

Annual Report

July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011

by Marty Eberhardt

Fiscal Year 2010-2011 was an extraordinary year for the Water Conservation Garden. Exactly halfway through the year, we changed our governance from a Joint Powers Authority to a nonprofit. We transferred not only our governance, but also our staff, volunteers, and physical and financial assets from one group to another.

During the first half of the fiscal year, the burgeoning Friends Board was working with the Joint Powers on a management agreement acceptable to both. Key to this agreement was a several-year financial commitment from the five water agencies that have been our primary funders: San Diego County Water Authority, Helix Water District, Otay Water District, Sweetwater Authority, and the City of San Diego. By December of 2010, we toasted the new era with champagne. An agreement was signed that was acceptable to both groups. The Garden staff retained their jobs and benefits.

In January 2011 the next phase of work began for the very young Friends Board, now called the Governing Board of the Water Conservation Garden. In February, they met with staff and came up with a new mission statement that reflects our commitment to a greener community in which water conservation is part of a larger picture. The new statement reads, "To educate and inspire through excellent programs and exhibits that promote water conservation and the sustainable use of related natural resources."



The Garden's new permeable pavement exhibit

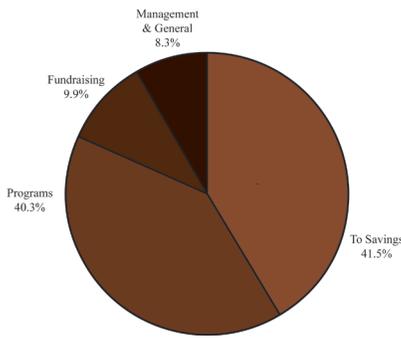


A sculpture by Rebecca Goodman interprets the Garden's mission

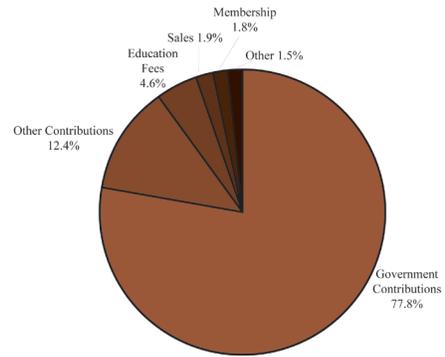
Our **programs** reflected this strong base of water conservation, branching out to embrace other aspects of sustainability. Ms. Smarty Plants, with her inspiring message about "saving the world with your own two hands", reached 28,000 children this year. The following generous organizations contributed to the success of the Ms. Smarty Plants programs: California American Water, Otay Water District, San Diego Gas & Electric, Sempra Energy Foundation, Sweetwater Authority, and Wells Fargo Bank. Many programs were school assemblies, where the redoubtable Ms. Smarty Plants engaged as many as 450 children at a time!

The Garden had its first art exhibition in 2010-2011, a collaborative effort with Art Pulse. Fourteen talented artists interpreted our mission statement with media as varied as artificial turf, recycled glass and wine barrel casks. The collaboration brought a whole new audience to the Garden, allowing us to expand our reach. Audiences from all over the country loved our new method of natural pest control, and inhabited our owl box in February via our live streaming Owlcam. Our nesting pair of owls, Hoot and Holla, were on display for months on our website. The world watched their young grow and fledge, increasing our web traffic by a factor of nine. *(cont. on page 2)*

Garden Expenses, 2010-2011 \$453,399



Operating Support and Revenue, 2010-2011 \$775,218



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

On December 31, 2011, all financial assets of the Water Conservation Garden were transferred from the Water Conservation Garden Authority to Friends of the Water Conservation Garden. This included \$300,000 in savings accounts. The Garden has a policy requiring it to maintain at least three months of operating income in case of emergencies.

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We celebrated our members with March Plant Madness, featuring plant sales and free classes for members during the month of March. Our celebration of spring continued with our well-known Spring Garden Festival, which drew 5,000 people. Two thousand people attended our Fall Garden Festival, eager to learn about water wise landscaping. In the warmer months, our “Dog Days of Summer” program opened, and we welcomed canine friends and their owners on summer evenings, reaching yet another audience. And, we celebrated our newly shaded amphitheater with a summer concert featuring Novamenco.

In addition to some of these major programs, we welcomed some important visitors to the Garden, including many who came on tours with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Water Education Foundation, as well as State Department visitors from the Middle East who were interested in water issues. We were pleased to host the San Diego Press Corps, local event planners, the Rotary Club of Spring Valley/Jamul with their “La Bella Wine and Food Vida” event, and the East County Chamber of Commerce’s production of “Politics in Paradise”. We were also delighted to present awards at the San Diego County Landscape Contest awards ceremony.

Despite the enormous changes in our operations, our horticulture crew continued their excellent care of our grounds. They added a lovely garden outside of the “Retrofit House”, and worked the entire year on an excellent exhibit on Storm Water Management, funded by San Diego County, which featured a green roof and permeable pavement fountain. They also coordinated with our talented docent

crew to turn our multipurpose room into a space worthy of our inspiring Garden. With Ms. Smarty Plants, they put together a “Jurassic Garden” for our younger visitors. We began discussions with Cuyamaca College about using one of their portable buildings for offices and classroom space -- huge needs for our dynamic institution. On top of all of these projects, the horticulture staff created a terrific little retail nursery, for those visitors who want the plants they see right away.

Behind the scenes, staff, docents and board members were working furiously to **market and raise money** for the Garden. Our membership increased 44% over the previous year. We also began our planned giving program, hoping to create an endowment over time. A look at the enclosed donor list shows how many people need to be thanked for fiscal year 2010-11, which was finished in the black, a goal many nonprofits were not able to reach this year. *Please note that the numbers in the enclosed graph reflect a transfer of financial assets on 12/31/11 in the form of a contribution from the Joint Powers Authority of \$367,946. Three hundred thousand dollars of this is composed of the savings account of the JPA, which was also transferred to the Friends.* The Garden policy is to keep at least three months of operating expenses in savings at all times to deal with potential emergencies. Thus, in terms of our annual operating budget, we were “in the black” by \$21,819. *(cont. next column)*



A new side garden graces the Retrofit House exhibit



Garden Staff
 Marty Eberhardt, Executive Director
 Paul Redeker, Horticulture Manager
 Daniel Mayorga, Landscape Technician
 David Yetz, Landscape Technician
 Laurie Furry, Education Director
 Elizabeth Ramos, Director of Development and Communications
 Heather Carlton, Office Assistant
 Pam Meisner, Programs Assistant
 Kay McGrath, Bookkeeper

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

Friends of the Water Conservation Garden Board President Remarks

by Michael Grisdale



2010-2011 was, by any measure, a tumultuous, yet successful year for the Garden.

Effective January 1, 2011, after successfully completing extensive legal, financial, organizational and operational changes during 2010, the Garden transitioned from being managed as a public agency by a Joint Powers Authority to

being managed as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

These 2010-2011 changes, and others that will follow over coming years, reflect the belief that a community-based nonprofit form of governance, coupled with on-going support from the Joint Powers Authority and others, is the best form of organization to manage the Garden into the future.

The impact of recent changes at the Garden contributed significantly to the Garden's 2010-2011 success. Some of these key changes have been:

- Improved and expanded physical facilities
- Strengthened governance and management structures
- Strengthened and diversified financial resources
- Strengthened personnel and administrative resources
- Strengthened marketing, public relations and community outreach
- Increased regional, national and global recognition, including awards received

These changes demonstrate clearly that the Garden's supporters, members, external advisors, management and staff - working together with shared goals and passions - have proven ability to achieve sustained growth and success in today's difficult environmental, operational and financial conditions.

Changes at the Garden are a continuing process, however.

Changes already made will require ongoing attention, effort and modification. Additional changes – many anticipated and others not anticipated – have already begun in 2011-2012 and will continue for at least several more years.

Without your confidence in the Garden's direction and leadership, your support and your assistance, these vital changes would neither be possible nor likely to succeed.

Fortunately, as 2010-2011 results show, we appear to be on the right track and making significant progress.

Thank you for doing so much for our Garden and yours.

The Garden's image and renown evolved in other ways this year as well. A committee of staff worked with Bev Oster, of advertising firm Oster and Associates, to come up with a new logo which portrays the Garden's strength and longevity via a stable oak tree, along with a contemporary font. We also began to reach out to the world through social media, using both Facebook and Twitter. And we were delighted and honored to learn that the American Public Gardens Association had chosen us as one of eight gardens in North America whose community outreach programs should be emulated by other public gardens. They cited our educational festivals, our Ms. Smarty Plants programs, and our interpreted gardens as excellent community outreach tools.

Even deeper behind the scenes, we had to come up with new policies and procedures for the new organization, new bank accounts, and new accounting formats. We signed the management agreement which I mentioned earlier, as well as an inter-jurisdictional agreement with the Grossmont Cuyamaca Community College Auxiliary. The docents also made major changes, creating a new docent training program and a new docent manual.

This was truly the Year of Change. As I retire, having led the Garden through the transition and a full year thereafter, even more change is on the horizon. New leadership will soon take the reins, and our future is bright. The Garden's mission is critical to the future of the community. Its people - boards, staff, and docents- are full of energy, ideas, and talent. Its grounds are inspiring to all who visit. As I leave, I thank everyone who cares about the Garden and has been involved over the years. The people behind the Garden can, as Ms. Smarty Plants would say, "change the world with their own two hands."



Garden leaders (from left to right) Mark Weston, Chuck Muse, Eleanor Hugus, Michael Grisdale, Marty Eberhardt, John Highkin, Dr. Richard Wright, and Dr. Cindy Miles gather to launch the Garden's new logo

Donors

July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011

Fall Festival Sponsors 2010

Agri Service, Inc.
Barbeques Galore
Miramar Wholesale Nurseries
Mountain States Wholesale Nursery
Metropolitan Water District of
Southern California
San Diego Gas & Electric

Spring Garden Festival 2011

Agri Service, Inc.
Baldwin and Sons
Black & Veatch
CH2M Hill
Cox Communications
Cuyamaca College Foundation
Dudek
Environmental Science Associates
Hunter Industries
Metropolitan Water District of Southern
California
MWH
Nautilus Environmental
Pardee Homes
Peter Barron Stark & Associates, Inc.
Plumeria Inc.
RBF Consulting
RMC Water & Environment
Snipes-Dye Associates
Torrey Pines Landscape
William A. Steen & Associates
Wells Fargo Bank

Garden Partners

Benchmark Landscape, Inc.
Miramar Wholesale Nurseries
Ramona Municipal Water District
San Diego Gas & Electric
Santa Fe Irrigation District

Joint Powers Authority Contributions

City of San Diego
Helix Water District
Otay Water District
San Diego County Water Authority
Sweetwater Authority

Ms. Smarty Plants Program Support

California American Water
Otay Water District
San Diego Gas & Electric
Sempra Energy Foundation
Sweetwater Authority

Grants and Contracts

County of San Diego Community
Enhancement
County of San Diego Watershed
Protection Program
Hans & Margaret Doe Charitable Trust
The PBS&J Foundation
San Diego Gas & Electric
Sempra Energy Foundation

In-Kind Donations

Agri Service, Inc.
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Ken Smith Landscape Architect
Miramar Wholesale Nurseries
Mountain States Wholesale Nursery
Oster & Associates
Roesling Nakamura Terada Architects
Sean Naylor
Sierra Madre Trees
Sodexo
Viejas Enterprises, Inc.
Village Nurseries
Workshop West

Hoot and Holla Owl Fund

Nathaly Aguilera
James and Donna Bowersox
Cindy Feaver
Valerie Miller
Susan Morgan
Pamela Page
Karen Sumek
Leonard Trentacosta
Mark and Anne Weston
Judy Wheatley

Financial Contributions

Sue Ellen Benson
John & Suzanne Bridges
Michael Clifford
Marty Eberhardt & Phil Hastings
Jennifer Erwin
Damian Esparza & Danielle Poenessa
Hans and Margaret Doe Charitable Trust
Michael & Dinah Grisdale
Eric and May Harris
Eleanor Hugus
Robert Parrott & Jo Ann Christensen
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Sprites of East County, Inc.
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Viejas Enterprises
Mark Weston
Dr. Richard Wright

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Dr. Richard Wright

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Damian Esparza & Danielle Poenessa
Joan Forbes
Michael and Dinah Grisdale
Eleanor Hugus
San Diego Horticulture Society

Sunflower Members

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Carol Fasching
Bud Hamilton
Susan Inot
Kay & Vince McGrath
Charles & Ellen McVean
Don & Jen Melucci
Dr. Cindy Miles
Richard & Susan Namba
Michael & Dale Snyder
Fern Steiner
Jan and Paul Tubiolo
DeAna Verbecke
Mark & Anne Weston

Wild Grape Members

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Barbara French-Lee Family
Elizabeth Hansen
Eric & May Harris
Michael & Carolyn Ladd
Steven Loustalet
Ann Mayer Family
Chuck & Lynda Muse
Lawrence & Darla O'Leary
William & Bess Pocklington
Brenda Richmond Family
Stan & Susan Schroeder
Richard & Maureen Smith
Nan Sterman, Plant Soup
Klaus & Carolyn Steurmann
Deanna Weeks

*The Garden is grateful to all of its
members and contributors!*