

WINKELMAN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Winter, 2017

PO Box 486, Kearny, AZ 85137 WNRCD.org

From the Frog Pond by Bill Dunn

Happy New Year!

First, I thought that I should bring everyone up to date on what the State Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) has been doing. Of primary interest is the Summer Meetings call by the Board to start the process of moving administrative duties from the State Land Department (ASLD) to the Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM). The Board felt that the missions of the NRCDs are more in line with that of DFFM and they both have a much broader scope of responsibilities than the ASLD. The DFFM Director will necessarily have a natural resource background while the ASLD Commissioner necessarily should have a land development background, making a new NRCD Commissioner less of a learn of what NRCDs are all about. This was very apparent with this administration as virtually all of the ASLD staff we had worked with for many years left the ASLD.

This process will require a change by the Legislature since NRCDs have their own statutes and appropriation apart from any other part of state or local government; then, the Governor has to sign it. This may be a multi-year project but I think it will strengthen the NRCDs by having this other relationship.

In this newsletter, you will see an obituary for longtime cooperator Beverly Miller. The Winkelman NRCD was an important part of her life. She had served as a supervisor and came to every meeting and went to every state meeting as long as I have been involved in them. Being a microbiologist, she was instrumental in explaining to FWS the problems behind the science they relied on for the 90 day Listing Decision for the Sonoran Desert tortoise. She will truly be missed.

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As of this writing, 1/1/2018, we are still waiting for the end of the environmental review to get started on the Kearny River Fire project. I don't know how something like this can take so long.

The SunZia Project will move into the construction phase this spring and our liaison, Chris Fletcher, will continue representing us and the Redington Districts on that. They have requested a larger role for the districts during that phase and we will be exploring that with them in the near future.

Congratulations to Walt and Francie Meyer for receiving the Conservation Heritage Award. They worked with the District for over 30 years: such as serving on the Supervisory board, conducting a 20+ year study on the Sonoran Desert Tortoise, and assisting in the creation of a Best Management Practice for Grazing.

Francie will be retiring from the board this coming May; so, let me know if you are interested in joining our board of Supervisors.

Some day it will rain and you'll wonder why you bought that expensive drought insurance.

Till next time,

Bill

ASARCO provides update on Ray Land Exchange

By Mila Besich-Lira | August 3rd, 2017 | Published by Copper Area News

In 1993, ASARCO filed an application to exchange lands with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The application would allow for ASARCO to obtain 10,975 BLM acres within the Copper Corridor and in exchange ASARCO would offer 7,304 acres of environmentally sensitive areas that are adjacent to Wilderness Areas. The approval of the land exchange will allow for ASARCO to continue to grow their operations.

In 2000, the BLM issued a Record of Decision which approved the land exchange. The process involved a lengthy permitting and public participation process prior to the issuing of a Record of Decision. In 2000, the Center for Biological Diversity challenged the approval by the BLM, but the challenge was denied.

In 2010, the Centers for Biological Diversity appealed the decision to the Ninth Circuit Court and they were issued a judgment in their favor regarding one narrow issue. The Ninth Circuit Court contended that “BLM failed to compare the environmental consequences of ASARCO’s potential future mining operations on Selected Lands “with” and “without” BLM oversight under BLM’s surface management regulations 43 CFR.” BLM then determined that it would prepare a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that would include the with and without analysis. This supplemental EIS was completed in 2015.

The outreach and education process is part of the required permitting process. Currently ASARCO is waiting for the application to be allowed to be published in the Federal Register. Once the application is listed in the Federal Register, it can be opened up to public comments. There will be a 90-day public comment period on the land exchange once it has been approved for publishing in the Federal Register.

ASARCO continues to work with the BLM to have this application approved for the Federal Register. Recently ASARCO attended the council meetings in Hayden, Kearny and Winkelman to provide this update to community leaders.

Flash Updates:

Land Exchange: The NOA was published on November 17, 2017, beginning the 90 day comment period. Robin Barnes, Asarco Land Manager, would appreciate letters of support during this comment period by Feb 16, 2018. She can be contacted at 520-798-7796 or Rbarnes@asarco.com. A public meeting will held in Kearny on January 16 from 5 to 7:30 at Ray HS auditorium.

Firewise course in Kearny: On January 20-21, a **FREE** 2-day course is designed for fire professionals and community members interested in evaluating properties from a Firewise perspective. Topics include: fire ecology, fire behavior, property assessment, and fire hazard mitigation tactics for property owners. RSVP Contact: Mayra Moreno, 520-628-5487 or mmoreno@dffm.az.gov. LOCATION: Constitution Hall 912-C Tilbury Rd., Kearny AZ 85137

Movin on Down the Trail



Beverly Miller 1929 - 2017



Beverly Meade Miller, age 88, passed away Thursday Nov. 30th 2017 at her home in Tucson, AZ. Born on October 30th 1929, she was a resident of Arizona all of her life. She worked at St. Joseph Hospital as a microbiologist for 25 years.

She is survived by Raymond Miller, Lila Adams, Beatrice Jo Miller-Kohlberg, Kitty Miller, grandchildren Jenny Miller, Bria Kohlberg, Court Donner, numerous nieces, nephews, family members and friends. She has been an active member of Winkelman NRC D, Arizona Cattle Growers Association, and SACPA.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to the Winkelman Resource Management Center, PO Box 68, Mammoth, AZ 85618. A celebration of life will be held in the spring of 2018.



The **Conservation Heritage Award** was presented to Walt and Francie Meyer who have been the core of the Winkelman NRC D for 30 years. While Walt was chairman for almost 20 years, Francie was the unpaid district clerk.

For many years, the Meyer family has held a field day at their ranch for students of the Ray Schools. The kids were able to learn about branding, vaccinating, herding and what it takes to be a rancher and a responsible land manager to conserve and protect the rangeland and environment.

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Walt and Francie Meyer were also instrumental in the Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to first determine that ranching was not a significant threat to the Sonoran Desert Tortoise. As part of a team to develop a Best Management Practice for Grazing, the Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the Sonoran Desert Tortoise did not need to be named an endangered species. This was the first time coordination with federal agencies in a proposed endangered species decision was used.

Crossing the Next Meridian by Jenny Cordrey**
Natural Resource Policy & Law Essay, April 15 2008

The history of the Western settlement and the forming of its culture is most fascinating to me. It is iconic to what we know as "The American Dream" in so many ways. I am extremely proud to be a part of that heritage, not just in a past sense, but also now and into the future. To lay some background, my great grandfather on my dad's side, was a son of immigrants. Born in Kansas and a child of the times, he skilled himself in the mining industry and eventually made his way here to Arizona. In 1875, he and his family settled a homestead and successfully owned and operated a copper mine of their own. Times grew tough in the industry and the family homestead turned into a full-fledged cattle operation. Through these many years, our family is still there, in that exact same spot, proud of our family's accomplishments and the small contribution we have made to our local history.

How does this tie in with the management of our natural resources here in the West and all across the country? My answer to that question is somewhat complex and can be broken down into three parts, past, present and future. It comes from the deep heritage my family shares with so many others who have based their lives on the stewardship of the land we care for and depend upon. Love for the places we call home, the strong ties that we share with the land, and the trials and tribulations that have brought "old-timer" families like mine into the future are the driving forces, for me, in taking care of our natural resources.

Past

The government's driving effort for frontier settlement brought about the promise of vast ranges and bountiful returns for all to seek. Proof that this was the leading policy was the passing of the General Mining Act of 1872, and the Desert Land Act of 1877, among others. Philosophies like "Manifest Destiny" and "Rain Follows the Plow" energized the steady movement of a hopeful and adventurous people. This supported the mindset for the traditional Westerner. The families that settled the land and established their homesteads worked extremely hard for what they had, and in most cases that wasn't very much, inspiring their independent and self-sufficient culture.

Unaware of the realities the harsh and arid West embodied, people overloaded the natural resources with ambition and progressive ideas. Undoubtedly, the West was abused in a period when settlement was encouraged to secure territories for the expansion of these United States. Time told the story of discovery, expedition, and burden, as we learned how sensitive our West was. This is NOT something to be apologized for, but something to revere as our great history, and look back upon and recognize the lessons learned. Families, such as mine, struggled but held on. Appreciation and affection for the countryside that we know so well has been passed forward through the generations. Principles aimed toward careful management of the resources is a vital element to preserving the future of our family's rich legacy.

Present

Now that we can see the model of the past, we can now engage in practices that are improved in order to benefit all. Laws like the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 were passed to regulate land management. The pressures put on land owners, particularly ranchers, to change age-old thinking were tremendous. Stubborn and independent, this proved to be a difficult task. This "old" way of thinking is not all together bad. Most of the ranchers I know have overcome mountainous times to be able to stay put. They have this same deep respect and love for the land that I have been talking about. Who else but someone who has ridden her hills and canyons horseback countless times, and seen multiple seasons of drought and delightful ample summer

Crossing the Next Meridian (Continued from Page 4)

rains could understand this better? This person that I know is someone who wants to sustain the native pastures and provide for all that is wild. For his diligence, he receives not only an economic return, but an emotional and comforting connection to a place he can call his home. This is the true reward. It is those hard working folks that I wish to keep the country running. I honestly don't feel the portrayal of history by some has been fair to those who settled here in response to promises made by a government anxious to secure the vast resources of the West. Yes, there are those who aren't in it for the lasting connection of home, but for the "big bucks" or the ego or romance of the big cow man. Unfortunately, all too often the little guy gets positioned into the same category as these folks.

One great example of the change in times is the ambition of many land owners to get involved and get educated. So many ranchers have college degrees and are influential leaders of their communities. I know many who possess PhD's and can debate anyone in the world of science and politics with and truly hold their own. These icons are reputable contributors to the cooperation between those who utilize our natural resources and those responsible for overseeing the administration of set policies. They are also essential in providing an alternative view to issues important to natural resources. Proof of this is the involvement of Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCDs) in natural resource and community issues. These NRCDs consist of farmers, ranchers, other land managers, and interested citizens who help to mitigate problems by bridging the gap between government and citizens.

Future

There is much in the future of the United States and the world to be hopeful about. With the growing populations and the demands on the Earth to produce for its people, we here in the United States are blessed. We still have a vast and fertile land thanks to diligent management and are fortunate to be able to provide the sustenance that not only our people require, but also to so many around the planet. Our leadership in science, technology, and politics ultimately will carry us into the future. Our tremendous innovative ability and eagerness to learn will also enable us to contribute effective management of our natural resources so that it will continue to provide us not just with the benefit of food production, but also with scenic beauty, healthy habitats for flora and fauna, and the untold mysteries we have yet to discover. The need to make land husbandry profitable enough to maintain families by using political and technological means will help to continue these generations. This will help fight land development and selling of private lands causing fragmentation of the landscape and confused management. To accomplish this, we must emphasize the importance of encouraging better science education for natural resource careers.

I feel extremely lucky to have been raised in a family that has seen these advancements through its generations. I think it has allowed me to have a much broader insight into the important issues involving natural resource management. The long rich heritage I speak of encourages me and others like me to push forward. Understanding how history makes us who we are and how it grants us the ability to make changes when needed is a critical key to the success of getting things done the right way for all. I am excited for the future and my contribution to it. I do have to say, I am a bit partial to the keeping of Western traditions and, in that, the survival of American ranching families. They are important contributors and a major building block of this country's past, present, and future. Perseverance, cooperation, knowledge, development, and implementation are things of which we can all agree, and these will help carry us forward while keeping us tied to the past.

****Note:** Currently, Jenny is a full-time partner on their "family" ranch. She has a husband and 2 children. She wrote this paper while studying Range Management at the University of Az.



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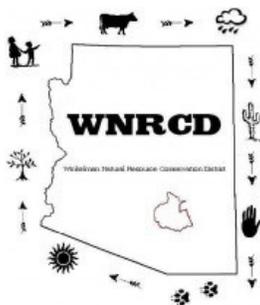
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Ray Federal Credit Union is proud to serve the communities of the copper basin with a full range of financial services. We strive to provide courteous and professional service. **Dan Thurman** is the new manager of the credit union and welcomes your comments and suggestions.

Mark Your Calendar

AACD Winter Meeting, January 9-10, Yuma, AZ

WNRCD Quarterly meeting on February 20 at 10 am, General Kearny Inn



PO Box 486
Kearny, AZ 85137

