

# Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District



CONSERVING - PROTECTING - PRACTICING WISE USE



## November, 2016 Newsletter

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*We are not supposed to be political from the seat of our position within the Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District. So these comments are from me personally.*

There is a change in the winds in Washington D.C. I hope we feel at least a breeze way down here at this level. I will be optimistic and patient for that breeze. The hope is that some of the federal agencies that come into play with the future of our local recourses will hear and be sensitive to the needs of our natural resources and the people that use them. In the past it has been a frustrating road to travel.

It will be another great day when the Supreme Court and other federal and state courts have a few constitutional thinking people to bring it back to a more even keel.

After the dust had settled on Election Day, rural America finally stood up and said enough is enough. The last eight years obviously were not working for the country, so why continue in the same direction. Another ten trillion in debt and what did we have to show for it. We were on a course to implode. It will take some time to fix.

Now we need to work together to make this country safe for the citizens. Be a producing country, so that we can employ our citizens and regain the confidence of our elected policy makers and not be sold out for the personal gains. By making the people proud of being a productive part of America will fix a lot of the problems that we see across our country.

I was watching a program the other night about what our troops that are in combat go through, not only in a fire fight but when they come back to so called normal life. We need to thank our servicemen and women—a great big THANK YOU for putting their lives at risk to defend our country.

As for the hard working volunteer board members, advisors and members of the Hereford NRCDC, we have worked toward and keep in mind our mission: *working together to enhance our natural resources.*

Within that we must make the best decisions for the people in our District that are economically feasible and environmentally responsible.

## **Border Brush Management Tour**

### **By Dusty Glidewell, NRCS**

Brush management is an ongoing conservation effort that is being implemented throughout southern Arizona. Decades-long fire suppression, overgrazing, and other socio-economic considerations have led to the widespread encroachment of woody species onto historic grasslands in this area. Extended periods of drought combined with increased pressure from invasive woody species have created an unhealthy watershed, which historically yielded high forage producing grasslands. These invasive woody species have displaced desirable grass species, altering ecological processes that promote healthy and productive grasslands. More recent activities along the U.S./Mexico border have further contributed to the decreased condition of these once fertile grasslands. Woody species encroachment and the conversion from grasslands to shrub lands will continue at an increased pace if left untreated. The untreated areas will continue to contribute to accelerated soil erosion, reduced water infiltration, diminished habitat for grassland dependent wildlife species, spread of noxious weeds, and reduced forage quantity and quality for both wildlife and livestock.

Traditionally, mechanical brush management has been an effective tool for grassland restoration but it is difficult to apply on a large scale. These methods require a great deal of input, including planning and implementation costs, labor, money, and time. A more feasible method of brush control was needed to continue this effort of restoring these historic grasslands. Aerial chemical brush control has been used in New Mexico and Texas for over 30 years but is fairly new to Arizona. In an effort to further explore the applications of aerial chemical brush control in Arizona and to promote a diversified ecosystem for the health of both livestock and wildlife, Arizona's conservation partners developed the Grassland Restoration Project. This project was initiated by a workgroup that consists of members representing Iroquois LLC, Whitewater Draw and Hereford NRCD's, NRCS, Crop Production Services, and Dow AgroSciences. The project was proposed to various agencies and organizations as a joint effort to address a number of resource concerns. The workgroup identified a focus area along the U.S./Mexico border where the health of native grasslands has greatly diminished over the past several decades. The objectives of this project were to address identified resource concerns through aerial application of chemicals specifically targeting invasive woody species, to promote sound rangeland management principles, and to determine the effects of chemical mesquite suppression on grassland recovery in southeastern Arizona.

On October 13, 2016 the Hereford and Whitewater Draw Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCD's) hosted a workshop that highlighted these recent grassland restoration efforts to suppress invasive shrub species along the U.S./Mexico border. The purpose of this workshop was to bring conservation partners together and share what the workgroup learned about the chemical suppression of

invasive woody species in southeastern Arizona. Thanks to the planning and coordinating committee, consisting primarily of Gerry Gonzalez, Dusty Glidewell, and John Ladd, this meeting was a great success with over 100 participants attending the morning session and over 50 participants attending the afternoon session. Participants included both American and Mexican ranchers, cattle grower's associations, various Federal and State land management agencies, several conservation partners, Cochise County supervisors and employees, and members of the public.

In the morning session, participants heard from brush control experts, partners involved in the project, and other supporters of grassland restoration efforts. Following introductions and welcomes, participants learned about similar conservation efforts being done by our Mexican counterparts in the effort of grassland restoration. Dr. Kirk McDaniel walked us through the history and future of brush control and shared details about woody species suppression in arid regions. He also discussed the trials and tribulations involved in bringing the practice of chemical mesquite control to southern Arizona. Pat Call and John Ladd shared a video of some of the brush control treatments applied as part of the Grassland Restoration Project. We also heard from other members of the workgroup, various agencies involved in the project, and other partners.

The hosts of this workshop provided home-made breakfast pastries, refreshments, and a delicious lunch all catered by Bailey's BBQ and Bistro LLC from Douglas, Arizona. Participants got the opportunity to network as they enjoyed their lunch. Jack Ladd, a long-time local rancher, received a plack from the Grassland Restoration Project Workgroup for his longstanding commitment to and support of grassland restoration efforts in southeastern Arizona. Sky Guardian was also there to support restoration efforts and to promote their new UAV monitoring technology.

The afternoon session consisted of a bus tour of the Grassland Restoration Project focus area, which provided participants with the opportunity to see these restoration efforts first hand. At the first stop, the Ladd Ranch, participants walked through thick grass in a previous mesquite treatment area. At the second stop, the Bisbee Airport, participants learned about the type and amount of chemicals being used to suppress invasive woody species. Barry Wallace and Richard LaCasse walked them through the process of chemical brush management and answered numerous questions about the project. The bus then slowly drove past other aerial chemical treatments applied through the Grassland Restoration Project before arriving at the last stop, near Douglas, Arizona. Participants got the opportunity to walk through a mesquite treatment that was completed in June of 2016. This treatment was done on land owned by Freeport MacMoran as part of their reclamation efforts.

This workshop, sponsored by local stakeholders, provided participants with several details about what goes into grassland restoration efforts. Various conservation partners and the community were given the opportunity to come

## Border Brush Management Tour, cont.

together in an effort to increase awareness and knowledge of grass-land restoration efforts in southeastern, Arizona. This workshop would not have been possible without the following sponsors: Barry Wallace - CPS Timberland, Dow AgroSciences, Freeport MacMoran, Consul of Mexico, Arizona Community Foundation of Cochise County, Hereford NRC, Whitewater Draw NRC, and Sky Guardian. For highlights from the workshop, check out this video by Pat Call:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRvRv4PHCtA>.



Photo by Xavier Alfaro-Lopez

The first stop on the tour's field trip was the Ladd Ranch. The Ladds applied a new mesquite formula and after a few years of deferment there is a strong understory of perennial and annual grasses creating a mosaic of lush forage.

## State Director of Ag Inspects Faulty Border Fence By Lucinda Earven

The Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District has been in coordination meetings with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) since 2014, as a local governmental agency that was providing economic, cultural and environmental input for the Resource Management Plan (RMP) they are developing for the San Pedro River National Conservation Area (SPRNCA). We were asking that, as they develop their new plan, they consider reinstating managed grazing back on the San Pedro River.

In 1988, when the SPRNCA was established and management taken over by the BLM, almost all cattle were removed and all but four small grazing allotments were banned. The BLM promised to re-visit this issue in 15 years - it's been 28 years. The Hereford NRC, its supervisors and advisors, maintain that managed grazing would help prevent trespass cattle from Mexico, thus potential introduction of disease, devastating fires along the river, and better border security.

Because of the BLM's continuing reluctance to consider this alternative, we enlisted the help of the Arizona State Director of Agriculture, Mark Killian and Governor Ducey's Natural Resource Advisor, Hunter Moore, who accepted our invitation to come to Cochise County on Aug. 31, 2016, to inspect the dilapidated fence on the river at the Mexican border. The Hereford NRC hosted a lunch at the Turquoise Country Club afterwards to discuss concerns and observations. Our state leaders were very engaged and asked good questions. We appreciated them taking the time to see, first hand, the potential for disease introduction and taking our concerns back to Phoenix. Whether or not they have any more influence as a state agency with the federal bureaucracy that is the BLM remains to be seen.

Photo by Xavier Alfaro-Lopez

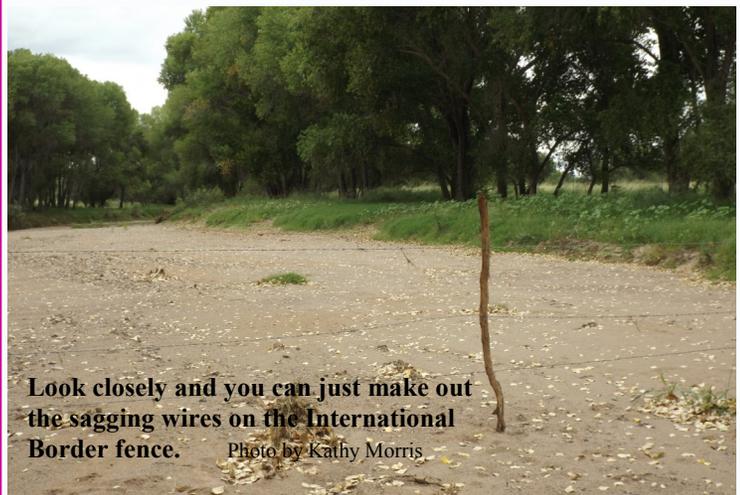


The surrounding area by the slag pile in Douglas shows results after about 5 months of mesquite application. The majority of the mesquite is dead, leaving the succulents such as yucca, unharmed.



Photo by Xavier Alfaro-Lopez

Taking place at the Bisbee Airport, the plane used for aerial spray of Spike and mesquite chemical is shown above. The pilot from Morris Ag Air and representative for Crop Production Services Barry Wallace, were giving an overview of how they properly mix and proportionate the chemicals, as well as how they accurately apply the chemicals using already mapped out coordinates via Geographic Information Systems.



Look closely and you can just make out the sagging wires on the International Border fence. Photo by Kathy Morris

## Thank You!

Hereford NRC Board of Supervisors would like to thank the following cooperators for their up-to-date dues and contributions:

Gail Griffin  
Bill Odle  
Joe & Patty Scelso  
Brian Ulmer

## HORSHOE DRAW UPDATE

In a meeting November 1, 2016 the Cochise County Board of Supervisors approved the acceptance of ownership of the Horseshoe Draw Project upon completion of the construction of the project by the District.

## ***CORRECTION***

The August, 2016 issue contained an article entitled "Our New Mexico Neighbors" and mentioned Caltron County, NM. The correct spelling is Catron.

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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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