Delta
Conservation, Human Dimensions, Estuaries/Esteros

CALL FOR PAPERS & POSTERS

For more information and registration visit

www.gulfconference.org

email: gulfconference@desertmuseum.org

or call

Yajaira Gray at 520-883-3018

Financial aid may be available

Sponsored by:

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum

Sonoran Sea Aquarium


Center for the Study of Deserts and Oceans (CEDO)

World Wildlife Fund Mexico Program

MARTIN FOUNDATION AWARDS \$40,000 GRANT FOR EDUCATION

Responding to the long-term success of the Sonoran Sea Aquarium's Education Outreach Program, the Bert W. Martin Foundation, an Orlando-based private foundation, recently awarded \$40,000 to SSA to help continue to deliver its education outreach program to schools and events in the Tucson community.

Funds will be used to build new exhibitory and maintain the Marine Machine and the existing traveling exhibits. In addition, the grant is funding the update of the SSA web site www.tucsonaquarium.com and ensures that information on this evolving project stays up-to-the-minute.

The Martin Foundation has been a generous supporter of pediatric health care, the Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children and Women and a variety of educational programs including the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. 

Children 3 & under are free but cannot go in the boats. Trip will be limited to 10 vehicles or 25 people (whichever comes first).

Call David Rabb for more information at 906-5474. 

NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Julie Xelowski-Brooker

Greetings to all!

The Sonoran Sea Aquarium is winding up for a busy and productive 2003-2004 school year! Our Education and Outreach department and the increasingly well known Marine Machine brought the hands-on exhibit to schools in Tucson and Southern Arizona, exposing children to fossils, shells, sand, bones, sharks, invertebrates, and fishes.



Along with a wealth of artifacts, school children receive an important message- that of the importance of the "circle of life" here in Arizona's rivers and in Mexico's Sea of Cortez, and how we as individuals can make a difference in the protection and conservation of our wonderful resources. Our message has reached over 115,000 children and adults!

The education offices have moved to the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum. Since joining efforts with the museum, it made sense to move our location! Aquarium and Museum staff will be working toward merging terrestrial-based outreach programs from the Desert Museum, with the aquatic programs of the Sonoran Sea Aquarium to create new combined programs that more fully interpret the Sonoran Desert region.

The Education and Outreach department strives to continu-


ally expand and improve. We have made some important additions to our exhibit. Together with Arizona's Game and Fish Department, we have created exhibits depicting our riparian habitats and the distinctive native fishes living there.

This year we have implemented a series of specialty classes. Our Specialty Class series is designed to be a fun, interactive way for students to learn even more about our aquatic environments. The classes are a great follow-up to the general Sonoran Sea Aquarium presentation, part of a class's ocean unit, or even a super activity for interest groups such as scout troops.

We are excited to say that starting October 2003 the Education and Outreach Program will make its first weeklong presentation in Mexico! Thank you to volunteer Jo-Ann

Llatin. She has translated the entire program to Spanish and will head up the first Mexico Outreach!

The Sonoran Sea Aquarium education department would like to send a hearty "THANK YOU" to all of its sponsors for making this program possible. It is exciting to bring our message of education and conservation and instill a sense of wonder in children throughout southern Arizona and "soon to be" Mexico!

We now have online registration! Just go to www.Desertmuseum.org under programs click on School and Youth Programs, go down the side bar and click on Sonoran Sea Aquarium Education Programs! We are currently booking school visits for the 2003-2004 school year. Our program is dynamic and flexible, and the calendar is filling fast! 

HELP BRING THE SEA TO THE DESERT

Support the Sonoran Sea Aquarium

Mail this form with your check or money order to:

SONORAN SEA AQUARIUM, P.O. Box 86870, Tucson, AZ 85754

Please check the appropriate membership category. All membership levels receive the quarterly newsletter Seascapes.

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*Dedicated to bringing a world-class public aquarium to
Tucson, promoting education, conservation and
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