

Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District

June 2014 Newsletter

CONSERVING - PROTECTING - PRACTICING WISE USE



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Chairman's Corner

It has been a busy year for Supervisors, advisors and contributing cooperators. With the downsizing of the NRCS and government as a whole, there are new challenges to meet the demands. The Douglas Field office, for 2013, had EQIP contracts of \$41,701.98 for 2,850 acres and CSP contracts at \$92,628.00 for 23,464 acres within the Hereford NRCD district. The District Supervisors stay busy with all the meetings with the State NRCD, U.S. Forest Service, AZ Game and Fish, Bureau of Land Management and the local NRCS personnel to enable making the best decisions about our resources within the District. We have to recognize the pressures of today's modern world that influence resource use and decisions. We try to meet the needs of our resource users by using a science based, common sense approach to ensure sustainability of our natural resources both for today and the future. Within the decisions made, we consider the culture, social, biological and economic values.

In addition to the Arizona State funding of \$19,000 each year, the financial support of many individuals, businesses, organizations, local governments and our cooperators have enabled the Hereford Natural Resource Conservation District to accomplish many projects.

Since 2011 financial support for District activities have been received from Coronado Resource Conservation & Development, Barnett's Towing LLC/Barnett's Propane LLC, John and Sharon Lohse, Campstone Transfer, Inc., Jeri Ligon, Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc., Arizona Antelope Foundation, Arizona Community Foundation, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Cochise County and our cooperators.

The donation of money has supported the District in hosting two tours of conservation practices within the District, support the Tombstone FFA including the antelope monitoring program, the coordination meetings with the Arizona Ecological Services, USFWS, Coronado National Forest, USFS, and Gila District, BLM.

The District could not have accomplished so much without the donation of time and expertise by the following individuals, businesses, organizations and agencies: Deborrah and Lamar Smith—Cascabel Ranch and Consulting, Margaret Byfield—American Stewards of Liberty, Stephanie Smallhouse—Arizona National Resource Conservation Districts, Bill Dunn—Winkelman NRCD, Gerry Gonzalez and all the staff of the Douglas District Office, NRCS, and Mary Darling—Darling Geomatics representing Cochise County and the Arizona Game and Fish.

Your dollars, time and expertise make a difference on the ground while going up against the millions of your tax dollars paid to the environmentalist groups with settlements to lawsuits against the federal government.

Thank You,
Hereford NRCD

James Lindsey, Chairman

Working Together to Enhance Our Natural Resources

Coordination Meetings

Coordinate: Working together as an equal, to act in harmonious combination.

Federal and state statutes require federal agencies to work coordinately with local government, to “coordinate” with local government in developing and implementing plans, policies and management actions.

The statutes create a process through which local government has an equal position at the negotiating table with federal and state government agencies. They create a process which mandates agencies to work with local government on a government-to-government basis. Implicit in the mandate of coordination is the duty of the governmental representatives to work together in an effective relationship to seek to reach agreement on consistency between federal, state and local plans and policies.

The Hereford NRCDC has had five coordination meetings with the Federal agencies. The first two coordination meetings were with the USFWS pertaining to the proposed critical habitat for the spikedance and loach minnow. The upper San Pedro River was included in the proposal, but excluded in the final rule. It was the opinion of a lot of people that the exclusion of the San Pedro from critical habitat was due to local governments’ (District, Sierra Vista and Cochise County) information provided in the coordination meetings.

This year the District has already hosted three coordination meetings.

The first meeting was with the USFWS on the issue of listing and critical habitat for the yellow-billed cuckoo and the northern Mexican gartersnake. Four supervisors from the District, District clerk, Margaret Byfield, American Stewards of Liberty (consultant on coordination), Mary Darling, Darling Geomatic (natural resource and wildlife biologist consultant for Cochise County), Mike Ortega, Cochise County Administrator and Mike Rabe, Nongame & Endangered Wildlife Program Branch Chief, Arizona Game & Fish provided scientific data and pointed out the lack of such scientific data in the proposed listing actions. Amber Morin, NRCDC Manager, Arizona State Land also attended.

US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was also well represented with Steve Spangle, Field Supervisor, USFWS Phoenix Office, Jess Humphrey, Public Outreach Specialist, USFWS, Arizona, Jean Calhoun, Assistant Field Supervisor, USFWS, Tucson office, Jeff Servoss, USFWS lead for the northern Mexican & narrow-headed gartersnakes. Three people were present by phone, Susan Sferra, Wildlife Biologist, USFWS, Tucson office, Robert Moler, Assistant Field Supervisor for External Affairs, USFWS, Sacramento Office, Steve Layman, Senior Wildlife Biologist, USFWS, Sacramento Office.

This was probably the 7th or 8th coordination meeting Steve Spangle and the USFWS has had with Arizona conservation districts, some including city and county governments. Steve pointed out that public hearings are required by law, but are very formal. They’re in the form of testimony with no dialog. He expressed that he feels coordination meetings are a much better setting, to discuss issues and to exchange information. What the USFWS wants from the local government is the information they may have that will help inform the USFWS with decisions going forward. In addition, the USFWS will provide the local governments with any information that can be used on what the listing or any designation of critical habitat will mean to the local governments and residents within the District and the County. Steve stated he appreciated the opportunity and looks forward to these discussions.

The District hosted a meeting with the USFS on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Coronado National Forest. Three supervisors, an advisor and the clerk attended for the District. Mary Darling, Michael Turisk, Planning Manager and Michael Izzo, Building Official, were present for Cochise County. Forest Service personnel included Jennifer Ruyle, Natural Resources and Planning staff officer, USFS, Coronado National Forest and James Heitholt, Range and Watershed staff, USFS, Sierra Vista Ranger District. Issues discussed were habitat management for species, forest fires, forest roads, road closures, timber management, wilderness, and private property access within a wilderness.

(continued on page 3)

Coordination Meetings, continued

The most recent assembly was a meeting in March 2014 with the BLM on the Draft EIS/RMP for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA). Representing the District were three supervisors, four advisors, the clerk, Margaret Byfield and Lamar Smith, consultants, and Dr. Gary Thrasher, both consultant and cooperator. Pat Call, supervisors, Mary Darling and Michael Turisk represented Cochise County. BLM Gila District was represented by Tim Shannon, District Manager, Vi Hillman, Tucson Field Manager, Ryan Pitts, Renewable Resource Leader, and Eric Baker, Rangeland Management Specialist, BLM Gila District.

The issues discussed in this coordination meeting were: Overview of the coordination requirements, the history of grazing on the San Pedro both before and after the establishment of the SPRNCA, the data available, or lack of the data and analysis, trespass cattle and possible livestock diseases imported from Mexico in cattle coming north on the river, fire and fuels management, protocols for scientific studies, brush control and the possible impacts on water, and water. The District and County stated their position taken from their plans, that an alternative, preferably the preferred alternative, should include managed grazing within the SPRNCA as a tool for resource management. The District questioned why the San Pedro doesn't operate like the La Cienegas NCA where cattle grazing is allowed since the BLM considered that project a success. The final issue is the requirement for the BLM plan to be consistent with District and County plans or explanations provided for areas of inconsistency.

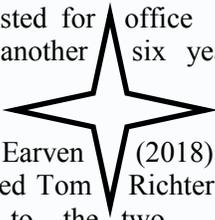
HNRCDC Board Elections

Elections and appointment of District Supervisors are conducted each even numbered year.

Three Supervisors serve on the NRCDC Board in an elected capacity with staggered six year terms of office.

Rachel Thomas ran uncontested for office this spring so was elected to serve another six year term.

The other elected Supervisors are Jim Lindsey (2016) and Lucinda Earven (2018). The three elected Supervisors nominated Tom Richter and John Lohse for appointment to the two Supervisor positions appointed by the Arizona State Land Commissioner for a two year period.



* Hereford NRCDC email has changed. *
* Old: info@herefordnrcdc.com *
* New: hereford_nrcdc@juno.com *

...IN A NUTSHELL

Your Hereford NRCDC has actively participated in and will continue to work on the following current federal actions:

- EPA definition of "Waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act
- BLM RMP/EIS for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area
- Coronado National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan EIS
- Sierra Vista Ranger District Motorized Travel System, EA
- USFS Best Management Practice for Water Quality Protections
- USFS Proposed Directive on Groundwater Resource Management

In addition, the District has been involved in and will stay involved in the following endangered species actions:

- Critical habitat for the jaguar
- Listing, critical habitat and 10J rule for the Mexican wolf
- Possible listing and critical habitat for the yellow billed cuckoo
- Possible listing and critical habitat for the northern Mexican gartersnake
- USFWS Proposed change to the definition of critical habitat

The conservation and economic impact of each individual, and cumulative activity for this area is vital to HNRCDC and Cochise County.

If you would like more information on any of these actions, or would like to be included on our email notification list for comment period deadlines please contact us at hereford_nrcdc@juno.com Please include "actions" in the subject line.

HORSESHOE DRAW PROJECT FUNDED

The District has been notified that its grant application for the Horseshoe Draw Flood Control, Restoration and Erosion Mitigation Study and Design project will be funded by a grant from the Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission. The grant amount is \$198,625. The project is located on the private land of the Ladd Ranch east of the San Pedro River and south of Highway 92 and will benefit the San Pedro River, the San Pedro River watershed, and aquifer recharge.

Head cutting at Horseshoe Draw has caused severe erosion which resulted in tons of sediment being transported downstream into the San Pedro River. Fine sediment and debris in the riverbed cause the river's sandy soils to be clogged, thus inhibiting water from recharging the aquifer. Flooding has also caused major problems and washouts on the South Paloma Trail which is the only road providing access to homes south of the Horseshoe Draw.

The grant is for the first two of the three phases of the project; the study and design. Phase one requires an engineering company to perform several studies to determine if the project is feasible and if so the best method to control flooding and runoff and prevent further soil erosion. A preliminary look at the area by representatives from HilgartWilson and Cochise County indicated a berm structure would be most suitable.

The studies will determine the proper structure or structures needed, and the most effective locations for their construction. Phase one also includes obtaining all the necessary permits such as Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), if necessary, Approval to Place Improvement – Arizona State Land Department, State Historic Preservation Office cultural resource clearance, Floodplain Use Permit – Cochise County Flood Control, and permitting from Arizona Department of Water Resources.

Phase two is to select the final design from the conceptual design alternatives. This will provide the necessary data to determine the cost for the final phase of the project; the construction. Once this is done the District can proceed with grant applications for the construction funding.

A Phoenix, AZ engineering firm, HilgartWilson, will perform the work for phase one and two.

New District Faces

Hereford NRCDC welcomes Sierra Vista homeowner, Kale Kiyabu as our newest member/cooperator. Kay is retired and is active in local politics.

ARIZONA NRCDC SUMMER CONFERENCE

“Coordination, Conservation, & Local Expertise”

August 10-12, 2014

The Historic Hassayampa Inn

122 East Gurley Street

Prescott, Arizona

Conference Keynote Speakers:

- ◆ Margaret Byfield, Executive Director, American Stewards of Liberty
- ◆ Larry Voyles, Director, AGFD
- ◆ Stu Tuttle, State Biologist, NRCS

Educational Breakout Sessions and Field Day

Please contact Katie Reeves: EduKate.AZ@gmail.com

Source of Real Information About the Wolf Issue

The Real Wolf: The Science, Politics, and Economics of Co-Existing with Wolves in Modern Times

by Ted B. Lyon and Will N. Graves

In this detailed yet easy-to-read essay collection, authors Ted B. Lyon and Will N. Graves investigate the majesty and myths surrounding wolves in the United States and offer a new, true picture of the wolf in contemporary America.

The Real Wolf: The Science, Politics, and Economics of Co-Existing with Wolves in Modern Times is an in-depth study of the impact wolves as a federally protected species have had on big game and livestock populations. Each chapter in the book is meticulously researched and written by authors and scientists who have spent years studying wolves and wolf behavior. Contributing authors Rob Arnaud, Dr. Arthur Bergerud, Karen Budd-Falen, Jess Carey, Dr. Matthew A. Cronin, Dr. Valerius Geist, Don Peay, Laura Schneberger, Heather Smith-Thomas, and Cat Urbigkit each describe a unique aspect of the wolf in the United States. *The Real Wolf* does not call for the eradication of wolves from the United States, but rather advocates a new system of species management that would allow wolves, game animals, and farmers to live in harmony.

The Real Wolf presents hundreds of pages of documents, facts and real life stories about gray wolves, including over 460 references, footnotes, and links to sources and facts.

In the book, you will find that a massive disinformation campaign has been perpetrated upon America about wolves.

Myth: Wolves do not kill or attack people.

Fact: They do, and regularly, Chapters 3 and 4 will shock you.

Myth: Wolves are the sanitarians of nature and only kill the weak and the sick.

Fact: Wolves kill any and all forms of animals, strong as well as weak.

Myth: Wolves do not destroy game herds.

Fact: Chapter 5 and 8 document how wolves destroy large game herds quickly before moving on when a region can no longer sustain them.

Myth: Wolves are an economic boon to the economies of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

Fact: Chapter 7 and 10 document how and why wolves are a financial disaster for ranchers, farmers, businesses and states.

Myth: Wolves do not carry harmful diseases.

Fact: Chapter 14 lays out facts, backed by worldwide scientific data, proving that wolves are definite carriers of diseases dangerous to man and animals alike.

Clean Water Act

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corp of Engineers have issued a proposed rule, Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act. This rule, if adopted, will expand the scope and power of the Clean Water Act. EPA and the COE jurisdiction will extend to many water and land features that are physically remote from traditional navigable water. Any ditch, gully or low area that might carry water when it rains but is dry most of the time will be included. In the proposed rule, EPA is maintaining that all connections between waters are “significant,” regardless of how much or how often they actually have water, and should be equally and categorically regulated by the federal government with very few exceptions.

EPA will be able to aggregate what they call “other waters” with similar waters in the region to find a “significant nexus” to traditionally navigable waters.

Although there are no navigable rivers within the Hereford NRCD, we are within the Colorado River watershed so what will stop EPA from considering that a significant nexus?

Major sections of the proposed rule leaves key concepts unclear, undefined and subject to agency distraction. The proposed rule is open for public comment until July 21, 2014. Information is available on www.regulations.gov
Document number is EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0880.

Counting Jaguars

March 5, 2014 USFWS issued the final rule for 764,207 acres of critical habitat for the jaguar. The habitat is located in Cochise, Santa Cruz and Pima counties in Arizona and Hidalgo County, NM. This critical habitat action is the result of petitions, complaints and lawsuits (3) by the Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife.

There are two areas of critical habitat within the District. These are the southern area of the Huachucas from Ramsey Canyon to the Border, most west of Highway 92. The critical habitat area does cross a short way to the east side of 92 for about three to four miles from 3 Canyons Road south. The Whetstones from Highway 82 to Kartchner Caverns west of Highway 90 is also an area of critical habitat.

There are fewer than 40 verifiable records of lone jaguars presumed naturally present in the US since 1900. They include just two confirmed females (1919 -1949), both in Arizona. The true origin of all these jaguars is uncertain because at least 16 additional jaguars were brought in and released for big game hunts. There are only three records of jaguars in the USA pre-dating 1900, and those records date from 1829-1890. Two were near the present-day Mexican border and only the 1890 record is known for sure to have occurred north of the Mexican border. There is presently one lone male jaguar north of the US/Mexican border.

Are the jaguars considered illegal coming from Mexico? Department of Homeland Security has given \$771,000 to the University of Arizona to place trail cameras at 120 sites for the purpose of getting pictures of the jaguar and ocelot. In addition, some of these funds are being used by the University of Arizona to survey the ranchers in the jaguar area to get their opinions of the animal.

Hereford NRC D/Tombstone High School FFA Pronghorn Capture/Releases Update

by Glen Dickens, Vice President *Arizona Antelope Foundation*

On January 27-29th 2014 Arizona Antelope Foundation (AAF) board members, and 50+ volunteers including five members of the Hereford District of NRC D, and 10 Tombstone High School FFA students and 30+ Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) employees set up to capture pronghorn in the Prescott area. The purpose of this capture project was to bolster two pronghorn populations with additional numbers and genetic diversity in southeastern Arizona in game management Units 35A/B in the Elgin area, while keeping the Prescott area pronghorn population in Unit 19A at a manageable size and allow for continued recruitment of fawns.

The project activity included constructing an alley way fence and corral on day one. Then on days two and three capture time utilizing ground spotters and a helicopter to bring nearby herds/groups of pronghorn to the trap site and drive them into the mouth of the winged fences. Everything was go on capture day and on day one eight pronghorn were successfully caught. They were then processed by THS students, with assistance, including ear tagging, taking temperatures, collaring and carrying them to the transport trailer. These animals were successfully released just north of Elgin.



Photo by Betty Dickens

However after that group was secured many other groups of pronghorn were safely guided to the trap and each and every group failed to enter the critical alleyway of the trap leading to the actual capture corral. This continued on day two, thus giving negative results similar to attempts in 2012.

The Prescott Valley motel rooms for the participating students were paid for by the AAF's National Fish and Wildlife grant entitled "Southeastern Arizona Grasslands Pronghorn Initiative". Additional NFWF grant funding will be made available for other qualifying activities by the FFA members as the field and geo-data base portions of the project continues.

Previously on January 14, 2014 NRC D Board members and THS FFA students observed the release of 23 pronghorn just south of Elgin and another 16 in the north end of the San Rafael Valley. Of the 23 released near Elgin three are fitted with radio collars (one buck and two does) and the FFA students will be monitoring those animals' seasonal and daily movements over the two year half-life of the collars and will learn to use GIS and ARC Info tools with AAF GIS Manager Caroline Patrick as their instructor to provide the necessary maps and management data in the herd area.

The AAF is pleased to be partnering with both the Hereford NRC D and the Tombstone High School FFA class led by instructor Kelly Lyda on this very important pronghorn population enhancement work over the next two years. We look forward to our continued collaboration on behalf of these young adults.



Photo by John Millican



Photo by Mary Darling

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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 NRC D
is on the World Wide Web!
www.herefordnrcd.com

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Advertisement: \$60 for 4 issues.
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HEREFORD NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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