

Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District

CONSERVING - PROTECTING - PRACTICING WISE USE



April, 2016 Newsletter



Photo by Kathy Morris

Board of Supervisors

CHAIRMAN

Jim Lindsey

520.559.0715

shtl@mindspring.com

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Rachel Thomas

520.456.1008

badgerall@earthlink.net

SECRETARY

Lucinda Earven

520. 456.2024

hossdvm@yahoo.com

SUPERVISOR

John Lohse

520. 234.5452

2747jrl@gmail.com

SUPERVISOR

John Ladd

520.456.5938

sjranch@wildblue.net

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

If You Are a Large Land Owner or Have Allotments That Could Use Some Range Restoration, Please Contact the Hereford NRCD.

The Arizona Rangeland Conservation Partnership is still being hammered out between AACD, NRCS and BLM, but the 6.5 million dollars over the next five years would be a blessing for the Hereford District. The application is still being worked on, but we are sure it will have some NRCS components. They are trying to stream line the application. The folks at AACD are working hard with the producers in mind. We are looking at 2017 for our District to receive some of the funding.

Another big natural landscape conservation project is a federal, state and local effort to help the landscapes in the Hereford and Santa Cruz Districts. The SENTINEL LANDSCAPES project is in the planning stage as well.

There are monies available now from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for rangeland improvements.

Bottom line: If you are interested in range land improvements such as brush treatment, erosion control, fencing, water improvements, etc. for your operation, you need to contact us, so that we can get you on the list. Now is the time to get all your ducks (COWS) in a row, so that when the gates open, you are ready to go.



hereford_nrcd@juno.com

www.herefordnrcd.com

520.220.2028

PO Box 3361

Sierra Vista, AZ 85636



NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

Donald Decker

520.364.2001

donald.decker@az.usda.gov

**Working Together to Enhance
Our Natural Resources**

Arizona Statewide Water Use Survey

The Food Resource Group (an Arizona Non-Profit) piloted an Arizona statewide telephonic survey conducted by Public Opinion Strategies July, 2015 and compiled some interesting data concerning water usage in the state. The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 4%.

Voters widely approve of the job the AZ Department of Water Resources is doing managing the state's water supply with *somewhat approve* (44%) being the largest percentage and *strongly disapprove* (9%) being the smallest percentage.

There was total support for landowner's right to drill their own wells for access to groundwater (80%) and spending more tax dollars to build water storage dams and pipelines (73%). Interestingly, those surveyed approved of more laws and regulations to 1) provide more water for fish and wildlife in rivers and streams (72%) and 2) requiring more water conservation by homeowners (69%).

More than eight out of ten voters said they are concerned about the availability of water for Arizona's farms and ranches with 41% being *very concerned* and just 3% *not at all concerned*. Across the state there was a 66% approval of the job Arizona's farmers and ranchers are doing in managing water resources.

Again, more laws and regulations came into play with voters favoring that for requiring more water conservation by farmers and ranchers (61%) and to limit water used for growth and development (55%). However, voters were against more laws and regulations to limit the use of water by farmers and ranchers (57%), and were opposed to transferring water from Arizona's farmers and ranchers to provide more water for homes (63%).

A majority of voters felt Arizona's groundwater resources are insufficient for the next decade and they agreed overwhelmingly to first curtail water use on private lawns and golf courses (95%). Voters said, should California declare a water shortage, they would rather pay California's costs of desalinization than reduce Arizona's agricultural use of the Colorado River.

The bottom line is that Arizona voters are friendly towards the state's farmers and ranchers. Two-thirds of the voters approve of the job the agricultural industry is doing in managing water and do not believe the industry should be among the first to sacrifice if there is a water shortage.

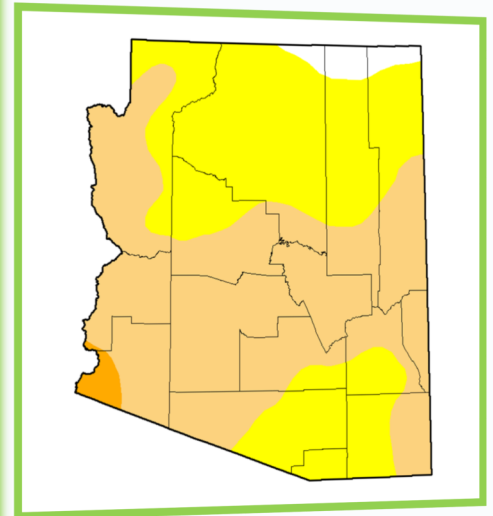
Short-Term Drought Status Report

The dryness from February has continued unabated through March, moving much of the state from *no drought* or *abnormally dry* conditions to *moderate drought*. At the end of February 31% of the state had *no drought*, but by the end of March only 2.5% had *no drought*. *Abnormally dry* or worse conditions jumped from 69% at the end of February to 98% at the end of March, while *moderate drought* jumped from 16% to 54% during the month of March.

We are now moving into the dry spring season, and fire danger will be increasing as the early winter precipitation and the recent warm temperatures have increased the fire danger in both the grasslands and the forests.

(Summary produced by the State Drought Monitoring Technical Committee—April 4, 2016)

On the Arizona map (right) bright yellow denotes *abnormally dry* and light brown denotes *moderate drought*.



April is Water Awareness Month (WAM)

Please visit waterawarenessmonth.com for up-to-date and helpful information on just about anything and everything to do with water in Arizona.

Highlights on this informative web page are: [Activities-Events-Programs](#) (learn about classes, workshops, events and programs), [Appliances-Fixtures-Equipment](#) (learn how to select water efficient appliances and equipment, [Irrigation and Plant Watering](#) (learn how to correctly water plants and to install efficient irrigation systems, [Plants and Landscape Design](#) (learn about the hundreds of beautiful, low water use plants available for landscaping), [Supply-Environment-Quality](#) (use these resources to find out where your water comes from and learn more about water quality, the water/energy nexus, riparian areas and drought in our state), and [Water Basics](#) (learn about your water footprint and what you can do to use water more efficiently).

Arizona Legislature Passes NRCD Bill

The NRCD program was created to restore, conserve, and protect the state's natural resources to promote the health, safety and welfare of the public. There are currently 32 NRCDs and 24 education centers in Arizona that are managed and funded by the State Land Department.

The legislature recently passed SB 1190 which provides methods for natural resource conservation district education centers to increase knowledge of natural resources within the state through the following methods:

- Offering technical guidance and training to agricultural producers
- Publishing scholarly materials
- Providing educational and training opportunities, both inside and outside of the district
- Conducting or sponsoring scientific studies that affect natural resources in the state

This valuable bill for the NRCDs was co-sponsored by Senator Gail Griffin and Senator Barbara McGuire.

Arizona Association of Conservation Districts Winter Meeting

The AACD Winter and Legislative Meeting was held January 26 and 27, 2016 in Phoenix, AZ. This year's keynote speakers were Arizona BLM Director Ray Suazo, Arizona State Forester Jeff Whitney and Arizona NRCS Director Keisha Tatum. The program was co-hosted by Bill Dunn, AACD President and Steve Barker, AACD Executive Director

Ray Suazo discussed multiple use on BLM lands and that not every use is appropriate to every acre of BLM land. He stressed multiple use. He wants input from the stakeholders but he wants people to understand why it is important to get cattle out of the drainage in a timely manner—that is, while good forage still exists. Being an election year this is a transition year for BLM. Ray has told his colleagues they should focus on their core workload—the workload that will *be there* legally regardless of politics. He wants the BLM prepared for the demands on BLM land in 2025. Those demands are different now than they were 10 years ago and will be different again in 10 years from now.

Jeff Whitney spoke about a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Forestry and Arizona State Lands Department. He wants to encourage enhancements and restoration of watersheds. He reminded the listeners State Trust Lands generate dollars for public schools. He said the culture of the agency was not to spend dollars on the ground but he wants that to change. Finding money to work on the ground is part of his job. Landscape scale, cross boundary forest projects at all elevations across the State

are being considered. Landscape scale, cross boundary is the new way things are being looked at in Washington, D.C., although budgets are limited and there is fiscal tension.

Keisha Tatem spoke of the NRCS budget and budget related items. Earlier in January there was a dust conference—the Air Quality Initiative has approximately \$25 million for the country. Arizona and California are the #1 priorities. Under the National Water Quality Initiative each state lists watersheds that need attention. This year it is Coyote Creek and a drainage on the San Pedro River. Keisha ended with the deliberation that the relationship between the NRCDs and the NRCS needs to be defined.

Save the Date – August 9-11, 2016

The Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) will hold their Summer Board of Directors Meeting and Training Conference on August 11-13, 2016 at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort. The resort is located 25 miles east of Flagstaff on I 40; 350 miles from Sierra Vista.

The conference will focus on Arizona's Forests. AACD is partnering with the Arizona State Forester to put together a panel of speakers to launch a statewide partnership between Arizona's Conservation Districts, private landowners, forest industry, the State, Federal, and Tribal agencies, conservation and producer organizations, and others that want to get to work in Arizona's forests and woodlands.

Visit our website at www.herefordnrcd.com for registration details and more information.

The Coronado Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Area is alive and well with projects in the books to assure existence until at least 2019. The Coronado RC&D serves five counties in South-eastern Arizona; Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pima and Santa Cruz, and searches for grants as funding for many conservation-minded projects.

Annual membership is \$150.00 and members can benefit from the RC&D's excellent reputation with several State Agencies and close relationship with the University of Arizona Extension Office should any regional grant opportunities arise. Contact the Coronado RC&D office at 450 South Haskell Avenue, Willcox, AZ 85643 or 520-766-3607.




(Reprinted with permission from the Willcox San Simon NRCD February, 2016 Newsletter.)

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 425 Allen Street • P.O. Box 68
 Tombstone, Arizona 85638
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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 and participation.

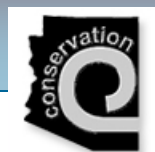
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HEREFORD NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
PO Box 3361
Sierra Vista, AZ 85636



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