

SIERRA VISTA HERALD, March 19, 2013

To the Editor:

This Friday, March 22, marks the annual celebration of the life-giving resource that we all depend on... water. World Water Day serves as a reminder that without adequate supplies of clean, fresh water, our lives would be quite different and our standard of living far lower. In some places in the world, clean water is not available, and in many others, people have to go to great lengths to procure it. We take for granted the ease with which we can turn on the tap and out flows clean water for our use.

Here in the desert southwest we're perhaps more aware than in other locations that water is a scarce resource and should be conserved. But translating that awareness into action is also important. There is much we can do as area residents to use water carefully. There are discounts and incentives offered by the city and the county with the help of Water Wise and the Cochise Water Project to implement rainwater harvesting to water our gardens and to retrofit homes with on-demand water heaters, low-flow fixtures and high efficiency toilets. And we can encourage our community leaders to promote and implement sustainable operations that conserve water and energy.

We have a great resource on our doorstep: the San Pedro River. By using water more carefully, we can help to ensure its future. There are numerous opportunities to use less water in our daily lives and make sensible consumer choices. Likewise, there are many ways to protect Arizona's rivers like the San Pedro — and the birds and other wildlife, their habitats, and the people who depend on these rivers — and advocate for sensible water management decisions that impact them.

Advocating for our rivers and sound management practices is Audubon's goal in setting up their Western Rivers Action Network. It is also the goal of the Friends of the San Pedro River in protecting the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, not to mention the system of National Conservation Lands to which it belongs. I hope you will join me in becoming a part of this network of concerned citizens. Healthy rivers mean healthy birds, diverse wildlife communities, productive rangelands, and vibrant economies. Citizens of Sierra Vista and surrounding communities, don't just Dream Your City — Dream Your Valley!

**Robert Weissler**  
**Executive Director**  
**Friends of the San Pedro River**  
**Vice President**  
**Huachuca Audubon Society**