

2016 WINKELMAN NRC LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETING
APRIL 11, 2016

This year's Local Work Group meeting was held at Aravaipa Campus CAC with very good participation of both producers and agency folks. We divided the groups into four sections depending on where their interest was. The four divisions were: Gila River from Winkelman to Florence, Dripping Springs, San Pedro and the Southwestern portion of the District. Each section was represented by from 2 to 9 or 10 people.

The resource concerns from the Dripping Springs area were:

- Plant community and composition. This resource concern can be addressed using Mechanical and chemical spraying mostly of cholla.
- Water distribution with an emphasis on solar pumps.
- Fencing with an emphasis on replacing wire gates with metal gates and cattle guards.

Resource concerns from the Gila River area were:

Non-native invasives along the river and other riparian areas. Species of concern there are Salt Cedar. Since the Rafter 6 Ranch and the District will be doing treatments for the Kearny River Fire area, there is an opportunity to see how different treatments will work and cost. It was noted that the remaining burned area is an opportunity to enlist other interested parties to join and experiment on salt cedar removal tactics. There was also much discussion of the District starting a plant nursery to raise local phreatophytes to replace the removed salt cedar.

Upland invasive species that need to be addressed are cholla and turpentine brush. Since the area is a transition zone between sonoran desert and sonoran grassland, it was thought that we should do some experimenting here also with herbicides and plowing to see if it will work in the area. There were several potential plots identified that are large enough and are fenced so as to be able to manage cattle grazing after treatment.

It was noted that there needs to be more wells, pipelines and fences constructed in that area to help address the stated resource concerns.

Incised washed along the river was noted but because of the lower river bottom (up to 10 ft) since the '93 flood and resultant lower baseline there is not much that can be done about it.

Resource concerns for the San Pedro area are:

Water quality, especially along the rivers. ADEQ has studied both the San Pedro and Aravaipa rivers and concluded that they are high in e-coli during high rain events. These can be addressed by:

- Grazing management along rivers.
- Erosion control from roads.
- Replacing old septic tanks along rivers.

Fire risk along the rivers due to housing developments along the rivers. This can be addressed with:

- Understory control.
- Fire breaks-ACOE?
- Regular maintenance of thinned areas.

Water quantity. This can be addressed by removing invasives; especially cholla and other cacti using among other things, fire.

Both water quality and quantity can be addressed by:

- Ponds in the area need to be cleaned,
- More water developments are needed,
- Many need to be converted to solar and catchments for water?

Improvement of plant condition is dependent on infrastructure; i.e. fencing, prescribed grazing, gates for people management, new water developments for both livestock and wildlife.

Education was also mentioned but I'm not sure how that will fit into our resource concerns.

The West Side resource concerns are:

Inadequate domestic livestock and wildlife water. This can be addressed by:

- Developing new wells, pipelines, watering facilities.

Inefficient energy use. Addressed with solar pumping plants.

Plant community production and composition and inadequate forage production. Addressed with fencing.

Noxious and invasive species, especially cholla and prickly pear. Can be addressed with chemical treatment. This may be compromised by the presence of saguaro on state lands. All BLM lands will need NEPA. State lands will need a permit only. Nothing needed on private lands.

It was noted that the BLM funds can be used for planning. Also ADEQ 319 funding is available to clean tanks with a 60% pay by them. AGFD has a Habitat Partnership Program that will pay for much of this and they like a match also. The State Association is aware of that one and is planning applying and using those funds for non-federal match for some of the Partnership funding.