

**Hereford
Natural
Resource
Conservation
District**



CONSERVING - PROTECTING - PRACTICING WISE USE

**Fall 2013
Newsletter**



Board of Supervisors

CHAIRMAN

Jim Lindsey

520.559.0715

sht1@mindspring.com

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Rachel Thomas

520.456.1008

badgerall@earthlink.net

TREASURER

Tom Richter

520.458.1671

farmertomz@msn.com

SECRETARY

Lucinda Earven

(520) 456-2024

hossdvm@yahoo.com

MEMBER

John Lohse

(520) 234-5452

2747jrl@gmail.com

info@herefordnrcd.com

www.herefordnrcd.com

520.220.2028

PO Box 3361

Sierra Vista, AZ 85636



NRCS DISTRICT
CONSERVATIONIST

Gerry Gonzalez

520.364.2001 ext. 101

gerry.gonzalez@as.usda.gov

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Chairman's Corner

I want to thank our new District clerk for coming on board. Kathy Morris has taken the bull by the horns and has taken him to the ground. What a great addition to your Hereford NRCD team.

Even with the government shutdown and still no passage of the farm bill, your local District keeps on with the local concerns of our natural resources. There are many issues facing our District and the citizens within. Please go to our web site herefordnrcd.com for current information on the issues. If any of them interest you, we would welcome you to our meetings and your involvement. Your involvement means more to the community than the government decision makers that don't live here.

Some of the issues are the expansion of the wolf territory into our District, the cuckoo bird listing which includes the San Pedro River, the San Pedro River Resource Management Plan with the BLM, the San Pedro navigable river issue and the EPA connective downstream waters issue. These are just the top five. Needless to say, members of your board are very busy.

While you are on the HNRCD web site, check out the latest on the Tombstone High School FFA antelope program. They have been recognized by the National FFA and across the nation for the antelope program. The agriculture class took second place at the Cochise County Fair's local school competition this year. The theme was *Agriculturists are the Best Conservationists*. Hats off to Kelly Lyda's Tombstone High School agriculture class.

**Working Together to Enhance
Our Natural Resources**

Arizona NRCD Summer Conference



Photo by Kathy Morris

The conference tour began at the Hayhurst Ranch, south of Hwy. 82, a short distance west of the San Pedro River. Participants gathered to listen to and view the attributes of the herbicide Spike 20 treatment on invasive brush. Seeing firsthand the difference between treated and untreated brush was clear evidence of the success of treatment. Standing in high, thick grass brought positive reactions from the crowd.



Photo by Rachel Thomas

Walnut Gulch personnel provided information about the Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed to the tour participants at Flume No. 6 on Walnut Gulch. They explained how the Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed was initiated in 1951 by the Research Division of the Soil Conservation Service to study the role of watershed treatments on downstream water yield and how the operation works today.



With a majority of the conference participants on the tour, it was crowded on the Charleston Bridge. This was a chance to view the San Pedro River and listen to presentations which included one by Pat Call, Cochise County Supervisor and District Advisor, about some of the water issues of the area.



Photo by John Lohse

Brown Canyon Ranch on the Coronado National Forest (left & right) was the place to be for the delicious convention bar-b-q catered by the Arizona Farm Bureau and served by the Tombstone High School FFA students.



Photo by NRCS

Conference Highlights



Bill Schock, President AZNRCD and Gary John, Treasurer AZNRCD presenting Senator Gail Griffin (right) the AZNRCD Good Hand Award.

AWARDS PRESENTED TO TWO HEREFORD NRCD ADVISORS

Bill Schock and Gary John, AZNRCD presenting Jack Ladd, Hereford NRCD, the AZNRCD Conservation Heritage Award (left)



According to feed-back received, the 2013 AZNRCD Summer Conference hosted by the Hereford NRCD was a huge success. Around 100 Supervisors and other Cooperators from all over the state attended the two days of an informative and enjoyable conference. The program was filled with good speakers on several subjects. One subject of great interest to the area was Al Medina, retired Range Management Specialist, Rocky Mountain Research Station, USDA, providing an overview of the 15 year study he participated in on the Upper Verde River. The study, "Synthesis of Upper Verde River Research and Monitoring 1993-2008", authored by Daniel G. Neary, Alvin L. Medina, and John N. Rinne, has been published and peer reviewed. The study provides a lot of good scientific information for and about riparian habitat management.

Some considered the highlight of the conference being the half day tour of resource management sites within the District.

The first stop was the Hayhursts' Brockline Ranch where people were able to see firsthand the difference between treated and untreated brush with clear evidence of the success of treatment. Standing in high, thick green grass brought positive reactions from the crowd.

Flume No. 6 on the Walnut Gulch Experimental Watershed was the next stop where personnel from the USDA Agricultural Research Service provided information about the 60 year history of research of the hydrology, erosion and sedimentation on the approximately 58 square mile arid watershed.

The next stop was the Charleston Bridge on the San Pedro River where people were able to walk out onto the old bridge, view the San Pedro River, and hear about water issues in the area.

The tour culminated at Brown Canyon Ranch for dinner, entertainment, and an awards ceremony. The food was provided and prepared by the Arizona Farm Bureau and served by Tombstone High School FFA officers.

The conference activities were kicked off with a supervisors' meeting where supervisors traded information on district operations and learned the latest from Stephanie Smallhouse, AZNRCD Executive Director and Amber Morin, Arizona State Land NRCD Manager. A meeting of AZNRCD Board Members concluded the conference.

ATTENTION COOPERATORS!

Your NRCD receives countless emails regarding federal, state and local activities, workshops, conferences, and most importantly, government actions that affect us all. Please be sure we have your email address so we can forward to you pertinent information. Drop us a line at info@herefordnrcd.com Please put "Email List" in the subject line. Thanks for helping us help you stay informed!

Board Activities

The District has submitted a grant application to the Arizona Water Protection Fund for \$198,625 for the first two phases, the concept and feasibility study and the design for the Horseshoe Draw Project. The third phase will be the construction which when completed will reduce flooding, erosion and soil loss, road and property damage with an added benefit of a good recharge project. The runoff is from the approximately 9,000 acres of the contributing watershed south of Highway 92, east of the San Pedro River and begins in Mexico. The Draw is impacted by intermittent and intense flooding which has created significant head cutting and channel meanders, and other signs of an unbalanced sediment transport system. The grant application was prepared by Deborrah Smith, Cascabel Ranch & Consulting. Presently the Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission is proceeding in the grant application evaluation process.

Amber Morin, Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) NRCD Manager, attended the District's October meeting. She provided information from the State Land Department and NRCD updates. The ASLD Budget request has been approved by the Commissioner and the Department has asked for full funding for the districts from the legislature. She outlined her goals, as NRCD Manager, for the districts.

Lucinda Earven and John Ladd attended the International Boundary Water Commission meeting in Douglas September 19, 2013.

Rachel Thomas and Deborrah Smith met with Tim Shannon, District Manager and Dennis Syliva, Associate District Manager, BLM-Gila District. A copy of the District's comment letter on the San Pedro RNCA was provided and there was a discussion about the District's intent to initiate coordination with the BLM on the plan. Deborah presented an extensive report on the continual hurdles from the BLM for a brush control project on the Mike Hayhurst BLM allotment.

District is Currently Dealing with Four Federal Actions

(1) The BLM planning effort for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area continues. BLM states it will encompass all public lands within the SPRNCA and possibly additional lands within the watershed identified through scoping and considered during the planning process.

Preliminary issues identified include the following:

- Geographic extent of the planning area (planning area boundary)
- Desired future conditions for water quantity
- Desired future conditions for riparian and upland plant communities
- Management of riparian vegetation along the San Pedro River
- SPRNCA's designation as a Globally Important Bird Area
- Areas open and closed to grazing
- Use restrictions for resource protection
- Management of resources near the urban interface

(2) **The USFWS has extended the comment period to December 17, 2013** for two of the three recently released proposed wolf actions. The two actions extended are the proposal to list the Mexican gray wolf as an endangered subspecies and to delist the gray wolf. The other proposal is to revise the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican gray wolf. A USFWS public meeting pertaining to the wolf issue has also now been scheduled in Arizona December 3, 2013, 6 p.m. at the Hon -Dah Conference Center, 777 Highway 260, Pinetop, Arizona. The comment period for the Environmental Impact Statement for the Nonessential Experimental Population has closed.

(3) The USFWS has released a proposed rule to list the yellow-billed cuckoo in the western portion of the United States, Canada and Mexico as a threatened distinct vertebrate population segment. The San Pedro riparian area is included as part of the habitat. **Comments are due by no later than December 2, 2013.**

By Suzanne Arnold, Sierra Vista Historical Society

A Smithsonian exhibition, Journey Stories, is currently visiting six Arizona communities during 2013 and 2014. The event in Sierra Vista is sponsored by the Henry Hauser Museum with the exhibition being organized by Nancy Krieski, curator of the Museum. This will be in Sierra Vista from Feb. 22, 2014 – April 6, 2014. Cochise County's Journey Stories will be exhibited on large banners which will be placed in the Sierra Vista Library and the Ethel Berger Center. There will also be an exhibition of local historic artifacts.

The Hereford NRCD will sponsor seven banners, four on the history of ranching and three on rangeland conservation. The ranching banners give information on ranching from the era of Father Kino who introduced cattle into the area through modern day ranching.

The three range conservation banners focus on the use of Spike 20 herbicide treatment, mechanical treatment and erosion control structures. Mike and Jeannie Hayhurst have used the herbicide Spike 20P on their Brookline Ranch to eradicate brush, enabling native grasses to return as well as a spring near the Babocamari River. Jack and John Ladd have demonstrated the mechanical treatment of removing mesquites and brush with a bulldozer, clearing nearly 5,000 acres on their San Jose Ranch near Naco. A large area of soil erosion was controlled by a massive spillway built in 1939 on the Cowan NI Ranch on Davis Road east of Tombstone. A Cowan family descendant and current owner, Ruth Evelyn Cowan, repaired the spillway after she bought the ranch in 1994 and it continues to correct erosion to this day.

After completion of the Smithsonian exhibition, the banners will be available for the District to display in offices, libraries, the Cochise County Fair and schools.

As part of the Smithsonian exhibit, a series of presentations will be held in Sierra Vista in March. Mike Hayhurst will give a talk and power point presentation on range conservation being accomplished on the Brookline ranch on March 16, 2014 at 1:00 P.M.

Many thanks and much appreciation go to Rachel Thomas and Ruth Evelyn Cowan for their photos and participation in the preparation of the text for the banners. A big thank you also to all who loaned photos: Jack Ladd, Mike Hayhurst, Frank Krentz, Fred Davis, and Bess Shugart .

Editor's Note: Rachel Thomas says the District owes Suzanne Arnold a big thank you for the many, many, many hours she has spent assembling the information for the ranching and conservation banners. The initial plan was for one banner on the history of ranching. With Suzanne's dedication and assistance it has expanded to the seven banners.

New District Faces

Ruth Evelyn Cowan owns the NI Ranch located near Davis Road east of Tombstone, AZ where she raises brahma and crossbred cattle. She purchased the ranch from her parents in 1994. There was a discussion with Amber Morin, AZ State Land NRCD Manager at the October District meeting regarding an individual being a cooperator in two districts. Amber stated there was no problem for a person who owns property in two districts being a cooperator and receiving conservation support in two districts. However, the person would only be able to vote in the district where they are a registered voter.

Jason and Stacy Pickett have recently taken over operating the family's Brent Mott Ranch from Stacy's parents, Don and Linda Mott. The Picketts are raising cattle and horses. The Brent Mott Ranch is located off Highway 92 near Palominas, AZ and was originally part of the Greene Cattle Company. The ranch's founder, Brent Mott, served on the Board of Supervisors of the HNRCD from June, 1950 through May, 1974—18 years! Jason and Stacy have two children, Ashley and Paul who are the fifth generation to be at the ranch.

Sierra Vista resident **Kathy Morris** has joined the HNRCD as Board Clerk. Kathy buckarooed five years in the ION region (where Idaho, Oregon, and Nevada join) then moved to the west central mountains of Idaho and continued riding for two grazing associations on the Payette and Boise National Forests for another 18 years.

A severely broken leg in 2003 forced her cowgirl retirement. She moved to Sonoita, AZ in 2006 and had the opportunity to live on the Crown C Ranch and work at Desert Rose Horse Farm.

She's excited to be at your service at the Hereford NRCD.

Mary Darling and Brad Fulk answering student questions during lunch.



Photo by Rachel Thomas

Antelope sighted during the workshop day.



Photo by Rachel Thomas

TOMBSTONE HIGH SCHOOL FFA ANTELOPE PROGRAM

The Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District (District) with the support of Mary Darling, Darling Geomatics and Brad Fulk, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) sponsored a workshop about antelope and their habitat for the Tombstone Agriculture class and FFA (FFA) October 10, 2013. The FFA will gather and record data to support the AGFD program to supplement the dwindling herd of antelope north and south of Highway 82 in the Sonoita/Elgin area.

This one day visit to the field allowed students to view a herd of antelope bedded down, motionless, then up and running full speed as they moved off across a rolling hill. The students learned about some of the different types of habitat used by antelope and also toured a heavily vegetated riparian area. Students also collected water samples and learned about pH and alkalinity preferences of antelope. In the next two years the students will gather information and develop and maintain data on the antelope movements, using information from the GPS collars to track habitat use, water source and quality, and fawning site selection and fawning survival.

AGFD, with the support of the Arizona Antelope Foundation, has been planning for the relocation of antelope into the area since 2011. Antelope will be relocated from New Mexico and northern Arizona. The antelope will come from areas where there are more antelope than optimum for the habitat to support current herd sizes.

With funding grants from AGFD and the Cochise Community Foundation, the District is able to provide support to both the AGFD program and the FFA program. Funds were obtained from the Arizona Community Foundation to purchase four of the twenty GPS collars which will be placed on the antelope at the time of relocation and used for tracking the movement of the antelope. The funds from the AGFD grant will be used for travel expenses for FFA members to make trips to the area to gather the follow-up information for AGFD.

Another visit is being planned for the FFA students to visit the release area the first part of December.

To gain additional support for this program the Tombstone FFA applied for and was granted the National FFA LTS Environmental Grant for support of the antelope monitoring program. This antelope program for the FFA is the only program of its kind in the nation.

This trip to the field for the antelope program occurred just before Kelly Lyda, Tombstone Ag teacher and seven FFA students attended the National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky October 28-November 2. The students, along with 56,000 attendees from across the nation and Puerto Rico attended educational and business sessions at the convention and toured historical sites in Louisville such as Churchill Downs, Fort Knox, and the Australian Adventure Zoo.

Students at the Empire Ranch, Sonoita



Photo by Rachel Thomas

Getting a briefing before spotting antelope



Photo by Rachel Thomas

Antelope Release Dates

On January 15th the AGFD plan to release antelope in two locations in the Sonoita/Elgin area.

- South of Sonoita on the Babocamari Ranch along SR 83
- In the San Rafael Valley on the USFS on the Vaca Ranch.

On January 27th/28th the AGFD plans to release antelope

- on the Rose Tree Ranch off the upper Elgin Road, south of SR 82
- on the Empire Ranch on the north side of SR 82.

All release dates will be weather permitting.

Cochise County Fair

How well do “kids” like to color? If this year’s Cochise County Fair is any indication—a lot! Among the many handouts at the NRCD/NRCS fair booth this year were 8 1/2 x 11 sheets with outlines of just about everything imaginable connected with agriculture and/or nature. John Lohse, HNRCD Supervisor and fair booth coordinator, said he started out with approximately 4,000 sheets and crayons to go with them. They only made it through the first two days. Volunteers came to the rescue and made some extra copies. The HNRCD booth also featured a candy bowl and not surprisingly, the candy went the same way. Also popular with people were the “stress balls”—this year they were cowboy hats.

John thanks the people that helped him man the booth, including the Tombstone High School FFA students that spent time at the booth.



Photo by Rachel Thomas

Tombstone High School FFA Students

After serving bar-b-q to attendees at the AZNRCD Summer Conference the students took a moment for a photo with faculty advisor, Kelly Lyda (center) in front of the Brown Canyon ranch house.

(left to right)

Amber McClanhan, Alicia Allen, Emily Addington, Jace Jacobs, Casey Harris, Alyssa Dryer, Tabytha Friend



Photo by Kathy Morris

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BOARD MEETINGS

**Third Wednesday of every month
 9:30 AM**

**Sierra Vista Cochise County
 Complex Conference Room
 Hwy 92 and Foothills Drive, Sierra Vista**

Note: Date, location and time is subject to change.
 We invite District Cooperators and the general
 public's attendance

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