

Western Hardrock Watershed Team

Annual Report 2011



An OSM/VISTA Initiative

The Western Hardrock Watershed Team is a coalition of community/watershed improvement groups, confronting the challenges that remain from historic mining in the West. We address environmental degradation and community impoverishment, providing rural mining communities with the skills and capacity they need to make their neighborhoods and watersheds better places to live and work.

Western Hardrock Watershed Team was founded in 2006 by T Allan Comp, Ph.D. at the request of the Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining & Safety. WHWT is a program of Southwest Conservation Corps and currently places 26 new OSM/VISTAs each year.

WHWT BY THE NUMBERS

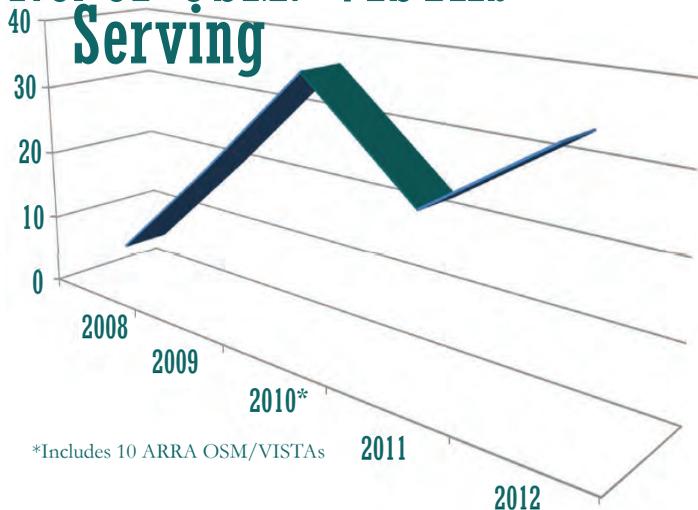
\$1,050,640

Cash Resources Generated by OSM/VISTA for Their Project

\$394,968

In Kind Resources Donated to OSM/VISTA Project

No. of OSM/VISTAs Serving



*Includes 10 ARRA OSM/VISTAs



Investment and dedication

[OSM/VISTA Volunteers] personally touch communities with their presence... The enthusiasm and call to service attitude that these young people bring to these communities is genuine and is matched by the support given to the [OSM/VISTA] Volunteers by the communities they serve.

-Colorado Division of Reclamation,
Mining and Safety Director Loretta Pineda





To building tomorrow's leaders and communities

I chose to pursue a second year of service with the Western Hardrock Watershed Team because the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership inspired me to truly believe in community work and being an OSM/VISTA allowed me the freedom to pursue different ways to support my young organization.

-Rachel Boothby
OSM/VISTA
Railyard Stewards



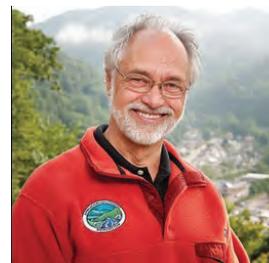
Moving Forward...

A Message from WHWT Team Coordinator Allan Comp

This is our first attempt at an annual report for the Western Hardrock Watershed Team – happily, it’s been a great year to report. The Department of the Interior awarded its Environmental Achievement Award in the Good Neighbor category to the two OSM/VISTA Teams; we had seventeen sites in Colorado and another six serving in New Mexico; the Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety in Colorado continued to support our OSM/VISTA sites; we received a three-year grant for site support from The Tiffany & Company Foundation and the Office of Surface Mining not only continued its support for team administration, site administrative matches and internships, but also now talks about “Reclaiming Communities” as a serious commitment in the Division of Reclamation Support. All this happens because we have great local sponsors for equally-great OSM/VISTAs – and a Durango Support Office to make sure our recruitment, training and support for each of those positions is the best.

We remain committed to building capacity in communities impoverished by environmental degradation – creating the opportunities for rural communities to educate, rebuild, and revitalize their rural places and their peoples. I hope you enjoy this quick summary and I’d like to hear back from you about what you think. tcomp@osmre.gov will get me every time and my phone still works as well 202-208-2836.

Yours in service.





Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining, & Safety



Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation & Enforcement

Continuing Partnerships



mission of WHWT and advocating for WHWT as an expanding force in the southwest. OSM also provides funding to help us continue our ongoing projects like biannual trainings for our OSM/VISTAs and their supervisors, site and administrative support, and more.

Similarly, DRMS has supported WHWT since our beginning, recognizing the need to support Colorado's watershed organizations build their capacity to ensure access to clean water for rural communities. DRMS continued their support and guidance this year by helping WHWT identify sites and organizations in need of an OSM/VISTA and providing financial support to those sites, many of which are fledgling watershed or community development organizations in historic mining communities.

Since Western Hardrock Watershed Team's inception in 2006, there have been two partners contributing time, money, and guidance that has been integral to our success and achievements: the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement (OSM) and Colorado's Division of Reclamation, Mining, & Safety (DRMS).

OSM provides countless hours of oversight for WHWT. Team Coordinator Allan Comp not only started WHWT, but continues to play a large role by making connections to advance the reach and

As always, we extend our deepest gratitude to these two invaluable partners who continue to support our efforts throughout Colorado and New Mexico.





WHWT grows in New Mexico



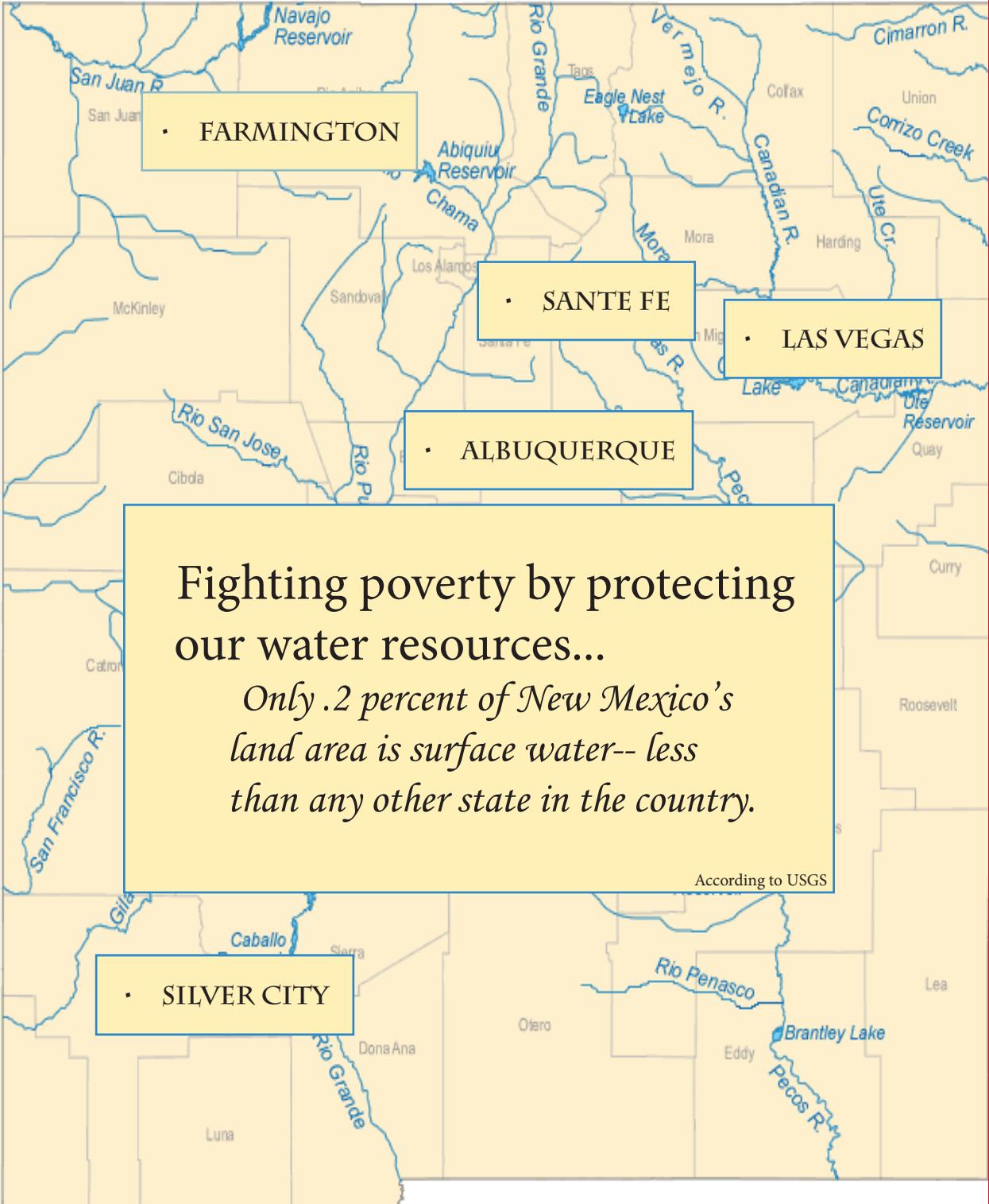
Expanding our horizons

This year marked an exciting expansion for the Western Hardrock Watershed Team. Since 2009, the WHWT has had a handful of OSM/VISTAs in New Mexico, but in August 2011 the Team placed additional members in Farmington, Albuquerque and Santa Fe, as well as an OSM/VISTA Leader based in Albuquerque. In April of 2012, another New Mexico site in Las Vegas joined the WHWT, bringing the total presence to six sites. WHWT has been able to expand its support to more watershed and community development organizations there, and members are already making real impact in their communities.

OSM/VISTA Melissa May had a particularly successful year with the San Juan Watershed Group (SJWG) in Farmington, NM. The SJWG was approached by BHP Billiton about the opportunity to apply for funding from a settlement between BHP Billiton/PNM and the Sierra Club, and May spearheaded the writing and development of the proposal.

Through her work, the SJWG secured a \$500,000 grant and was able to offer May full-time employment with the SJWG and the Soil and Water Conservation District in Aztec, NM.

With OSM/VISTAs like May leading successful projects in rural New Mexican communities, it's easy to see why the WHWT is so excited about this expansion and is eager to continue growing to meet the needs of other communities. We are optimistic about the Team's future and are currently developing a proposal to add five more OSM/VISTA positions in New Mexico. Progress and partnership-building has been fruitful; to date we have formed relationships with nearly 20 organizations eager to host an OSM/VISTA. Looking ahead, WHWT's expansion in New Mexico and partnership with the New Mexico abandoned mine land program will continue making advances to serve rural communities impoverished by environmental degradation in New Mexico.



• FARMINGTON

• SANTE FE

• LAS VEGAS

• ALBUQUERQUE

Fighting poverty by protecting our water resources...
Only .2 percent of New Mexico's land area is surface water-- less than any other state in the country.

According to USGS

• SILVER CITY

WHWT receives support from The Tiffany & Co. Foundation

Connecting with our funders

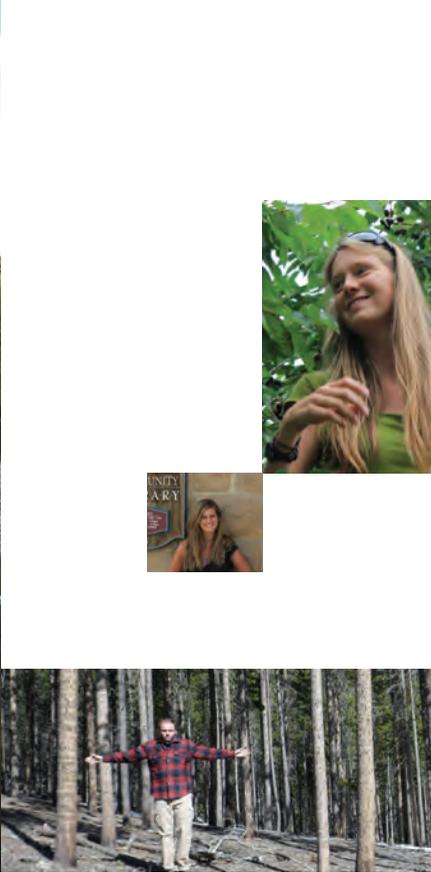
This winter, the Western Hardrock Watershed Team was awarded \$115,000 from The Tiffany & Co. Foundation to support our work in hardrock mining communities. This 3-year grant provides site support for the communities we serve in Colorado and New Mexico that have been impacted by the mining of precious metals and gemstones, including cost-match assistance and professional development for year-long OSM/VISTA Volunteers and Summer Program Members.

The Tiffany & Co. Foundation works to promote economic and social development in an effort to support and strengthen mining communities through local and global outreach. The Foundation supports place-based needs of mining communities, which makes for an excellent partnership with the Western Hardrock Watershed Team.

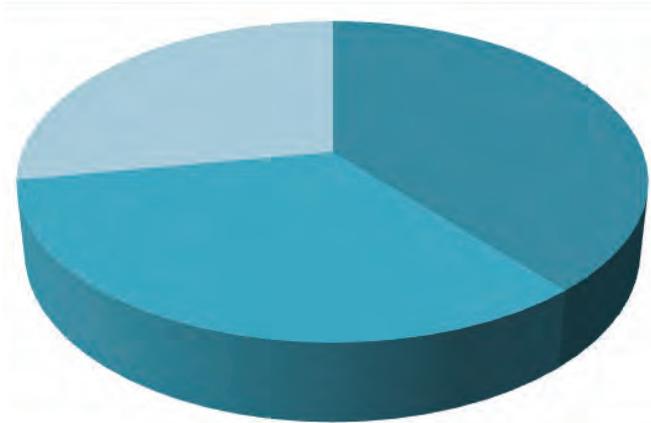
Monies from the foundation will support our work assisting socially- and economically-distressed mining communities in Colorado and New Mexico by promoting environmental stewardship, volunteerism, and community leadership at the local, grassroots level. In 2012, WHWT awarded 4 sites in New Mexico, 10 sites in Colorado, and 8 summer positions in Colorado and New Mexico with financial support from The Tiffany & Co. Foundation to better build the capacity of their mining communities.

WHWT extends our many thanks to The Tiffany & Co. Foundation for their generous support of the Team's work building the local capacity of mining communities. For more information on The Tiffany & Co. Foundation's Responsible Mining Grant Program, please visit <http://www.tiffanyandcofoundation.org>

TIFFANY & CO.
FOUNDATION



The Tiffany & Co. Foundation Support 2012



- Colorado \$10,000
- Summer Program \$12,000
- New Mexico \$14,000

The Waterboxx Project

Engaging communities

In Colorado and New Mexico, many of our partners recognize that trees play a crucial role in ecological and community health. Trees help stabilize reclaimed mine land, improve riparian habitat, keep water quality clean, and maintain healthy communities. Many of our groups work to plant trees and reforest critical areas within their watersheds.

To supplement these efforts, the OSM/VISTA Teams partnered with AquaPro and Inquiring Systems Inc. to help test their experimental Groasis Waterboxx product. The Waterboxx device seeks to mimic natural processes, helping young trees develop their root structures in eroded areas or in deserts. AquaPro provided funding and equipment to four community partners; in return for training and equipment free of charge, our community partners agreed to help with experimental plantings and monitor trees planted both with and without the Waterboxx. The four groups running the experiments include:

- **The Eagle River Watershed Council** who involved middle-schoolers and AmeriCorps NCCC volunteers to plant juniper, service-berry and blue spruce along the riparian corridor of the Eagle River near Edwards, Colorado
- **The Rio Puerco Alliance** partnered with a science class at a local youth detention center in Cuba, New Mexico to plant blue spruce, piñon juniper and burr oak along the back of the center's facility
- **The Kerber Creek Restoration Project** partnered with the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative to use the tree planting as part on an ongoing watershed restoration project in the arid San Luis Valley in Colorado
- **The Coalition for the Upper South Platte** – Victor Project is partnering with the Cripple Creek and Victor Mining Company to plant raspberry and aspen trees on a reclaimed mining area near Cripple Creek, Colorado

For AquaPro, the experiments will help them tailor their product to the diverse conditions in the West. For our partners, the Waterboxx provides a chance to engage communities in the learning and scientific process while helping restore compromised areas in those communities. Building on the success of the first year of the partnership, AquaPro and the OSM/VISTA Teams plan to expand the project in 2013, bringing the experimental plantings to more communities in Colorado and New Mexico.



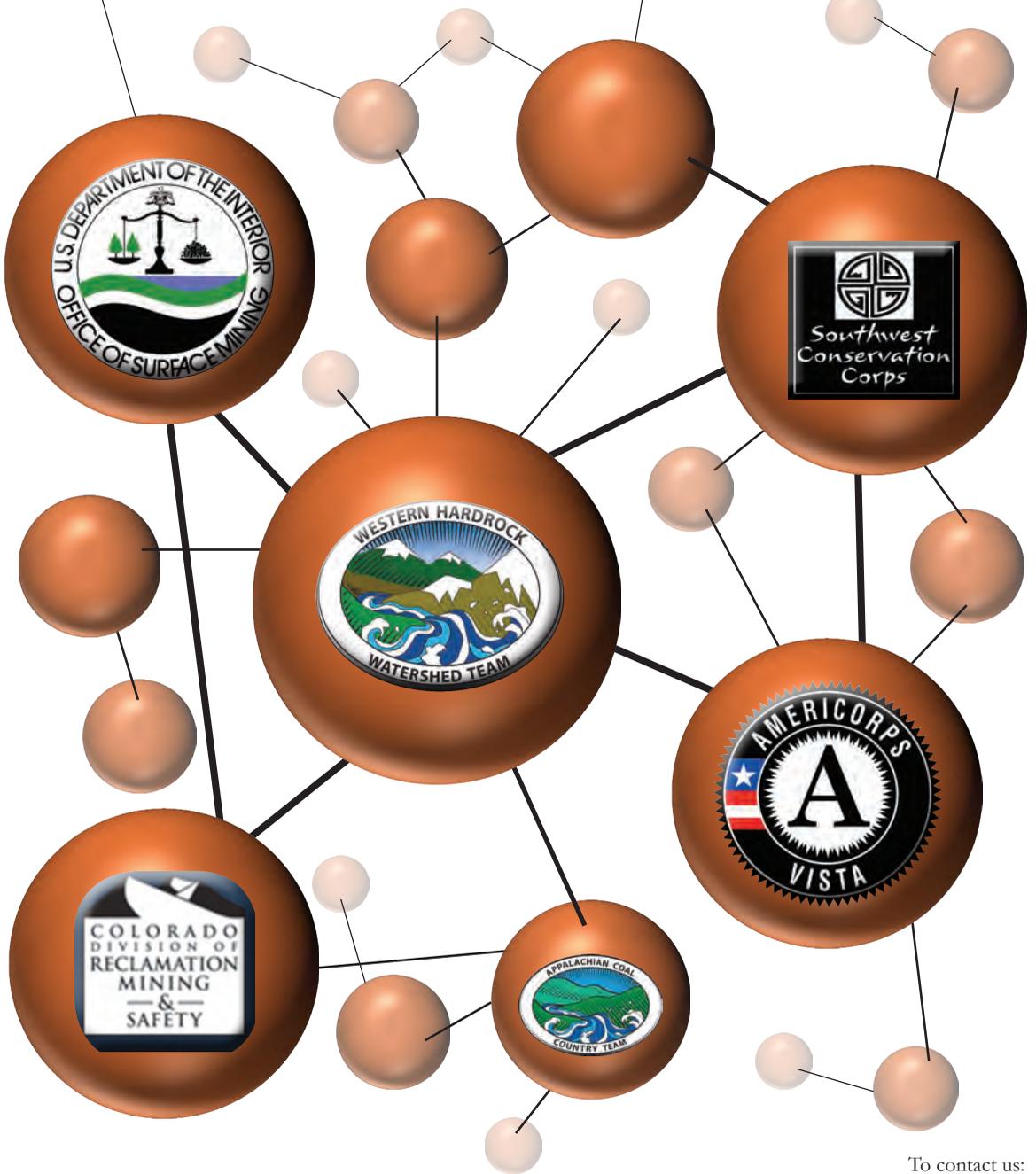


240

number of trees planted this summer in Colorado and New Mexico because of the Waterboxx project



Thank You to Our Partners



To contact us:
teamdirector@hardrockteam.org
970-403-0140