

Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner

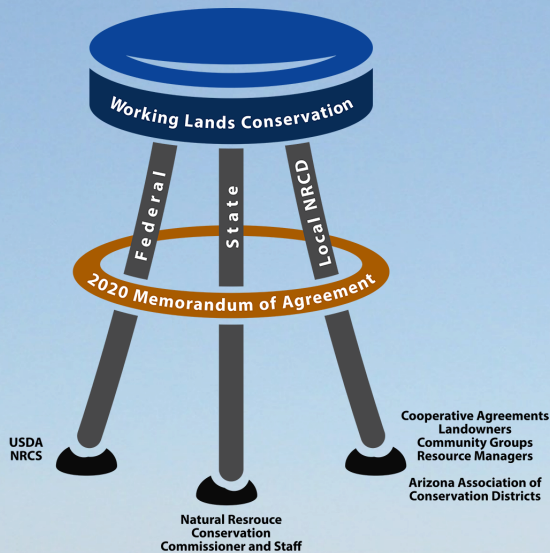
Lisa A. Atkins

2020 Annual Report



Structure and Approach to Conservation

Arizona's population is rising. Around 18% of land is privately owned, 27% is owned by tribes, State lands are about 12% and the remaining 42% is federally owned. We need landowners that can collaborate with multiple entities to work on projects and land management practices that conserve natural resources in Arizona.



Collaboration is a three-legged stool

- Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner provides district administration, funding, assistance, and training
- Natural Resource Conservation Service provides planning and technical assistance, cost-share programs and inspections
- Local Natural Resource Conservation Districts identify and prioritize resource concerns and use a voluntary, incentive-based approach to engage landowners

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION COMMISSIONER

The Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner administers and coordinates districts throughout the state as directed ARS 37-1013.

This is done by:

- Providing financial and operational support to Arizona's 32 Natural Resource Conservation Districts
- Design efficient program and policy structures that engage participation and deliver conservation results
- Coordinating and promoting conservation district services; providing operation oversight and administration; overseeing district elections

⇒ About the Arizona State Land Department:

<http://land.az.gov>

⇒ About the Natural Resource Conservation Districts:

<https://land.az.gov/our-agency-mission/supported-programs>



Natural Resource Conservation Districts

For more than 75 years, conservation districts have served as trusted, non-regulatory partners who engage landowners in conservation.

Each county is represented by at least one conservation district. Conservation district supervisors live where they work, making them the local experts of the landscape and people.

Conservation districts:

- Assess local natural resource needs and assist in planning projects to deliver voluntary conservation
- Facilitate guided tours and education outreach of land conservation projects and practices
- Develop relationships with local landowners



Examples of conservation projects include:

- Controlled burns and hazardous fuel mitigation
- Riparian restoration and maintenance
- Leveling fields for water conservation
- Improving wildlife habitat
- Forest and rangeland health
- Soil stabilization

The function of the Natural Resource Conservation District is to take available technical, financial, and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinating them so that they meet the needs of the local land user for conservation of soil, water and related resources.





AGUA FRIA-NEW RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Cliff Amator

Vice Chair: Mike Moore

Phone Number: 602-390-3167

Email Address: afnr.nrcd@gmail.com

Legislative District: 1, 4, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, & 27-30

Congressional District: 4, & 6-9

Acres: 879,880

2020 Accomplishments

The Arizona State Envirothon's goal is to educate youth about the nature of our resources and what they can do for the conservation and environmental protection of these resources, and to facilitate a natural resource education program through a training workshop and annual competition. This program is part of North America's largest high school educational environmental competition.

Project summary and results:

Due to the COVID pandemic, the Envirothon Committee worked diligently throughout the year to develop a virtual competition. The University of Arizona was a tremendous help with this effort. On April 9, 2021, the AZ State Envirothon held a virtual competition. Nine teams participated in the event.

Students had to take an online test on the four primary topics, which include soil, forestry, wildlife, and water. They also submitted their oral presentation (via video) the week before. This year's focus issue for the orals was: 'Water Resource Management: Local Control and Local Solutions.'

Trivium Preparatory Academy took top honors in this year's competition.



Above : 2019 gathering of all competitive teams in Arizona
Below: Tri-City winners in 2019

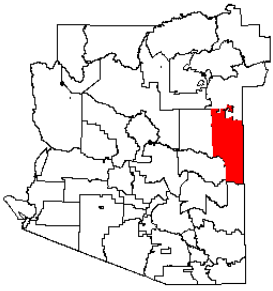


Key Partners:

Agua Fria-New River NRCDC, Salt River Project, University of Arizona, Tucson Electric Power/Unisource Energy Services, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, Central Arizona Project, Waste Management, Arizona Public Service, Arizona Soil and Water Conservation Society, Creative Plants, Smithfield Foods, SWCA Environmental Consultants, Big Sandy NRCDC, West Pinal NRCDC

MORE WORK TO DO

- Water conservation management program
- Reduce the amount of farm water use by the end of the fiscal year 2020
- To achieve a higher degree of efficiency in water management



APACHE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Daric Knight

Vice Chair: Macky Trickey, Jr.

Phone Number: 928-333-4941 ext. 106

Email Address: sharon.fisher@az.nacdnet.net

Legislative District: 6 & 7

Congressional District: 1

Acres: 2,549,624

2020 Accomplishments

The district assists with Natural Resource Conservation Service to help cooperators carry out many conservation programs. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) has several cooperators signed up to assist with a project located north of Lyman Lake that will help lessen excessive sediment loads from Coyote Creek Watershed. We have received multiple funding from both NRCS and ADEQ and continue to work with producers and the Forest Service to addressing erosion and natural resource issues related to sedimentation in the watershed. WE reach cooperators in our semi-annual newsletter, highlighting this project and other District accomplishments.

Project summary and results:

Grassland Restoration North of Lyman Lake – RCPP provided an avenue to meet our need for brush management and begin the process of grassland restoration. These programs allowed us to better utilize our existing resources and provided additional flexibility for grazing management. In our Lyman Lake North RCPP, the current contracts cover approximately 70,000 acres.

Key Partners:

USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service, Arizona Game and Fish, USDA-Forest Service, University of Arizona Extension Service, Arizona Water Quality, Arizona State Land Department, Towns of Eagar, Springerville and St. Johns, US Fish & Wildlife, AZ Association of Conservation Districts, Apache County



Erosion on Coyote Creek bank



Juniper push to improve forage



A land plane, used to level fields for sediment control

Other Accomplishments

Scholarship - It's important to inform the youth of agriculture. The money goes to students who demonstrate an interest in agriculture related subjects. For example; welding, business.

The majority of students attend a college of their choice, and the funds are sent directly to the school on behalf on the student.



Certified Welder – Tulsa Welding School

MORE WORK TO DO

- To remove sediment from Lyman Lake is the focus of the district for the next few years



BIG SANDY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Anita Waite

Vice Chair: Beatrice Zueger

Phone Number: 928-765-2397

Email Address: bigsandynrcd@gmail.com

Legislative District: 5 & 7

Congressional District: 1 & 4

Acres: 4,932,543

2020 Accomplishments

NEPA & Needs Assessment Planning

We are developing a plan to address water shortages through watershed and riparian restoration, flood control and other conservation practices. This is a multi-year, multi-agency project. The objective is to coordinate and collaborate with multiple partners for a long-range management plan to address water shortages over 4,932,543 acres. We have eight watersheds, and we will be addressing each one. First, we will finish the needs assessment and programmatic NEPA so we can receive BLM permits; then we will look for funding.



Antelope, wildlife that will benefit from resource planning

The District also hosted a **Programs & Grants for Farmers & Ranchers** workshop to educate farmers and ranchers on available programs and resources for funding and technical support. Feedback received was that it was useful with a lot of information about programs they were not aware of. More than one participant voiced their appreciation for this workshop.



When our range is healthy, the opportunity for a beautiful array of flowers

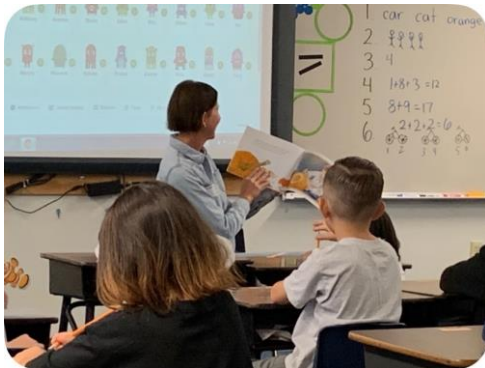
Key Partners:

Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Service - Kingman office, Arizona Game & Fish Department, United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Arizona Department of Water Resources, Bureau of Land Management, Freeport MacMoRan



Participants of the workshop

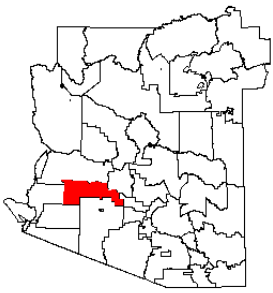
Education Center



1. Website with specific information about the district resources
2. Participation and/or partnership with other resource education programs by enhancing and adding to existing programs from our natural resource district perspective.
3. Natural resource monitoring education for ranchers, farmers and other interested groups
4. Education pertaining to the Federal Endangered Species as well as mitigation necessary or desirable for our District.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Consultant goes into each classroom; leaving educational materials
- We would like to increase the number of classrooms and students participating over the next few years
- Our district will introduce K-2 children to Agriculture. If funding increases, more classrooms and grades will be included



BUCKEYE VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Rayanne L Leister **Vice Chair:** Ella Pierpoint

Phone Number: 623-694-4701

Email Address: rayannel@yahoo.com

Legislative District: 4, 5, 13, & 19

Congressional District: 3, 4, & 8

Acres: 1,375,460

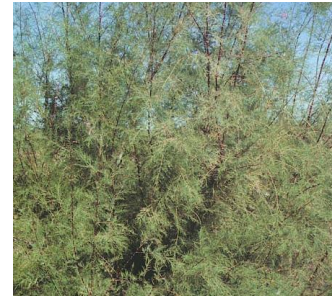
2020 Accomplishments

Salt Cedar Removal in the Gila River - Salt cedars (Tamarisk) are an invasive species that have taken over our rivers and low-lying areas. They pose a flood and fire hazard. If nothing is done to correct this, eventual loss of life and property will ensue. District board members have attended meetings with the Lower Gila River collaborative in order to involve all stakeholders in creating a joint management plan. Buckeye Mayor Jackie Meck has stated, "Restoring the Gila River to its natural habitat will remain a top priority for me."

Our District is working with NRCS to develop a **Resource Needs Assessment**. This will identify areas that require flood control, invasive species eradication and/or water conservation across the 1,375,000+ acres of the district. Our goal is to inventory all local resources and challenge - whether it is water use, flood control, groundwater, pollution, or urban sprawl onto prime farmland, and to educate the general public on conservation issues.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona State Land Department, Local Government, Local NRCS, University of Arizona, US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Agricultural Research Service



Salt Cedar – an invasive species

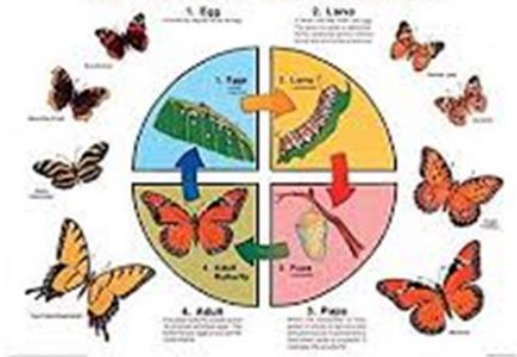


Salt Cedar Removal



Avondale Fire

Life Cycle of the Butterfly



Buckeye Valley Conservation Education Center

- Increase awareness of resource concerns and conservation needs to students and educators
- Provide educational hands-on learning activities to promote good stewardship of our land and resources.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Participate in plan for Salt Cedar removal
- Utilize Resource Needs Assessment to develop a plan for assessing needs, setting priorities, obtaining funding, and develop cooperative efforts with other entities for resource management throughout the District.

Generated pursuant to A.R.S. § 37-1013.A6 by the Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner



CHINO WINDS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Bert Teskey

Vice Chair: Gail Steiger

Phone Number: 928-910-4482

Email Address: wendy.districts@gmail.com

Website: www.wycecaz.com

Legislative District: 1 & 6

Congressional District: 3 & 4 **Acres:** 2,584,045

2020 Accomplishments

- Utilizing drone technology, Chino Winds NRCD is supporting conservation practices. These practices include maintenance of historic grasslands through juniper removal, grazing and fire. Through this drone agreement, Chino Winds has been able to complete practice certifications for the NRCS strengthening our partnership with valuable efforts.
- Chino Winds NRCD partners with Triangle NRCD to host a yearly Local Work Group .
- District support for NRCS Program Assistant

Project summary and results:

In 2021, Chino Winds will complete our Technical Innovation Agreement with the NRCS. The goals fulfilled will be 8,000 acres of drone imagery used to develop practice specifications for brush management and woody residue treatment, survey grade data on six NRCS practice checkouts and two engineering surveys for development into NRCS engineering practice specifications.

The Program Assistant provides two days per week in the office; uploading documents, assisting customers with applications and eligibility, entering applications, processing payments, assisting with contracts, entering technical assistance notes and supervising drone management.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Arizona State Land Department, US Forest Service, National Association of Conservation Districts, US Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts



Above: Phantom 4RTK

Below: Grasslands within the District Boundaries



Above: Cassandra Manifee
in Prescott Valley

Education Center

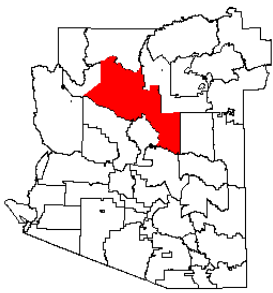
Western Yavapai Conservation Education Center (WYCEC) informs and communicates with the pioneers of today and tomorrow about the wise use of our natural resources to maintain a sustainable, productive, and healthy resource base for our communities and all caring for them.

The primary conservation issues we are focusing on are:

1. Water cycle and aquifer recharge
2. United States food and fiber production
3. Soil health

MORE WORK TO DO

- To reach 300 classrooms with educational presentations in the classroom and deliver materials, lessons, and thematic units to teachers and interest groups



COCONINO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Benny Aja

Vice Chair: Paul Babbit

Phone Number: 928-779-1745

Email Address: coconinonrcd@gmail.com

Website: www.facebook.com/Coconino-Natural-Resource-Conservation-District

Legislative District: 6 & 7

Congressional District: 1 **Acres:** 5,315,267

2020 Accomplishments

Willow Bend Environmental Education Center's mission is to provide educational outreach services that build environmental awareness and an ethic of responsible stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

- We led 55 different field trips for K-12th graders. Field trip locations included the Willow Bend gardens, the recycling center, Picture Canyon, Frances Short Pond and the Rio Wetlands.
- We provided over 221 in-class programs to k-12 county schools. These included programs about wildlife, sustainability, renewable energy, waste reduction, outdoor safety, food waste and more.
- We held over 70 community programs at Willow Bend including Family Science, Adult Ed. Science Saturday and more.
- We held two renewable energy focused teacher workshops with over 20 participants.
- Over 1000 volunteer hours went to restore and enhance the habitat gardens around Willow Bend.

Key Partners:

National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Prometheus Solar, Kid Wind, Coconino County Parks and Recreation, USFS, City of Flagstaff, Flagstaff Unified School District, City of Flagstaff, Coconino Parks and Rec, AZ Game and Fish, NAU, Boys and Girls Club, Coconino Juvenile Courts (Step Up Program), Friends of the Willow Bend Gardens



Aspen Corner construction



Inside Willow Bend Learning Center



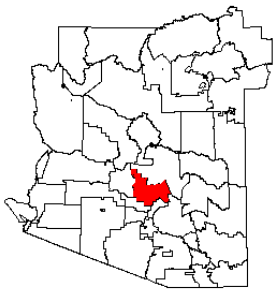
We had so much fun at Aspen Corner! Best field trip ever!



Other Accomplishments

The Northern Arizona Grassland Initiative is managed by AZGFD Region II in cooperation with the Coconino NRC and Local Ranchers and Landowners. Entering a 5th year, substantial restoration efforts and range improvements have occurred. The partnership is applying for additional RCPP and EQIP funding for continued landscape scale projects in Northern Arizona. The projects are primarily mitigated Pinyon Juniper encroachment on rangeland as well as overall health of the grasslands.

MORE WORK TO DO



EAST MARICOPA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Scott Loughead

Vice Chair: Jason Rowley

Phone Number: 602-620-9148

Email Address: mdufort2002@yahoo.com

Website: <http://www.emnrcd.org>

Legislative District: 1, 8, 12, 15-18, 23-26, & 28

Congressional District: 4, 5, 6, & 9 **Acres:** 1,079,362

2020 Accomplishments

Water Conservation Management Program

The goal of the Water Conservation Management Program (WCMP) is to provide a snapshot of what is happening during an irrigation event. We identify irrigation management weaknesses being used during a single irrigation event and provide practical recommendations and irrigation techniques to improve efficiency, enabling water users to irrigate more properly.

Project summary and results:

To accomplish these goals the WCMP technicians and program managers conduct irrigation performance evaluations, irrigation training workshops, pump energy analyses, field topographic surveys, flow rate confirmations and other irrigation water management services.

This has been an ongoing project for the past five years and is based on a bi-annual contract with the Arizona Department of Water Resources. The successes of the WCMP were immediately felt, and annual estimations by program participants state that approximately 22000-25000 acres are impacted and between 8200 – 9000-acre feet of water is saved for our local farmers and cooperators, annually.

Key Partners:

Arizona State Land Department, Local Natural Resources Conservation Service, Non-Profit Organizations, USDA Agricultural Research Service



Above: Checking construction of a newly installed concrete lined ditch using a portable laser.

Below: Vegetables being grown on 80" beds. As the wetted edge moves passed the vegetables towards the strip of dirt between the two rows of plants, the salt and other minerals are moved as well. Theoretically, lowering the "salts" in the immediate plant rows.



East Maricopa Resource Management Education Center

Urban Gardening, Composting and Outreach

Goal #1 for this program is to demonstrate to our community where their food comes from and how their food is grown by local farmers. As a result, goal #1 will lead to goal #2 which is to educate individuals and families in the community about growing their own fruits, vegetables, and even livestock (poultry, swine, fish). Goal #3 is to help our neighbors implement such a project that will support individuals, with little agricultural experience, to become producers on a small scale. This correlates with production in our area that is done on a large scale by farms.

MORE WORK TO DO

- East Maricopa Resource Management Education Center will plan to facilitate a total of five educational courses for the local community and help implement five urban gardens and/or compost bins in the 2020/2021 fiscal year



ELOY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Ronella White

Vice Chair: John Donley

Phone Number: 520-836-1960 ext. #3

Email Address: e_fc_wpnrcd@yahoo.com

Legislative District: 8 & 11

Congressional District: 1

Acres: 298,426

2020 Accomplishments

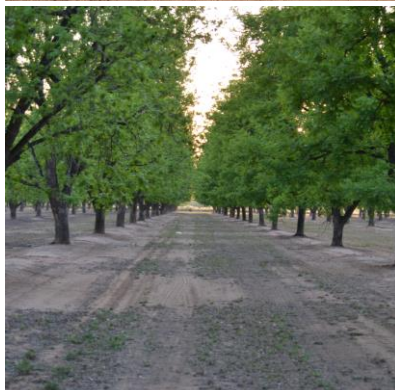
Extended drought conditions have reduced irrigation water availability. It is necessary to help producers determine the most effective irrigation techniques and good water management for their respective farms to maximize water use efficiency.

Project summary and results:

This program is administered through our Irrigation Management Service (IMS). IMS staff monitor irrigation and help educate producers by performing certain monitoring functions. This year IMS performed four turf evaluations, 14 standard crop evaluations, six seasonal (full crop) evaluations, and conducted season-long irrigation training and education in water management. IMS also held four workshops to assist ADWR Best Management Practice (BMP) participants. The BMP benefitted 177 farms for a total of 100,800 acres.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona State Land Department, Local Government, Local NRCS, University of Arizona



Above: Learning flood control and water management

Education Center

Through our education center, Natural Resource Education Center (NREC) we provide a well rounded, farm experience program using five different field days. Elementary school students and the adults that accompany them receive valuable instruction about their relationship to the natural resources around them including water, agriculture and food; water and energy conservation; flood control; and water management.

Providing input to local, state and federal legislators on issues affecting natural resources and agriculture helps them see the importance of supporting economic development and the Arizona economy.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Deliver five different outreach programs to four different Pinal County schools by March 2021. Pre/Post evaluations of all programs administered and recorded March 2021



FLORENCE-COOLIDGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Scott Riggins

Vice Chair: Marcus L. Martin

Phone Number: 520-836-1960 #3

Email Address: e_fc_wpnrcd@yahoo.com

Legislative District: 8

Congressional District: 1 & 4

Acres: 265,964

2020 Accomplishments

The San Carlos Irrigation & Drainage District (IDD) delivery system is 100 years old, and we have increasingly constrained water supplies in central Arizona. Delivery and on-farm irrigation efficiencies will remain low, and farmers will continue to lack sufficient irrigation water supplies to meet existing needs if the current system is not rehabilitated and modernized.

Project summary and results:

San Carlos IDD Watershed Rehabilitation and Modernization

The San Carlos Irrigation & Drainage District (SCIDD), Florence-Coolidge NRCD and the West Pinal NRCD partnered to apply for a PL-566 grant from Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop a plan to move forward with this work. As a partnership, and with SCIDD as the lead, we are also applying for an RCPP grant through USDA-NRCS to begin the actual work. The NRCDs will present workshops to educate and inform local growers of the project and how it will allow more on-farm improvements possible.

In order to monitor and assess irrigation techniques of growers, Irrigation Management Service (IMS) performed four turf evaluations, 14 standard crop evaluations, six seasonal (full crop year) evaluations, and conducts season-long monitoring & education training in water management.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona State Land Department, Local Government, Local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), University of Arizona, San Carlos Irrigation & Drainage District, West Pinal NRCD



Above: unlined water ditch

Other Accomplishments

- Help producers determine the most effective irrigation technique for each farm to achieve maximum irrigation efficiency with existing systems
- Monitor the IMS staff as they service the Arizona Department of Water Services (ADWR) Best Management Practices (BMP) program, assist NRCS with gathering data for irrigation water monitoring, and provide technical assistance and water management training to agricultural producers



MORE WORK TO DO



FREDONIA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Brent Mackelprang Vice Chair: Shane Button

Phone Number: 928-643-73034

Email Address: rm.fredonianrcd@gmail.com

Legislative District: 5 & 7

Congressional District: 1 & 4

Acres: 3,086,415

2020 Accomplishments

This year will be our 8th Annual Weed Day year of the Weed Day where we strive to eradicate the Scotch Thistle, but we won't see the yield of our effort until next season. We plan to spray annually, hoping to knock down the Thistle. We average 20 participating cooperators, depending on how bad the weeds are each year, who use our chemical to spray on their own land. Both the workshops and the Annual Weed Day are an opportunity to provide natural resource awareness to our local teenagers interested in range and farmland management.

Project summary and results:

On the Annual Weed Day Fredonia Natural Resource Conservation District is joined by local agencies, cooperators and landowners. As a group, we spray as much Scotch Thistle as we can in four or five hours. The district provides the chemical.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona State Land Department, Arizona State University, Bureau of Land Management, Local Government, Local NRCS, Arizona Extension Agency, Utah Extension agency



Above: 2019 Cattleman's Reproduction Workshop

Below: Scotch Thistle




MARCH 24
Insights on Improving grazing on public land
Webinar Through Zoom
Look out for our next webinar participants prior to event.

MARCH 30
Kane County Youth Swift Center
415 E. State Street, COCHISE, AZ 85629

MARCH 31
Small Family Event Center
2000 South 202nd Street, TUCSON, AZ 85710

APRIL 1
Range Tour
Fredonia, AZ 85424

FREE LUNCH PROVIDED BY GENEROUS SPONSORS
DON'T MISS OUT ON THE DOOR PRIZES!
Bills, whoopie pies, cowboy hats, golf shirts, t-shirts, baseball caps, and more!
HELPFUL REMINDERS AT THE END OF THE TOUR
Don't be the last person standing!

43RD ANNUAL AZ/UT RANGE LIVESTOCK WORKSHOP & TOUR
March 30 - April 1, 2021

WORKSHOP TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Low cost water monitoring technology
- DVM 40 app for livestock record keeping
- Grazing during drought/poor drought impacts
- Cattle Market Economics
- AI gene cameras in the handling/ranching industry
- Base water transfers/water rights
- Commercial genetic testing applicability to high desert ranching
- Rancher Spotlight

Registration: 7:30 - 8:15 AM
Workshop: 8:15 - 4:30 PM

Receive a Field Sponsor for the workshop and have your name and brand placed on our workshop, receive a workshop, and a chance to win a 2000 gallon tank!

To become a Ranch Sponsor contact: Kelli Yates at: kelly.yates@blm.gov or call 435-644-3914

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For updates and questions: tinyurl.com/3umrc9h

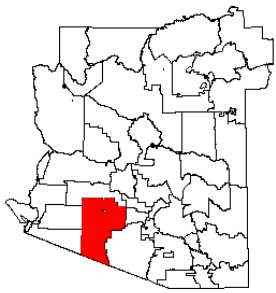
EXTENSION **Utah State University** **Arizona State University** **Utah State University**

Workshops

- Cattlemen's Reproduction Workshop – Presentations for cooperators, landowners, and students on the current methods of reproduction. Including such items as: AI, anatomy of a cow, gestation, etc.
- 43rd AZ/UT Range Livestock Workshop and Tour – March 30-April 1 - This workshop brings the agencies, cooperators, landowners, and suppliers together to discuss their different concerns. Speakers are brought in to educate them on subjects from range management to soil and water conservation, to herd management, and more.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Annually support two district workshops
- Our district will promote natural resource conservation topics by collaborating with BLM to create a poster contest around Earth Day



GILA BEND CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Tyson Stuhr

Vice Chair: Mark Skousen

Phone Number: 623-386-4631

Email Address: rayanne1@yahoo.com

Legislative District: 4 & 13

Congressional District: 3

Acres: 3,026,702

2020 Accomplishments

By law, all pesticide workers and applicators are required to be trained to safely use chemicals. The training served farm workers who would not be trained otherwise. Training was provided in both Spanish and English for the underserved agricultural workers.

The Gila Bend District co-sponsors the Buckeye Valley Conservation Education Center with the Buckeye Valley District.

Project summary and results:

A trainer from the Arizona Department of Agriculture came to Gila Bend to train pesticide workers and applicators in a workshop. This training was provided at no cost to the participants. All participants were certified to meet state standards and were provided a license.

Students participated in hands-on agricultural learning programs in an active agricultural setting. Students learned about crops and farm animals grown in Arizona and were taught the importance of recycling, water conservation and healthy soils.

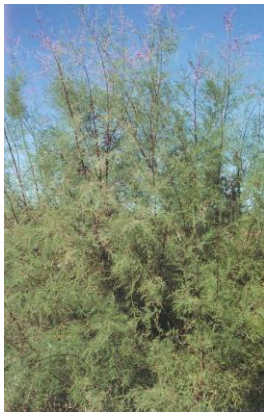
Key Partners:

Town of Gila Bend, NRCS, Buckeye Valley NRC, Tohono O'odham Nation, Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality



Above: Pesticide training was provided in both Spanish and English.

Below: Students participated in hands-on learning activities and picked vegetables in the educational garden.



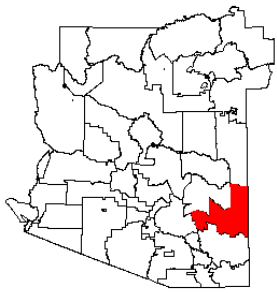
Other Accomplishments

The Gila Bend NRC is partnering with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Buckeye Valley District to develop a Resource Needs Assessment. Our District completed a five-year Long-Range Plan during 2020.

Our District has offered to again partner with the Town of Gila Bend in a main street beautification project to provide xeriscape, low-level water use plants for pollinators.

MORE WORK TO DO

- The Gila Bend NRC will use the Resource Needs Assessment document to set priorities and develop cooperative efforts with other entities to make the best use of natural resources within our District boundaries



GILA VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Dean Lunt

Vice Chair: Scott Alder

Phone Number: 928-428-5537

Email Address: amy.herbert@az.nacdnet.net

Website: <http://facebook.gilavalleyncrd/>

Legislative District: 7 & 8

Congressional District: 1 **Acres:** 2,373,993

2020 Accomplishments

Agriculture plays an important role in our local community and economy. Therefore, the management of land within the district to ensure the sustainability of agriculture is crucial. Our goal was to identify and address natural resource concerns on local agricultural lands by promoting natural resource conservation programs, and by providing direct technical assistance to the local USDA NRCS office in administering farm bill programs to enable local land users and managers to apply practices to address natural resource concerns.

Project summary and results:

Gila Valley NRCD entered into a cooperative agreement with NRCS enabling us to provide a technical assistant for 1,460 hours working directly with the Safford NRCS Field Office. This fiscal year, we were able to directly assist with planning conservation practices on 11 farms and eight ranches. We also directly assisted with applied conservation practices on 24 farms and five ranches including solar projects, cover crops, planning conservation practices, and Emergency Disaster Programs. We also assist Gila Valley Irrigation District (GVID) by providing administrative and technical assistance.

Key Partners:

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service - Safford Field Office, USDA Graham - Greenlee Farm Service Agency, Gila Valley Irrigation District



Above: Cleo, the Corgi, ready to lend a hand on the farm

Below: Livestock and wildlife watering facility installed on a local ranch



Education Center

Natural Resource Conservation Education and Outreach Program reaches our local community in order to promote conservation, preservation and wise use of natural resources. A few projects include providing curriculum on pollinators to local 4th grade teachers and to the Gila Watershed Partnership, assistance at the Southern District FFA Judging contest held in Safford, AZ, partnering with University of Arizona Experiment Farm to conduct soil moisture monitoring on local farm fields which provides real time data that can be used to assist local producers wanting to implement irrigation water management.



NACD's Stewardship Materials "Where Would We BEE Without Pollinators?"

MORE WORK TO DO

- Host and/or sponsor 1-2 workshops, events or field days
- Sponsor local student for NRCWAY
- Address irrigation efficiency on at least 3 farms & address range resource concerns on at least 2 ranches within the year
- Assist GVID with Phase 1 of modernizing the irrigation canal delivery system to address natural resource concerns



HEREFORD CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: John Ladd

Vice Chair: Lucinda Earven

Phone Number: 520-559-0715

Email Address: nrcdhereford@gmail.com

Website: www.herefordnrcd.com

Legislative District: 14

Congressional District: 2 **Acres:** 594,538

2020 Accomplishments

There were many difficulties encountered in 2020 because of SARS-CoV-2 restrictions. However, the Board of Supervisors kept abreast of local programs by attending meetings of organizations such as Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Restoration Partnership, Upper San Pedro Partnership, and Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network.

The Board maintained monthly meetings via conference and face-to-face when able to do so. Representatives from various government agencies attended the regular monthly meetings to keep the Board up-to-date on their activities. These include: Natural Resource Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, United States Forest Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. Programs available for landowner assistance change regularly, as do the required qualifications necessary to obtain assistance. Cooperators contacted the Board when they needed help or required information on how to apply for programs.

Also, In 2020, one of the District's biggest endeavors was to continue to reach out to the non-producing property owners with smaller acreages to ascertain their conservation resource concerns. The aim of the Board is to not only find out the concerns and needs, but also to reach out to multiple agencies in hopes of finding funding assistance for projects. To assist in this effort, the Board appointed Ivette and Chuck Cunningham as Small Acreage Landowner Advisors.



Key Partners:

University of Arizona Extension Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Tombstone High School Future Farmers of America, Arizona State Land Department, National Association of Conservation Districts

Education Center

The Hereford NRC (HNRCD) Board believes in a diversified use of its education funds as best use of our public money and for future funding opportunities. Unlike in 2019 when the District was able to sponsor two well-attended workshops featuring monitoring rangelands with drone imagery and soil health and sustainability, a planned Wildlife Attractor's Workshop was postponed to a later date in 2021. Workshops are generally free and open to the public. Workshop subject matter are planned in response to HNRCD surveys.

The Board continued to support the Tombstone High School Future Farmers of America while reaching out to the San Pedro Spirits 4-H Club which serves the communities of Sierra Vista, Whetstone, Hereford, and Palominas. The costs associated with raising and producing quality livestock are daunting to many small operations. SARS-CoV-2 changed the way we reach out and communicate our mission to work together to enhance our natural resources. The HNRCD is finding ways with our partners to get students, the public, and our Cooperators involved in agriculture, science, and leadership.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Support Tombstone High School Ag/FFA and local 4-H programs to provide extra funding for the agriculture and FFA programs so the students can accomplish classroom and outdoor activities that they would otherwise be unable to do. For instance, required clothing assistance, equipment and livestock assistance.

Generated pursuant to A.R.S. § 37-1013.A6 by the Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner



LAGUNA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Sheryl H Christenson **Vice Chair:** Bruce Easterday

Phone Number: 928-783-5735

Email Address: Sheryl.Christenson@az.nacdnet.net

Legislative District: 4 & 5

Congressional District: 4

Acres: 1,347,091

2020 Accomplishments

- Produce is the main winter crop in our area. During November, Yuma area produces 90% of the U.S. lettuce.
- We cannot grow food without clean water. Water rights laws are being questioned and changed. Yuma has the oldest water right on the Colorado River.
- The Salt Cedar Beetle has been released upriver on the Colorado and in New Mexico on the Gila. It has made its way down the Colorado to the Yuma Area and is doing its job defoliating the Salt Cedar, giving natives a chance to grow.

Project summary and results:

- We attended open meetings on water right movements and spoke with state legislators about our rights. We have attended meetings and written letters to prevent water from being moved from one watershed to another. This year, the issue was with Parker and Cave Creek.
- We provide information and collect information about the salt cedar beetle, salt cedar projects to clear from the area. We provide and collect information about other noxious weeds in agriculture

Key Partners:

University of Arizona, Salt Cedar Eradication, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation



Above: Tamarisk
Below: Lettuce field 2019



Other Accomplishments

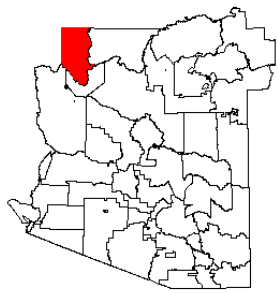
The Yuma Conservation Garden provides microscopes, hand lenses, thermometers, rulers, and assorted supplies to support our lesson plans and teacher training. We have over three miles of paths, a riparian area, a waterfall/watershed demonstration area, a 150-seat amphitheater, a tortoise exhibit, native plants with signage, shaded picnic areas, a rainwater collection site, native plants from the Sonoran desert, and bird boxes.



Teacher training at Yuma Conservation Garden

MORE WORK TO DO

- The Laguna NRCDC has always had water as its top priority. Food safety has come to the forefront when Wellton Mohawk NRCDC had produce from a field reported as a source of an outbreak.



LITTLEFIELD-HURRICANE VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Barry Bundy

Vice Chair: Kolter Layton

Phone Number: 435-632-6543

Email Address: lhvnrkd@infowest.com

Legislative District: 5

Congressional District: 4

Acres: 1,995,702

2020 Accomplishments

The Arizona Strip relies almost entirely on rainfall for water. Providing reliable water sources may include ponds, water harvesting catchments, watering facilities, spring developments, pond sealing and lining, pumping plants, and pipelines to address inadequate livestock and wildlife water. This 50,000-gallon water tank is invaluable for storing much needed water in times of drought and distributing throughout the pastures for cattle and wildlife.

Grass will not grow in thick cedar trees and sagebrush. Therefore, removal of both is very beneficial. Lop and scatter involves cutting down the trees, removing the limbs and scattering so they will decompose faster. Sagebrush is eliminated by applying Spike to kill it. This allows the grass to utilize the water that would have been used by trees and sagebrush and is an improvement for the edible forage.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona State Land Department, Bureau of Land Management, Local Government, Local NRCS, University of Arizona, US Fish and Wildlife Service



Education Center

The objective of the **Cowmans Reproduction Workshop** is to educate the cooperators and ranchers in improved and effective cattle reproduction. The topics included managing stress for improved reproduction performance, preparing for the breeding season during drought, beef cow reproduction physiology, the process of going from postpartum anestrus to active estrous cycle, fetal programming, how to get the first calf heifers to rebreed, fetal growth and development, reproductive tract dissection, and heifer selection.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Our objective is to provide a reliable water source every three miles on the Arizona Strip by October 1, 2021. We are assisting producers in working with NRCS and other agencies to accomplish this goal.



NAVAJO COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Frances Perkins

Vice Chair: Ethan Ellsworth

Phone Number: 928-524-2652

Email Address: sharon.fisher@az.nacdn.net

Legislative District: 7

Congressional District: 1

Acres: 2,107,308

2020 Accomplishments

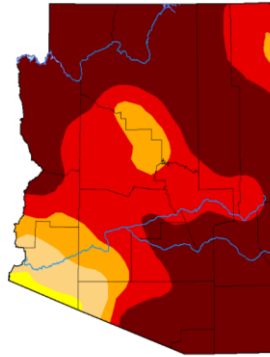
The US Drought Monitor has stayed in extreme to exceptional ratings most of 2020. Our district is continuing to respond to the current drought as it has worsened in most of the county. Producers have little to no water in dirt tanks so have had to haul water for most of the year as many are dependent on surface runoff.

In November 2019, to combat the consequences of drought, Jeffers Cattle Company, along with our key partners, seeded by plane, over 1,500 acres with approximately 22,000 pounds of Indian Rice and Needle & Thread grass. This newly seeded area will not be grazed for a two-year period allowing for regeneration. The project was monitored at 6 months and 1 year. The 1-year inspection found very limited growth.

The board has provided input to the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests on the Heber Wildhorse Territory Environmental Assessment. If the herd size is not addressed, then overgrazing can lead to an irreversible decline in plant production and stability, increasing erosion and permanently affecting the productivity and function of the area.

Key Partners:

Arizona Game and Fish, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Arizona State Land Department, University of Arizona Extension Service



Map released: Thurs. May 13, 2021

Data valid: May 11, 2021 at 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):
David Simeral, Western Regional Climate Center
Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):
Denise Gutzmer, National Drought Mitigation Center

Above: US Department of Interior Drought Map of Arizona

Below: Typical rangeland in Navajo County NRCD



Other Accomplishments

The district offered to all 7 High Schools in Navajo County a scholarship for any graduating senior going into conservation related, agriculture related fields.

We had one application approved. The student was from Joseph City High School, Kordell DeSpain. We will be offering scholarships again in 2021.



MORE WORK TO DO

- Due to drought, Navajo County needs to assist cooperators with water conservation, by finding water trucks, hay, and a well repair company



PARKER VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Ray Martinez

Phone Number: 928-916-1330

Email Address: ParkerValleyNRCD@gmail.com

Legislative District: 5

Congressional District: 4

Acres: 264,047

2020 Accomplishments

The objective of the Parker Valley Education Center is the development of individual responsibility as well as collectively.

Irrigation System Improvement Program - The Parker Valley NRCD facilitated a meeting focused on funding sources and partnerships available to accomplish the tribes long range goal of increasing irrigation application efficiency from 30-40% to 70%.

Project summary and results:

The Education Center provides FFA and 4H youth the use of a facility to house and breed animals to enable them to participate in the La Paz County Fair livestock competition. Without the facility many youths would not be able to participate in the livestock competition. Participants are financially and personally responsible for the care and feeding of their animals. Collectively, they were responsible for cleaning the pens and grounds.

The meeting brought together representatives from Colorado River Indian Tribe, AZ Natural Resource Conservation Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, and NRCD. We are currently working on a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in order to move forward.

Key Partners:

Colorado River Indian Tribes, AZ Natural Resource Conservation Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation



Above: Kaitlyn Humeumtewa, 2020 Parker FFA Star State Greenland Finalist

Below: Animal pens for FFA and 4H students to raise animals for competition



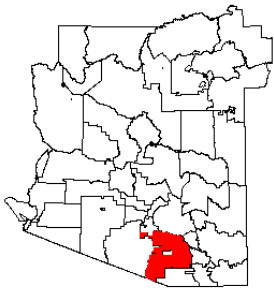
Other Accomplishments

The Parker Valley NRCD is working to expand cooperation levels between the District, Tribe and the NRCS, by developing relationships. We provide assistance to farmers on tribal land to identify conservation practices and funding to implement them in order to improve soil and water.



MORE WORK TO DO

- Greenhouse Conservation Program - Install greenhouses for crop and irrigation education and experiments
- Develop a MOA as a guiding document between the District and the Colorado River Indian Tribe



PIMA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Jim Chilton

Vice Chair: Cindy Coping

Phone Number: 520-220-1221

Email Address: clerk.pimanrcd@gmail.com

Website: <https://pimanrcd.wordpress.com/>

Legislative District: 11 & 14

Congressional District: 1, 2, & 3

Acres: 2,138,267

2020 Accomplishments

In February 2020, the Pima District hosted a seminar for four U.S. Congressmen, their staff, and a reporter (Daily Signal) about the problems encountered by District ranchers, farmers, and residents due to the currently insecure border. A border fence, parallel roads, and a 24/7 patrol along the border are proposed. These measures would safeguard lives, property, and environmental quality.

We opposed a proposed change in the legal status of wild Mexican wolves to “essential”, which would strip ranchers of all existing asset protections.

Project summary and results:

Several District cooperators made presentations regarding the impacts of border insecurity on their ranches and shared their personal experiences trying to manage rangelands and cattle. Following a luncheon, a tour embarked for the border, where the visitors were taken to the point where an old-style 18-foot bollard fence ends, a badly eroded foot trail intersects the boundary, and a 4-strand barbed wire fence marks the southern border of the United States for the next 25 miles.

The District submitted comments on the proposed Mexican wolf rule. We explained how the proposed change of status relies on an existing rule that defines “essential” populations in conflict with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The inappropriate definition of “essential” threatens to destroy the Arizona cow-calf industry.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona Department of Water Quality, Arizona State Land Department, Bureau of Land Management, Fire Districts



Above: Congressman Biggs standing between the end of the border fence structure and the 4-strand barbed wire fence that marks the international boundary

Below: M293, the male founder of the Ghost Ranch Lineage



Education Center

Conduct 1 workshop before May 31, 2021 to provide an update to cooperators about:

- Effects of tax law changes to agriculture
- Agency changes in monitoring protocol
- Game and Fish grant program
- Colorado River Conservation Plan and impact on water rights

MORE WORK TO DO

- Start working on district-wide Resource Needs Assessment Plan, science-based assessment, including maps, by gathering data within the district to share with NRCS



REDINGTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Andy Smallhouse **Vice Chair:** Jess Barry

Phone Number: 980-721-6376

Email Address: brooke.gladden@aacd1944.com

Legislative District: 14

Congressional District: 1 & 2

Acres: 285,860

2020 Accomplishments

The Redington NRC District Supervisors began a technical and financial assistance program in their District. There is a local need for increased water quality and quantity. These projects demonstrate the means, methods and measures by which water, soil and soil resources may be conserved.

Project summary and results:

One project targeted increased water quantity and quality using modern techniques. A solar pumping plant was installed in an area that needed an efficiently increased supply. This solar plant also provided water for wildlife and increased cattle distribution for improved ground cover. Solar pumping plants minimize the dependence on electricity and fossil fuels and removes the chance of contaminants possibly reaching the soil.

Another project was the removal of mesquite and salt cedar along the San Pedro River five acres which will increase water quantity in the basin and allow for more annual flow. The removal of invasive species by hand cutting also contributes to better ground cover and more native vegetative species which will increase water quantity, soil stability and healthier wildlife habitat. Instruction on this technical project from the NRC District is available for interested stakeholders.

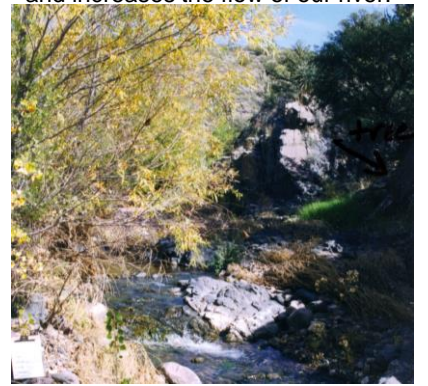
Key Partners:

Natural Resources Conservation Service, Pima County, US Forest Service, Producers, Redington Conservation Education Center, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts



Above: Building solar pumping plant takes precision and time especially in high ground.

Below: Clearing our river of invasive vegetation leaves more room for the native species needed by our wildlife and increases the flow of our river.



Other Accomplishments

The high country of the Redington NRC District needs more water sources to help in animal distribution and for wildlife during dry summers. The ruggedness of the country makes this a difficult project. The solar pumping project can have a big impact in resource management. The District also started work on their resource assessment and conservation action plan.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Complete installation of second pumping plant
- Two workshops on best management practices
- Complete mesquite and salt cedar removal on four acres of riparian area in the Redington NRC District



SAN PEDRO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Sharon Reid

Phone Number: 520-586-3467

Email Address: bonniewilson230@yahoo.com

Legislative District: 14

Congressional District: 2

Acres: 362,061

2020 Accomplishments

Our District conducted monthly board meetings, submitted all state-required reports to the AZ State Land Dept (ASLD), submitted monthly minutes to ASLD, and board members attended local conservation meetings at Natural Resource Conservation Service in Willcox, AZ. We also reviewed and updated the Conservation Implementation Plan as needed.

Project summary and results:

Our district hosted a presentation on Upper San Pedro Priority Watershed where we are seeing new partnerships for 319-Funded Project. We also provided information on other educational workshops such as "New" Beginning Farmers Class Series hosted on other districts. We also provided funds to support the Natural Resources Conservation Workshop for Arizona youth.

Key Partners:

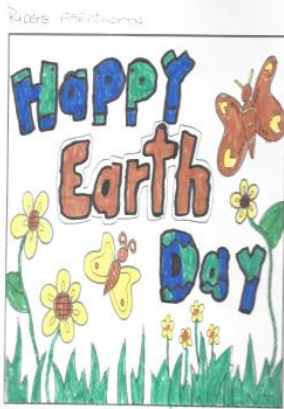
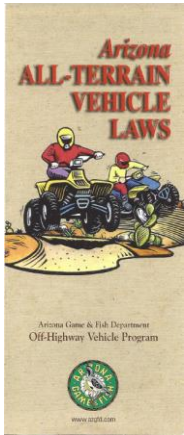
Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Bureau of Land Management, Local Government, Local NRCS, Non-Profit Organization, University of Arizona, US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Agricultural Research Service



EQIP Funds Project completed in Pomerene, AZ



An example of a 4-foot cut caused by and extreme rain event

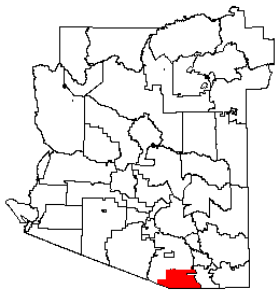


Other Accomplishments

Our District has elected to provide information to local students on the importance of water conservation, water harvesting, and improving the soil thru composting. The city of Pomerene students (kindergarten - 8th grade) participated in our Earth Day activities. Awards were presented to students. Students were also provided with information on AZ state laws pertaining to Off Highway Vehicles.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Keep cooperators up to date on legal issues by state water master
- Input on management decisions affecting SRINKA & watershed, river & adjacent land & neighbors
- To ID sources/occurrences of E.coli to the San Pedro River



SANTA CRUZ CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Stephen Williams **Vice Chair:** Bill Schock

Phone Number: 520-220-1221

Email Address: clerk.scnrcd@gmail.com

Website: <https://santacruznrzd.org/>

Legislative District: 2

Congressional District: 3 **Acres:** 852,785

2020 Accomplishments

Arizona Revegetation and Monitoring provides monitoring on 20 vegetative transects yearly on ranches within the district. The focus is on National Forest grazing permits, but private land is also monitored.

Water Rights Workshop on 2/18/20 (SC County Fairgrounds) An overview of rural water rights in Santa Cruz and Cochise Counties, a panel discussion on Best Management Practices for watershed health, and identification of funding sources for implementing Best Management Practices.

Project summary and results:

- The data gathered can be used by the FS and cooperators to evaluate trends on key areas to maintain livestock grazing on rangeland.
- Seventy people attended the 6-hour Water Rights Workshop; lunch was provided. This workshop provided informed cooperators on water rights and what they can do to protect their existing water rights. "After attending the District's Water Rights Workshop, I investigated the status of my water rights and some needed to be updated. Now, my water rights are current." Bill Schock

Key Partners:

Arizona Land and Water Trust, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Bureau of Land Management, Local NRCS, University of Arizona, US Forest Service, Santa Fe Ranch Foundation



Monitoring at the Rosetree Ranch



Monitoring on Babacomari Ranch



Participants at the Water Rights Workshop



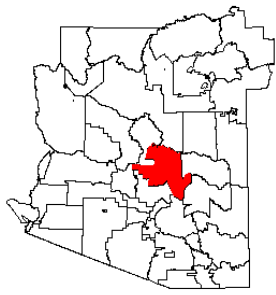
Education Center

To increase the visibility and public awareness of the Santa Cruz NRCDC, we staffed a booth at the Santa Cruz County Fair. We were able to talk to District cooperators and area ranchers for three days. We also gave out over 600 school kits (pencil, eraser, ruler) to the attending students. Numerous cooperators visited the booth and a new area resident signed up to be a cooperator.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Conduct three Rock Dam Workdays during Fiscal Year 2020-21
- Working with Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's office and district schools to encourage over 450 students to participate in May 2021 festival

Generated pursuant to A.R.S. § 37-1013.A6 by the Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner



TONTO CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Lori Brown

Vice Chair: Francis Cline Jr.

Phone Number: 928-978-3153

Email Address: tontonrcd@gmail.com

Legislative District: 1, 6, & 23

Congressional District: 4

Acres: 2,280,808

2020 Accomplishments

On the Range monitoring is in conjunction with the Forest Service and the University of Arizona (UofA). The Forest Service and Tonto NRCDC have a partnership to collect range monitoring data through the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. This data enables ranchers to keep cattle on Federal Allotments and provide courts with scientific, non-biased data.

Project summary and results:

Twenty-nine ranches/allotments in the Tonto National Forest were monitored for NEPA and data records, including 2 allotments that had not been monitored before. Rancher participation is 100%. The technical report, which includes a summarization letter that analyzes what the data means, if a change in vegetation occurred, precipitation data, summary of collected data, summary graphs with a yearly comparison, and information on forage species. The UofA hosted three workshops and will continue to do that the next four years.

Under the Farm Bill, land cooperators get much needed assistance to improve water delivery to livestock and wildlife as well as brush control for grazing. Objectives met for 2019-2020: four pipelines, three watering facilities, two pumping plants.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona Department of Water Quality, Arizona State Land Department, Fire Districts, Local Government, Local NRCS, University of Arizona, US Forest Service



Above: Range monitoring vegetation long-term trend on JF Ranch

Below: Cherry Creek, Dagger Allotment



Future Goals

Volunteer Wildflower Project

Volunteers will help to spread wildflower seed in the Globe area to address erosion issues, increase pollinator populations and increase tourism. This project has not occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic and is planned for the 2020/2021 year. If this plan is successful, it will become more widespread in the Tonto NRCDC area and possibly other in areas.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Provide technical assistance to individual landowners, continue the Tonto and Rye Creek stabilization, continue support for the Tonto Creek crossing, assist agencies with education about forest health and fire prevention and assist with stabilizing crop land in the Gisela area



TRIANGLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Shelley Blackmore **Vice Chair:** Tom Ritter

Phone Number: 928-910-4482

Email Address: dawn.salcito@usda.gov

Website: www.wycecaz.com

Legislative District: 1

Congressional District: 4 **Acres:** 1,474,596

2020 Accomplishments

Through an NACD Technical Assistance Grant and funding from local ranchers Triangle NRCD hired a full time Archaeologist. With this resource, Triangle has been able to assist in cultural surveys on private land, U.S. Forest Service, State Trust Land, and Natural Resources Conservation Service projects.

Project summary and results:

The result of this project has been essential conservation projects such as forest stand improvement, maintenance and creation of livestock/wildlife waters and grassland improvements implemented within our District boundaries. May 2021 will complete our 3rd year NACD Technical Assistance Grant. To date, the Triangle NRCD's Archeologist has completed 44 cultural surveys.

Triangle NRCD has partnered with the AACD to develop an MOU with Prescott National Forest for continued cultural survey support. Triangle hopes to expand MOU development to all land types and government agencies within Yavapai county.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Local Government, US Forest Service, US Natural Resources Conservation District, National Association of Conservation Districts, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts



Above: Tank Creek Water Harvesting Catchment, Skull Valley, Arizona

Below: Practice Certification for archeology work, Skull Valley, Arizona



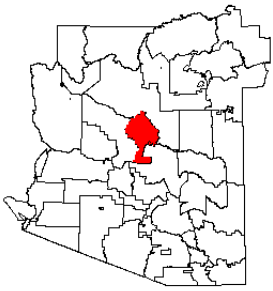
Above: Dani Lawrence teaching at Chino Valley High School

Other Accomplishments

1. District support for the NRCS Program Assistant.
2. Western Yavapai Conservation Education Center support.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Reach 300 classrooms and/or 10,000 students in the school year and to develop curriculum aligned with Arizona State Teaching Standards addressing our three focus areas: Water cycle, food & fiber production and soil health



VERDE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Chip Norton

Phone Number: 602-903-2436

Email Address: nrcdverde@gmail.com

Email for Verde NRCDE Environmental Education Center: <http://vnrcdeec.org>

Legislative District: 1 & 6

Congressional District: 1 & 4

Acres: 1,311,297

Education Center

This quote from Rhonda Koppe, a teacher at Camp Verde Middle School, says it all for the Verde NRCDE supported **Verde Conservation Education Center**: “The 8th Grade Properties of Water Program implemented by Ms. Cody has been an immeasurable benefit to our education and sense of community, here at Camp Verde Middle School. For several years now, Erin and her colleagues have been enriching and challenging all of us regarding the importance of water as a natural resource and the need to protect and preserve our watersheds and riparian environments.

The Properties of Water program has created environmentally aware, conscientious young people. The in-class presentations and water-testing lab piques their interest. They become aware of point source and non-point source pollution. The students learn about the need for a balanced pH, nitrogen content and dissolved oxygen, etc. Visiting the wastewater treatment plants and the river really caps it off and brings it home”.



Key Partners:

City of Cottonwood, Town of Clarkdale, Cottonwood Oak Creek School District, Clarkdale-Jerome School District, Camp Verde Unified School District, American Heritage Academy, Project Wet, Yavapai County, Salt River Materials Group, Salt River Project, Arizona Public Service, UniSource Electric



2020 Accomplishments

The key issues in the Verde Valley are water security, preservation of agricultural heritage, protection of wildlife habitat and reduction in soil erosion. Our focus in the coming year is to reach adult populations by providing more educational opportunities related to conservation and increasing coordination among local partners.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Convene six Irrigators Workshops on topics identified with stakeholders and NRCS supervisors over 18 months
- Provide written materials following each workshop to increase dissemination of information



WELLTON-MOHAWK VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: David Sharp

Vice Chair: Gregory Marlatt

Phone Number: 928-210-7169

Email Address: samclaurin@aol.com

Legislative District: 13

Congressional District: 3 & 4

Acres: 1,390,940

2020 Accomplishments

- Provided current and historical weather data to cooperators to use in planning crops and water schedules.
- As Arizona hires many teachers and education administrators from out of state, it is important that they learn about the importance of Agriculture to the culture and economic well being of Arizona.
- This program brings agriculture, conservation and stewardship to schools through out Arizona.

Project summary and results:

- We provide operation and management funding to the University of Arizona for their AZMET site within the district. Also, we maintain the location of the equipment.
- Our district Supervisors and cooperators take a group of educators for a week. They tour different agriculture-related businesses, spend time with a farm family and develop curriculum to be used by them in the classroom.
- Curriculum about agriculture, conservation and stewardship is provided free of charge to schools. This can either be through personal visits speaking about it or kits that are lent to the schools containing lesson in all subjects related to the curriculum (i.e., recycling).

Key Partners:

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Arizona Agriculture Education Foundation, Arizona Farm Bureau, NACD Soil & Water Stewardship, University of Arizona, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality



Roll AZMET site



Touring a canal on the district that transports Colorado River water



Classroom kit on "Cattle" supplied by the Ag in the Classroom Project.



Education Center

Our district supports two scholarships. Students applying for both scholarships must include an introduction letter, a grade transcript and an essay on "what the applicant views as some of today's challenges and potential solutions in agriculture/agribusiness and/or natural resource management".

Paige Johnson, Antelope Union High School Class of 2020, said "I am beyond grateful to be a recipient of your scholarship. This fund will allow me to further my education with less worry of financial setbacks.

MORE WORK TO DO

- To provide cooperators with local weather information to enable them to better conserve water and to be better stewards of the land



WEST PINAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Philip Hartman

Vice Chair: Dick Powell

Phone Number: 520-836-1960 #3

Email Address: e_fc_wpnrcd@yahoo.com

Legislative District: 8 & 11

Congressional District: 1

Acres: 412,024

2020 Accomplishments

- The Upper Santa Cruz River, although an intermittent flowing waterway, does provide a way of controlling flooding in certain areas. Over the years of development in the Casa Grande area, brush and trees have been allowed to clog the wash. The wash is in desperate need of being cleaned out and deepened to allow flood water flow away from both farm and urban areas.
- Agricultural and conservation education are specialties that most teachers don't have the resources for. We provide a well rounded, farm experience program through five different field days.



Above: Upper Santa Cruz River Important Bird Area (IBA)

Project summary and results:

We contacted the City of Casa Grande and Pinal County officials to address the problem. While we have been successful in bringing the concern to the City and the County for consideration, neither has been willing to accept financial responsibility for maintenance of the wash. We will continue to work on this project and help determine if there are any grant opportunities to help with funding.

Despite schools being closed mid-March due to COVID19, our Education Center taught 3,326 students for a total of 8,690 student agricultural education hours, and 244 adults. Elementary students and the adults that accompany them receive valuable instruction of their relationship to the natural resources around them including water, agriculture and food; water and energy conservation; flood control; and water management.

Key Partners:

AACD, GUAC, CAC-Signal Peak Campus, Eloy NRCD, Florence-Coolidge NRCD, Irrigation Management Service, NREC, NRCS, Ruby Farms, Tomkinson Farms, CAIDD, Fast Track Farms, Caballero Dairy, Pratt Farms, Donley Farms, Morning Star Farms, Mourning Dove Farms, and many more

Other Accomplishments

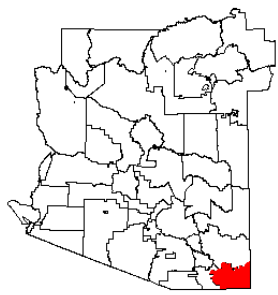
We decided we needed to advertise ourselves to our producers. We determined that a rain gauge imprinted with our contact information would catch the producers' attention. It was packaged with a Letter of Introduction, a brochure highlighting the West Pinal NRCD, and a Cooperator Agreement form. From this mailing, new producers contacted us and were able to become cooperators. They were also introduced to the services provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. District local funds paid for this project. We continue to contact new producers in this way.



MORE WORK TO DO

- Determine active producers within the district; contact each producer for their input on their immediate resource needs and coordinate data gathering with mapping contractor. From this data, a 5–10-year plan charting the direction of district efforts will be created.

Generated pursuant to A.R.S. § 37-1013.A6 by the Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner



WHITEWATER DRAW CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Fred Davis

Vice Chair: Frank Krentz

Phone Number: 520-642-1951

Email Address: whitewaterdraw@gmail.com

Legislative District: 14

Congressional District: 2

Acres: 1,169,429

2020 Accomplishments

Many Farmers and Ranchers are using drones on their property to more easily identify where brush eradication has been successful. Our district provided a drone training to inform cooperators and others about the diverse use of drones.

In addition, our district hosted a workshop on Estate Planning which included workshop focused on the legal aspects of passing on your farm and ranch to the next generation.



Above: Estate Planning for Farmers and Ranchers

Below: Group at Drone Workshop

Project summary and results:

- The Drone Workshop had 65 in attendance
- The Estate Planning Workshop had 53 in attendance

Key Partners:

Cochise County, Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona Department of Water Quality, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, and Hereford NRCD.



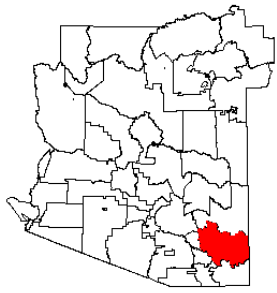
Mesquite grassland around Whitewater Draw NRCD

Future Goals

- We are planning to provide a Soils Health Workshop for local farmers within our District on how to improve their soil quality, if needed, to provide a better yield on their crops. The measurable objective would be to determine what soil additives could be used to improve soil health for better crops.
- Other workshops include Energy Saving and Range Management. These will assist with range management efficiency programs, reduce erosion, water efficiency, and energy efficiency.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Facilitate two workshops in the District by June 2021
- Promotion of 2,000 acres of brush management, 6,400 acres of improved grazing distribution and wildlife habitat



WILLCOX-SAN SIMON CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Tina Thompson

Vice Chair: Larry Parker

Phone Number: 520-507-2220

Email Address: willcoxsansimonnrcd@vtc.net

Legislative District: 14

Congressional District: 1 & 2

Acres: 2,145,846

Education Center

- The 2020 Page Bakarich Scholarship recipient is Ashley Riggs. Ashley is studying Soil Science at New Mexico State University. This annual scholarship promotes youth pursuing agriculture and conservation and has awarded over \$106,000 to date since its inception in 2001.
- The Education Center also offers continued support to the Willcox FFA Wildlife and Range Teams. The 2020-2021 wildlife team members are Gabriel Todd, Jack Owen, Maylee Thompson and Brady Thompson.
- The Education Center received a grant to install bat houses and educate the public about bat conservation. Ten bat houses will be installed by Twin Lakes golf course in Willcox and near Cochise Elementary School in Cochise, AZ.



Above: Scholarship recipient Ashley Riggs
Below: 2020-2021 Willcox FFA Wildlife Team



Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona State Land Department, Bureau of Land Management, Local Government, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Non-Profit Organizations, University of Arizona, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, National Association of Conservation Districts

2020 Accomplishments

With the help of a National Association of Conservation Districts grant, the Willcox-San Simon NRCD hired MCA Consulting to assist the Willcox NRCS Field Office with the backlog of archaeological clearances needed to implement conservation projects. In 2020, 10 archeological clearance survey were completed using grant funds and in-kind match.

The Willcox-San Simon NRCD holds a Contribution Agreement with the Natural Resource Conservation Service that provides funds for a technical service position at the Willcox Field Office. The NRCD matches a portion of the funds to support this position that is important to the daily operations of the Willcox office.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Mesquite monitoring on 8 ranches within the District boundary
- Protection and preservation of the Sulphur Springs Valley aquifer
- Complete additional archaeological surveys as needed



WINKELMAN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Bill Dunn

Vice Chair: Steve Turcotte

Phone Number: 520-220-1221

Email Address: clerk.wnrncd@gmail.com

Legislative District: 7, 8, & 11

Congressional District: 1 & 2

Acres: 1,609,376

2020 Accomplishments

National Association of Conservation Districts provided funds for technical assistance for conservation best-management practices using Oracle Community Learning Garden (OCLG) as a district-wide demonstration hub. This enabled three goals: install two hoop houses; community-wide vermicomposting system; and a water conservation system. Two resulting business startups will contribute to the economic sustainability of the program.

Project summary and results:

The project taught conservation, promoted appreciation and understanding of the environment, and encouraged responsible stewardship of natural resources. Specifically, the project served the developing communities in our Conservation District with technical assistance in 1) vermicomposting, 2) rainwater management, and 3) ecosystem restoration. We are getting ready to start seeds for our fall plant sale. We are going to plant native vegetation for restoration projects in the second hoop house. Arizona Department of Forestry & Fire Management met with OCLG staff to identify forestry projects that could utilize native plants

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Local NRCS, National Association of Conservation Districts, University of Arizona



Winkelman Environmental Education Center

The local community schools do not have the funds to take their students on field trips. The District had funded trips to: Boyce Thompson Arboretum, Shamrock Dairy, Biosphere 2, Arizona Museum of Natural History, etc.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Clean/seal four dirt tanks - The WNRCD stock tank cleaning and sealing program will provide cleaning, maintenance, and sealing of dirt stock tanks which are a primary source of water for cattle and wildlife



YUMA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Chair: Mark Kuechel

Vice Chair: Tom Fox

Phone Number: 928-783-5735

Email Address: Sheryl.christenson@az.nacdnet.net

Legislative District: 13

Congressional District: 3

Acres: 1,261,245

2020 Accomplishments

Producers are guided by Food Safety Regulations. Doug Mellon, a local cooperater, points out that “agriculture is a science.”

Project summary and results:

Fields are now being fenced to keep people and animals from entering the fields. Birds are kept out of the fields with scarecrows and the public is informed to stay out of the fields. Irrigation water is tested. Privies and handwashing stations are supplied for workers. Everything possible is being done to keep food safe from field to the table.

Water is tested, soil samples taken. Fields are checked for any signs that wildlife has urinated in the field and 50-foot-wide sections are not harvested if found. The NRCDC partners with Yuma Ag Summit, Leafy Green Association, and the Arizona Farm Bureau to collect and provide information about food safety.

Key Partners:

Arizona Department of Agriculture, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, Arizona State Land Department, Bureau of Land Management, Local Government, Local NRCS, Non-Profit Organization, University of Arizona, US Bureau of Reclamation, USDA Agricultural Research Service



Above: Lettuce Field 2019. Yuma is the lettuce capital of the world in November.

Below: Mark Kuechel, Citrus Producer



Education Center

Yuma Conservation Garden (Yuma/Laguna) The Yuma and Laguna NRCDC supports the Education Center and its three miles of interpretive signed trails. Long term goals include groundwater demonstration, supporting a watershed, plant identification opportunities, invasive species management, off-highway vehicle lessons and animal identification. There are currently 51 lesson plans on the website.

MORE WORK TO DO

- Signage is an ongoing need. The signs have been cracking within one year because of the intense heat and strong sunlight.