

PIMA NRCD Local Work Group Results

1. Meeting Information

- Date & Time: April 22, 2024
- Location: NRCS Plant Materials Center Conference Room, 3241 North Romero Rd, Tucson AZ 85705
- Facilitator(s): Deborrah Smith, AACD Executive Director
- NRCS Representative(s):
 - Alisha Phipps
 - Heather Spieth
 - Mynesha Holliday
 - Austin Urcadez
 - Emilio Carillo
 - Tom Reis
 - Brett Myers
- Other Key Attendees
 - Nick Schobinger, Arizona Game and Fish Department
 - Karen Simms, Pima County Parks and Natural Resources
 - Stephen Williams, Chair, Santa Cruz NRCD
 - Bill Schock, Santa Cruz NRCD, former AACD president
 - Christin Peterson, Supervisor, Santa Cruz NRCD
 - Steven Turcotte, Winkelman NRCD, AACD Range committee chairman
 - Carol Dubois, Winkelman NRCD
 - Jack Mann, Winkelman NRCD, Pima County Farm Bureau
 - Catherine Mann, Winkelman NRCD
 - Jonah Cude, Winkelman NRCD Projects Manager
 - Mary Miller, Pima NRCD Secretary, co-chair of Altar Valley Conservation Alliance (AVCA), owner of Elkhorn Ranch
 - Sue Chilton, Pima NRCD Vice-president; Chilton Ranch
 - Cindy Coping, Pima NRCD Treasurer

2. NRCS Report

The NRCS Tucson Field Office currently has 63 active projects.

United States Department of Agriculture

2024 Completed Projects

Practice Type	Amount Completed	Units	Total Payments
Brush Management (314)	1,012	Acres	\$193,313
Combustion System Improvement (372)	1	Number	\$183,535
Watering Facility (614)	95,000+	Gallons	\$116,451
Fence (382)	22,940	Acres	\$63,742
Livestock Pipeline (516)	27,813	Feet	\$36,529
Pumping Plant (533)	8	Number	\$34,022
Irrigation Land Leveling (464)	1.5	Acres	\$533
Irrigation Pipeline (430)	760	Feet	\$760

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NRCS FY 2024 Contracts within Pima NRCD Boundaries

Funding	Agricultural Category	NRCS Planner	Practice	Amount	
2024 EQIP Contracts					
	Crop				
		Mynesha Holliday	Irrigation ditch, land leveling, cover crop	\$105,521.00	
		Mynesha Holliday	High Tunnels	\$5,887.00	
			Subtotal		\$111,408.00
	Range				
		Alisha Phipps	Livestock waters, fence, prescribed grazing	\$150,439.00	
		Heather Spieth	Livestock waters, fence, prescribed grazing	\$190,122.00	
		Austin Urcadez	Livestock waters, fence, prescribed grazing	\$109,090.00	
		Alisha Phipps	Livestock waters, fence, prescribed grazing	\$203,681.00	
			Subtotal		\$653,332.00
EQIP Subtotal					\$764,740.00
2024 CSP Contracts					
	Range				
		Alisha Phipps	Livestock condition, brush management, wormer	\$199,999.00	
CSP Subtotal					\$199,999.00
Total NRCS FY 2024 Contracts within Pima NRCD boundaries					\$964,739.00

- Notable adjustments in NRCS funding, policies, or focus areas: none

- Ranking Pools:
- Updates on how projects will be prioritized: See changes to ranking questions and points.
- Non-NRCS Federal agencies currently working on resource issues within the Pima NRCD :
 - Bureau of Reclamation: Current partner in [Altar Valley Watershed Plan](#)
 - Bureau of Land Management: Currently conducting range monitoring in Ironwood Forest National Monument
 - USDA-Forest Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service: Currently co-defending the 2014 Biological Assessment and Biological Opinion on livestock grazing in Coronado National Forest against malicious anti-grazing lawsuit brought by Center for Biological Diversity and Maricopa Audubon Society, who are ultimately seeking to terminate all livestock grazing on some 150 allotments on the U.S./Mexico border in AZ and NM
- State-Available Money (not specified by National):
 - Overview of discretionary state funding opportunities: Project funding is often available from a number of Arizona State agencies including but not limited to some or all of the following:
 - Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management
 - Arizona Game and Fish Department
 - Arizona Department of Water Quality
 - Pima NRCD's State funding for the current FY
 - Pima NRCD's District account
 - Pima County
 - Pima County Flood Control
 - Town of Marana
 - Town of Oro Valley
 - Tucson Water
 - City of Tucson
 - Metro Water
 - - Pima NRCD's District account: We include the District account in our annual spending budget by the following formula: Subtract the size of the Pima NRCD's District account five years ago from the current size

of the District account. Divide the difference by five. Add the quotient to the amount of the next Fiscal Year's budget from the State account to arrive at the total conservation project budget for the next fiscal year. The District Account includes unspent State funding from previous fiscal years, income from investment growth of those funds, and private donations.

- Private Funding Sources
 - Both the Pima NRCD and the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance have, in the past, received generous project sponsorships from major Arizona mining companies. This includes Rosemont and Phelps Dodge.
 - Individual cooperators also have contributed cash and/or in-kind labor to project funding.

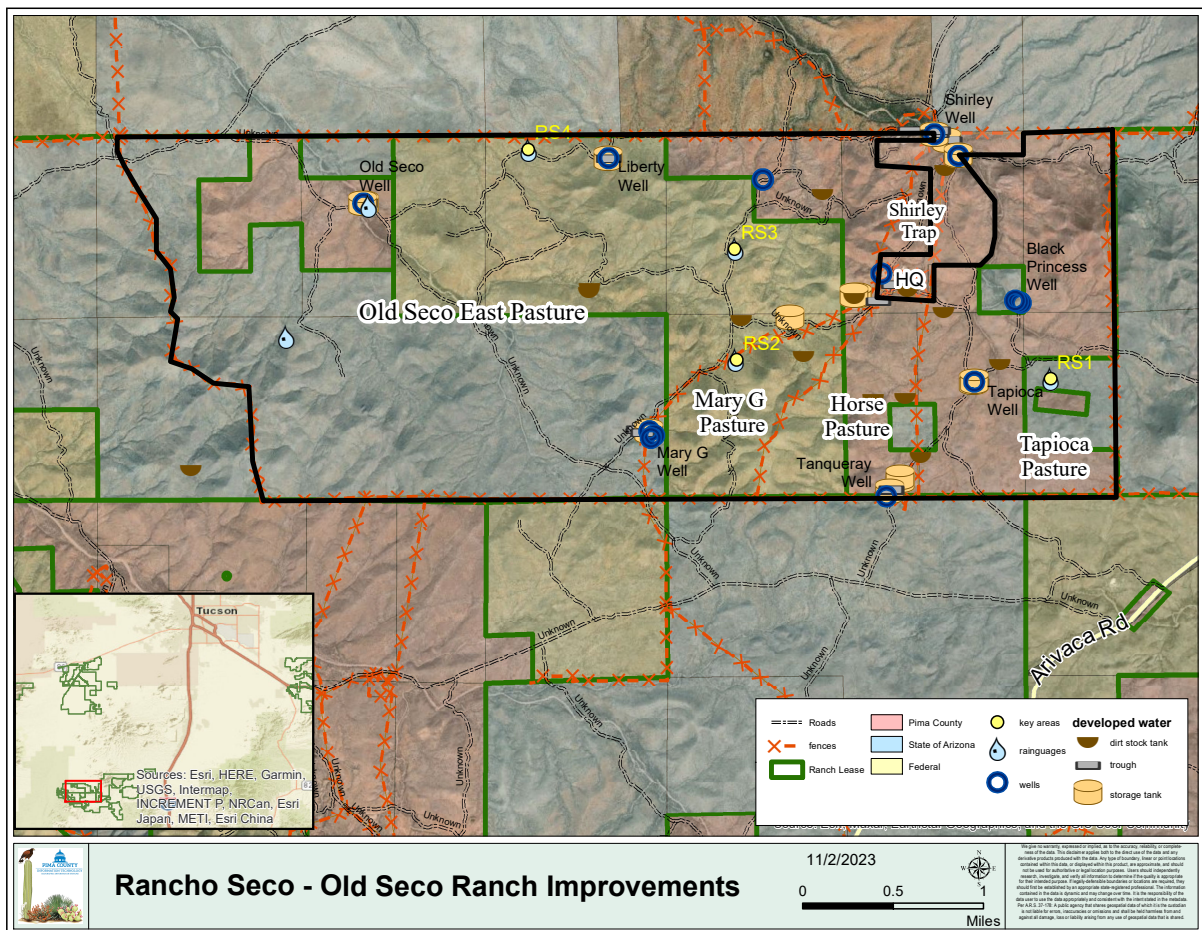
Notes

3. District Report

- LWG Report on Previous Year's Findings:
 - Summary of concerns and priorities identified last year.
 - Rangeland
 - Animals: Inadequate Livestock Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution
 - Plants: Plant Productivity and Health
 - Soil: Sheet and Rill Erosion, which is defined to include gullying and head-cutting
 - Winkelman NRCD had requested in 2024 to add Energy: Energy Efficiency of Equipment and Facilities (e.g., remote monitoring of livestock tanks) as an approved practice.
 - Cropland:
 - Soil: Organic Matter Depletion
 - Water: Inefficient Irrigation Water Use
 - Water: Groundwater Depletion
- Previous Year Accomplishments:
 - Conservation work completed with district support:
 - Rancho Seco is located in the southern end of the Altar Valley, bordering the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. ranch is


Pima County owns the ranch and leased the grazing to an individual who recently signed a Pima NRCD cooperators agreement. Last year, the ranch had an area about 10,000 acres with five wells but no pumping, storage or delivery infrastructure. This was due to a previous lessee removing infrastructure they lawfully owned. Pima NRCD signed an MOA with Altar Valley Conservation Alliance to obtain approval from Pima County and do other coordination required to install new infrastructure. The grazing lessee's primary livelihood is mechanical engineering. He has overseen major pump installations all over the world. He personally completed the design and installation of the first and largest Rancho Seco solar pump and storage tank replacement project under contract with AVCA. The first well addressed is the Tanqueray Well. Piping to connect the well to the water distribution system is to be completed soon.

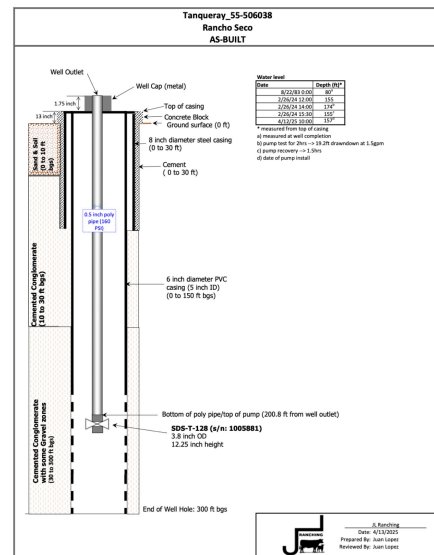
Pima NRCD Expenditure: \$5,000.00



Rancho Seco Update:

As of April 13, 2025, Juan Lopez has purchased and installed a solar pump. Photos below are of the well installation completion minus plumbing connection to the tank for backup.

		INVOICE #288 Mar 24, 2024										
3400 S. Santa Anita Santa Anita, AZ 85038 PH: 520 266 8172		BILL TO Juan Lopez JuanLopez@rancho.seco										
TERM: NET DUE		FOR Solar Submersible Pump Kit										
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Description</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Solar Pump system, Include:</td> <td>\$2,133.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1- T-128 Solar submersible pump, Controller, cable, battery rope, poly pipe, wire, filling kit</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2- SM-PH100-181 Solar module PM</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>BALANCE DUE</td> <td>\$2,133.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Description	Amount	Solar Pump system, Include:	\$2,133.00	1- T-128 Solar submersible pump, Controller, cable, battery rope, poly pipe, wire, filling kit		2- SM-PH100-181 Solar module PM		BALANCE DUE	\$2,133.00
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BALANCE DUE	\$2,133.00											
<p>Make all checks payable to SONORA RIVER ELECTRIC LLC If you have any questions concerning this invoice, use the following contact information: Victor Lopez, 520 266 8172, victor@sonorarelectric.com</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS!</p>												



Tanqueray well project is nearly completed on the Rancho Seco.

- In January 2025, Pima NRCD approved up to \$10,000 for a brush clearing project along the Brawley Wash as a separate part of a larger erosion control project. Approval was made pending the rancher presenting Pima NRCD with maps, timelines and cost estimates, and signing a cooperator agreement. The rancher who requested the funding has not followed up. Withdrawal of the funding approval has been placed on the June agenda so that other project proposals may be considered.
- Planned Work for the Coming Year:
 - Upcoming initiatives and goals.
 - Possibly work with Altar Valley Conservation Alliance to expand the water storage and distribution infrastructure project on the Rancho Seco. In FY 2025 one well was outfitted with infrastructure. Four wells on the ranch remain unused and in need of pumping, storage and distribution infrastructure improvements.
 - Implement a Resource Issues Reporting Form on the Pima NRCD website to automate data collection from anyone who wants to report a resource issue within the District's boundaries.
 - Outreach to agencies, towns, cities, UofAZ, NGOs to document what conservation issues they are working on, and where, to make progress on a more comprehensive Resource Needs Assessment.
 - Review Pima NRCD archives to incorporate into the Resource Needs Assessment full documentation of projects that were completed in the distant past (more than 10 years ago).
 - Partner with AVCA on other projects they propose.

4. Invited Partner Presentation(s)

- Name of presenter(s) and organization(s): Alisha Phipps, USDA-NRCS Team 7
- Summary of key points discussed: See attached .pdf file of NRCS presentation.

Notes: Alisha Phipps (NRCS) created and presented a comprehensive and yet straightforward overview of the previous year's LWG recommendations and how those priorities were applied to FY 2024 project applications. She very clearly outlined how NRCS funds were spent on specific applications from the Team 7 area in the three NRCDs at this LWG meeting. Ms. Phipps tearfully mentioned the NRCD is going

through the current federal Reduction in Force. Two of the NRCS staff in attendance at this meeting, Heather Spieth and Austin Urcadez, serving their last day or their final week on the job. Emilio Carillo is the new Team 7 acting lead.

5. Summarized Survey Results

- Key Resource Concerns Identified: The LWG group compared the NRCS table of 2024 Completed Projects against the previous year's priority resource concerns and concluded that last year's priorities should continue for FY 2025. These priorities are listed as follow:
 - Rangeland
 - Animals-Inadequate Livestock Water Quantity, Quality and Distribution
 - Plants- Plant productivity and health
 - Soil- Sheet and Rill Erosion, which includes gullying and head-cutting
 - Cropland
 - Soil-Organic matter depletion
 - Water- Inefficient Irrigation Water Use
 - Water- Groundwater depletion
- Projects Currently Being Funded or Implemented by the Pima NRCD:
 - Rancho Seco Water development project (Pima NRCD and AVCA) -
- Recommendations for New/Revised Practices: None
- Areas of Interest for Higher Levels of Conservation Focus: No changes. Brawley Wash and its tributaries have always been a priority area within the Pima NRCD. Not mentioned during the LWG meeting , but the Brawley Wash Working Group was formed in 2020 to address severe erosion, downcutting and head-cutting on the Brawley Wash. See 2022 Stantec Consulting Environmental Assessment report on the Brawley Wash [here](#). More information and maps for Pima County's Brawley Wash Watershed Plan can be found [here](#).
- Potential Partners for Leveraging Funds: See response to Question 2.
 -
- **Proposed Ranking Questions:**
 - **Range:** (Changes from 2024 ranking questions as indicated)

1. Will the proposed project result in implementation of all planned structural practices within 2 years of contract obligation and within 4 years for all management practices?
 1. Yes = 25 points
 2. No = 0 points
2. Will the practices to be implemented be part of an approved NRCS Resource Management System Conservation Plan (RMS) that covers the whole operation and all resource concerns (as opposed to a progressive plan)?

Clarification: The difference between an RMS and a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) is that NRCS alone creates the RMS. If a ranch has only one resource issue and a practice to address it, the plan is an RMS. A CRMP involves all federal and State, County and local agencies with jurisdiction over the combined federal, state, and private lands on the ranch, the private landowner, and the NRCD.

 1. Yes = 20 points
 2. No = 0 points
3. Is this a new conservation plan for this producer/land unit
 1. Yes = ~~20~~ 10 points
 2. No = 0 points
4. ~~Did the operation experience a wildfire in the last 5 years?~~ Are you applying conservation practices as a direct response to a wildfire burn or other significant natural event?
 1. Yes = 25 points
 2. No = 0 points
5. How many of the 3 locally identified resource concerns specified does the proposed project(s) address—(Inadequate Livestock Water Quantity, Plant Productivity and Health, Sheet and Rill Erosion)?
 1. Address all 3 RCs = 45 points
 2. Address 2 out of 3 RCs = 30 points
 3. Address 1 of 3 RCs = 15 points
 4. None = 0 points.
6. Will the proposed project(s) address the resource concern - Terrestrial Habitat for Wildlife and Invertebrates? (WHEG = Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide)

- Contracted conservation practices address available terrestrial wildlife habitat to improve the WHEG score by an increment of: $> 0.3 = 45$ points
 - Contracted conservation practices address available terrestrial wildlife habitat to improve the WHEG score by an increment of: 0.2 to $0.3 = 30$ points
 - Contracted conservation practices address available terrestrial wildlife habitat to improve the WHEG score by an increment of: $< 0.2 = 15$ points
 - No Improvements to WHEG score = 0 points
7. Will the proposed project(s) address resource concerns that will help land users to manage for drought situations?
- Include implementation of a grazing management plan which also includes a strategy for drought management? = 20 points
 - Include implementation water development practices for livestock and wildlife? = 20 points
 - Include implementation of grazing management plan and water development practices? = 40 points
 - None = 0 points
8. Do you have a monitoring plan that includes one or more of the following?
- Rain gages = 10 points
 - Photo data = 10 points
 - Trend data = 10 points

Crop Ranking Questions

1. The application will increase irrigation efficiency (Farm Irrigation Rating Index - FIRI

score) by:

- $\leq 10\% = 0$ points
- $11\% - 15\% = 20$ points
- $16\% - 19\% = 30$ points
- $\geq 20\% = 40$ points

2. How many of the 2 locally identified resource concerns (RC) specified does the proposed project(s) address (Source Water Depletion, Soil Quality Limitations)?

- Addresses 2 RCs = 40 points
 - Addresses 1 RC = 20 points
 - None = 0 points
3. Will the proposed project(s) include a flow measuring device and/or irrigation water management (IWM)?
- Both IWM and flow meter = 40 points
 - One or the other: IWM or flow meter = 20 points
 - Neither = 0 points
4. Will the practices to be implemented be part of an approved NRCS RMS level Conservation Plan ~~for their entire operation~~ **that covers the whole operation and all resource concerns** (as opposed to a progressive plan)?
- Yes = 20 points
5. Will the proposed plan include a management plan, complete with record keeping (Nutrient Management Plan, Irrigation Water Management Plan, etc)?
- Yes = 20 points
6. **Do you have a monitoring plan that includes one or more of the following?**
- Rain gages =10 points
- Photo data =20 points
- Trend data =40 points
7. **Are you applying conservation practices as a direct response to a wildfire burn, severe weather or other significant natural event?**
1. Yes = 25 points
 2. No = 0 points

Notes:

6. Recommendations to NRCS (up to three priority areas) This was not discussed during the LWG meeting.

- Priority Area 1: Brawley Wash
 - Priority Resource Concerns: Sheet and Rill Erosion a.k.a. gullyng and head-cutting, and subsequent increases in depth to ground water table. Conservation Practices: One-rock dams, structural dams, livestock waters, brush removal, fencing

- Ranking Questions: See answer to question
 - Incentives List: Money
- Priority Area 2: Rangelands
 - Priority Resource Concerns: Livestock water availability, plant health and productivity
 - Conservation Practices: New water infrastructure, prescribed grazing, fencing, brush management
 - Ranking Questions:
 - Incentives List: Money
- Priority Area 3: Croplands
 - Priority Resource Concerns:
 - Conservation Practices:
 - Ranking Questions:
 - Incentives List: Money

Notes:

7. Priority Area(s) Discussion Notes

- Priority areas were not discussed at the LWG meeting, but the District is focused on severe erosion, head-cutting and downcutting of the Brawley Wash in the Altar Valley as the biggest resource issue in the District.

Notes:

8. Local Farmer & Rancher Input

- Key discussion points from local producers: Local producers largely did not show up to the LWG meeting, but in the past have focused funding applications on improving livestock water availability, removing invasive mesquite, and massive soil erosion, gullying and head-cutting along the Brawley Wash, the Santa Cruz River and their tributaries.

Notes:

9. Partner Input

- USFS Input: None

- USFWS Input: None
- AZGFD Input: Nick Schobinger was present at the LWG meeting.
- DFFM Input: None
- NRCS Input: NRCS presented Data on funding, last year's priorities, conservation practices people applied for, etc. See attached NRCS presentation/
- Other Partner Input: Winkelman NRCD provided the attached summary of their District-wide resource assessment, which involved interviews with 15 cooperators.
- In the future, Winkelman will more likely partner with Redington than with us due to their mutual resource concerns on the lower San Pedro river valley. Santa Cruz and Pima will likely continue combining LWG meetings due to similar concerns.
- AVCA - Provided Rancho Seco report. AVCA has done extensive technological research and GIS mapping in the Altar Valley. They may be willing to provide some of those maps for the AACD portal.
- Pima NRCD additionally received a funding request for mesquite removal project along the Brawley Wash from an individual who has not yet signed a cooperator agreement. No money has been spent and earlier approval for District funding may be withdrawn.

Notes:

10. Additional Comments or Considerations

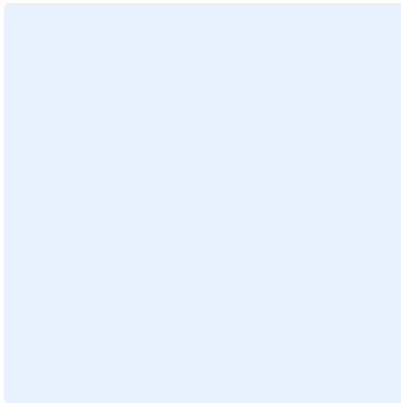
- Overregulation and/or political agitator-driven third-party lawsuits against the resource management agencies or against the Department of Homeland Security can and will destroy even the best laid conservation plan. Many times, writers of new regulations fail to consider the potential for adverse and often unintended impacts to existing conservation plans and projects.

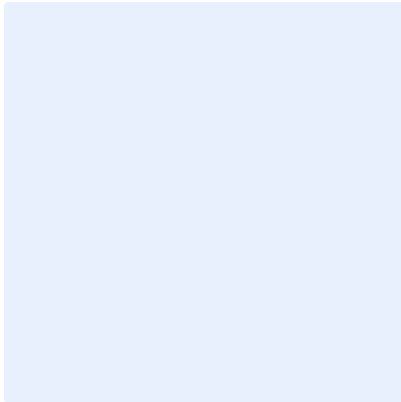
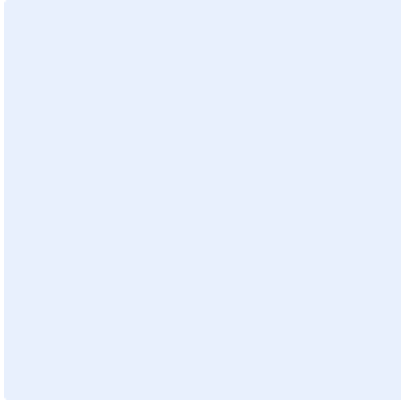
11. Meeting Adjournment

- Meeting End Time: 3:00 PM
- Minutes Prepared by: Cindy Copping
- Minutes Approved by:
 - **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

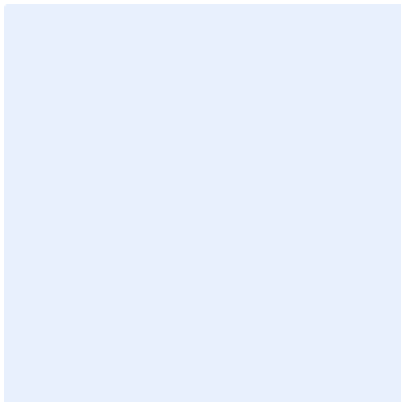
12. Portal Information

- Include map(s) of priority area(s) This topic was not discussed at the LWG meeting. We will put this topic on the agenda for our June 17, 2025 quarterly meeting. That said, a QR code for the Altar Valley Fire Preparedness Map is included below.
-





- Insert land ownership table See response to the first part of question 12.



13. Checklist for Reporting Completion & Signatures

- ☐ Completed report and meeting minutes

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ Reviewed by the NRCS Team Lead

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ Reviewed by NRCD Chair

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ Sent meeting minutes and report to cooperators, stakeholders, & NRCS Team Lead

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ Confirmed received by NRCS Field Office

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ Confirmed received by NRCS State Office

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ Reported to the State Technical Committee

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ STAC minutes reported to districts within six months

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



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Tucson NRCS Field Office Local Work Group Meeting Updates FY 2025

April 22nd, 2025

By: Alisha Phipps

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PURPOSE:

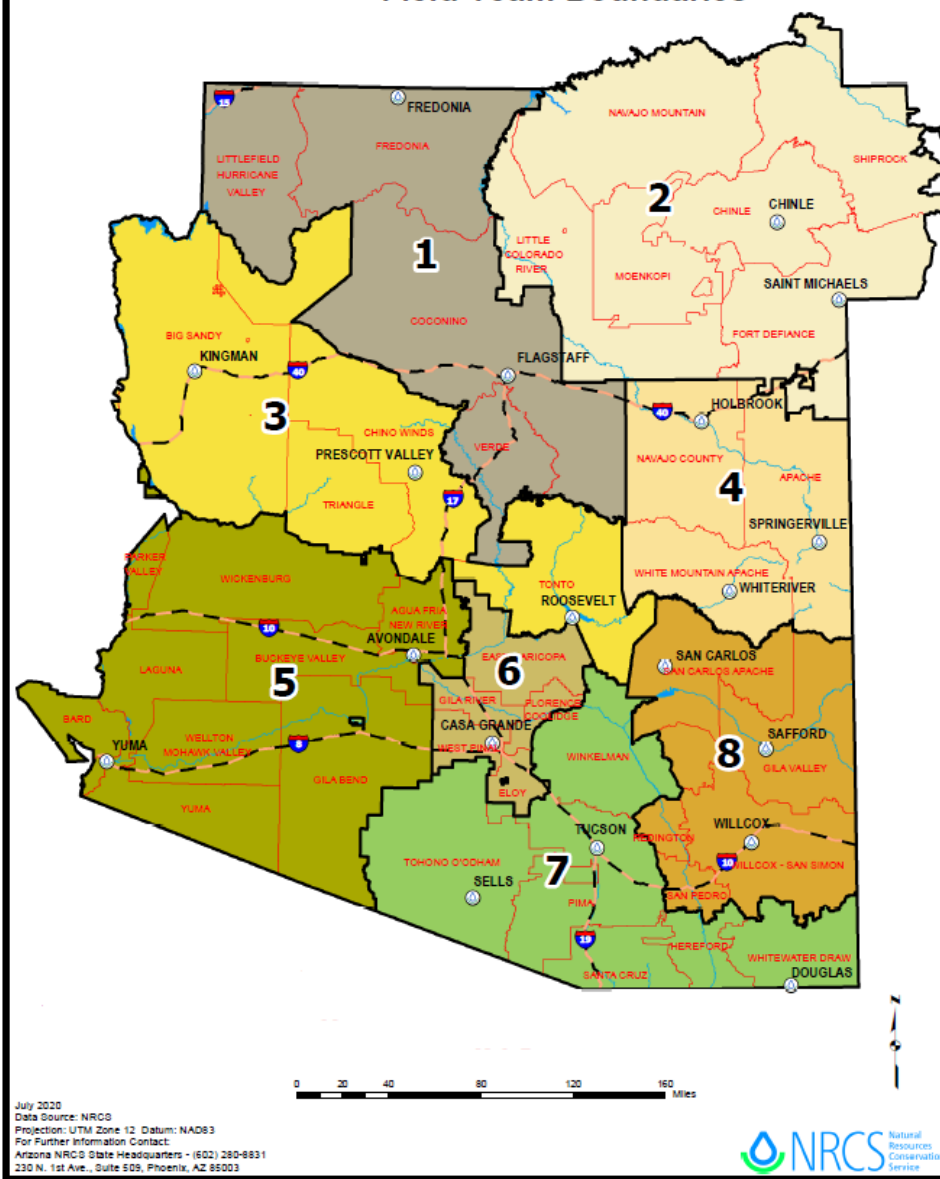


Provide a forum for the NRCD's and NRCS to work collaboratively with local conservation stakeholders to strategically identify solutions to natural resource problems.

Input gathered from this meeting will be used by NRCS when making decisions on focusing technical and financial assistance.



Field Team Boundaries



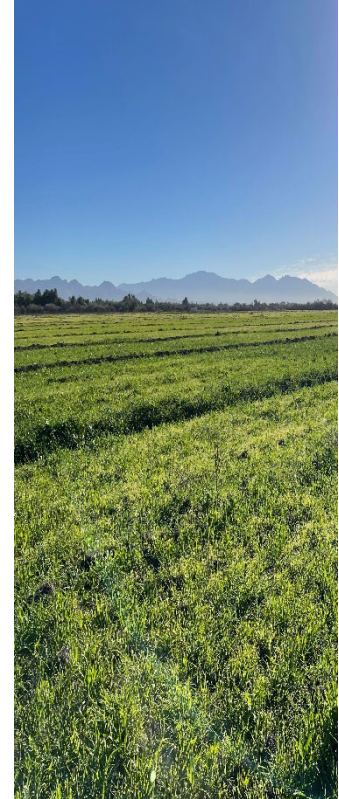
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NRCS Funding Programs:

- **CSP – Conservation Stewardship Program**
 - Available funding for AZ: \$3,800,000
- **EQIP – Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) – funds available statewide (\$17.695 million)**
 - EQIP –IRA Small Farm and Ranch = \$1,195,000
 - EQIP-IRA Crop and Pasture = \$6,000,000
 - EQIP-IRA Range = \$6,000,000
 - EQIP-IRA Forest = \$2,500,000
 - EQIP-IRA ACT NOW Targeted Practices
 - High Tunnels, Cover Crops, Brush Management - chemical = \$2,000,000
- **EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program (Statewide \$11,181,800)**
 - Available funding for Tucson Field Office: \$621,231
- **RCPP – Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape w/ Arizona Land & Water Trust**
 - \$3,557,816
- **Joint Chiefs - Catalina Rincon: Mount Lemmon watershed area: \$157,652**
- **Joint Chiefs - Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Phase 2: \$385,700**
- **National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI): Babacomari Watershed: \$1,132,203**



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**Have not received allocations for 2025*

Previous Year's EQIP Funding Allocations for Tucson NRCS Office

Year	State EQIP Funding	TFO Funded Contracts	Number of Contracts
2024	<i>\$11 million (EQIP)</i> <i>\$17 million (IRA)</i>	<i>\$3,393,966*</i>	<i>26</i>
2023	\$14 million	\$1,101,929*	14
2022	\$16 million	\$689,781	10
2021	\$19 million	\$261,998	7
2020	\$17 million	\$607,401	10
2019	\$12 million	\$608,554	12
2018	\$16 million	\$690,108	11
2017	\$19 million	\$347,608	10
2016	\$14 million	\$552,364	10



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*Includes IRA funding along with general EQIP & CSP



Tucson FY2024 CONTRACTS = \$3.3 million

EQIP 2024 Contracts

CROP	NRCD	PLANNER	PROJECT TYPES	CONTRACT AMOUNT
	Pima	Mynesha Holliday	Irrigation ditch, land leveling, cover crop	\$105,521
	Pima	Mynesha Holliday	High tunnels	\$5,887
	Santa Cruz	Mynesha Holliday	Irrigation water, hedgerow planting	\$18,280
	Santa Cruz	Mynesha Holliday	High tunnels	\$29,434
	Santa Cruz	Mynesha Holliday	Irrigation ditch, structures for water control	\$80,751
RANGE	NRCD	PLANNER	PROJECT TYPES	CONTRACT AMOUNT
	Pima	Alisha Phipps	Livestock waters, fence, prescribed grazing	\$150,439
	Pima	Heather Spieth	Livestock waters, fence, prescribed grazing	\$190,122
	Pima	Austin Urcadez	Livestock waters, prescribed grazing	\$109,090
	Pima	Alisha Phipps	Livestock waters, fence, prescribed grazing	\$203,681
	Santa Cruz	Alisha Phipps	Livestock waters	\$48,486
	Santa Cruz	Heather Spieth	Livestock waters, fence	\$277,265
	Santa Cruz	Heather Spieth	Brush management	\$6,024
	Santa Cruz	Heather Spieth	Brush management	\$187,458
	Winkelman	Alisha Phipps	Livestock waters	\$255,984
	Winkelman	Heather Spieth	Livestock waters, prescribed grazing	\$18,419
	Winkelman	Alisha Phipps	Livestock waters, fence, prescribed grazing	\$212,341
	Winkelman	Alisha Phipps	Livestock waters, prescribed grazing	\$35,666
	Winkelman	Heather Spieth	Livestock waters, hedgerow planting, bird houses	\$131,692
	Winkelman	Heather Spieth	Livestock waters, fence	\$62,489
TOTAL CROP =				\$239,873
TOTAL RANGE =				\$1,889,156
TOTAL EQIP OBLIGATED =				\$2,129,029

CSP 2024 Contracts

	NRCD	PLANNER	PROJECT TYPES	CONTRACT AMOUNT
Range	Pima	Alisha Phipps	Livestock condition, brush management, wormer	\$199,999
Irrigated Pasture	Santa Cruz	Mynesha Holliday	Pollinator planting, weed control, mulching	\$55,016
Range	Santa Cruz	Alisha Phipps	Forage management, monitoring, pollinator planting, mulching	\$199,999
Range	Santa Cruz	Alisha Phipps	Forage management, wormer	\$199,428
Range	Winkelman	Alisha Phipps	Forage management, wormer	\$200,000
Range	Winkelman	Alisha Phipps	Livestock condition, wormer, wildlife/pollinator plantings	\$200,000
TOTAL CSP OBLIGATED =				\$1,054,442

RCPP 2024 Contracts

	NRCD	PLANNER	PROJECT TYPES	CONTRACT AMOUNT
Range	Santa Cruz	Heather Spieth	Livestock waters	\$210,495



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2024 Completed Projects



Practice Type	Amount Completed	Units	Total Payments
Brush Management (314)	1,012	Acres	\$193,313
Combustion System Improvement (372)	1	Number	\$183,535
Watering Facility (614)	95,000+	Gallons	\$116,451
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Irrigation Pipeline (430)	760	Feet	\$760

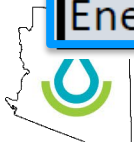


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Arizona State Priority Resource Concerns (RCs)

FY 2024 Arizona State Priority Resource Concerns	
Air - Emissions of Particulate Matter (PM) and PM Precursors	
Animals - Inadequate Livestock Water Quantity, Quality and Distribution	Range
Plants - Plant Productivity and Health	Range
Plants - Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation	
Plants - Plant pest pressure	
Soil - Organic Matter Depletion	Crop
Water - Inefficient Irrigation Water Use	Crop
Water - Groundwater depletion	Crop
Water - Surface Water Depletion	
Water - Sediment transported to surface water	
Animals - Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates	
Animals - Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms	
Soil - Sheet and Rill Erosion	Range
Soil - Wind erosion	
Energy - Energy Efficiency of Equipment and Facilities	2024 – request to add from WNRCD



Top 3 Resource Concerns identified by LWGs in 2023 & 2024

Ranking Overview



- **As part of the conversation we need to discuss ranking questions that will be used to evaluate producer applications received for NRCS programs.**
- **A ranking system assigns points to applications; higher points equal greater environmental benefits.**
- **The higher an application score = higher on the list for funding**
- **Customizing the ranking pool allows Arizona NRCS to focus funding on priority resource concerns and initiatives identified by the Local Work Groups.**
- **Ranking Pools: Rangeland and Cropland/Irrigated Pasture**



Range Ranking Questions

1. Will the proposed project result in implementation of all planned structural practices within 2 years of contract obligation and within 4 years for all management practices?

Yes = 25 points

No = 0 points

2. Will the practices to be implemented be part of an approved NRCS Resource Management System Conservation Plan (as opposed to a progressive plan)?

Yes = 20 points

No = 0 points

3. Is this a new conservation plan for this producer/land unit?

Yes = 20 points

No = 0 points

4. Did the operation experience a wildfire in the last 5 years?

Yes = 25 points

No = 0 points

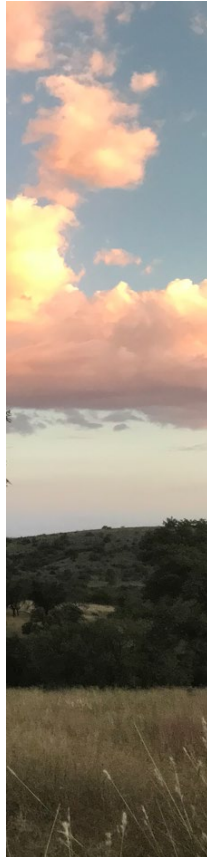
5. How many of the 3 locally identified resource concerns specified does the proposed project(s) address (Inadequate Livestock Water Quantity, Plant Productivity and Health, Sheet and Rill Erosion)?

Address all 3 RCs = 45 points

Address 2 out of 3 RCs = 30 points

Address 1 of 3 RCs = 15 points

None = 0 points.



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Range Ranking Questions Cont.

6. Will the proposed project(s) address the resource concern - Terrestrial Habitat for Wildlife and Invertebrates? (WHEG = Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide)

- Contracted conservation practices address available terrestrial wildlife habitat to improve the WHEG score by an increment of: > 0.3 = **45 points**
- Contracted conservation practices address available terrestrial wildlife habitat to improve the WHEG score by an increment of: 0.2 to 0.3 = **30 points**
- Contracted conservation practices address available terrestrial wildlife habitat to improve the WHEG score by an increment of: < 0.2 = **15 points**
- No Improvements to WHEG score = **0 points**

7. Will the proposed project(s) address resource concerns that will help land users to manage for drought situations?

- Include implementation of a grazing management plan which also includes a strategy for drought management? = **20 points**
- Include implementation water development practices for livestock and wildlife? = **20 points**
- Include implementation of grazing management plan and water development practices? = **40 points**
- None = **0 points**



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Crop Ranking Questions

1. The application will increase irrigation efficiency (Farm Irrigation Rating Index - FIRI score) by:

- $\leq 10\% = 0$ points
- $11\% - 15\% = 20$ points
- $16\% - 19\% = 30$ points
- $\geq 20\% = 40$ points

2. How many of the 2 locally identified resource concerns (RC) specified does the proposed project(s) address (Source Water Depletion, Soil Quality Limitations)?

- Addresses 2 RCs = 40 points
- Addresses 1 RC = 20 points
- None = 0 points

3. Will the proposed project(s) include a flow measuring device and/or irrigation water management (IWM)?

- Both IWM and flow meter = 40 points
- One or the other: IWM or flow meter = 20 points
- Neither = 0 points

4. Will the practices to be implemented be part of an approved NRCS RMS level Conservation Plan for their entire operation (as opposed to a progressive plan)?

Yes = 20 points

5. Will the proposed plan include a management plan, complete with record keeping (Nutrient Management Plan, Irrigation Water Management Plan, etc)?

Yes = 20 points



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Questions?



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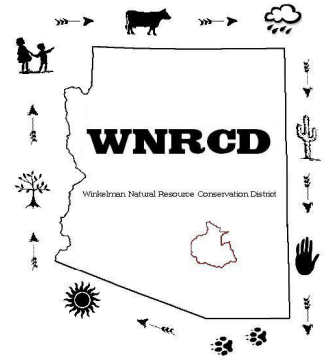
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**WINKELMAN NATURAL RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
P.O. Box 486
Kearny, Arizona 85137**



March 29, 2005

To Our Cooperators:

A couple of years ago, the District called on as many cooperators as we could to help us with discovering the resource needs of the District; so, we could begin prioritizing and targeting our funding. No one knows more about a community's natural resource problems than the people who live and work there. That's why it's so important to give local landowners and partners a voice in how best to prioritize & address their resource issues through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Local Work Group (LWG) program. The LWG is led by your local Natural Resource Conservation Districts (NRCD) and is the foundation of NRCS' conservation program delivery process. It supports locally led conservation efforts by coordinating USDA programs with other landowner stake holders such as federal, state, and local conservation programs to provide an integrated solution to addressing natural resource concerns. NRCS relies on the Districts and producers, at the annual LWG meeting, to tell them where they think local NRCS funding should be spent through a ranking system.

This year's meeting will be held at the Tucson NRCS building on April 22, from 1:00 to 3:00pm at 3421 N Romero Rd, Tucson. The Winkelman, Santa Cruz and Pima NRCDs will participate. The Winkelman District will use the attached list as our priorities from the work we did in 2022. If these aren't your funding priorities, please attend the meeting and let the Districts and NRCS know. If you can't attend the meeting, please email me your concerns.

The Winkelman District will be sponsoring a free **Managing Drought Workshop** on April 14 at the General Kearny Inn from 9:30 to 3:00 pm. The WNRCD Board felt that since we have so many newer producers in our and neighboring districts that haven't experienced such a dry period as we are having now, we should work with Cooperative Extension and get their combined expertise to help them plan for perhaps a more extended drought. Please sign up for the workshop because we need to order lunch and workbooks.

Sincerely,

Bill Dunn, Chairman Winkelman NRCD
dunnranches@yahoo.com

Resource Assessment Summary by Kyle Thompson (NRCD Coordinator)

In May, 2022, the WNRCD conducted a series of interviews with 15 cooperators and partners, which included ranchers, farmers, various agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These interviews provided valuable insights into the resource concerns and priorities within the District, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities for conservation efforts. Twelve of these interviewees provided information they agreed to have shared with the AACD. Listed in order of importance, the interviewees identified these resource concerns:

1. Water Development
2. Fire risk
3. Dirt tanks need cleaning
4. Saltcedar
5. Cactus
6. Gullies and headcuts and sheet
7. Springs going dry
8. Mesquite

One recurring and overarching concern that emerged from these interviews was the **issue of water**. Virtually all interviewees identified water as their primary concern. This concern encompassed various aspects of water management, including both ensuring its availability and optimizing its distribution across ranches and farms. To address this, a range of strategies and projects were discussed, such as drilling new wells, transitioning to solar-powered pumps for sustainability, laying pipelines for efficient water transport, installing larger water tanks, implementing water monitoring technologies, improving existing water infrastructure, and notably, the pressing need for cleaning dirt tanks. The emphasis on cleaning dirt tanks underscores their crucial role in the district, as they serve as key sources of water for both wildlife and cattle.

In addition to water concerns, **wildfire risk** was highlighted as a critical issue by nearly all of the interviewees. The threat of wildfires is a matter of significant concern, particularly given the potentially devastating impact that they can have on the district's landscape, ecosystems, and communities.

Vegetation management emerged as another widespread need across the district. While Saltcedar was the most commonly mentioned invasive species requiring attention, interviewees also expressed concerns about native species such as mesquite, cholla, and prickly pear encroaching on rangelands. Many ranchers indicated a desire to acquire more knowledge and resources for effectively managing these cactus species, which have become more abundant and problematic than in the past.

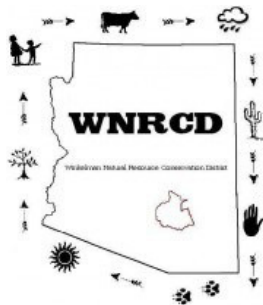
Although not discussed extensively, **soil erosion** was recognized as an issue affecting ranches in the District. The erosion of soil can have detrimental effects on land productivity and water quality, making it an area of potential concern for conservation efforts. Interestingly, while wildlife populations were generally reported to be on the rise, the interviewees identified habitat loss due to Saltcedar as a significant challenge. This emphasizes the interconnectedness of various environmental factors and underscores the importance of addressing invasive species like Saltcedar to preserve and enhance wildlife habitats.

Finally, many interviewees noted specific challenges to their day-to-day operations, such as vandalism, fence cutting, off-road vehicle use, target shooting, and illegal dumping. These issues, while not directly related to natural resource management, can have a negative impact on the environment and the livelihoods of those working in the district. Collaboration with law enforcement was mentioned, but some of these problems persisted, suggesting a need for further community engagement and proactive solutions.

In summary, the interviews conducted by the WNRCD in 2022 provided valuable insights into the multifaceted challenges facing the district. Water availability and management, wildfire risk, vegetation management, soil erosion, habitat preservation, and operational challenges were among the key concerns expressed by the district's stakeholders. These insights will undoubtedly inform and guide the WNRCD's ongoing and future conservation efforts to address these critical issues and sustainably manage the district's natural resources.

Calendar of Activities/Events

- **Managing Drought Workshop** on April 14 at General Kearny Inn at 9:30-3:00 pm
- **Local Work Group** Meeting on April 22, 1-3 pm for the Winkelman, Santa Cruz, and Pima NRCD Districts. Location: NRCS Tucson office (Training Room), 3241 N Romero Rd.
- Winkelman Education Center **Summer Conservation Camp** June 2-4
- Winkelman NRCD & Education Center Quarterly Meeting on June 11.



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