

Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District

January 2016 Newsletter

CONSERVING - PROTECTING - PRACTICING WISE USE



Photo by Kathy Morris

Board of Supervisors

CHAIRMAN

Jim Lindsey

520.559.0715

sht1@mindspring.com

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Rachel Thomas

520.456.1008

badgerall@earthlink.net

SECRETARY

Lucinda Earven

520.456.2024

hossdvm@yahoo.com

SUPERVISOR

John Lohse

520.234.5452

2747jrl@gmail.com

SUPERVISOR

John Ladd

520.456.5938

sjranch@wildblue.net

hereford_nrcd@juno.com

www.herefordnrcd.com

520.220.2028

PO Box 3361

Sierra Vista, AZ 85636



NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

Donald Decker

520.364.2001

donald.decker@az.usda.gov

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The Hereford District will participate with 16 other Arizona districts in a new conservation program to be funded by NRCS and BLM. The title of the program is: The Arizona Rangeland Conservation Partnership (ARCP).

About six million dollars will be awarded in the next five years, to treat large landscapes for grass land health. Other conservation programs can also be funded.

Arizona's rangelands are the watersheds that capture precipitation which replenish the critical water supplies that support wildlife, livestock and crop production, rural and urban populations and industries all across Arizona. Our rangelands also support wildlife and livestock with forage and recreational use. The goal of the ARCP will be to build locally led, landscape scale, conservation partnerships. Our District will partner with private landowners, BLM, NRCS, ASLD, local governments and other organizations who want to help manage and improve the health of Arizona's rangelands.

One more of the great things to come out of this, is the ability to standardize and streamline coordinated resource management planning and practice design requirements. To develop programmatic approaches for NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act), T&E species and cultural resource protection. This will mean less time and money spent on the red tape requirements and more projects put on the ground.

The Hereford District has already contacted some of the land owners in our area in reference to this new program, but if YOU are an interested landowner and have not been contacted, keep an eye out for more information and meetings from the newsletters and our website in the future. Or contact John Ladd or Jim Lindsey.

Contact information is on our website (www.herefordnrcd.com) and adjacent to this article.

Working Together to Enhance Our Natural Resources

2015 In Review

2015 was a busy and productive year for the Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District. Last year's endeavors that we're proudest of are:

- ♦ The Water Protection Fund contract for concept and feasibility study and design with HilgartWilson for the Horseshoe Draw Project was signed and HilgartWilson is proceeding with concept and feasibility
- ♦ Held three coordination meetings with the BLM concerning the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement
- ♦ With five other NRCDs held a coordination meeting with the USFWS and a meeting with the Small Business Administration on the proposed revision to the Regulation for the nonessential experimental population of the Mexican wolf
- ♦ Held three successful workshops: Range Monitoring Work Shop, Range and Watershed Analysis Work Shop, and an Erosion Control Workshop which was an "on-the-ground" construction of sausage rock erosion control structures at the Cochise Area Network for Therapeutic Equestrian Resources (C.A.N.T.E.R.) property
- ♦ Joined with the Whitewater Draw NRCS, Coronado RC&D, and NRCS in a booth at the Cochise County Fair
- ♦ With the Iroquois Foundation and NRCS accomplished approximately 3,800 acres of mesquite suppression
- ♦ Accomplished 2,087 acres of Spike treatment for brush control
- ♦ With AACD the HNRCD prepared the HNRCD Comprehensive District Resource Conservation Plan
- ♦ Attended and participated in the AACD summer conference and winter meeting
- ♦ Provided *Proud Member of the Hereford Natural Conservation District* signs to 20 cooperators for placement on their property

Antelope Recovery Project Highly Successful

In 2014 40 head of antelope captured in New Mexico were released in Arizona, 23 in the Sonoita/Elgin area where that population of pronghorn was down to a handful, fewer than 20 animals according to AZ Game & Fish Department tallies.

AZ Game & Fish Department joined with the AZ Antelope Foundation and accepted the volunteerism of the HNRCD and the Tombstone High School FFA program.

An extensive fencing project replaced bottom barbed wires with smooth wire since antelope don't jump over fences, they crawl under. Water gaps were built and brush was controlled.

After the New Mexico animals were released a capture took place in Prescott Valley. Although that effort was disappointing, five more animals were relocated in the Sonoita/Elgin area.

As of August, 2015 the count is up to well over 100 animals, with an 85% fawn survival. Everyone involved considers the project a huge success. To view a great video on the project go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb4pyvHzs6Y>



Horseshoe Draw Flood and Erosion Mitigation Project Presentation.

February 5, 2016 10:00 AM

*Forest Service Building, Conference room
4070 South Avenida Saracino, Hereford, AZ*

Representatives from the Civil Engineering firm of HILGARTWILSON will be making a presentation on the Hereford NRCD's *Horseshoe Draw* flood and erosion mitigation project. The presentation will cover findings from the recently completed conceptual design process, describe the design alternatives considered for the project, and provide an update on how the final design of the selected alternative is progressing. The presentation will also include a detailed overview and description of the structural elements (earthen embankment, flood pool, spillways, etc.) which will make up the flood and erosion mitigation system.



Restoring Healthy Grasslands Border Project

By Don Decker NRCS Douglas Field Office

The NRCS is working with the Hereford NRCD, the Iroquois Foundation, the Whitewater Draw NRCD and the Arizona State Land Department to improve rangeland conditions near the U.S./Mexico border. The Forest Service and the BLM are also cooperating on this project.

The specific focus is to implement brush control to improve rangeland condition and encourage perennial grass production in the areas where it has been greatly reduced due to brush encroachment.

The Foundation has challenged the Districts and the agencies to focus initially on a narrow band of degraded rangeland against the border. The NRCS has created a special funding source through their existing EQIP program, to cost share with willing landowners on some of the brush treatment in this area.

The Districts have been helping the NRCS by contacting landowners and assisting them through the process. Approximately 3,100 acres have been treated by the Iroquois Foundation to date with 2,455 additional acres to be treated by the spring of 2016. The NRCS has entered into contracts on 2,547 acres, also for spring 2016 implementation, with more potential acres to be treated as other land owners come on board with the program.



Photo by Don Decker

HNRCD/BLM Coordination Meetings

Hereford NRCD has had seven coordination meetings since 2014 with the Tucson Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management.

The focus of these meetings has been the District providing data which supports a grazing alternative to improve the natural resources, reduce fuels for fire, and the danger of diseases from trespass cattle from Mexico for the San Pedro RMP/EIS (Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement). BLM hopes to have some solid alternatives formulated by February.

The District has had expert assistance at the coordination meetings from Mary Darling—consultant, Darling Geomatics, Lamar Smith—consultant, Cascabel Ranch & Consulting, and Margaret Byfield—American Stewards of Liberty.

The public is invited to attend these important meetings. Watch your email or herefordnrcd.com for the upcoming agendas.

The Battle Continues

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) may have enacted a new rule pertaining to waters of the United States (WOTUS) but that hasn't compelled people to "go with the flow."

Almost immediately after the new rule took effect 13 states (including Arizona) filed suite. That case resulted in a U.S. District Court judge's temporary injunction against implementation of the regulation. But that injunction applies only to the 13 states that sued EPA and the Corps in the North Dakota district court.

Because the 9th and 5th U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeal and the 8th Circuit reached opposite conclusions last year the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to take a case that will determine whether land owners can challenge in court a regulatory determination that their properties are subject to the Clean Water Act.

The EPA has been accused of violating the "propaganda prohibition" of a federal statute resulting in Congressman Jason Smith (R-MO) introducing the *End EPA Advertising Act* which would stop the EPA from using taxpayer money to hire public relations contractors.

The Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015 (Bill Shuster—R(PA) was passed by the House in May, 2015 and is now in the Senate. This bill would "roll back" the new EPA regulation that defines WOTUS.

President Obama vetoed S.J.Res. 22, a joint resolution that would have voided the WOTUS rule extending EPA regulatory authority over certain bodies of water. This bipartisan resolution was a resolution of disapproval which is a legislative procedure used to try to overturn regulations and rules put forth by the executive branch. The Senate voted to override the veto, but only managed 52 of the 60 necessary votes to avoid a filibuster.

What are your thoughts on WOTUS?


We'd like to hear from you and print your "letters to the editor." Email us at hereford_nrcd@juno.com or send a letter to POB 3361, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636

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 425 Allen Street • P.O. Box 68
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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.

Hereford NRCD
is on the World Wide Web!
www.herefordnrcd.com

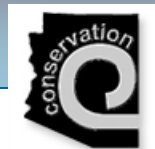
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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Hereford-NRCD/4342483309971>

HEREFORD NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

PO Box 3361
Sierra Vista, AZ 85636



All programs of the Hereford NRCD are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, national origin, age, sex, religion, political belief, marital or familial status or handicap.