

# WATERLINES

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This brief letter is intended to bring you up to date with Waterlines' work this year. Waterlines has always emphasized checking on past projects to see if water is still flowing without problems. Volunteers regularly return to communities where projects were initially completed 10 or 20 years ago. It's fair to say that Waterlines has one of the best records among water non-profit organizations in terms of verifying how projects are functioning years after completion.

That said, after recent years of expanded growth (with water projects in over 700 communities), the Board recognized the importance of an even more rigorous approach not only to checking on past projects but—this is important—confirming that problems spotted were in fact being resolved, not just being 'monitored and evaluated' for learning purposes in future projects.

We decided to focus in 2013 on past projects, visiting three times the number of communities we usually visit, all the while ensuring that in those cases where any problems were identified, some entities (usually a mix of the community, Waterlines, or local government) were taking steps to resolve them. Particular thanks in Santa Fe goes to the extraordinary work done by Betty and Judy in keeping track of hundreds of water systems' current conditions, repairs, and funding.

In this Year of Circuit Riding, then, here's a brief update as of November, 2013:

**Kenya (Rift Valley Province):** Waterlines' board members Mark and Diane Reimers, local Kenyan facilitators (Richard Kalya, David Langat, Joel Mitei, David Kurgat), and Linda Golden (who initiated Waterlines' involvement in Kenya in 1997) have this year checked on the functioning of over 100 water projects, mostly rainwater catchment systems at schools. Waterlines' systematic



approach to resolving identified problems has led to what are called "Monitoring & Action" (not just "Monitoring & Evaluation") Plans, designed by Mark and Diane Reimers, Betty Kersting, Judy Crawford, local Kenyan facilitators and Tenwek Community Health and Development. To generalize about the findings: Tanks continue to prove very well constructed, though annual tank cleaning remains sporadic. Problems involve

inadequate gutter construction and need for better drainage. A modest investment (a contribution of no more than \$200 by Waterlines, matched by the same amount from the community) is resolving most problems in projects built during the past decade.

**Panama:** Waterlines has supported over 100 gravity-flow water systems in rural indigenous communities. More than 30 of these have been visited this year by board member Fr. Robert



Cumberland, Waterlines' volunteers Bob and Julie Dunsmore, and Peace Corps Circuit Rider, Erica Jones. To generalize: many projects continue working without problems, but in some cases improvements will be made with the community carrying out the labor and sharing in the minor cost with Waterlines to repair systems five or ten years old. Before completing his leadership role in Panama's Peace Corps, board member Tim Wellman set up the first Peace Corps Circuit Rider program (where an

experienced Peace Corps Volunteer checks on the water systems of numerous rural communities), a model that will serve as a template for Peace Corps in other nations.

**Ethiopia:** Waterlines' involvement in Ethiopia was initiated by Bill Muldrow, emeritus board member of Waterlines. In April, board member John Vavruska and his daughter, Anna, and the Western Wollega Bethel Synod's Tadesse Alemu, made site visits to 19 spring protections, using Dembi Dollo as a base. In general, the spring boxes were in good shape. Problems needing to be addressed in places include minor leakage at the springbox, drainage issues and inadequate fencing. Three springboxes need more extensive repair. Migs Muldrow and David Muldrow will be visiting other communities at the turn of the year.



**Mexico:** Waterlines' very first project, completed in 1986, was in Mexico (in the community of Los



Ricos where the water continues to flow). In recent years, water projects—all gravity-flow systems-- have taken place in Chiapas, thanks to the oversight provided by Kees Grootenboer. Kees and Water Engineers for the Americas' Ramon Lucero have made site visits this year to a half dozen communities near Altamirano, and enabled the water committees in several extremely rural communities in the Lacandon Jungle to make minor repairs to the spring protections and pipelines. (Local politics frustrates expansion of some water and

sanitation systems in Chiapas).

That's a brief overview of Waterlines' work so far in 2013.  
Everyone associated with Waterlines is grateful for your continuing support.  
Thank you.

David Douglas