

Dr. Thomas Meixner, Chair of the Cienega Watershed Partnership, passed away unexpectedly and tragically on October 5, 2022 in Tucson, Arizona. The Cienega Watershed Partnership (CWP) will be forever grateful for Dr. Thomas Meixner's leadership and tireless advocacy of the unique and highly valued Cienega Watershed.

Tom was already a very busy University of Arizona hydrologist and faculty member when he was approached to join the CWP board of directors in 2013. He wanted to work on water issues in a local watershed that mattered to so many people. From the start, Tom's expertise contributed to the success of on-the-ground projects like habitat restoration and the FROG (Chiricahua frog restoration) project. Tom was integral to moving the organization forward as it considered fundraising planning, how to support the public forums (the Cienega Corridor Conservation Council and the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership), revising the Strategic Plan, planning for workshops, and CWP's other initiatives

CWP relied on Tom's expertise for assessing and advising on the Rosemont Mine water impacts. He represented CWP on the triennial review of the Outstanding Waters of Arizona and interacted with individuals and officials working on Arizona water issues.

Tom's vision and drive helped to re-energize one of CWP's signature programs: The State of the Watershed (SOW). Tom became part of the leadership team for SOW especially after the focus of the workshop became assessing the watershed condition. He and fellow CWP board member Larry Fisher worked on funding proposals and, with Adriana Zuniga, organized the annual workshop. He and Larry worked with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Udall Foundation and the French iGlobes project to fund the assessment work.

Once Tom became the Board Chair in 2018, he focused on shoring up the organization by improving financial management and increasing donations. Importantly, he directed his efforts to reinvigorating, diversifying, and stabilizing the Board, and continuing to strengthen our program work. In 2019, Tom took on more responsibilities at work, becoming the Department Head for University of Arizona's Department of Hydrology and Atmospheric Sciences.

In addition to the SOW work, Tom was a key driver of the CWP's public-facing programs which included the Science on the Sonoita Plain, a long-standing symposium for managers and researchers to share current research findings and land management efforts with each other and interested community members. After 11 SOSYP symposia, in 2021, Tom led a team that expanded the scope to include the Sonoita Creek watershed (in partnership with the Friends of Sonoita Creek) and a much more interactive and field-based event "Discovering the Land." Tom explained: "We wanted to get people back on the land, not just sitting in chairs listening to science, even good science!"

CWP experimented with providing outreach and education opportunities to the public. Tom co-lead the watershed tours that were held pre-COVID and engaged the community out on the land to better understand the watershed. Tom had a unique ability to interpret hydrology and watershed dynamics for all participants regardless of their educational background, further building support for stewardship of the Cienega watershed. He strongly supported the upcoming virtual TravelStory watershed tour that is being developed with many partners.

Tom also championed and was the face of CWP's popular [Lunch and Learn](#) online discussions, which CWP plans to continue this effort in the spring of 2023.

Tom's gregarious nature was a key to the success of CWP's strong history of collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management, Pima County, and many other restoration- or water-focused groups.

In short, Tom, a passionate engine of wisdom, boundless energy, expertise and leadership, kept CWP going. He touched every facet of the organization from ensuring that CWP participated in fundraising programs like Giving Tuesday to continuing CWP's Wall of Honor to recognize contributions to the watershed.

The CWP board is deeply saddened by his loss. He was a dear friend to us; always humbly connecting with others on a personal level. His brilliance made a lasting light that will continue to inspire us all to always be curious, courageous, kind, dedicated and passionate.

In loving memory,

CWP Board of Directors and Friends
October 2022

Please consider donating to the [GoFundMe page](#) for Tom's family.

The University of Arizona established the Dr. Thomas Meixner Memorial Fund to honor his legacy. You may donate to the [crowdfunding page](#). The family will direct it to a University of Arizona cause meaningful to them.

Thank you.