

Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District

CONSERVING - PROTECTING - PRACTICING WISE USE



SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER Chairman's Corner

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As I am writing the *Chairman's Corner*, the thunder, wind and rain of our first monsoon is right outside my open door.

First it's the wind and approaching thunder that excites you and the hope that the rain will follow. Then the smell of fresh rain kissing the desert floor. Oh, that smell, you could be deaf and blind and still know what it represents.

Then your thoughts drift to the future rains and how they will wake the sleeping desert. The grasses will take a much needed drink and start to green up. The many flowers will emerge in bright colors. The dry washes will flow with a sudden down pour. All the critters will come alive with the fresh new growth of brush and grasses. The frogs come out from their underground bedrooms and talk about the wonderful rain. The horses will roll in the mud till you swear that is not your horse—whose horse is that? The cows will be roaming with green grasses all about with hearts' content, chewing their cud and a cow smile on their face. The little calves playing with one another, tails straight up in the air.

When you see all of your pastures full of green grasses, you feel a sense of accomplishment from the hard work to rid them of the creosote, tar bush, white thorn and mesquite. Bringing it back to a productive range, not only for the operation, but for the added benefits to our aquifer, wildlife, erosion control and sediment reduction to name a few. Life is good on the Ranch!



Working Together to Enhance Our Natural Resources

Hereford NRCD Welcomes Pat Call as Board Supervisor



Pat Call was appointed by Arizona State Land Department Commissioner Lisa Atkins to fill the vacated Board Supervisor position which became available when Rachel Thomas retired in March, 2018.



Pat Call and his wife, Trish have resided in Sierra Vista since 1951. They have two grown sons, born and raised in Sierra Vista. Pat has a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Biology and he is a Viet Nam era veteran. Pat was a private business owner in Sierra Vista for 35 years. A Republican Party member, Pat is currently serving his fifth term as Cochise County Supervisor for District 1.

Pat was an HNRCD Advisor for many years before becoming a Board Supervisor.

Pat has been instrumentally involved in many area projects and efforts, including:

- ◆ Upper San Pedro Partnership
- ◆ Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network (CCRN)
- ◆ Served on many state and local water and growth task forces/commissions including the Governor's appointee to the Arizona Water Resources Development Committee
- ◆ Border Regions Area Council of the Arizona Office of Homeland Security
- ◆ The establishment of Cochise County's Business Friendly Task Force
- ◆ The Cochise Water Project (TCWP)
- ◆ Rotary Charities, Inc.
- ◆ C.A.N.T.E.R.
- ◆ Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- ◆ Huachucans

Pat has led efforts to bring more County services to the Sierra Vista area such as the County's regional service center on Highway 90; he is a member of the Sierra Vista Rotary Club, and, for over 27 years, has been the chief pyro-technician for the Sierra Vista July 4th fireworks display; he is the volunteer producer, host and co-host of the weekly Friday Morning Focus Show, a three-hour radio program on KTAN showcasing community issues, events and organizations.

Federal News

WOTUS: The EPA and Army Corps of Engineers have sent a new rule defining Waters of the United States (WOTUS) to the Office of Management & Budget (OMB) for review. The new proposed rule would interpret EPA's and the Corps' jurisdiction more narrowly. Scott Pruitt, EPA Administrator, said "we are taking an important step toward issuing a new WOTUS definition and answering President Trump's call to ensure our waters are kept free from pollution, while promoting economic growth, minimizing regulatory uncertainty, and showing due regard for the roles of the federal government and the states under the statutory framework of the Clean Water Act."

Environmental groups have been against changing the 2015 WOTUS rule, including The National Wildlife Federation. They said the announcement of a new rule being sent to OMB "kicks off the administration's plan to roll back Clean Water Act protections for millions of wetland acres and stream miles that have historically been safeguarded under the 1972 Clean Water Act."

USFWS: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has completed initial reviews on petitions to delist the Western Distinct Population Segment of yellow-billed cuckoo. USFWS found the petition presented substantial information and will begin in-depth, scientifically rigorous reviews to determine whether the petitioned actions are warranted.

NEPA: The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is considering updating its implementing regulations for the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Over the past four decades, CEQ has issued numerous guidance documents but has amended its regulations substantively only once. Given the length of time since its NEPA implementing regulations were issued, CEQ solicits public comment on potential revisions to update the regulations and ensure a more efficient, timely, and effective NEPA process consistent with the national environmental policy stated in NEPA.

San Pedro River National Conservation Area (SPRNCA)

June 29, 2018 is the SPRNCA Resource Management Plan (RMP) draft release date. There will be a 90 day comment period after the release. August 6th at 9:30 a.m. a special HNRCD/BLM question and answer meeting will be held at the USFS/BLM building on 4070 S. Avenida Saracino, Hereford. There will be public meetings at the Sierra Vista Police Station, 911 N. Coronado Drive, July 30th and August 22nd, 5:30-7 p.m. Another public meeting will be in Benson, 5:30-7 p.m. on August 8th at the Benson Fire Department Station 71, 375 E. 7th

Drought

By Steven M Barker—Arizona Association of Conservation Districts.

Drought is the lack of effective precipitation. But there are different kinds of drought. The kind of drought is determined by the intended beneficial use of the water.

Soil moisture droughts affects plant production. Soil moisture droughts occur when adequate soil moisture is not available during the growing season. Depending on where you are in the state, that might occur due to a lack of rain during the growing season, or due to a lack of rain or snow during the winter.

Soil moisture droughts may be seasonal – like a dry summer. Or they may last longer and result in the mortality of perennial plants. Soil moisture droughts can also be caused by poor distribution of precipitation events – when all the effective moisture comes in one storm event instead of spreading out through the season or year.

Soil moisture droughts not only affects the amount of vegetation production, but also the amount of vegetation cover, which impacts how much precipitation can be captured from the next storm. It also affects the potential for new plants to germinate.

From a conservation perspective, the management strategy during soil moisture droughts is simply to keep the ground covered. The focus of management is to make sure every possible acre has as much vegetation cover as possible to capture the next big storm event. That typically means hauling water to areas where there is still good vegetation, moving animals to holding areas, and feeding them, or renting pasture somewhere else.

Surface water droughts occur when the normal runoff into washes and rivers is significantly reduced. Surface water drought occurs when the runoff into streams, ponds, lakes and reservoirs is not adequate to meet the demands for various uses.

Localized surface water droughts may just mean a few ranchers do not have any water in ponds for their livestock. More widespread surface water drought impact reservoirs that supply water to cities, or reduce the flow in rivers that is needed to support aquatic species.

Groundwater droughts occur when the amount of water infiltrating down into the groundwater tables declines significantly. When groundwater recharge is not keeping up with groundwater withdrawals, whether because of drought or over-pumping, the water table declines. The result is an increase in pumping depth and costs, the potential for wells to go dry, and the potential for land subsidence which can create large fissures. It can also result in springs drying up.

Very little if any of the precipitation at lower elevations gets into the groundwater table, where evapotranspiration exceeds precipitation amounts. Most groundwater recharge is from snowmelt at the higher elevations in Arizona. Groundwater replenishment comes from long periods of water soaking into the ground. This recharge mostly occurs from long, slow snowmelt on north facing slopes, from water infiltration under perennial lakes, rivers and streams, or from streams that flow for long periods of time during snowmelt.

U. S. Drought Monitor—Arizona

The Arizona Drought Monitoring Technical Committee confers weekly to advise the U.S. Drought Monitor authors on the current drought conditions in Arizona, and makes recommendations about the position of the drought boundaries for Arizona. The U.S. Drought Monitor is the official record of drought for Federal drought relief claims. Information used by the MTC in advising the Drought Monitor authors includes numerous drought indices, precipitation and stream flow data, and impacts data. Every Thursday, the Drought Status web page automatically updates with the latest U.S. Drought Monitor map of Arizona.

As of their latest report, a vast portion of AZ is in *extreme drought*, with the HNRCD varying between *moderate drought* to *abnormally dry*. These conditions have been in existence since the first of 2018.

There is a growing wildfire danger due to the continued dry and hot conditions, and many parks and forests are closed for recreational activity.

Early signs of the monsoon season are appearing in the southeast corner of Arizona.

Do your rain dances and pray for the monsoons!

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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.

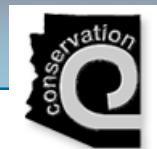
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