

2009-2010 Annual Report

July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010

by Marty Eberhardt

This was a year of change for the Water Conservation Garden. All year, we prepared for moving the governance and operations of the Garden from the Joint Powers Authority to the Friends of the Water Conservation Garden. We created a new strategic plan, and worked on a new logo and branding effort. We built a new Friends Board with some incredibly community-minded volunteers. We created a development plan that will take us forward, bringing us new members, partners, and donors. We also worked closely with our member agencies to ensure that they approve of the direction that we are going, and that they will continue to support us.

In the midst of creating and documenting a whole new direction, we continued to build our exhibits and programs. On the grounds, we added a shade structure to our outdoor amphitheater that makes it infinitely more useful in warm and inclement weather. Our newly shaded area has already been greatly appreciated by school groups, summer concertgoers, and audiences at our major events, among others. We are grateful to all of the funders of this project, and most especially to Bill and Norma Verbeck, whose great generosity made it possible. Ecolife Foundation's "Walking for Water" event paid for a new rain barrel exhibit, a device that is gaining more and more interest from visitors who are looking for simple ways to save water. We also expanded our Children's Discovery Trail by adding a "Jurassic Garden," a delightful area that uses dinosaurs to engage children in thinking about water.

This year saw another surge of activity in the area of children's programs. We created a school assembly program, "Ms. Smarty Plants™ and the Magic of Water." Ms. Smarty Plants™ saw 25,000 schoolchildren on tours and in assembly programs this year! We also initiated an education/community service program for teens. The Green Teens helped us with many Garden projects, while gaining valuable volunteer experience. Once again, we offered our popular "Kids' Camp" in July, using the teaching skills of a very special group of docents.

One thousand thirty-six people attended our classes and workshops for adults. We offered popular standards such as "Ask the Designer" and "Toss the Turf," and added some

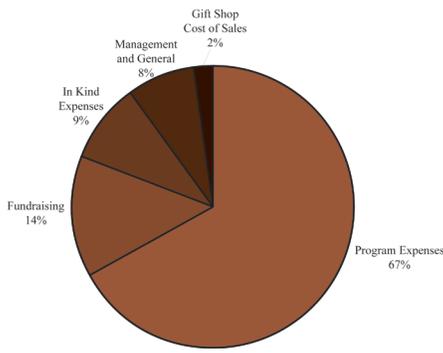


Grevilleas in bloom near the Garden's symbolic pipeline

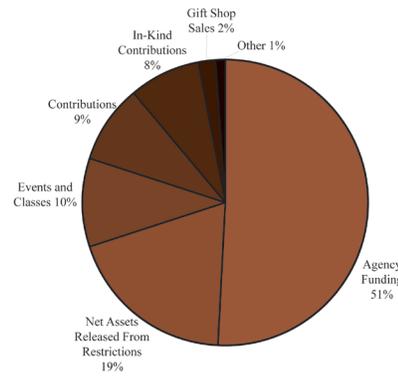
new classes that are destined to become favorites, such as "Water Smart Edibles"™ and "Rainwater Collection for Homeowners." We continued to offer our horticultural advice line, the "Water Smart Pipeline," two days a week. We were pleased to add Spanish language and special needs tours to our monthly line-up, and were proud to welcome 7, 200 people on organized tours to the Garden.

Many know the Garden for its signature events. Our fall and spring plant sales and the Spring Garden Festival drew about ten thousand visitors. We had summer concerts for both adults and children, and in December, a lovely holiday evening when the Garden twinkled with thousands of energy-conserving lights. We were proud to host the East County Chamber of Commerce's "Politics in Paradise" event, where politicians at every level debated the issues of the day in our amphitheatre. (I was told by one organizer that the "paradise" referred to the Garden, and I choose to believe that was the intent of the name.) We also took Garden materials and expertise to many locations (*cont. on p. 2*)

Garden Expenses, 2009-2010
\$868,563



Operating Support and Revenue, 2009-2010
\$939,338



*Does not include depreciation. A copy of our audit is available upon request.

2009-2010 Annual Report (cont. from p.1)

throughout the County, and by year-end, had reached over 116,000 people through off-site events.

We did notice a great deal less publicity from local water districts about conservation this year; people were doing as they had been asked to do, and had cut back as much as 12%. The sense of emergency of the previous year was lacking, and we believe this was a major reason our visitation did not reach the all-time high of the previous year. However, visitation was still up 32% over two years ago, reaching nearly 47,000 people. We countered the lack of public urgency about conservation by increasing our social media presence, sending numerous email updates to our members and friends, and by creating new collateral materials with the new logo you see on this report.

Our financial picture was stable in 2009-2010, as can be seen in the accompanying pie chart. Our member agencies increased their support this year after dues had stayed level for several years. The San Diego County Water Authority also provided wonderful support for a new development program that allowed us to change our modus operandi to that of a more traditional nonprofit. We were grateful to the professionals who provided us with about \$75,000 in in-kind services this year, as well as the docents and volunteers, without whom we simply could not function, who gave us more than 7,200 hours of their talents.

We hired our first development director in February of 2010. She worked on an aggressive 5-year funding plan and a compelling case statement for us. We built the Friends Board and development committee so that the Garden would have the necessary tools to do more fundraising. We increased our

grant writing efforts; many of these will come to fruition in the following year. We were particularly grateful to the Hans and Margaret Doe Charitable Trust, which gave us grants for marketing, the Water Smart Pipeline, children’s assemblies, the Green Teens, and materials for our outreach efforts. We hope that you will review all of our donors on the included list and join us in giving them our deep and sincere thanks for their support in difficult economic times.

We were so pleased to hear that an Otay Water District survey showed that 61% of the ratepayers who visited the Garden made a change in their landscapes as a result of their visit. A California Polytechnic Pomona student posed a similar question as part of her Master’s Thesis and came up with a similar number; 51% of those who visited made water conserving landscape changes afterward. These are remarkably potent statistics. How many of us would say that we had made ANY lifestyle changes after a visit somewhere? Our motto is to “educate and inspire”. Clearly, the California water picture will require us to reach more and more people more and more effectively, in order to preserve the quality of life that we hold dear, and that we want to bequeath to future generations. All of us here at the Water Conservation Garden stand ready to meet the challenge.



Executive Director Marty Eberhardt addresses a crowd in the newly shaded amphitheatre at the Spring Garden Festival, one of the Garden’s premiere community events



In Bloom is a quarterly publication of The Friends of the Water Conservation Garden, Cuyamaca College Drive West, El Cajon, CA 92019 (619) 660-0614, www.thegarden.org

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Paul Redeker, Horticulture Manager
Daniel Mayorga, Landscape Technician
David Yetz, Landscape Technician
Laurie Furry, Education Director
May Harris, Development Director
Elizabeth Ramos, Events & Marketing
Heather Carlton, Office Assistant
Pam Meisner, Programs Assistant
Kay McGrath, Bookkeeper

JPA President's Remarks

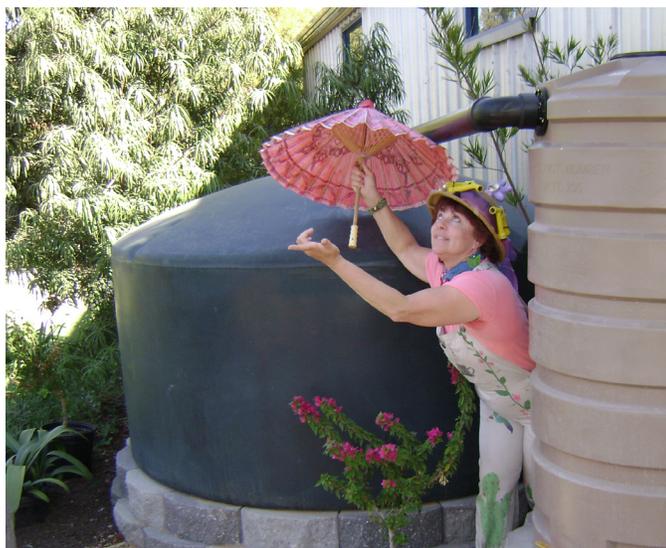
by Chuck Muse



On January 1st, 2011, the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) transferred the responsibility of running the Garden to the Friends Board. This transition came about as a result of several factors, including concerns about the continuity of board members who were elected officials, and confidence that the flexibility and fundraising potential of a non-profit board would be an asset to the Garden.

Eleven years ago, the Helix Water District, along with the Otay Water District and Cuyamaca College, saw a need for a demonstration garden to promote water conservation in the region. The success of the Garden can be attributed to the Authority's determination to follow through with the Garden's mission statement: "Promoting water conservation in the southern California landscape through excellent exhibits and programs that educate and inspire the public."

The JPA will still have a presence, as the owners of the Garden, but the day-to-day operation of the Garden will be handled by the Friends Board. We look forward to this new governance, and anticipate the ongoing success of the Garden and its programs.



Ms. Smarty Plants™ waits for rain to collect for reuse in the Garden's new rainbarrel exhibit

Friends of the Water Conservation Garden

Board President Remarks

by Mike Grisdale



As Garden members and supporters, all of us know that water conservation — particularly reducing the 60-70% of water used for outdoor landscaping — is critical to sustaining our quality of life here in Southern California. We're delighted that over 60% of those who visit the Garden subsequently change their outdoor landscaping behavior. That's

one reason why the Garden has been recognized as one of the 10 Best Gardens in the West by Sunset Magazine.

Because the Garden's mission is so tied to our quality of life, some of the Garden's key objectives are to broaden its regional appeal, and to increase its impact, membership, recognition and support. Based on an extensive, comprehensive 5-year plan developed in 2009, the Garden has transitioned from a public agency to an independent 501 (c) 3 nonprofit, effective January 1, 2011. Stages of this process will continue through 2014. We believe a community-based non-profit governance, coupled with on-going support from the Joint Powers Authority and others, is the best form of governance for managing the Garden. That's our first big step.

Our transition has required changing the organization's legal and financial status, recruiting a new board of community leaders, expanding our paid and volunteer organization to increase emphasis on fund-raising, marketing and community outreach, changing employment conditions for our talented and dedicated professional staff, developing an updated public positioning and image, and much more. There are still more changes and steps to come.

All of these changes are the result of significant assistance from the Joint Powers Authority, legions of Garden members, supporters and external advisors, and the Garden's outstanding staff. These organizations and individuals, possessing diverse skills and experience but shared goals and passions, have helped us marshal the expertise, community support and committed effort necessary to pursue our transition successfully.

As Southern California approaches its twelfth consecutive year of drought, our changing organization and its increasingly vital mission are evolving significantly to maximize opportunity for growth and success in today's difficult nonprofit, philanthropic and environmental conditions.

Thanks to all of you who have assisted in this transition so far. We look forward to your ongoing support.

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July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010

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Spring Garden Festival 2010

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Grants and Contracts

Education

California American Water
Hans and Margaret Doe Charitable Trust
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PBS&J Foundation
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
upon the Recommendation of
Supervisor Diane Jacob
San Diego Gas & Electric
Sweetwater District

Development & Marketing

Hans and Margaret Doe Charitable Trust
San Diego County Water Authority

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The Garden is grateful to all of its members!