

NEWSLETTER Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District

P.O. Box 68

Mammoth, AZ

85618

www.wnrcd.org

February 2012



Supervisors and Personnel:

Chairman: Bill Dunn

Supervisor: Beverly Miller

Supervisor: Gary Vinson

Supervisor: Peter Else

Supervisor: Diana Manning

District Clerk: Vicki France

520-292-2999 x 111

With Assistance from:

*USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service*

3241 N. Romero Road

Tucson, AZ 85705

520-292-2999 x 105

From the Frog Pond

Of all the things that make our jobs as resource managers toughest, is the federal bureaucracy. This has been amplified by the BLM's refusal to coordinate with us and the Redington District on the SunZia Transmission Project. Not only that, but when we have pointed out their role as project proponent with their portrayal of the project as "providing primarily renewable energy" they have stonewalled, lost our appeals, and given us email addresses that are not working. Just this morning (1/31/12) I sent another email asking why our IQA appeal has not been posted on their website as they are bound to do. More to come....

As you probably know, the US Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to create a new refuge along the lower San Pedro River Valley from about Cascabel to its confluence with the Gila. Our district and the Redington District hosted a public meeting for them to explain their plan and get the reading of the locals. They said they wouldn't move on the proposal without the support of the local community. It sounded to me like the local community, especially the agricultural community, was pretty vocal in their opposition. I don't think they were dissuaded.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service in Arizona has returned to their practice of having the local districts okay Comprehensive Management Plans before they do their EQIP funding for a farm or ranch. This is how they did business in the past but got away from it during the period when they were supposed to get a lot of money out the door for practices and projects. At our last quarterly meeting Kristen Egan presented the Board with three Contracts to approve. We approved two and had questions about one. She will get that info to us and hopefully we can move on it. Historically this has been one of the primary roles of the districts: local producers with local knowledge working on local natural resource issues.

The Ed Center has been working with the Boyce Thompson Arboretum and Mammoth Elementary School to provide funding for buses to take the students there and help design a presentation for them. Since state funding has dropped for our local schools, field days has fallen by the wayside. This will be a good way to get them exposed to some natural resource education.



325 - CALF ROPING IN ARIZONA

Till next time.... **BILL**

We Care About Conservation

AZ NRCS and AZ's Conservation Districts Partner in Conservation Planning Campaign

The Arizona Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has partnered with Arizona's Conservation Districts in a conservation planning campaign. Conservation planning is the fundamental starting point for maintaining and improving the natural resources that support agricultural production and the lifestyle we love and enjoy. Arizona NRCS and Arizona's Conservation Districts care about conservation and are here to help agricultural producers conserve the resources and the lifestyle they love for future generations.

"We are getting conservation on the ground faster and more efficiently by working together. The relationship between the NRCS and Arizona's Conservation Districts is a symbiotic one," said Tedd Haas, farmer from the Willcox-San Simon Natural Resources Conservation District.

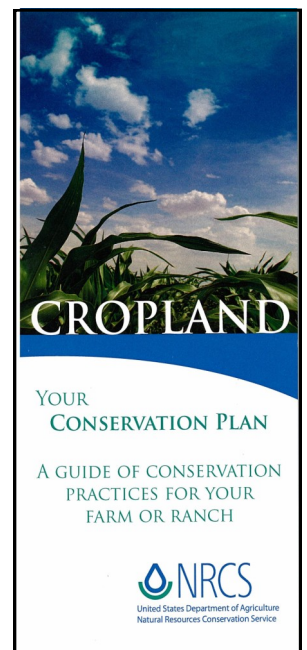
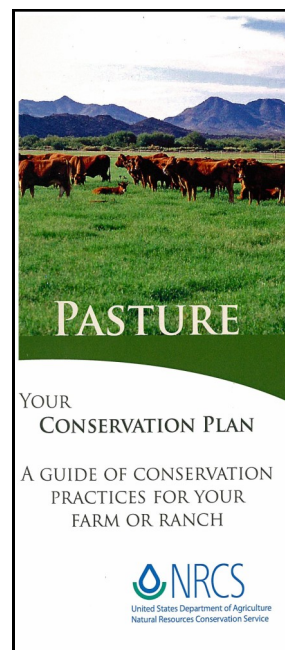
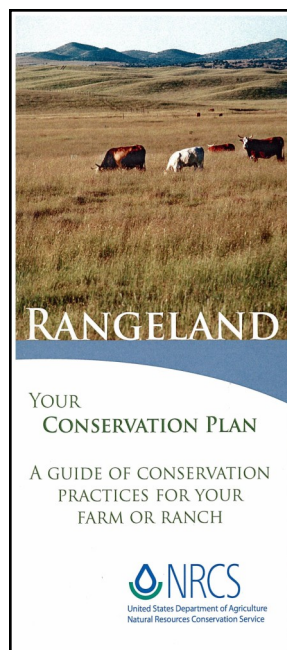
Conservation Districts provide leadership for a locally led conservation program to help producers address local conservation priorities. Arizona's Conservation Districts are strong partners with NRCS and work closely with NRCS field staff to communicate the needs and priorities of conservation on the ground at the local level.

A conservation plan is a free service NRCS provides to agricultural producers that combines the practical knowledge of the producers, the local conservation district natural resource priorities and the scientific knowledge of NRCS conservationists. NRCS experts help producers to conserve water, improve air quality, and reduce soil erosion. It's the producers plan to use as they wish – a guide to using their natural resources more efficiently.

Agricultural producers can request technical assistance and develop a conservation plan at any time. The conservation plan is a three phase process. Once a conservation plan is completed, producers have the opportunity to apply for NRCS funding to help implement the improvements and structures needed to achieve their conservation plan.

As part of the campaign, participating producers will have the opportunity to be highlighted on the Arizona NRCS website as well as through "We Care About Conservation" success stories. They will also be recognized by their local Conservation District for taking a pro-active approach in conserving their natural resources for future generations.

These three pamphlets are available to give further detail to each type of agricultural operation. They are 22 pages of detailed information about creating plans. They are free and you do not need to have an EQIP Contract.



District Elections May 5, 2012

Every two years the conservation districts elect one or more supervisors. There are also two appointed positions.

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the provisions of the Natural Resource Conservation Districts Law of the State of Arizona, an election for the purpose of electing a Supervisor for the Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District will be held on the 5th day of May, 2012,

between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon, at the polling place listed below:

**Dudleyville Multigenerational Center
Dudleyville, AZ**

The term is from June 1, 2012 to May 31, 2018. A candidate for Supervisor of the Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District must reside within the District. Nomination Forms and Affidavit of Qualifications may be obtained from Vicki France, District Clerk, 520-292-2999 x 111. Completed Forms must be filed with the Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner of the State Land Department, 1616 West Adams, Phoenix, Arizona 85007 **by April 15, 2012.**

If a qualified District elector wishes to vote by mail, the elector's request for a mail ballot **must** be made timely and in writing to the address given below.

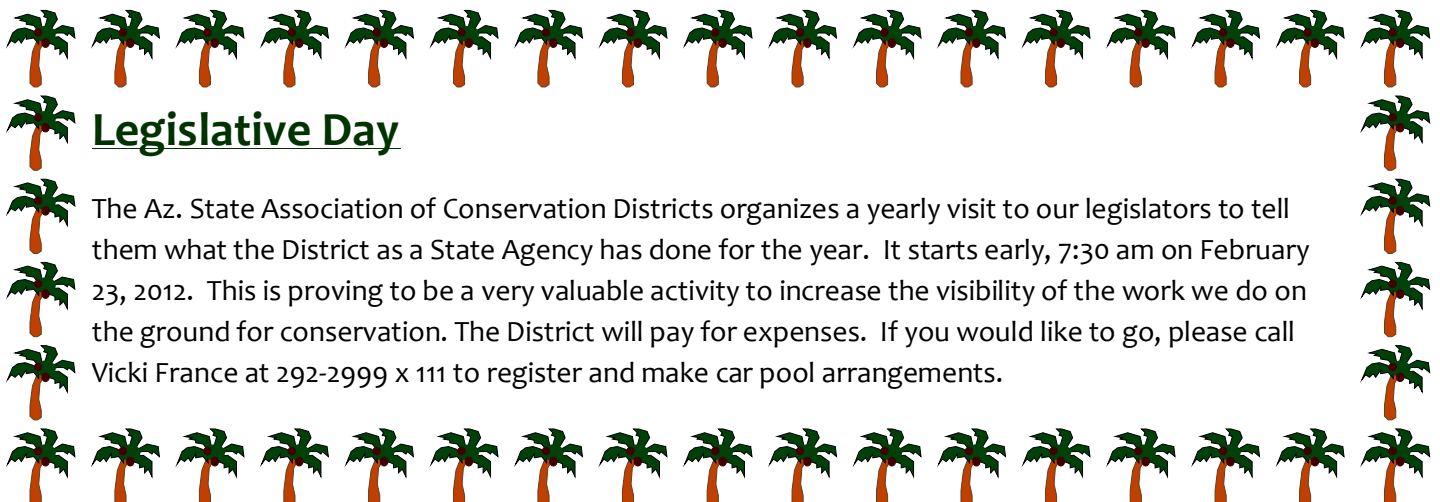
If only one nominee applies, the election will be automatic.

"Qualified elector" means a person who is a District cooperator and a qualified elector of the state (18 years of age, a registered Arizona voter). "District Cooperator" means any person who has entered into a cooperative agreement with the District for the purpose of protecting, conserving and practicing wise use of the natural resources under his control. (A.R.S. 37-1003). A person who is not already a District Cooperator may obtain a Cooperative Agreement Form from Vicki France.

By: The Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District Board of Supervisors,

William Dunn, Chairman.

3241 N. Romero Road
Tucson, AZ 85705



Legislative Day

The Az. State Association of Conservation Districts organizes a yearly visit to our legislators to tell them what the District as a State Agency has done for the year. It starts early, 7:30 am on February 23, 2012. This is proving to be a very valuable activity to increase the visibility of the work we do on the ground for conservation. The District will pay for expenses. If you would like to go, please call Vicki France at 292-2999 x 111 to register and make car pool arrangements.

Winter Meeting Minutes * January 18, 2012* Florence AZ

The regular winter meeting of the Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District had 23 people in attendance.

Supervisors and District Personnel Present: Chairman, Bill Dunn, Beverly Miller, Gary Vinson and Peter Else and Diana Manning; Vicki France, District Clerk.

Members, Cooperators and Guests Present: Hattie Hedrick, Jan Wilson, Francie Meyer, Miriam Reed, Pat Reed, Whit Patten, Kathy Brown, Becky Dunn, Gregg Vinson, Stan and Molly Yoder, John Rendall and Molly Hansen. Charles Ffolliott and Bob Evans were also present.

Agency Personnel Present: Kristen Egen, USDA-NRCS; and Ben Brochu, AZ Game and Fish Dept.

Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions: Bill Dunn called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. Cooperators and guests introduced themselves.

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

Consent Agenda: Diana made the motion to approve the Minutes of November 2, 2011 and rephrasing the wording for November 4. Gary seconded it and the motion carried. Gary moved to pay the following bills:

Bill Dunn for postage - \$81.90

San Manuel Miner – \$206.10

Winkelman NRCD - \$1091.53

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

I. New Business:

1. Donation received to date

Hattie reported that to date, we have received \$1,216 in donations.

2. Access Committee Report

Bill asked what everyone thought of the meeting in November. Francie said that she was very discouraged. Peter said that originally they were to meet to send up a trial project. Molly thinks that access should be part of an inventory for future planning. Ben said that this will be dreadfully slow and we need to chip away at the problem. A lot of the Travel Management plans are about closing redundant routes. Kristen said that one whole CRM Meeting for the Battle Axe was devoted to the access plan. State Land was there. Access is not even a layer. In another Plan meeting there was a lot of time devoted to this issue. The process is cooperator driven, not agency driven. John R. believes we should support the Travel Management Plans and processes. Miriam asked Kristen who sets the CRMP agenda. Kristen said that it depends on who is the lead agency and the wishes of the rancher. Back to the test ranch, John believes we should pick one that has a BLM Travel Management Plan. It was noted that the Battle Axe Ranch Plan was so dragged out because of a Travel Management Plan. Bill would email the committee to see what they think of doing next. Miriam asked Peter if the Pinal Partnership could help. He said that they have a very big agenda and did not see getting any help from them.

3. Council on Environmental Quality Revisions

The State Association, Districts and other concerned organizations met yesterday (1/17). The Federal Registry Notice sounds pro local government, but is actually the opposite. All of the **must** have been changed to **may**. The **required** is changed to **suggest to**. This revision fly's in the face of the original intent of NEPA and recasts the CFR's as permissive and not rule. The deadline to comment is January 27. Bev moved that we send our comments on this notice. Gary seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The group is also drafting a response the proposed changes in the ESA.

4. Appeal to the letter from BLM Information Quality Committee

Peter and Bill have a meeting on Friday the 20th with Congressman Gosar's office. They will enlist his help in resolving this issue. They would like to start and investigation into why this is happening. BLM

continually admits the flaws but continue to refuse to correct them. Peter has drafted up a letter in answer to their January 6 response. This item is tabled until after lunch to allow everyone a chance to read it.

5 NRCS's new planning/contracting direction – Kristen Egen

We are rolling out new information on our Conservation Planning efforts – **We Care About Conservation**. We have signs, bumper stickers and various handouts if anyone interested in getting the word out. They cover Conservation Planning for Cropland, Rangeland and Pasture. We won't be funding contracts without a plan signed by the District from now on.

II. Old Business:

1. Field Report Update

Since the last meeting, Katie has gotten nothing from Game and Fish or the Az Mining Association. Vicki said the document is excellent and really needed to be finished. Maybe we could publish it with a note that information was not available at the time of publishing. There will be several printings like the **Garbage Guide** and it could be added later. Ben thought that Jim H. has sent Katie the info. He would follow up. Diana said that the ASARCO has been busy with EPA and other issues. Diana gave us the contact info for Krishna Parameswaran. Vicki would write a letter to each group. Peter suggested that we look at the draft without it.

2. WRMC

Hattie said that we received the money from the Hohokom RC&D that they were holding for the printing of the Garbage Guides. She is going to meet with the Mammoth Schools at the end of January to finalize the details of the trip to the Boyce Thompson Arboretum. Francie said that she has two boxes of **Range Etiquette** brochures. She would give them to Katie to store in the basement of the NRCS offices. Hattie would also like space there for the Ed Center things.

III. Reports from Supervisors and District Personnel:

Bill said that besides the Council on Environmental Quality and the ESA revisions, the USFWS wants to redefine "significant portion of the range" to mean that if it is endangered in any portion of the range, it is endangered in all parts of its range.

Peter reported the Pinal Open Space Committee has gotten a grant from the National Parks Service to hire a facilitator. The sessions will be at CAC so the travel time is greatly reduced. He said that because of the Winkelman Natural Resource Conservation District involvement, more and more people are realizing the connection between ranching and preservation of open space.

Diana reported that the Az Mining Association is also commenting on the change to the *significant portion of the range* definition.

Vicki reminded everyone that the Elections will be in May. Beverly Miller's term is expiring. Petitions are due by April 15. Also the annual visit to the legislature for Conservation Districts will be February 23. Vicki has forms and information on these items.

IV. Reports from Agency Personnel

NRCS –Kristen Egen

We have 3 EQIP applicants in Winkelman District, one is crop and two are range. We will review the plans in Executive Session with the District.

The FSA office in Winkelman-Santa Cruz is slated for closure. They are having a meeting on this on the 2nd of February if interested. When they close, Pinal County would continue to go to Casa Grande for assistance.

Budget is tight this year – cut in almost all programs but EQIP and our Administrative Section in Phoenix is set to be combined with other agencies – not sure when.

AZ Game and Fish – Ben Brochu

At Bill's request, Ben Reviewed the Heritage Grant Program and the ones that we could possibly use to do Sonoran Desert Tortoise Research. There were also ones that may be of interest to Hattie and the Ed Center. It is all available on the Web Site.

The meeting was adjourned from 12:25 – 12:50 pm for lunch.

V. Call to the Public

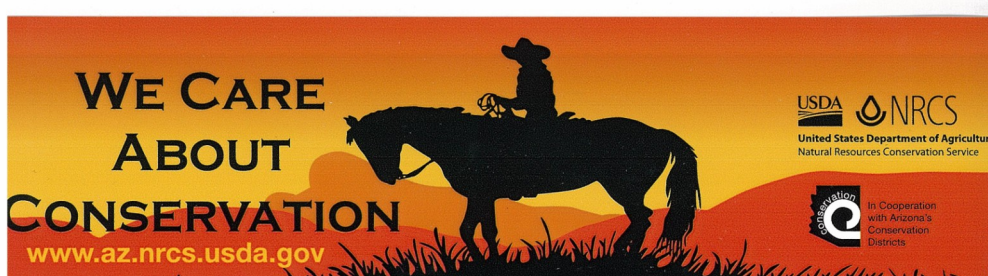
John R. said that all of the Az. Trail is complete. There will be a celebration: February 4, 2012, 9 AM – 2 PM, PERA Club, Tempe, Arizona. Some short stretches of the Mt Lemmon road are being rerouted to get the All American Trail Head.

The meeting returned to the tabled issue of the letter to the BLM. No one had any corrections. No action was taken.

Diana moved that the group move into executive session. It was 1:10 pm. Bev seconded the motion. The executive session adjourned at 2:15 pm. The Board approved two conservation plans and tabled a third until more information could be obtained. The supervisor's election was discussed but no action was taken

VI. Adjournment

The next District meeting was set for the third week in April. Bev Miller moved to adjourn the meeting, Peter Else seconded it and the meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.



This is available as a bumper sticker from the NRCS Office or by mail.

Spring District Meeting

So SAVE THE DATE.....April 18, 2012. We will send out a post card letting you know the location.