

Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District

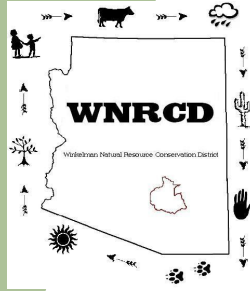
P.O. Box 68

Mammoth, AZ

85618

Fall 2011

www.wnrkd.org



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Supervisor: Beverly Miller

Supervisor: Gary Vinson

Supervisor: Peter Else

Supervisor: Dianna Manning

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From the Frog Pond

If it seems like this quarter was quieter than the last several for the Winkelman District, it was—a little bit. Not as many committee meetings with agencies but still we accomplished a few things.

Walt, Francie, Stefanie, and I have had five meetings now with representatives of Fish and Wildlife Service, Game and Fish, BLM, NRCS to identify everything a rancher does while raising animals so Fish and Wildlife can use it to identify “best management practices” when they make a 4D rule for the tortoise. First we listed all types of animals that are managed, i.e. yearlings, cow calf, sheep, goat, horse, etc. then we started listing what activities a rancher does in each operation, and broke each of those down to consider if an action has the potential to effect the tortoise; if the effect is either positive, negative, or no effect. Then if it can have a negative effect, how can that effect be either eliminated or reduced, such as doing that action at a certain time of year when the tortoise isn’t active, or surveying for tortoise ahead of an action, etc. If an action has no effect on the tortoise we still have to document that it was considered so some group or person cannot come later and say, “You didn’t consider this” and use that as a reason to go to court. We think we are just about finished with this part of it. When we are satisfied that we are, it will be sent out to agencies, interested groups and experts, as I understand it, to comment on it. We will then come back and see if we need to modify it. After that, the document can be used for not only the tortoise but other species as well. NRCS is going to use it for a Programmatic Agreement with Fish and Wildlife they have been working on for EQIP and other programs. It will be a template for other industries to use also. It took the four of us a couple of meetings to understand the importance of the minutiae of what we are doing. It has been kind of mind numbing at times but the document that is produced should be very valuable for the industry going forward. We have had about 25 hours of meetings with maybe that many more to go. I have been very impressed at how seriously the agency people take this, since they have nothing personally to gain or lose by it.

The Coordination Committee along with the Redington Committee met with Jim Kenna, State Director of BLM along with Tom Dabbs, Brian Bellew, and staff people concerning the SunZia Power Transmission Line Project. Mr. Kenna began with a long discussion of the importance of the project to the country and how it will further the nation’s goals toward alternative energy. We then had a pretty heated discussion about coordination and the BLM’s responsibilities toward local governments per NEPA and FLPMA. By the end of the meeting, Mr. Kenna, “representing the Secretary of Interior” said they would not recognize coordination and would not discuss it further.

We agreed to have another meeting with Mr. Dabbs and Bellew to go over our concerns with the project. At that meeting, they said they were under orders to not talk about coordination and they couldn’t say if anything we had

presented to the BLM in four other meetings would be in the Draft EIS—but they would like to keep meeting. We feel at this time, it would be a waste of time.

Stefanie, Rachel Thomas, and I met with Senator Kyl's natural resources person and his area manager to ask the Senator to intervene on our behalf. They have been working on a strategy to help us.

The two Districts have also petitioned the BLM under the Data Quality Act to for a correction of their 'Needs And Purposes Statement' since the SunZia project has little or nothing to do with alternative energy. It was billed as such in order to keep the environmental organizations from opposing it and from opposing it going thru the San Pedro or Aravaipa valleys. It worked. Since the petition came out several of those organizations have changed their position and supported our petition. This was a result of the work and foresight of Supervisor Peter Else.

Since the creation of the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan and its Open Space and Trails element there have been several meetings in Florence that some of us have participated in. This side of Pinal County is seen as the natural playground for the Phoenix-Tucson megalopolis. As a result, the District is forming a committee to include agency people to see if we can't get a handle on the rampant off road use and access issues. Since this is a growing problem across the District, it would be good for some of you who haven't been involved, to offer to serve on this committee. All you have to do is email me at dunnranches@yahoo.com. Hopefully we can explore ways for law enforcement and agencies to coordinate with each other and maybe come up with new tools for producers to combat this problem.

We have a new Supervisor! Diana Manning works for ASARCO presently as an environmental engineer. She is very active in the Arizona Mining Association and lives in Florence. Diana is a trained big equipment operator as well as a specialized flight instructor. She is a powerplant and airframe mechanic and has a degree in business. She is a welcome addition that will bring a new perspective and lots of hands on experience to the District. Thanks for serving Diana.

Miriam has retired—again. If you remember, she retired as a supervisor a couple of years ago after being on the board nearly a hundred years. We gave her a nice plaque, thanked her profusely for her service, then when we came up short to fill a position, she graciously agreed to serve again. The board gave her a gift certificate this time. I don't know what we'll give her next time. Thank you Miriam, for your grace, wisdom, and sense of humor.

Thursday, September 22, the Redington and Winkelman Districts hosted an informational meeting for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to explain and receive feedback on an idea of making the Lower San Pedro River Valley into a refuge. Attending the meeting were about seventy five people from both districts and from both ends of the ideological spectrum and representatives serve on local school boards,. As you might guess, there were points of view that ranged from making the refuge to running the government completely out of the valley. The two points I came out of the meeting with were that nearly everyone agrees that the San Pedro must never become a housing development and that the NRCDs seem to be the only entities that have the trust of nearly everyone. Maybe that's enough to build on.

The Winkelman District signed three more Comprehensive Management Plans for District cooperators lately. These, for those who don't know, are management plans put into place by producers and have been agreed to by whatever agency or agencies own the lands that are being managed, along with the NRCS, the local NRCD and the producer. These agreements are a result of negotiations with the agencies and the producer to allow him or her to place improvements and management practices that hopefully insures the long term viability of both the resource and the operator.

Remember as a cooperator, the District is your advocate for the natural resources. If you have problems with agencies, contact us.

Guess that's all we've been doing. We need more rain, the frog pond is going dry.

Bill



News from around the State and District.....

AZNRC Summer Conference:

The District presented Bill Dunn with a plaque and desk clock at the Summer Conference. This was to honor his tireless efforts on behalf of the District and the State in all matters relating to Conservation Districts. The Conference was well attended and a variety of subjects was covered by various break out sessions.



To my wonderful friends of the Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District:

Your most generous gift and beautiful card given to me at our recent meeting of August 31st is appreciated more than you know. My time with each of you is a gift of its own - this is a unique group of caring people - working diligently toward good goals that endeavor to protect all on this earth, including its people - volunteer efforts of many Hours and travel - transparency throughout it all - setting new standards and higher goals and persevering through many obstacles. A legacy is being created here with many minds working in concert toward common sense backed up by good science - it is a work always in progress but the WNRCD folks can be proud of their efforts and contributions. It comes from the heart from People who work the land, some for generations. I admire this quality of person with whom I have been associated for a number of years - America at its best - pray it continues for our children. *With a grateful heart, Miriam Reed*

New State Conservationist

Keisha Brown Tatem, a native of Ivor, Virginia, began her professional career with NRCS as a Soil Conservationist Student Trainee in 1995. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a concentration in plant and soil science from Virginia State University. She spent over 10 years working directly with producers as a Soil Conservationist and District Conservationist in Virginia and Florida.

In 2008, Keisha was selected as the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations for southeastern Pennsylvania and in 2010, she was detailed to South Carolina to serve as the Acting State Conservationist. She also spent two years as a Policy Analyst with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Before being selected State Conservationist for Arizona, Keisha worked as a Natural Resources Specialist with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program Team at NRCS' national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Fall District Meeting

We have gotten off track with our meetings.

So SAVE THE DATE.....November 2. We will send out a post card letting you know the location.



News from the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service). . . .

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), with an application deadline of Nov. 1. NRCS will review applications from applicants who have completed a conservation plan and that are received by this date and rank them for fiscal year 2012 funding.

Also included in the EQIP Nov. 1 deadline is the organic, air quality, on-farm energy, conservation activity plans, and high tunnel program application deadlines. All of these programs are funded through EQIP. To learn more about these programs, please visit www.az.nrcs.usda.gov.

Certified organic producers and those transitioning to organic production are encouraged to apply for conservation funding. Unlike previous years, irrigation improvements may now be included if a primary resource concern is addressed. Primary resource concerns for the organic program include soil condition, soil erosion, domestic animals, plant condition, water quality and fish and wildlife.

The air quality program has four main areas of assistance:

Combustion Engine Installation or replacement allows for the installation of combustion engines as well as replacement of combustion engines to assist in reducing emissions by removing and destroying high-polluting internal combustion engines and replacing with new engines meeting the most current standards. Replacement engines must be decommissioned.

Dust - Road Treatments treat dirt roads with a soil stabilizer can reduce PM10 emissions by as much as 50%.

Conservation Tillage operations such as no-till, strip-till, ridge-till and mulch-till are effective ways of reducing soil erosion.

Waste Utilization. Manure has valuable nutrients that crops can utilize for their development, and by using waste utilization the operation will reduce the emissions of ammonia, volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen.

Eligibility for the on-farm energy initiative is open to agricultural producers who have Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP), developed through EQIP Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) for individual on-farm energy audits. Energy audits identify what resource concerns are present and open the opportunity for EQIP energy cost-share funds to improve those resource areas.

Conservation Activity Plans are being offered to producers who want technical assistance on a specific resource concern. Through a CAP, NRCS funds are used to pay a portion of the cost for a private technical service provider (TSP) to develop plans outlining conservation treatment alternatives. There are 13 CAPs offered in Arizona; nutrient management, forest management, grazing management, integrated pest management, headquarters agriculture energy management, landscape agricultural energy management, comprehensive air quality management, organic transition plan, fish and wildlife habitat management, pollinator habitat enhancement, and spill, prevention, control and countermeasure conservation.

Agriculture producers are encouraged to apply throughout the year for EQIP, WHIP, and other Farm Bill programs administered by NRCS. "The Nov. 1 deadline is simply so we set a time to review and rank applications for funding," said Keisha Tatem, NRCS State Conservationist. "Farmers and ranchers can apply whenever they are ready to plan improvements to their land's natural resources. Additional application ranking deadlines may be announced throughout the year."

Summer Meeting Minutes * August 31, 2011 * Florence, AZ

The regular summer meeting of the Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District had 21 people in attendance.

Supervisors and District Personnel Present: Chairman, Bill Dunn, Beverly Miller, Miriam Reed, Gary Vinson and Peter Else; Vicki France, District Clerk. **Members, Cooperators and Guests Present:** Hattie Hedrick, Jan Wilson, Walt and Francie Meyer, Diana Manning, John Rendall and Molly Hansen. **Agency Personnel Present:** Kristen Egen, Katie Cline and Alisha Phipps, Elisabeth Cullen, USDA-NRCS; Doug Witte and Steve Williams, AZ State Land Dept.; Shawna Loper, UofA Cooperative Extension and Ben Brochu, Az Game and Fish Dept.

Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions: Bill Dunn called the meeting to order at 9:57 a.m. Cooperators and guests introduced themselves.

Pledge of Allegiance: Bill led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda: Beverly Miller made the motion to approve the Minutes of August, 2011, and attaching the Land Management Plan Draft to it. Peter seconded it and the motion carried. Peter moved to pay the following bills:

Bill Dunn for postage \$33.15

Beyond Business Solutions for transcription \$492.00

Bev Miller seconded the motion, which was passed by voice vote with no nays.

1. New Business:

Approve revised Cooperator Agreement for Diana Manning.

Diana was approved as a supervisor on Aug. 1, but needed to become a cooperator as herself instead of ASARCO. The Board accepted the new cooperator.

Tortoise Conservation Team and the 4D Rule

Bill said that the team will have the last meeting tomorrow. Then Jeff S. will send it out to all of the agencies for approval. It will give grazing a take permit. This should be a template for other species.

Pinal County Open Space Plan Update

There will be a series of regional meetings. Celeste Andresen is organizing ours for Region 3. In this region most of the projects are trails and perhaps one park. The county plans to rely on Volunteer Stewards to maintain and police the trails. Gary pointed out that the trail is bringing in new OHV users where none ever went because the trail now connects washes and they can have loops. There has been lots of input from our cooperators. Francie reminded us that we should not forget the Great Western Trail. Bill thinks we need to get these folks out on a tour of what we are talking about. Many of the problem people are winter visitors from Apache Junction. We looked at a map of proposed trails and lots of them are impossible due to ownership etc. Jan Wilson thinks this is a public relations problem. Ben said that the Az G&F should have been out in front of this a long time ago. We talked a lot about the pros and of designating roads in a Travel Management Plan. It was eventually agreed that it was a necessary evil and we needed to start somewhere. Miriam thinks we need to ask how many trails we need to make people happy. Francie pointed out that we need consistent attitudes across all levels of the agencies. Steve W. pointed out that the map has a disclaimer that it is tentative and approval of the landowner/agency would be needed to make it a reality. We talked about the many maps that are out there that is also confusing to everyone. ASLD is only going to work on plans that make connections to the BLM or Forest Service trails. John Rendall said that if you look at forest service trails, they are well respected, maybe because of signage with the American Flag at the trail heads. It is the State Lands that are treated with such a lack of respect. Bev Miller moved that the District step up involvement and engagement with OHV Trails in the Open Space Plan. Peter seconded the motion, and suggested that one be done on a trial basis. The motion passed. The group then decided that it would be good to expand this to other districts such as Pima,

Santa Cruz and East Maricopa. Jodi Latimer would represent ASLD, Ben, John Rendall, Vicki, and Francisco Mendoza from BLM, Miriam/Dianna, Paul Burkhart, were all mentioned as committee members. Because this is a huge project to get a paradigm shift about public and private open space lands, maybe Donna M. would conduct a goal setting Strategic Plan for us later in the year.

Field Guide Revision, Long Range Plan, Newsletter and Website

Katie is about ½ done the field report. It will probably be 80-100 pages. Her problem has been lack of response from people that she needs information from. Everyone had a copy of the Long Range Plan and was asked to review it and get back to Bill. Walt and Francie had information to add and gave it to Bill.

No one knew about the status of the website because Jenny was not there.

Meeting with the USFWS re: Lower San Pedro Wildlife Refuge.

There has been a public meeting schedule for September 22 at 3 pm for them to talk to the residents of the Valley. It will be at Central Arizona College (Aravaipa Campus). Peter moved to have the meeting, Beverly seconded the motion. The motion carried. Molly has a congressionally commissioned Assessment of the San Pedro River Valley done in 1980. She will scan it and send it to Bill or Vicki. Francie said to be sure to advertize it well and give a little history in the publicity. It will be jointly hosted by the Redington District.

Ben Brochu gave his report

The issue of access was brought about the cancelation of a hunt in 19B due to denial of access to private property. Things were discussed and there are now 4 pilot projects going on. Allen Forney is the OHV Officer from Benson to the Gila River. His number is 520-975-4717. Jeff Faucet is north of the river. Everyone has Blackberries now. Ben gives the OHV Officers priority areas. They do patrols, enforcement and education. There is a new law that allows hunting within city limits. The same limits apply such as no discharging within a quarter mile of a house.

We adjourned for lunch at 11:46 am and reconvened at 12:20 pm.

The group agreed that Bill should ask the county to declare a Drought Emergency.

Appeal to the denial of our request for correction

The Information Quality Act does not cover oral statements, but in written documents, the BLM is still saying that the Sunzia power transmission line is still for renewable energy. They have 60 days to respond to our request. Four Environmental groups have already reversed their support and Peter thinks that the correction should be a big public one, not just a subtle note in the draft EIS. Walt mentioned that the acting NM Director once was assigned to this area and familiar with many cooperators. There was one addition and one correction. Peter moved that we send the letter with the revisions. Gary V. seconded it and the motion carried. It will be in the mail Sept. 2.

2. Old Business:

Coordinating Agency Status

USFWS and the Desert Tortoise: discussed earlier.

Sun Zia Transmission Line: Bill and several cooperators have a meeting with a Washington Representative in Senator Kly's office tomorrow over this whole lack of coordination. We decided to respond to Brian Blew's email by saying that the issues still have not been resolved and there is no need for a meeting.

Jaguar Habitat

The Pima District is had their first meeting with the USFWS. Bill attended. They also openly stated that their solicitors had said that coordination was not a legal concept. Pima stated that they were representing several district. Bill suggested that we write a letter to that effect. Bev moved that we send a letter of support to Pima to solidify this. Gary seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Range Monitoring for the district

We discussed several options that Vicki had. Maybe we could work out a partnership with Cooperative Extension even though they had no Range Extension positions in Pinal Co. Walt explained some of the issues with training.

Winkelman Resource Mgt. Center

The Small Landowner Workshops were well attended. Kristen can do a landowner workshop on Monitoring when Katie is doing one near the road. Doug needs to have reports at least annually. He takes activities from the District meetings.

3. Reports from Supervisors and District Personnel:

The October 8 meeting of SACPA is at Bills. He will have demonstrations on easy testing for common diseases in cows. Christine, Hattie's Daughter will come on to the Board. The State Technical Committee meeting will be on Sept 27. Vicki read a nice thank you from Bill Doelle. She also has gotten the supervisors a copy of what the American Stewards is providing for our Government Entity Agreement. Bev would like to talk about this at the next meeting.

4. Reports from Agency Personnel

NRCS –Kristen Egen

With all of the fires, Emergency Watershed Program had put \$900,000 into the area. The next Farm Bill will emphasize consolidation and simplification of programs. HoHokam RC&D has voted to disband. Walt said that we need to get in contact with both of them to get money back that they were holding for our projects. Vicki would do this.

ASLD – Doug Witte/Steve Williams

We have received full funding for 2011-12. Bev's term is up in 2012, and Bill in 2016. Peter and Gary are two year appointed terms. There has been a change to election laws that will eliminate an election if there is only one candidate in a race. He has Miriam's resignation, and needs the paper work for Diana. Vicki will get this done. Steve reported that the Knight Lawsuit is back in Superior Court for tomorrow, or very soon. The Rumory case is being heard at the end of September.

5. Call to the Public

John updated us on the status of the trail now that it is a National Trail. Laura Wright is the staff person stationed in Tucson. Most of the 800 miles is done.

Walt asked Steve about the effect of the fires on State Lands. Steve said that they were mostly unaffected. Most were back burns and very cool beneficial fires.

Vicki told the group about Pima's meeting with their county assessor. Others had heard of this issue. Bill said that if anyone has a problem contact Joe Sieg at the Farm Bureau.

6. Adjournment

The next District meeting was set for the first week in November to try to get us back on track. Bev Miller moved to adjourn the meeting, Peter Else seconded it and the meeting adjourned at 2:43 pm.



Wildlife Escape Ramps are now available for sale:

To purchase ramps contact Verde NRCD at
PO Box 280 Camp Verde AZ 86322 Phone (928) 554-0463
verdenrcd@yahoo.com or Call: Jodi Allen 928-567-3107



ROPING A BEAR

Mary Mercer found this old photograph and was wondering if any one knew who this guy was!!!!

Rangeland Monitoring Workshop November 10, 2011

Rangeland monitoring is an important part of every ranching operation. It helps determine pasture rotation, impacts from lack of rainfall and seasonal freezes. It can determine the existence or invasion of undesirable plant species. It may also be used in coordination with the Endangered Species Act Section 4-D Rule, to help you with getting grants and many other habitat issues. Like any other thing that is managed, we need to know what is out there and how to measure it before we can write Management Plans, Recovery Plans, Grants, or any other type of action.

The Winkelman and Pima Natural Resource Conservation Districts have the need and some resources to hire Range Monitors, but we cannot find qualified people to do this. The NRCS would like to have the rancher or his/her managers participate in a workshop to help train individuals to assist in this mission in the future.

The USDA-NRCS will hold a Monitoring Workshop on the **November 10** for a key monitoring area on the Falcon Valley Ranch, near Oracle Junction. They will show frequency, utilization and composition monitoring methods. It will be from 9 am - noon.

Please call or email Vicki France, 520-292-2999 x 111 vicki.france@az.nacdnet.net, for maps and car pool information.