

# ARIZONA SECTION

September 30, 2008

<http://azrangelands.org>

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## Presidents Message

Hello Friends! It's always enjoyable visiting with folks this time of year, when we are coming out of a summer that few are disparaging. As the days begin to grow noticeably shorter, temperatures drop, and thoughts begin to wander towards shipping, hunting, and monitoring, it is healthy to pause for reflection upon the rich bounty of natural resources which we have been entrusted. How fortunate we are to hold such an honor, and how privileged we are to be able to consciously bear the responsibility of caring for these resources for future generations.

In July, the Board of Directors held a board meeting at Mingus Springs Camp on the final day of the Natural Resources Workshop for Arizona Youth (NRCWAY). We had the opportunity to interact with a fine group of students as they made presentations of their week's activities and were recognized for active participation and superior performance. It is important that Section members be fully aware of what a great camp the Section sponsors and be

personally engaged when possible. I truly believe that the annual NRCWAY Camp is the single greatest contribution that the Section has made to natural resource management in the State of Arizona. For over 45 years, dedicated cadres of instructors and staff have introduced youth of Arizona to the wide ranging possibilities before them in natural resource careers and struck many a spark. It is no secret that I was a NRCWAY student in 1986 and that experience was the impetus which guided my academic studies and ultimate career choices - so maybe I am a little biased. A huge thank you goes out to NRCWAY stalwarts Kim McReynolds, Susan Pater, and Jeff Schalaus, who were augmented this year by many Section members including Mary Nichols, and Willie Sommers.

One of the primary challenges the camp is currently facing is a lack of incoming funds, and the organizers had to make a significant dip into the NRCWAY endowment fund to pay for this year's operations. Historically, one of the primary annual contributors to the camp was the many Natural Resource Conservation Districts



(NRCD's) across the state. With a few notable exceptions, contributions from NRCD's have dropped significantly in recent years. I urge Section members to contact their NRCD boards and reinvigorate this relationship which has proved so beneficial to the future of natural resource management across Arizona.

In late July, the Section gathered on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon for a very informative and entertaining summer meeting exploring the unique challenges of managing rangelands that interface with the Grand Canyon National Park. Thanks to our hosts on the Kaibab National Forest and to the many members of the planning committee for a truly memorable summer meeting.

*Bill*

## Aqui por la frontera

### Battle against Buffelgrass

I'm sure most, if not all of you have heard of buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*) by now. If you are like I was, you heard of it and that was about it. For folks in our higher elevation areas, it is not much concern. But for those of us that have connections to the management of Sonoran Desert, it is causing quite a stir.

Buffelgrass is an invasive African savannah fire-adapted perennial grass that is threatening the structure and integrity of our Sonoran desert, in particular the Sa-guaro/Palo Verde communities. It grows in dense stands, crowds out native plants and can fuel frequent and intense wild-fires in what has been a typically fire-free desert.

This exotic invasive can often out compete the native plants for water, while its dense roots and shading can prevent germination of those natives. This noxious weed was introduced into the US sometime in the 1930s as livestock forage, and is still being planted extensively in Mexico. Many of you may be devoting quite a bit of your time and energy in either eradication efforts or planning for such. I personally hadn't paid it much attention until recently, when it reared its ugly head in my professional life. I found a need to educate myself and to do so rapidly when it came down to me to put together a briefing paper to the USFS South-western Regional Office requesting funding (to the tune of ½ million dollars) for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for aerial application of herbicide. Although we, the Coronado National Forest, have in mind to use this one of many tools to manage noxious weeds, buffelgrass is definitely the driving force behind the

effort.

Now don't jump to the same conclusion I did when I first heard of this idea. We won't be doing broadcast herbicide application from a crop-duster to control a perennial grass on our desert mountains. As far as I know, no herbicide exists that can pick and chose between grasses. Kill one grass and it will kill 'em all. The idea is to use a helicopter with a long-line type hose connected to a weighted nozzle. When hovering over an infestation of buffelgrass, the pilot hits a switch that dis-

penses a lethal (hopefully) dose of herbicide through the nozzle. The accuracy and precision can be to a fairly small area (about the size of the desk that my computer

sits on that I am patiently banging away at right now). There is the irrevocable fact that some untargeted mortality will occur, as is the case with almost any herbicidal application. It isn't thought to be significant though, and certainly beats the alternative of doing nothing while this grass continues to invade at an alarming exponential rate (estimated to be doubling or tripling each year). Repeated applications will most likely be necessary, as the seed bank of this plant is abundant.

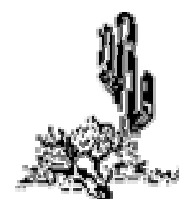
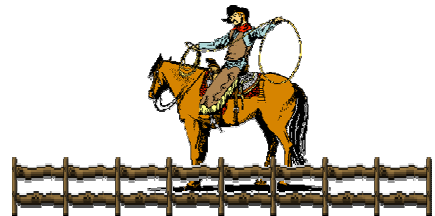
You may be asking why not just use backpack sprayers or hand-grubbing and pulling? While these are acceptable and effective techniques, the areas we need to deal with on the Coronado National Forest are often remote, rocky, and extremely rugged. Getting people with tools and backpack sprayers to these types of sites is not real feasible. Hopefully we can put the wheels on this EIS and get it completed in fiscal year 2009, and begin

treatment soon after. If not we may be facing a losing proposition.

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*Kendell Bown*

Director South



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paid it much attention  
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# Plants Information on the Web

I hope the monsoons have blessed you with adequate moisture as we have had here in northeastern AZ. With all the recent rains an unusual flush of various herbaceous life forms has appeared. Which has left me repeatedly scratching my head and mumbling, "What is that?" So if you're like me and find yourself searching through various flora books and/or websites for plant information, particularly grass species. Well, I have found a couple of websites with updated information for selected plant groups of North America that you may find helpful.

The first website, [Grass Manual on the Web](#), was developed as part of the Manual of Grasses for North America project. The web manual features both traditional and multi-entry grass keys by Genus, distribution maps, line drawings, treatment descriptions and images where available. The Utah State University Herbarium developed the manual website with material found in the *Manual of Grasses for North America*. The *Manual of Grasses for North America* was published in fall of 2007 with its design as a single volume replacement to the classic volume by Hitchcock and Chase. The new manual contains current taxonomic keys, illustrations, and distribution maps for the nearly 1300 grass species that have been found in North America north of Mexico. In addition, it presents keys and illustrations for several weedy and cultivated species not found in Hitchcock's Manual of Grasses. The new manual is published by the Utah State University Press and can be had for about \$80.00 online and most bookstores.

The second website, [USDA PLANTS Identification](#), is an online beta version of automated plant keys for grasses, gymnosperms and wetland monocots for all 50 states. Grass species keys are further divided by

states. Unlike traditional plant keys, the PLANTS Identification keys uses a multi-entry plant characteristics key. This allows for quicker plant lookup with fewer steps. The key has a "lookup" feature that allows you to highlight a word in the characteristic section and click the lookup button to get a definition from Google. Taxon names are linked to the PLANTS database plant profiles with current information and additional plant links. The data set and keys are draft and the National Plants Data Center welcomes your comments to improve the PLANTS Identification site.

...repeatedly scratching  
my head and  
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that?"

#### Websites:

USU Herbarium, Grass Manual on the Web:

<http://herbarium.usu.edu/webmanual/default.htm>

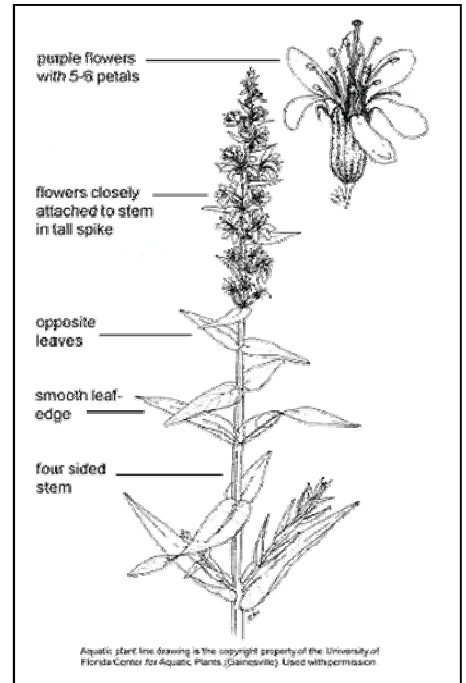
USDA PLANTS Identification Page:

[http://npdc.usda.gov/technical/plantid/wetland\\_mono.html](http://npdc.usda.gov/technical/plantid/wetland_mono.html)

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*Kenneth Gishi*

*Director North*



Plant key



## NRCWAY Camp

Kim McReynolds can tell a story, organize campers, and tip a teapot. It was the Board of Directors pleasure to meet up high on a ridgeline east of Prescott on the last day of camp. The students were excited and looking forward to presenting what they had learned during the week. It had rained and green was the predominant color of vegetation. The temperature was a welcome relief from the desert heat I'd driven up out of.



Group pictures were being taken when I arrived. How could I pass up the opportunity to capture kids demonstrating how close they'd become in just a short week. First

were the large group pictures, then smaller groups began to break out and ask for pictures to remember the camp and friends who share wonderful memories. We moved to the firepit and log benches while the campers formed into their groups to put on poster presentations. During the group presentations, everyone had a speaking part it seemed and they good-naturedly teased each other when someone couldn't remember their part. Applause was given roundly by the audience after each presentation.



Section President Bill Edwards spoke to the group about his experience as a camper many years ago and how it influenced his choice of a career in Range Management.

Awards were presented for many categories amid much hooting and hollering. I doubt that any will forget the teapot song, ever. The teamwork of leaders, students, and staff kept everyone fed and the camp clean. These are our future replacements in the world of range and wildlife management. They deserve our support. I encourage you to recruit students for next years camp.

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### ↓OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS↓

If you would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail, the Section would be very appreciative of the cost-savings. Please contact the editor at [dluhrsen@fs.fed.us](mailto:dluhrsen@fs.fed.us) to be added to the electronic mailing list.

### ~MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION~

Membership in the Society for Range Management is open to anyone engaged in or interested in any aspect of the study, management, or use of rangelands. Membership rights and privileges include: voting, committee service, nomination and election to offices, subscription to Rangelands journal and the SRM News. Arizona Section newsletter (for AZ Section members), discounted prices for publications, meeting registration fees, page charges and certification fees. For more information on membership in SRM or to request a Membership application, please contact Shai Schendel at the following e-mail: [Shai.Schendel@az.usda.gov](mailto:Shai.Schendel@az.usda.gov).

The Editor, News Staff, Interns, and volunteers would like to thank the following people for making this issue become a reality:

**Bill Edwards, Jim Sprinkle, Ken Gishi, Kendall Brown, Larry Ellicot, Katie Cline**

Stories with no contributor may have been written the editor...

### It's time again to start submitting nominations for our section!

- Range Manager of the Year;
- Awards for Professional and Technical Guidance;
- Outstanding Service Awards;
- Outstanding Young Range Professional.

The deadline is November 1, 2008. Please contact **Katie Cline** at 3241 N. Romero Rd.  
Tucson, Arizona 85705

[katie.cline@az.usda.gov](mailto:katie.cline@az.usda.gov)

(520) 292-2999 ext. 109



## Trophy Tree

Dan Robinette took advantage of the opportunity to drive the skidsteer and cut a tree or two. The quickness with which Dan grasped the technique demonstrated its ease to learn. We were also shown another cutter head which had a herbicide attachment for doing cut-stump application. Both operators emphasized safety and equipment maintenance. Directionally falling the tree is a developed skill, done by manipulating the axe quickly the moment the tree is sheared from the stump.



# Summer Tour at the Grand Canyon

Tusayan, AZ The campground was easy to find, clean and spacious. Early arrivers set up their tents or campers and gathered around to share stories and relax. When a quorum was reached, President Bill Edwards called the Board to order, went over minutes of the last meeting, the treasure's report, and other old business. New business included cajoling the crowd for nominees for the upcoming year. Byron reminded the group that he needs some relief from the Secretary-Treasure position. Vice President Al Medina offered to assist Byron until replacement(s) could be found. When the meeting was adjourned a small group went on in to town to the IMAX theater to learn something of the history of the Canyon. Upon returning to camp, the President-Elect started a small cooking fire for his steak and a Director North furnished a grill along with oyster hors' devours. As the fire burned down to coals, another small crowd gathered including members of the Big Ditch Band who entertained by preparing for the Friday night concert.

Coyotes broke the restful silence as daylight began to light the sky. Soon the smell of woodsmoke and coffee began to waft throughout the camp. Students furnished a filling breakfast of burritos. Clare soon gathered up the crowd, organized rides and led us off for the days ad-

ventures. We drove through a fire area, started by campers who abandoned their campfire. Our first stop was at a guzzler. There was a large roof (water collection surface) over three storage tanks which fed into a concrete trough. This project was a joint effort by Fish and Game and the Forest Service to provide water for wildlife on an otherwise dry ridge. Tom McCall gave an excellent presentation on the cost and purpose of the project. The group asked many questions and took lots of pictures.

*Clare soon gathered up  
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and led us off ...*

From there we drove to the Hull Cabin where we were entertained and enlightened about the local flora and fauna by Lori Makarick from the Park Service and Karlynn Huling of the Ranger District as well as our hostess, Clare Hydock. The next stop was the fire lookout where Pete Fule (NAU) talked about timber treatments and we took a walk through a thinning project to observe plant species diversity and recovery. The group returned to camp to recuperate and exchange more stories, while watching the cooks prepare supper.

Following the chuckwagon supper, the Big Ditch Band masterfully entertained the crowd with foot-tapping music late into the night.

Those who were not awakened by the crack of dawn on Saturday, slowly ventured out to enjoy coffee, fruit, and muffins again furnished by the students. We were soon on the road again this time going to a prescribed burn area adjacent to the Park. Plant diversity and wildlife were the main topics at the first stop. From there we went further up the backroad and discovered hedged sagebrush which the elk find very palatable after a prescribed burn.

The next stop was at a sagebrush site where the brush had been mowed to create openings and edge effect. The area had received good precipitation and the grass was green and vigorous.

The fourth stop of the day was the Agra-axe presentation. Two local ranchers were looking for a way to produce more forage on their tree infested grazing ground. It was obvious to them that removing the timber canopy would give the best results. Mike McCauley demonstrated the use of a skidsteer with a set of hydraulic blades that cut trees off at ground level very quickly. It was a very effective presentation

The Arizona Section, Society for Range Management **Winter Meeting** will be held in Sierra Vista January 13-14, 2009. Scientific meetings during the days for Jan. 13-14 will be held in the Sierra Grand Ballroom at the Thunder Mountain Activity Centre on Fort Huachuca <http://www.mwrhuachuca.com/restaurants.html>. To enter the base, you need a picture ID and a proof of insurance. The auction and evening banquet on Jan. 13th will be held at the Windemere Hotel and Conference Center <http://www.windemerehotel.com/>. The host motel will be the Windemere and they have provided us with a special government rate of \$78 per night for single occupancy and \$88 per night for double occupancy. There have been 70 rooms blocked at the Windemere and the motel will hold those rooms for us under "Society for Range Management" until December 30, 2008. You will need to call and reserve your own room if you desire to stay at the headquarters motel. The motel room charge at the Windemere includes a hot buffet breakfast and a complimentary evening cocktail. Other motels in Sierra Vista include:

Sierra Vista Quality Inn 520-458-7900; 1-800-458-0982

Sun Canyon Inn 520-459-0610

Gateway Studio Suites 520-458-5555; 1-877-443-6200



The theme for this year's program is "Geological, Anthropological, Historical, and Climatic Influences on Arizona Rangelands". We will have several accomplished speakers who will address long term and historical influences on Arizona rangelands. Look for more information in the AZ SRM newsletter later this fall.

Local attractions family may enjoy in the vicinity include Fort Huachuca Historical Museum <http://huachuca-www.army.mil/HISTORY/museum.htm>, Kartchner Caverns <http://azstateparks.com/Parks/KACA/index.html>, Tombstone, Bisbee, the San Pedro River Riparian Conservation Area, Cochise Stronghold, Mexico, and many others.

Arizona Section-Society For Range Management

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