

# Horizons

Natural Resources Conservation Service - Arizona Employee Newsletter

2nd Quarter 2012

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We want to hear from you!

Send in your stories, pictures and news to:

Amanda Sutter  
Public Affairs Specialist  
amanda.sutter@az.usda.gov  
(602) 280-8778



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMANDA SUTTER

Sisters, Marilyn Harris and Kathy Williams, continue the legacy of their Grandfather, caring about conservation on the Sands Ranch.

## A New Perspective

*Sisters keeping their grandfather's legacy alive*

BY AMANDA SUTTER, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Sisters, Marilyn Harris and Kathy Williams own the Sands Ranch, a cow-calf operation on 100 sections of private, state, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service and Pima county lands in Whetstone, Arizona.

The historic Sands Ranch began with their grandfather, Louis Sands, who moved to Arizona from Michigan in 1902. He began to buy ranchland in 1917. Louis Sands was a great horseman and passed on his passion for horses and his ranch to his children and

grandchildren. Marilyn and Kathy are third generation ranchers and are proud to be the owners and operators of the Sands Ranch for the past 15 years. They work hard to continue the legacy their grandfather left behind of maintaining a successful family operated ranch.

It is unique to see women own and manage a full ranching enterprise and when asked what about the ranch they like most, Marilyn replied, "For me it is our heritage and the love for livestock and the land."

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Our grandfather had a vision and I want to help carry that out. It is about keeping a legacy alive”.



The hard line of ocotillo demonstrate where chemical brush control was implemented and where it wasn't.



Recovering grasslands just two growing seasons after the use of chemical brush control.

Part of keeping the legacy alive has been embracing the different land ownerships and working together to create a coordinated resource management plan. The Sands Ranch is edging toward 100 years of conservation efforts. Marilyn and Kathy began working with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in the late 90's on assessing the condition of their resources through vegetation monitoring. During that time they also developed relationships with the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension and the Forest Service to help identify natural resource issues.

Working with other agencies and groups to build a stronger and healthier ecosystem on the ranch has been a large part of what the sisters have done to leave their mark on the ranch. To help leverage the efforts of multiple agencies and groups on the ranch a coordinated resource management plan was developed. It is a well developed vision or goal of a farm or ranch that can be achieved through implementation of an agreed upon set of conservation practices that improve the health of the land. The coordinated plan for the Sands Ranch has several government agencies involved and many policies to be followed. At the end of the process, all entities have come together with one vision to improve the natural resources on the land.

Four primary resource concerns were identified by the group; change of plant communities (changed from grasses to shrubs), loss of soil surface, loss of ability to absorb and store rainfall, and a lack of water reliability for cattle and wildlife. Having a coordinated plan allows the ranch to have more options to request and apply for funds through different agencies and resources to improve the natural resource concerns identified.

The NRCS assisted Sands Ranch with restoring its natural plant community through the implementation of chemical brush removal using their Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Removing brush to restore native grasslands provides livestock forage and wildlife habitat, while also enhancing the watershed. Chemical brush removal versus mechanical brush removal was chosen because it is less costly and more labor-effective.

The chemical is most effective on plants with shallow roots such as invasive brush species; creosote bush, whitethorn acacia, tarbush, and mariola. Chemical brush removal takes time.



Marilyn and Kathy with Barry Wallace (Crop Production Services) and Gerry Gonzalez (Douglas NRCS District Conservationist) at the US/ Mexico Border Ranch Tour.

"I am proud of all the improvements we have made. Things have gotten better since we first took over the ranch.

We bring a new perspective to grazing management. The women have stepped up and made things happen!"

Kathy Williams  
Owner of Sands Ranch  
Whetstone, AZ

It works by inhibiting the plants ability to make its own food, and can take up to 2-3 years to show full response.

Marilyn said, "One of the pastures treated has always been a horse pasture. However, until now, we couldn't see the horses! Chemical brush removal really works!"

"I am proud of all the improvements we have made. Things have gotten better since we first took over the ranch. We bring a new perspective to grazing management. The women have stepped up and made things happen," said Kathy Williams.

Seventy-five years ago a man had a vision for his land. Today that vision still exists and has been improved through generations of different perspectives, coordinated efforts with others involved and impacted, and a focus of taking care of the natural resources that continue to provide at the Sands Ranch. Marilyn and Kathy are continuing the legacy of their grandfather, showing what it means to care about conservation.

## BEYOND Tucson Festival

*Tucson PMC staff participates in local event*

BY DAVID FORESTIERI, TUCSON PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

Staff from the Tucson Plant Materials Center brought their expertise and a plant habit interactive matching game and display to the BEYOND: \*Commemorate \* Celebrate \* Commit\* Festival held at Tucson's Reid Park on January 7th. The festival grew out of a desire by community members to positively commemorate the spirit of togetherness and importance of place expressed in the aftermath of last year's shooting.

Ross Zimmerman, father of slain Giffords' staffer Gabe Zimmerman, sought to find a way to celebrate Gabe's life and his love of the outdoors. Started by Zimmerman as the Tucson Trails Tribute, 'BEYOND' grew to include a diverse group of southern Arizona individuals and groups, including public land management agencies. Festival

events were to celebrate not only individual growth and togetherness, but a shared care and respect for the unique natural surroundings of southern Arizona and its public lands. In Zimmerman's words: "BEYOND commemorates the tragedy of January 8th, celebrates the spirit of togetherness we felt in the days and months afterward, and commits us to working together to build a stronger community through our actions every day."

Ross Zimmerman invited the Tucson Plant Materials Center to be a part of the festival to help educate citizens about native plants in the area.

Other participants in the day long festival included volunteers from the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, The Tucson Herpetological Society and students from the University of Arizona's Tree Ring Research Lab.



**Leslie Glass (PMC Webmaster/Secretary) and David Forestieri (PMC Farm Foreman) man a booth at the Tucson BEYOND Festival.**

# Celebrating Volunteers During National Volunteer Week!

*Great stories of service for National Volunteer Week - April 15-21*

BY DANIEL PERKINS, MILES GILBERT AND

## Martin Luther King Volunteer Day

The Flagstaff Soil Survey office and the Flagstaff Field office volunteered to help the Flagstaff Shelter Services demolish shelves and clean the new dormitory facility. It was a good time, the soils staff is great at demolition and the field staff is great at cleaning up. We were recruited by Darlene Burden, board member for the shelter and wife of Iric Burden, Rangeland Management Specialist for the Flagstaff field office. It was unanimously a great experience for all and planted the seed for future volunteer efforts.



Pulling nails and cleaning up! (Iric, Russ, Harry and Shai)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANIEL PERKINS

Volunteers: Iric Burden, Janella Cruz, Jim Harrigan, Harry Hosler, Dan Perkins, Russell Plumb and Shai Schendel.

Flagstaff Shelter Services: <http://www.flagstaffshelterservices.org/>

## Earth Team Volunteers Visit a Petroglyph Site on Hopi 3 Canyon Ranch



Darlene Brinkerhoff

Miles Gilbert, NRCS Cultural Resource Specialist, recognizes his faithful Earth Team Volunteers as they enjoy a visit to a petroglyph site on Hopi 3 Canyon Ranch (Clear Creek Ranch). Among the volunteers, Gloria Kurzhals is referred to as the Pottery Princess because she has exceptional knowledge of the myriad prehistoric pottery, types found here in the southwest. She and her husband Ralf have accompanied Miles on surveys to the Navajo reservation in Utah, the Hualapai reservation near Peach Springs, the White Mountain Apache Reservation, the Hopi reservation, and on most of the private ranches that NRCS serves.

Darlene Brinkerhoff from Holbrook is a specialist in rock graphics, more commonly known as rock art. They include both petroglyphs (images pecked into stone surfaces) and pictographs (images painted on). She has authored a monograph on the rock graphics near the Cholla Power plant west of Holbrook.

Kaili Olsen, the youngest of the bunch, helped survey on the Flying V Ranch and is holding a pre-WWII Log Cabin syrup can in the image on the right.



Gloria Kurzhals



Ralf Kurzhals

MILES GILBERT



Kaili Olsen

PHOTOS COURTESY OF

# The 2012 Snow Survey Season

*The snow survey team gives the inside scoop*

BY SHAI SCHEDEL & DINO DE SIMONE, SNOW SURVEY TEAM

Each year members of the Arizona Snow Survey Team embark on their journey collecting data, this year our survey began on December 29th.

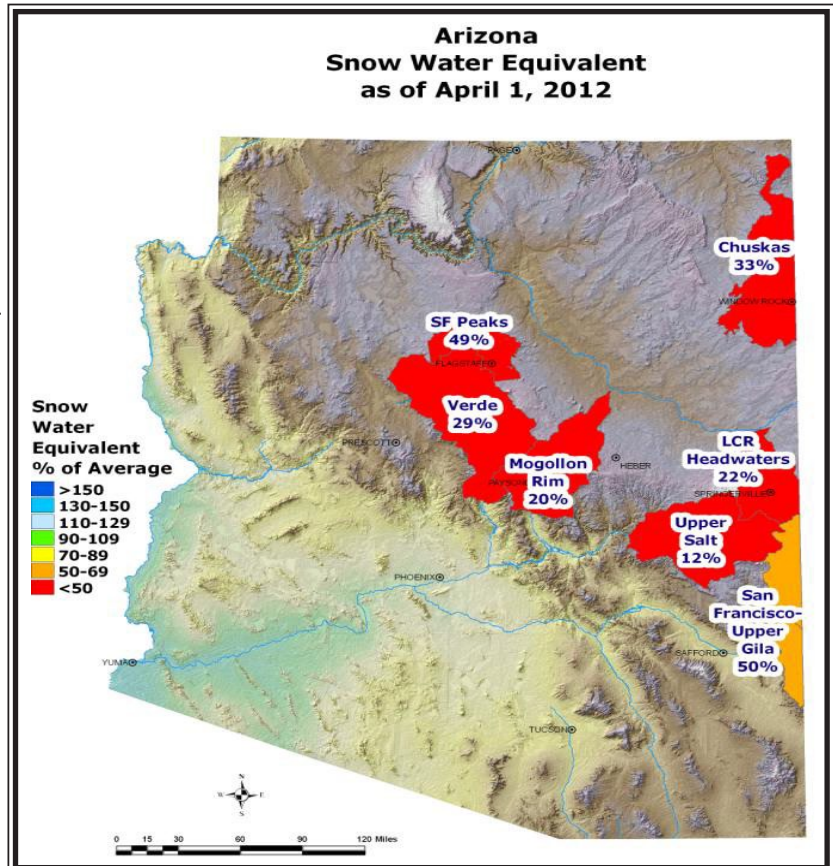
In Arizona, there are a total of 23 snow courses and 21 SNOTEL (snow telemetry) sites. The snow survey teams are comprised of NRCS, Forest Service, Salt River Project, National Park Service and Navajo Nation Department of Natural Resources employees. The NRCS is the lead agency for the program. All methods of travel are used to get to our sites depending on snow depth, location and experience. Snowmobiles, ski's and snowshoes are the typical way surveyors make the trek here in Arizona while some of the other western states use other modes such as helicopters while doing aerial surveys.

Twice each month during the snow survey season (January 1 to April 1), NRCS and partner surveyors venture out and measure the mountain snowpack. At the manual snow courses, we use a Federal snow sampling tube. The tube is plunged straight down through the snow to the ground to get the sample. Snow depth and snow water equivalent are derived from these measurements. While out on the survey you always have to be prepared and ready for anything! From getting the snowmobiles stuck to skiing on ice it's always an adventure!

Besides manually measured snow courses, hourly data are collected and transmitted from automated SNOTEL sites. Data include snow water equivalent, snow depth, precipitation, temperature, and other parameters. Data is made available to the public through the NRCS Snow Survey website ([www.az.nrcs.usda.gov/snow](http://www.az.nrcs.usda.gov/snow)).

Members of the snow survey team are required to attend the West-Wide Snow Survey Training school. The school is held annually rotating among some of the more heavy snowfall western states. While at the school individuals learn snow-surveying techniques and appropriate survival skills. Members are also required to be first aid and CPR certified along with taking annual physicals. The NRCS field offices that participate in the program in Arizona are the Flagstaff and Springerville offices.

The history of the USDA's role in snow survey leads back to Dr. James E. Church of the University of Nevada. In 1906, Dr. Church laid out what is considered to be the first western snow course. This snow course on Mt. Rose was used as a basis for predicting seasonal fluctuations in levels of nearby Lake Tahoe. The current method of weighing samples to determine water content was developed in the western United States. Dr. Church pioneered this effort.



Above is an example of some of the information that can be found in the Basin Outlook Report completed by Dino De Simone, our state Water Supply Specialist.

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The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that as much as 75 percent of water supplies in the Western States are derived from snow melt. As spring approaches, knowledge of the water content of the mountain snowpack is invaluable in the West. Snow surveys and water supply forecasting are critical to the management and wise use of our vital mountain water resource. This effort will grow and develop in accordance with the population and resource development of the western United States. The following states participate in the Snow Survey Program: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Most of the annual streamflow in Arizona originates as snowfall that has accumulated in the mountains during the winter and early spring. As the snowpack accumulates, hydrologists estimate the runoff that will occur when it melts. Measurements of snow water equivalent at selected manual snow courses and automated Snow Telemetry (SNOTEL) sites, along with precipitation and streamflow values, are used in statistical and simulation models to prepare runoff forecasts. These forecasts are coordinated between hydrologists in the NRCS the National Weather Service, and the Salt River Project.



Hydrologists and water supply specialists and their staff analyze, record, and use the snow survey data in preparation for and publication of state water supply outlooks. Once the reports are completed they are distributed to several agencies and individuals.

The relatively short history of snow surveys has been colorful and marked by the efforts of many innovative and enduring people. The present is an era of transition from manual methods of sampling and data analysis to automatic data processing; remote data sensing, snow telemetry, and satellite snow cover observation. In the future there will be continued improvement of techniques, equipment, remote data gathering systems, and forecasting methods.



# Redlands Crossing

*Bridges cultures, communities and canyons*

BY BONNIE STEVENS



**Redlands Crossing is a concrete bridge made up of an array of culverts, designed to move water during flash floods.**

Redlands Crossing is a concrete bridge made up of an array of culverts. This low-water crossing is designed to move water, especially flash floods from monsoon storms that sweep across northern Arizona's canyons and can impact Havasupai's sensitive waters and communities below.

By construction standards, it has a very small footprint. "We designed this crossing as if it were built in the air, suspended above the landscape and then placed into the spot where it was supposed to go," said Ed Van Beek, owner of Vastco Inc. "It's a light hand on the land approach."

Symbolically, however, the crossing is huge. It serves as a bridge connecting communities, cultures

and organizations, engineered in cooperation, aesthetics and appreciation for the natural environment.

"The equipment operators out there have had close family ties to the area for generations," said Van Beek. "They are cowboys and Native American workers who grew up there. They were chosen for the project because of their background, heritage and deep respect for the land."

To further blend the project with the environment, native limestone was used. "We wanted to create a quality roadway that matches the red striations in the geologic formations and will stand the test of flooding and erosion," he said.

Redlands Crossing is but one example of the many kinds of success stories made possible through the efforts of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Together with Babbitt Ranches, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Coconino County, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and Army Core of Engineers, NRCS has been able to assist with technical guidance and funding through the Conservation Security Program to improve the hydrology, wildlife habitat, accessibility and safety of people in the area.

"The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers rewards to those who have been good stewards of the soil and water resources on their working agricultural land," said NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist Shai Schendel. "It offers incentives for those who wish to exceed the minimum levels of resource protection and enhance the natural resources on the land they manage, ensuring that ranches and agricultural land, just like the Babbitt Ranches, remain viable working enterprises."

Part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the NRCS, formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service, has been helping producers solve agricultural problems and improve the land since the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

Its strong relationship with Babbitt Ranches goes back almost that far. Projects have included the development of fence lines and water sources such as wells, ponds and pipelines; surveys to understand the soil, vegetation and geology; and, treatments to remove encroaching pinyon and juniper trees, restore historic grasslands and improve wildlife habitat.

"The people of the Natural Resources Conservation Service have been at the heart of a lot of the land and ranch projects that have been occurring for more than 70 years," said Babbitt Ranches President Bill Cordasco. "They have been

directly instrumental in helping manage the land for its health and productivity.”  
“Through the financial assistance program, Babbitt Ranches has been very active, consistent and successful with their brush management to make the land more productive and open corridors for wildlife,” said Schendel. “They have treated more than 40,000 acres of grassland in recent years. That’s a huge chunk of land.”

Animals benefiting from these projects include turkey, elk, hawks, the endangered black-footed ferret and pronghorn, a special concern in Arizona because of the loss and fragmentation of habitat.

“When grassland becomes woodland, these species suffer,” said former Arizona Game and Fish Department wildlife biologist John Goodwin. “Through grants, incentives and expertise, the NRCS has provided essential tools to address critical issues and put results on the ground.”

With support from NRCS, Babbitt Ranches also has been able to construct wildlife drinkers with escape ramps. “Tanks are 8- to 10-feet across and a couple of feet deep. If birds and small mammals fall in, there’s no way to get out, so they drown. These ramps enable them to climb back out,” said Goodwin.”

Currently, NRCS is working with Babbitt Ranches to complete a range inventory of the Cataract Ranch to evaluate current conditions and see what future conservation measures may be useful to keep the ranch productive and healthy.

“Once Cataract is done the plan is to move to the Espee and the CO Bar to complete the same task,” said Kresta Faaborg, District Conservationist in the Flagstaff Field Office.

NRCS continues to build working relationships with landowners, watershed groups, conservation districts and other agencies to ensure healthy, safe and productive lands and food sources.

Like Redlands Crossing, NRCS connects to the past and creates a pathway for cooperation and participation into the future.

“Through the financial assistance program, Babbitt Ranches has been very active, consistent and successful with their brush management to make the land more productive and open corridors for wildlife,”

Shai Schendel  
Flagstaff NRCS  
Range Mgmt. Specialist

## Pinal County Fair

*Casa Grande NRCS at county fair*

BY CAROLYN HARBISON, NRCD DISTRICT CLERK AND JAMILAH MCCOY, CASA GRANDE DC



Each Spring the NRCS Casa Grande Field Office sponsors an outreach booth at our Pinal County Fair held in Casa Grande, Arizona. Our field office partners with the Natural Resource Education Center (NREC) and Irrigation Management Service (IMS), both of which are sponsored by our three Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCD); West Pinal NRCD, Eloy NRCD and Florence-Coolidge NRCD.



The booth has evolved into an excellent outreach vehicle and has been complimented by the Pinal County Fair Board for its professional appearance and personnel. We spotlight agricultural conservation, residential conservation, and natural resource conservation of our local agricultural community through displays, free information, a continuous slide show and actual personnel who visit with and answer the questions of visitors. Come by and see us next March!



# Interest in Natural Resources is Growing in our Schools

*School Science Fair focuses on conservation of natural resources*

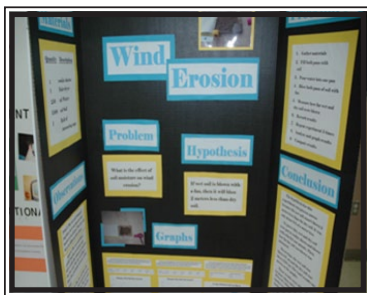
BY MOHAMMED ZERKOUNE, PH.D, AVONDALE FIELD OFFICE

My contribution to the Avondale's community is to partner with the local NRCD and provide technical expertise through training to local growers during workshops and field days. Another fun activity I enjoy participating in is assisting school teachers in the areas of soil, plant and water, and environmental science. Recently, I participated as a volunteer judge at the 7th and 8th grade science fair.

I am excited to report what I observed while judging. It is very encouraging to notice the growing interest in conservation of natural resources among students from 7 to 8 grades who presented posters on natural resources issues.



Over 50 students entered the competition. They prepared and presented their posters on several subjects including energy, water science, soil erosion, and environmental sciences, reflecting the subjects of their choice and their perspectives. The following are the winning posters:



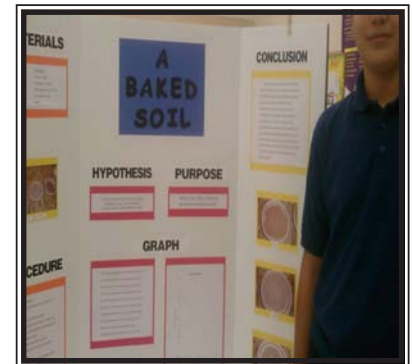
## Wind and Irrigation Induced Erosion

A student presented on the effect of wind blowing types of soil texture and soil moisture. He successfully proved his hypothesis true, proving that heavy particles (sand) travel the shortest distance and light particles (clay) travel the farthest. Wet soil will travel the shortest distance as compared to dry soil.

## Soil Moisture: Which Soil Holds Water Longer?

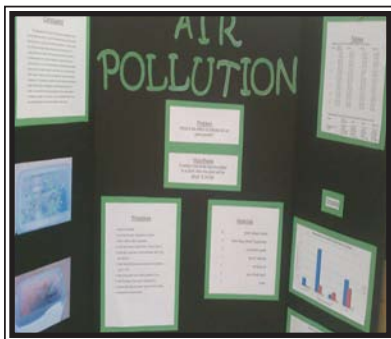
Here a student was interested in the study of soil moisture holding capacity, by comparing three

different soils and drying them three different times. Results proved student's hypothesis correct that clay soil holds more water and has a longer drying time. During the student interview, it was apparent that this student researched and documented the subject using the internet and lessons he learned in school as resources. It is good to see junior high school level students develop interest in soil and water science.



## Environmental Concerns: Growing plants to help to reduce carbon dioxide

Another student set up an experiment to observe plant growth as a function of the amount of carbon dioxide. An appreciable amount of measurement data was reported with good analysis.



## Composting Landfill Waste

A student was interested in evaluating the effect of temperatures on waste disposed in the landfill. The student conducted a study by simulating what would have been in the landfill by collecting various likely components and exposed these components to different temperatures at different time durations. The student's conclusion was that the higher temperature and longer amount of time, the compost decomposed more and at a faster rate.

As a part of our outreach activities and our role in the communities as conservationists we need to promote conservation through direct assistance to producers, and local and state organizations. It is also important that we support the education system with technology and science available at NRCS, as it should be considered as the best local reference.

# Coming to an NRCS Office Near You!

BY KEISHA TATEM, NRCS STATE CONSERVATIONIST



This spring started with a bang down on the Malpai Borderlands and continued with a visit to the Phoenix area from Chief White's Air Quality Task Force. On the Navajo Nation, I joined NRCS and BIA staff members for a technical session designed to improve interagency coordination and communication. Later, I met with both the Verde and Coconino Natural Resource Conservation Districts and spent a great day on the Orme Ranch. In San Carlos, I was honored to assist with the San Carlos NRCS Field Office ribbon-cutting ceremony. In March, I enjoyed visiting with staff in Sells and attending the Southwest Ag Summit in Yuma, then spent a fascinating day touring U.S./Mexico border ranches. The end of the month brought a visit from Astor Boozer, Regional Conservationist for the West, who joined me in visiting the Hopi 3 Canyon Ranches and in tours of Tucson-area farms and ranches. Just this month, I had a great tour in Parker with the Colorado River Indian Tribe.

## Air Quality Task Force with Chief White



Keisha Tatem listens to a presentation at the USDA Arid-Land Agriculture Research Center.



Chief White listens closely as a specialist discusses current projects at the center.



Keisha and another tour participant examine posters of current projects at the Research Center.

## San Carlos Apache Tribe



Keisha joins Ralph Ware, Millie Titla and San Carlos Conservation District Board members and Tribe officials for ribbon cutting.



Keisha presents Millie with her length of service award.

## Colorado River Indian Tribe

Keisha meets with members of the Colorado River Indian Tribe in Parker, AZ.



Keisha and Shelly Ward, Parker NRCS DC, listen as Ray Martinez, SWCD Board member, describes their irrigation demonstration project.



## U.S./Mexico Border Ranch Tour



Rebecca de la Torre, Keisha Tatem, and Gerry Gonzalez discuss the positive effects of brush management.



Art Meen presents information on Coordinated Resource Management Plans.

## Ganado Roundtable

Keisha participates in the USDA Roundtable with the Ganado, Cornfields, Jeddito, Kin Dah Lichii, and Steamboat Chapters of the Navajo Nation.



Displays were set up at the event to teach participants about NRCS and SWCD's.

Employee Stories

**Michael Villalobos Garcia -  
Recipient of Congressional Badge of Bravery**

One of the greatest feelings of happiness for parents is the experiencing of uncalled success of their prodigy. Mary Helen V. Garcia and Herman B. Garcia, Region 8 Ecological Site Inventory Specialist experienced such when their son Herman Michael Villalobos Garcia was bestowed the honor of a "Hero" within the eyes of the Colorado and U.S. Congressional delegates and Law Enforcement community. On Friday, January 27, 2012 Douglas County Deputy Sheriff Herman Michael Villalobos Garcia (Michael) was presented the Congressional Badge of Bravery for his brave acts during a shoot-out with an armed suspect. Michael was one of only 12 awarded to State and Local Law Enforcement staff across the Nation and the first recipient in Colorado. Michael has previously received the Purple Heart and the Medal of Valor from Douglas County Sheriffs office for his heroic acts.

The following is an insight to how the heroic act unfolded. The armed suspect was driving away from the crime scene when Michael took the call and calculated which side street the suspect may be trying to escape. Michael located and followed the suspect waiting for back up when the driver stopped and quickly got out of his vehicle and fired a hail of bullets wounding Michael in the first volley. Michael returned fire, both reloaded and at that start Michael warned the suspect to down his weapon and the suspect continued to raise his firearm at Michael's body at which time Michael rapid fired four rounds hitting the suspect twice and stopping the threat.

[Click here for more detailed information about Michael's story.](#)



Sen. Michael Bennet, Sen. Mark Udall and Rep. Mike Coffman present Deputy Herman Michael Villalobos Garcia with the Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery for his heroism in the line of duty. Photo by Courtney Kuhlen



Rep. Mike Coffman speaks to Deputy Herman Michael Villalobos Garcia's parents Herman and Mary Helen Garcia after the presentation of their son's Law Enforcement Congressional Badge of Bravery. Photo by Courtney Kuhlen

## Employee Achievements

### SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT ARIZONA SECTION PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL GUIDANCE AWARD – SCOTT STRATTON

*(Article by Society of Range Management Arizona Section)*



This award is designed to honor a person or persons with range management or conservation expertise and education, excluding ranch owners or operators, for their contribution to excellence in grazing management.

Mr. Stratton works for the NRCS out of the Safford Field office as a Rangeland Management Specialist. While being employed with the NRCS for about 6 years, Scott has only been with the Safford Field office for about a year. Scott presently works on the gambit of NRCS programs, providing assistance to over 31 ranches in Graham and Greenlee County. Scott's high level of energy, competence, and dedication has enabled him to achieve significant accomplishments in his short time with the Safford Field office. Scott works very closely with federal and state agencies to ensure coordination and collaboration across the board, developing Coordinated Resource Management Plans for the ranches with multiple land jurisdictions. Scott also participates in many groups and organizations including the Southeast Arizona/Southwest New Mexico Stakeholder Meetings, Gila Valley NRCO, Eagle Creek Watershed Association, and the Gila watershed Partnership.

Scott possesses an attitude and approach that has enabled him to achieve great accomplishments in a short period of time. The cooperators, ranchers and agency professionals that interact with Scott all have high praise for his abilities and dedication. It is a testimony to Scott's work ethic and commitment to the land that he currently provides such outstanding service to his partners, cooperators, and the profession of range management.

## Area 1 Meeting and Awards Celebration

*Area 1 Recognizes Outstanding Employees!*

BY AMANDA SUTTER, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST



### Outstanding Performance: Shai Schendel

Outstanding performance is the highest level of achievement. An individual must exceed all elements on the performance plan. Area 1 recognized Shai Schendel for her outstanding performance through the year. Shai not only accomplishes her tasks with excellent work ethic, but she also goes over and beyond expectations. Shai serves as the Federal Women Special Emphasis Program Manager on the Civil Rights Advisory Committee.

### Length of Service Awards:

Travis Swaim - 5 years  
 Kresta Faaborg - 10 years  
 Ralph Goh - 20 years  
 Gary Parrot - 30 years



## State Office Meeting and Awards Celebration

*State Office Recognizes Outstanding Employees!*

BY AMANDA SUTTER, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST



### Outstanding Performance: Patty Morgan

Patty Morgan was recognized at the State Office Meeting and Awards on December 15th for her outstanding performance through the year. Patty exceeded all elements on her performance review. Patty's attention to detail, hard work, and achievement beyond her general duties has earned her this performance award. Patty sits on the Civil Rights Advisory Committee as the Human Resource Advisor.

**Length of Service Awards:** William Fletcher - 5 years; Ana Troncoso - 5 years



### Soils Office of the Year: Greg Anderson, Andy Casillas, and Stephanie Shoemaker

The Globe MLRA SSO is the Soil Survey Office of the Year for completion of the Rapid Carbon Assessment sampling and all other assigned goals for Fiscal Year 2011. They completed sampling on over 100 sites. This in itself is an outstanding accomplishment. While out on sites they had the opportunity to interact with many field offices, building relationships with others in their area that will strengthen the soils program.

# New Faces

## NRCS Welcomes New Employees



**Allen Dart** (BA, Anthropology, University of New Mexico 1973; MA, Anthropology, University of Arizona 1983) became the State Cultural Resources Specialist in the State Office on February 13.

Before coming to NRCS he worked as an archaeologist for the Museum of New Mexico, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Arizona State Museum, Desert Archaeology, Inc. and its partner nonprofit organization the Center for Desert Archaeology, Old Pueblo Archaeology Center, and EcoPlan Associates, Inc. A past president of the Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society, Al now spends a lot of his “spare” time volunteering as Executive Director of Old Pueblo Archaeology Center (a Tucson not-for-profit organization that he founded in 1993 to provide educational and scientific programs in archaeology and culture), teaching archaeology certification classes through Old Pueblo and the Arizona Archaeological Society, giving presentations on archaeology and culture throughout Arizona (and beyond) as a member of the Arizona Humanities Council’s Road Scholars Speakers Bureau, serving on the Board of Directors for the Southwestern Mission Research Center (another Tucson nonprofit organization), doing crossword puzzles, and woodworking.

Al is a Registered Professional Archaeologist and has been a recipient of the Arizona Governor’s Award in Public Archaeology for his efforts to bring archaeology and history to the public. He notes, “For some reason Steve Barker hired me even though I’m a U of A grad. I guess he never gets tired of wrangling Wildcats.”



**Ray Dotson** is currently the Assistant State Conservation of Field Operations for Area 1 in Flagstaff. He started March 11, 2012.

Ray is from Port Gibson, MS and attended Alcorn State University. He began his career with

NRCS as a student intern the summer of 2005. He has had several positions in the agency, including soil conservationist, district conservationist, and now area conservationist. This career with NRCS has taken him to five different states.

Ray enjoys riding his motorcycle and going turkey hunting. His favorite quote is by Vince Lombardi, “Some of us will do our jobs well and some will not, but we will be judged by only one thing - the result.”

### Employee updates

**RACHEL SVETILK:** Rachel, STEP student, has been hired at the Tucson SSO - 12/18/11

**JAMES HARRIGAN:** James, Soil Scientist in Page SSO, has been reassigned to the Flagstaff MLRA SSO - 1/15/12

**DINO DE SIMONE:** Dino, Resource Conservationist for Water Resources staff, has been reassigned to the Engineering staff - 1/1/12

**JOHN CHUA:** John, Civil Engineer for Water Resources staff, has been reassigned to the Engineering staff - 1/1/12

**JASON ALLEN:** Jason, Biological Science Technician at Tucson PMC, has accepted a position as Plant Protection Technician with APHIS in Idaho Falls, ID - 1/15/12

*employee updates continued...*

**DEXTER GOH:** Dexter, Civil Engineer in Tucson AO, resigned - 1/27/12

**PATTI MORGAN:** Patti, Human Resources Specialist, has been selected as the Human Resources Officer - 1/29/12

**GEORGE COUCH:** George, State Public Affairs Specialist, has been placed on a temporary promotion as the NHQ Public Affairs Specialist - Internet Specialist - 1/29/12

**AMANDA SUTTER:** Amanda, Public Affairs Specialist, has been placed on temporary promotion as the State Public Affairs Specialist - 1/29/12

**FRANK TOUPAL:** Frank, Wildlife Biologist in Tucson AO, has retired - 2/1/12

**SCOTT RUST:** Scott, Soil Conservationist in Yuma FO, resigned - 2/11/12

**CORINNE ROSS:** Corinne, Farm Bill Specialist in Tucson AO, resigned - 2/7/12

**CHAMBLISS LANTANA:** Chambliss, District Conservationist in Shiprock FO, accepted position as DC in Aztec, NM - 3/11/12

**KRISTINE LARSON:** Kristine, Natural Resources Specialist, Ecological Site Development in Holbrook, resigned - 3/10/12

**TERI KNIGHT:** Teri, former RC&D Coordinator, has been reassigned to Natural Resource Specialist in Chandler FO - 3/25/12

**LAVERNE GENE:** Laverne, former RC&D Coordinator, has been reassigned to Farm Bill Specialist in Flagstaff AO - 3/25/12

**TERRY HALL:** Terry, former RC&D Coordinator, has been reassigned to Farm Bill Specialist in Tucson AO - 3/11/12

**LAMBERT CHEE:** Lambert, Natural Resource Specialist in St. Michaels FO, has been reassigned to Natural Resource Specialist in Douglas FO - 3/25/12

## 2012 Arizona Envirothon Winners!



**Above: 1st Place - Paradise Valley Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center High School**



**Below: 2nd Place - Paradise Valley Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center High School**



**Above: 3rd Place - Cienega High School**

## CIVIL RIGHTS HIGHLIGHT



### INCREASED SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS FOR VETS

DD Form 214 -- Extra social security benefit for those with active duty between January 1957 to December 31, 2001.

Veterans, who were on active duty between January 1957 and December 31, 2011, qualify for a higher social security payment because of Military service. Up to \$1,200.00 per year of earnings credited at time of application - which can make a substantial difference in social security monthly payments upon retirement. To apply, your DD-214 must be taken to the Social Security Office. This benefit is not automatic, it must be requested.

For more information please call Fletch, AZ NRCS Veteran and Disabled SEPM, at 602-280-8776.

## Upcoming Events

### NRCS Birthdays

#### January

- 5 Eric Wolfbrandt
- 6 Keith Larson
- 21 Debra Sledge
- 27 Sherry Ellicott
- 30 Dennis Kimberlin

#### February

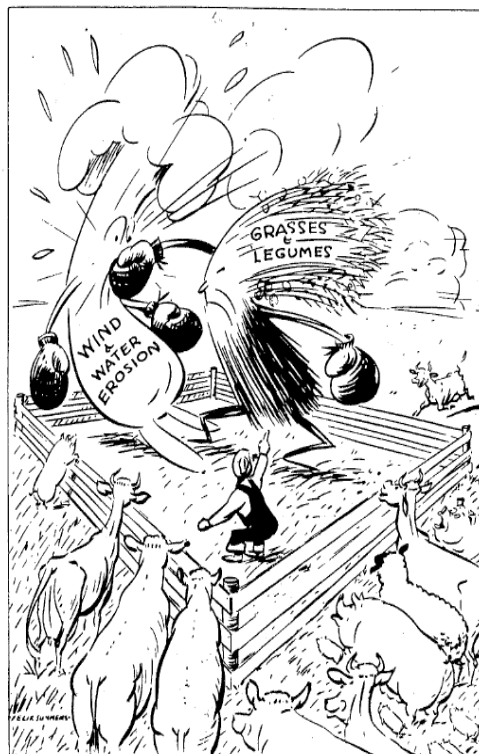
- 19 Bill Johnson
- 21 Travis Kolling
- 22 Dawn Messinger

#### March

- 26 Scott Webster
- 29 Punya Khanal

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR BIRTHDAY ADDED TO THE LIST, LET US KNOW!

### THE WINNER!



### Upcoming Birthdays

#### April

- 2 George Couch
- 23 Steve Barker
- 25 Melissa Martinez

#### May

- 3 Pam Allsworth
- 6 John Chua
- 20 Leslie Glover
- 31 Steve Smarik

*Horizons* is a quarterly publication for Arizona employees of the NRCS

Questions, comments, and articles can be submitted to:

Amanda Sutter, Public Affairs Specialist  
 (602) 280-8778  
[amanda.sutter@az.usda.gov](mailto:amanda.sutter@az.usda.gov)