

# WINKELMAN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Fall, 2015

PO Box 68, Mammoth, 85618

WNRCD.org

## From the Frog Pond by Bill Dunn

By now everyone should have heard that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) decided not to list the Sonoran Desert tortoise (SDT). At the last minute everyone at AZ Game and Fish, AZ Land Department, the development community, mining interests and others panicked and started putting conservation plans together and making a lot of noise about how a listing would affect them. The Winkelman District has been working quietly putting together over a two or three year period, along with a bunch of agency folks, our Best Management Practices document. This was done at the urging of Steve Spangle, Field Supervisor for the Ecological Services Office of the FWS. So, we had done all we could to affect the listing. Even if it had been listed, grazing would be protected because of our work and that of the Meyer family. Their SDT study, the crown jewel of them all, showed that grazing had no observable effect on the tortoise and the population is not in decline.

By the time you read this, the Line Siting Committee that decides the fate of the SunZia Transmission Line project will have finished their hearings. This district and the Redington district spent lots of man hours and lots of money fighting to get it moved from the BLM's preferred alternative down the San Pedro and across the southern half of the district. In the end, the board decided we could fight no more and came to an agreement with the SunZia folks. We agreed to not oppose the route any further during the line siting process. In exchange, SunZia will work with us during the siting and placing of towers, including aerial placement where possible. Their Certificate of Environmental Compatibility states that there will only be aerial placement of towers for at least 14 miles of the San Pedro stretch. This means there won't be roads there, and the

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lines will be as resource friendly as they possibly can be. Our agreement with SunZia was the benchmark for a lot of the other requirements they will have to meet.

We will also contract with them for the foreseeable future in mitigation and monitoring of the resource effects of the project. SunZia will also reimburse the district for the attorney and consultant fees we have spent since we began fighting it. When the planning process starts, they will pay us \$100,000 per year for three years to spend on conservation and other projects that allow us to fulfill our mandate.

In the last newsletter, I wrote about a large grant we had applied for with the Redington District for the Lower San Pedro area. We didn't get past the first round. Have to start over on that one this coming spring.

We have been included along with 15 other districts around the state to participate in the Arizona Association of Conservation District's five year grant for \$3 million from BLM and \$3 million from NRCS. This will be for strictly conservation projects. We will be holding an annual Work Group Meeting soon to decide where these projects will go. If you want to be included, I would suggest you come to that meeting. (Continued on Page 2)

## **From the Frog Pond (Continued from Page 1)**

The Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) will hold its annual Winter Legislative Meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The AACD is working on legislation that will create a conservation fund from state monies that will be used to leverage federal and private funds to come through the districts also. It will be a tough sell with this legislature but with the conservation dollars the AACD has put together already it's time for the state to do its part. New Mexico sends its state association \$750,000 per year. This year that has leveraged into \$10,000,000 more of conservation work there. Also, they are working with Lisa Atkins, the new Land Commissioner and new Natural Resource Conservation Commissioner to elevate the district position to its own division, as contemplated by the district's statutes. With this will come new opportunities and responsibilities for the districts.

Our Summer Quarterly meeting was held at Steve Turcotte's place in Aravaipa Canyon. Beautiful place, wonderful hosts. Since it had been raining the night before, Francie was really nervous about the water coming big down the canyon. Experience I guess.

A special thanks to the folks at the Ray Federal Credit Union for helping Chris (our clerk) with the copying & assembly of the SunZia documents, over 2500 copies & 25 notebooks.

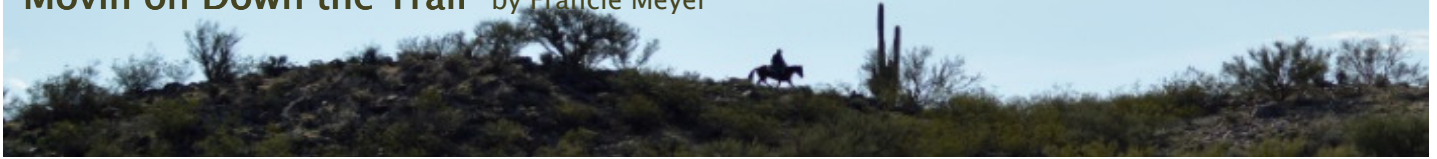
Until next time.

## **Pinal Rural Fire Rescue & Medical District**

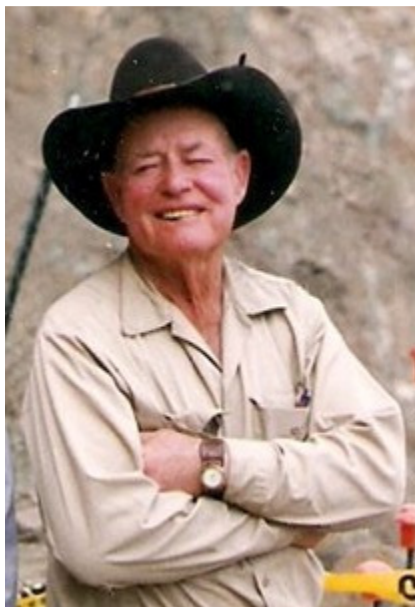
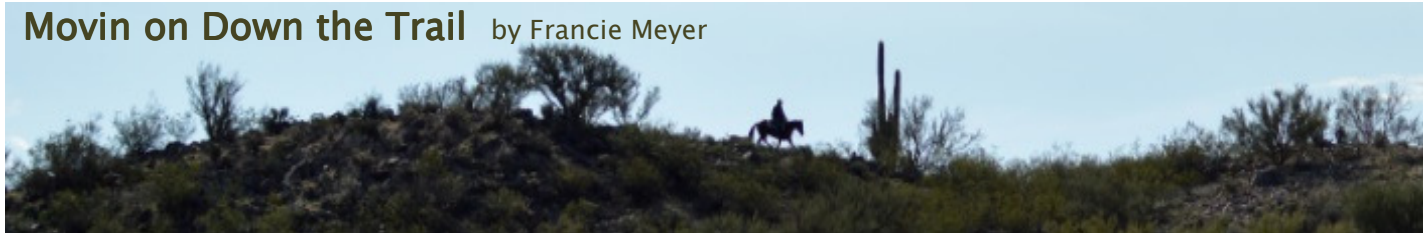
After over two years of planning, the Pinal Rural Fire Rescue & Medical District was approved on August 26 by the Pinal County Board of Supervisors., The District covers over 307 square miles bordering Hwy 77, including Aravaipa Canyon, and will be able to reduce response times to medical and fire emergencies. It will be the only fire-based paramedic service available between Oracle and Globe.

When analyzing the number of calls per year, about 80% of the District's calls are medical while about 10% are rural fires. The balance consists of miscellaneous calls and structural fires. The District was formed primarily to mitigate current protracted medical emergency response times as well as to enhance existing wild land fire protection capabilities. After two wild land fires in the last two years in the Kearny area, it is a matter of concern that a similar fire could occur in the lower San Pedro watershed basin. As a result, the District is working with Arizona State Forestry, NRCS, and local ranchers to put together a comprehensive wild land fire protection plan.

The District is governed by an organizing committee: Steve Turcotte (Chairman), Tom Carlson, and Georgina Vasquez. Targeted to be operational by February, 2016, the rural-based fire department will have a full-time Chief (Rod Prast), with firefighters on duty 24/7. The core staff would be augmented by part-time and reserve firefighters and volunteers. In terms of equipment, the District has 3 rescue ambulances, 1 fire structure truck, and 2 wild land fire vehicles, and is in the process of acquiring a water tender and an additional fire truck. Ambulance transport after first responder treatment/intervention will continue to be provided by the town of Kearny, Southwest Ambulance, AirEvac, and Native Air Helicopter Services.

**Movin on Down the Trail** by Francie Meyer**Joseph Lehman Goff****November 8, 1926 - December 31, 2014**

Joseph Lehman Goff (Joe to all his friends and family) passed away on December 31, 2014, at the age of 88. Joe was born on November 8, 1926, at the "Stork's Nest", an early Tucson maternity home. Joe and his sister, Bernice, were born to Seldon David Goff, an aspiring cowman and ice route owner, and Flora Bernice Goff, secretary and homemaker. Joe attended the Mansfield school where his sports career began. His athletic talent continued through Tucson High where his football skills at running, blocking, field goals and punting earned him an All Star title and the name "Joe the Toe". In the early thirties, Joe's dad sold his delivery routes and purchased a ranch north of Oracle Junction along old Florence Road (now Highway 79). The whole family pitched in to build the ranch and make it pay off. Joe helped his dad dig the well, build the house, barn and corrals and build the cowherd. Upon graduating from high school Joe received a football scholarship to the U of A but he enlisted in the Navy in 1945 and was honorably released in 1946. This homesick cowboy returned home, fulfilled his scholarship and played for the U of A for two years. Joe decided to branch out on his own and began the development of his very own ranching enterprise purchasing or leasing many well-known properties. Upon his Dad's death he also ran the desert home ranch. Joe leaves son, Charley (Connie) Goff of Oracle and daughter, Susan (Brian) Libby of Tucson, grandchildren and great grandchildren, and many, many long-time friends.

**Movin on Down the Trail** by Francie Meyer**Jephtha Oscar White****March 23, 1923 - September 13, 2015**

Jephtha (Jep) Oscar White passed away on September 13, 2015, at the age of 92. Jep was born along Aravaipa Creek near Winkelman on March 23, 1923. His parents were Abe and Verna White who had come from Buckhorn, New Mexico, to settle along Aravaipa Creek in 1920. Jep and his sisters, Gussie, Christine, Alene, and Maxine, and brothers, Lawrence and Jesse, grew up on the family ranch herding goats and punching cows and helping on the farm. Jep married his wonderful wife, Peggy Kelly, on September 12, 1942. Their first home was the cabin in "the Basin" below Zapata Mountain. Jep and Peggy had two sons, Dale (Butch) (now deceased), and Jephtha (Pepper). After 1955, Jep and Peggy lived in San Manuel while Jep worked at Magma Copper Company. But in 1962 they moved back to their beloved canyon to remain there for much of their lives. The horrendous Aravaipa Creek flood of 1993 almost took their home and damaged much of their farm. Jep and Peggy sold the ranch in 1999 and they moved to Globe. A few years ago they moved to Jerome, Idaho, to be with their son Pepper. The family just moved to John Day, Oregon, in July of this year. The family had many happy hours enjoying Jep's stories and harmonica playing. Jep fell and broke his hip on September 10. He and Peggy celebrated their 73rd wedding anniversary on September 12 and Jep passed away the following night with Peggy and family by his side. In the words of his son Pepper, "He loved his ranch, livestock, family, neighbors and friends, and watching the bighorn sheep above his home... his life stories were of his goat herding, cowboying ... and of course his ranch and helping his neighbors and brothers-in-law on theirs, he was an expert hunter and tracker. In the end, all his memories were of the Aravaipa and his life there. He was the last of the generation of Whites." He leaves behind his wife and son, daughters-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren as well as many, many friends. Jep will be missed by all of us.

## **Rain, Rain, Rain....Don't Go Away!!**

The summer monsoon has been pretty good to many of us in the district and not quite so good to others. But all-in-all it's been a pretty good summer. As you know, our district is large. It stretches from Florence in the west, heads on east to the top of the Galiuro Mountains, then from the top of the Catalinas in the south continues on up north to the top of the Pinals. That big area is the Winkelman NRCD and within it there is great variation, as it is everywhere during our summer rainy season. But where the rains have hit, lots of green grass and full ponds and springs have brought welcome relief to man and beast alike. Not bad for swimming holes either! Below are some examples of rainfall (inches) within the district from July 1 thru October 31:

Flying UW Ranch Headquarters - 13.45	Flying UW Ranch Whitehead Pasture - 9.85
Haydon Combe Ranch Headquarters - 11.05	Miriam Reed's Box O Ranch Headquarters - 4.55
Dubois Ranch near Kearny - 8.21	Aravaipa Creek Ranch - 10.8
Gary Vinson's Dripping Springs Ranch - 10.3	Gary Vinson's A Diamond Ranch Headquarters - 7.65

And by the way, the prediction is for a super El Nino this winter!

## **News Briefs**

### **Tonto Coordination**

Based on their website, no change in status.

### **EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program)**

The next ranking deadline is January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Only 1 range and 1 crop applications were ranked in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter due to the State Land Cultural Resource issue. NRCS funded the irrigated crop and will rank the range application again. All other applications are on hold due to the State Land issue. Applications are taken all year long and ranked every quarter.

### **Facebook**

The Facebook page is live. In mid October, the page had 484 sharings and 86 likes. Links will be added to the Arizona State Association and WNRCD websites. The most viewed post (Amber Barton) was about the problems created by trespassers, such as trash & 4x4 off road vehicles. The Facebook link is below:

<https://www.facebook.com/wnrzd>

### **Local Workgroup**

Workgroup(s) will be scheduled by year-end for the during the winter to address brush management.

### **Kearny Rive Fire**

Still working on permits, funding sources, and area plans. Several agencies have been contacted, still waiting for their response. The Tamarisk Beetle is estimated to be within our watershed in about 2-3 years.



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**Loans** - Auto (GAP Insurance Available), Signature, Debt Consolidation, Mortgages

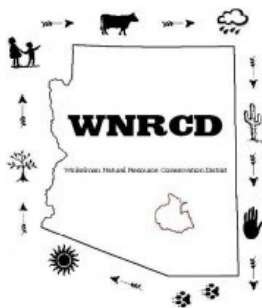
**Services** - ATMs (Kearny, Hayden), Notary, Money Orders, Cashier Checks, ACH Origination, Wires

Ray Federal Credit Union supports our local community through volunteering, fundraising, and charitable donations. We offer low fees & rates while providing great service.

### **Mark Your Calendar**

WNRCD Quarterly Meeting on January 20 at 10 am, location to be announced

Arizona Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) Annual Winter Legislative Meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.



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