

Ground Truth



A Publication of the Diablo Trust – A Northern Arizona Collaborative Grassroots Land Management Team



The Diablo Trust is a 501(c)(3) land management team created in 1993 to promote the social, biological, and economic sustainability of 426,000 acres of intermingled federal, state, and private lands southeast of Flagstaff, AZ, by engaging in a collaborative stewardship process that is in harmony with the natural environment and the broader community.

The phrase "**Learning from the land and sharing our knowledge, so there will always be a West**" captures our mission.

Ground Truth is the publication of the Diablo Trust, mailed free-of-charge to everyone on our mailing list. If you would like to be added to or removed from the mailing list, please contact us at:

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Contributors are solely responsible for the content of their articles, and the opinions expressed in the articles, linked materials, and comments are not necessarily those of the Diablo Trust.

Drought Turns Serious

Flagstaff-area ranchers mull early cattle sales to cope with dry winter
by Emery Cowan

Reprinted with permission from AZ Daily Sun & Emery Cowan

It was a snowier-than-normal February around Flagstaff, but hardly any of that moisture made it out to Judy Prosser's Bar T Bar Ranch near Meteor Crater.

The ranch hasn't seen any significant precipitation since the beginning of August, Prosser said.

Next door at the Flying M Ranch, rain gauges show precipitation is at less than one quarter of what the area normally sees in fall and winter.

And farther north, Navajo ranchers in the Bodaway Gap chapter say earthen water tanks usually fed by snowmelt are now completely dry, said Lee Yazzie

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A mother and calf in the sun on the Flying M Ranch, Feb 2018
(from the Diablo Trust archives)

Recreation On the Ranches

"From him to the stars, in all directions, there was only silence and emptiness."
- Larry McMurtry, Lonesome Dove

by Jeremy D. Krones



Recreators enjoying a day hiking on the ranches, May 2008
(from the Diablo Trust archives)

The beauty of the landscape in which we live has been cemented in the written word from the ancient pictographs and petroglyphs found along our canyon walls to blog posts with titles like "Adventure Buckelist" and "Essential Hikes of AZ."

Arizona is a unique state in the Union, being home to one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. Northern Arizona especially holds great wonder in the eyes of the world, being a high desert with often thriving ecosystems, mixed in with the canyons and mesas we learn to work with on the ranches.

Nearly half of Arizona is public land, managed by the US Forest Service (15%), Bureau of Land Management (20%), or the National Park Service (4%). The remaining 3% is managed by the US Mili-

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Please check out www.diablotrust.org/news for monthly installments of our regular columns!

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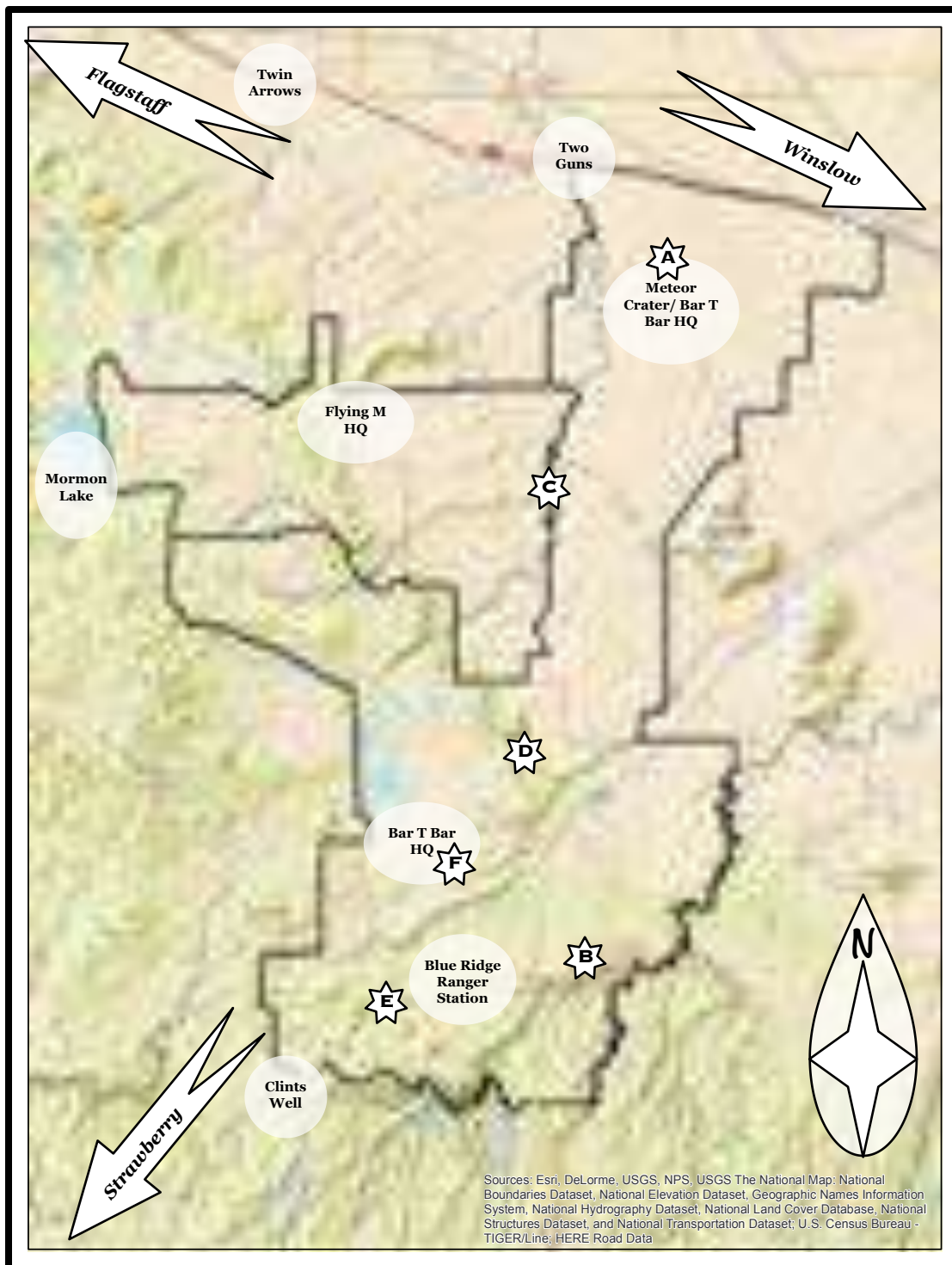
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Where We Are

A map of the Diablo Trust land area: Flying M and Bar T Bar ranches



Locations In This Newsletter:

A – Meteor Crater Headquarters (*Drought Turns Serious, p1*)

D – Coconino National Forest (*Recreation, p10*)

B – Tinder Fire area (*Wildlife and Wildfire, p6*)

E – AZ National Scenic Trail (*Recreation, p10*)

C – State Trust Land (*Ask a Rancher, p9*)

F – Hay Lake (*From the Calendar, p13*)

President's Message

by Norm Lowe

Recent fires, drought and NAU studies on Diablo Trust lands have turned my focus to carbon, the life element – as we keep “learning from the land and sharing our knowledge.”

Optimal levels of organic carbon are essential for optimal plant and animal diversity, stable soils and water infiltration. Because fire, grazing and drought each affect the cycling of carbon, good land stewardship is vital on our lands.

Over the past month the catastrophic Tinder Fire (see a map of the fire and commentary by Diablo Trust Wildlife Chair Tom Mackin on page 6) has burned over 16,000 acres on the southern end of Diablo Trust lands. The 2010 Schultz Fire covered over 21,000 acres and had greater burn severity than the Tinder Fire, but both caused great damage to infrastructure and management plans. A May 17th film screening and forum at the Museum of Northern Arizona emphasized how a coalition of dozens of agencies and organizations (including urban water users) are now uniting to reduce the growing incidence and size of hot fires which kill big trees, plant roots, and soil microorganisms.

In this vein, Diablo Trust works to manage ground cover through tree thinning and planned grazing so when fires happen they are cool fires which benefit the ecosystem.

Our region continues in serious drought which reduces the net carbon in plants and soil. Diablo Trust ranchers are now coordinating with agency staff to reduce and adjust water availability and livestock and wild ungulate grazing to achieve our conservation goals.

Soil carbon balance is the topic of the master's thesis just completed by Megan Deane McKenna with NAU's School of Earth Sciences and Environmental Sustainability (SESES). Megan compared soil carbon content of dozens of grazed sites and adjacent ungrazed sites and found that grazing had a slightly net positive effect on soil carbon sequestration.

A full report will be given in our next newsletter, if not earlier on our blog (www.diablotrust.org/news).

Please join with us in Diablo Trust's active process of land stewardship, because healthy land and wide-open spaces don't “just happen” in today's world with so “many cooks in the kitchen.”



Norm Lowe, President
Contact: president@diablotrust.org



Office Note

by Jeremy D. Krones

Happy Summer!

In mid-June I'll be graduating from Project CENTRL (Center for Rural Leadership), a 12-month, 9-seminar Arizona leadership program. My class, Class XXVI, comes from all over the state, and ranges in both industry and education.

Our seminars took us around the state, and beyond. We visited a timber mill in the White Mountains, a state penitentiary outside of Tucson, and lettuce fields in Yuma. Last fall we took a trip to Ciudad Obregon in southern Sonora, the Mexican state bordering Arizona, and in late April we flew to Washington, DC, to meet the Arizona delegation and a range of agricultural and educational leaders that work at the heart of our government.



This program, tuition free in large part to a generous grant from the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, has 40 years of experience training leaders in the Copper State. Project CENTRL claims six alumni in the Arizona legislature, and many more active leaders throughout the state (including Alan Kessler, Class I, from the Flying M Ranch).

The two greatest benefits I've found in this program are the networking, and the travel. I might have eventually ventured to the far corners of my adopted home state, but driving past the fields of lettuce and kale in Yuma wouldn't have given me the experience of spending an entire morning with migrant laborers.

I'd heard about some of the ranchers around Show Low, but Project CENTRL gave me the opportunity to sit with them and learn about their experiences, some very different than the ranches with whom I work.

The 2018 Diablo Trust calendar theme is the Economics of Open Lands. We toured a meat processing plant and auction house in March, and have plans to visit a 4FRI timber site and the AZ National Scenic Trail this summer. These field trips are more than to just see the land included in the Diablo Trust land area – they are to show you our region and enhance our networks.

I hope to see you out on the land this year, expanding your horizon in this “big sky country” (my apologies to Montana). We live in a diverse world, and in a diverse state. Without effort, we can only see what's immediately around us, and I aim – like with Project CENTRL – to show you what else is out there, so there will always be a West.




Jeremy D. Krones, Program Manager
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Getting to Know . . . Lisa Lamberson

Owner
Mountain Sports of Flagstaff

Lisa Lamberson wears many hats in Flagstaff: business owner, mother, philanthropist, and more. Lisa co-owns Mountain Sports and Bright Side Bookshop, both located on North San Francisco Street in downtown Flagstaff.

She was born in Casper, WY, but her family moved to Flagstaff in 1980, when her father opened the original Mountain Sports. Lisa spent most of her childhood in Flagstaff.



Lisa moved around the country after high school, living in Maine, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, Colorado, and other parts of Arizona. She received a degree in experiential education with a focus in visual arts from Prescott College.

When she returned to Flagstaff she taught at a Montessori school and ran educational programs at the Museum of Northern Arizona. Lisa returned to Mountain Sports in 2006.

In 2016 she and her husband Ben, a fellow Flagstaff local and Guardian paramedic, became the owners of Mountain Sports. In February 2017 Lisa, Ben, and Annette Avery purchased Barefoot Cowgirl Books, down the street from Mountain Sports, and re-branded it as Bright Side Bookshop.

Lisa and Ben are raising their five-year-old son Jack to be as outdoorsy and active as they are!

Born in: Casper, WY

Childhood Hero: Picabo Street (Olympic gold medalist skier)

Current Hero: Glennon Doyle (author and activist)

Contribution to the Flagstaff Community: Involvement in our mountain town through philanthropy, business, and my family!

Books or Documentaries You Recently Enjoyed: *Tangerine* by Christine Mangan; *When Women Were Birds* by Terry Tempest Williams; *Fire On the Mountain* (documentary)

Favorite Hobbies: River running, skiing, being outside with my son

Favorite Ranch Recipe: Dutch oven pineapple upside-down cake

Fondest Outdoor Memory: Seeing the total solar eclipse last year

Currently Unrealized Life's Dream: Seeing the Northern Lights!

Favorite College Class: NOLS semester in the Rockies

Favorite Quotation: "People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day."

- Winnie the Pooh

Message from the

by Kit Metzger



The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Recreation on the Ranches

Recreation: exploring the "Great Outdoors;" connecting to the earth; hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, Sunday drives, and much more . . . all of these activities happen on the Diablo Trust.

I am a believer in recreation on public land, but I think we may have reached the point that we need to look at a better way to manage it and keep it from becoming a destructive activity.

More than just a map, signs, and an ad campaign, we need boots on the ground. It may seem like a person's journey into the woods is not a big disturbance after being in the hustle and bustle of the urban areas, but if you live in the country, a large weekend, like Memorial Day, is unbelievable.



The Good

I feel that humans need that connection to the dirt, earth, and nature. Family time, alone time, even quality dog time, can bring your spirits up!

We see those types of activities all the time out here.

Big family camps with baseball, football, kids playing, families reconnecting, food cooking on an open fire and everybody going home smelling like wood smoke. It's a good time had by all, a huge camp that leaves behind nothing but memories and trampled grass.

The lone hiker out looking for sheds, birds, or just solace. All you see is a car parked somewhere, and then it's gone.

Big hunting camps where folks come in, spend their time hunting, and then again all you see is a patch of mashed grass.

We all enjoy sharing those experiences with these folks when we visit with them. All this is good and something essential—we need to use our resources.

The Bad

Some of the bad is just from people not knowing their impact on the country side. Some of the things that get to me are if the ground is bare, folks think that driving there is OK, or when they camp or park right next to a gate because there's no livestock nearby when they arrive.

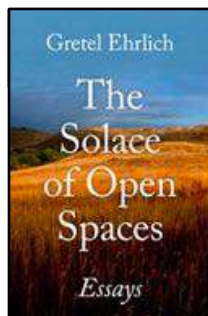
This might be a hanging offense in the "New West!" Some cattle, particularly little calves, will not go close to a vehicle, and it can be really hard to get them through the gate with the herd when there's a car nearby.

Another offense is, "we can leave the gate open because I don't see any cattle and we will be right back."

Or camping somewhere and instead of backing up to the camp, there is a tendency to create a "circle drive" at their camp. This leads

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Good Reads for the Western Life Book Club



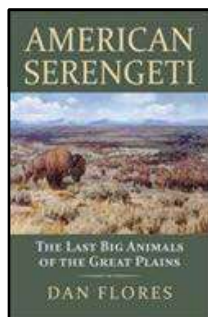
February Book Review: The Solace of Open Spaces by Gretel Ehrlich

Especially when compared to the other books we've read about Wyoming, sheep ranching, and women in the West, Gretel Ehrlich's The Solace of Open Spaces takes the cake. Ehrlich writes with the staccato beat of a person with so much to say but not enough time or space to say it, so they resort to explaining their surroundings with as few words as possible.

Unlike similar memoirs, The Solace of Open Spaces was written as individual essays and then compiled later in the most logical way: not chronologically based on date, but on details. You never have to question a description of a character, because Ehrlich has already described them in a previous chapter, even if that previous chapter takes place after the chapter you're reading. She also exudes not only confidence in her ranching capabilities despite being a

through-and-through easterner, but also positivity in the worst situations, for humans in general, for ranchers, and for women.

This book is highly recommended by the club!

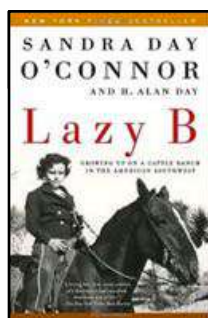


March Book Review: American Serengeti by Dan Flores

North America used to be chock-full of megafauna of all shapes, and for anyone who doubts that, I recommend you turn to Dan Flores' biological history American Serengeti. In only 200 pages, Flores outlines the history, present, and future statuses of six of the greatest animals native to our continent - all of which have become powerful symbols not only of the American West, but the country as a whole: pronghorn antelope, coyotes, horses, grizzly bears, bison, and wolves.

While there are times that he can go from waxing poetically about an animal's finer traits to explaining basic concepts at elementary levels, Flores' book is for everyone interested in taking the first step to understanding more about the fauna of the West.

The largest complaint was that sometimes he was too descriptive about certain real-world but very emotional events, like a violent hunt. Even with the clear realism (and maybe because of it), we recommend this book!



April/May Book Review: Lazy B by Sandra Day O'Connor

Descriptive, generational, real.

Those three terms were used with great frequency, and accuracy, in the meeting discussing Sandra Day O'Connor's memoir of her early life growing up on her family's cattle ranch in southern Arizona: Lazy B.

While her anecdotes tended to be short and quick, they each packed a punch, thrusting the reader into the world of her youth, drinking with rowdy cowboys at one of the two bars in town, fixing a flat tire while running late to delivering lunch to her father and his crew, and riding horses across the wide open pastures of the Lazy B. O'Connor wrote the book with her younger brother Alan, but it is largely in the first person by her. Her stories struck home for some book club members who grew up on ranches much like hers - it's still unbelievable that ranching really hasn't

changed in the last 150 years, and O'Connor's memoir could very well have been based just a few years ago, instead of 70+ years ago.

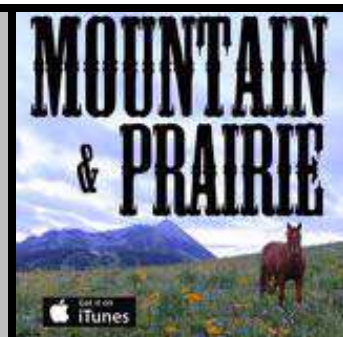
This is a beautiful look at the story of one of the most influential American women of the 20th century. We highly recommend it!

Thursday, June 28 @ 5:30PM

The Big Burn
by Timothy Egan

Flagstaff Public Library • 300 W. Aspen Ave.
Buy your book at **Bright Side Book Shop** and
support local businesses!

We're reading this in
partnership with the
Mountain & Prairie
Podcast Book Club!



Wildlife and Wildfire

by Tom Mackin
Diablo Trust Wildlife Chair

It's only May and already tens of thousands of acres have burned in our forests adjacent to Diablo Trust lands in what may be shaping up to be a very bad fire season. To say we've been in a dry spell for the past several months would be a huge understatement, with year-to-date precipitation at a near record 25-35% of average.

Between the lack of winter moisture, somewhat normal high spring winds, and temperatures that are more summer-like, the Forest Service and many municipalities have enacted fairly significant fire restrictions – appropriately so, if we're to minimize or reduce human-caused fires on the lands we love.

This brings up the question about the impacts of fire on wildlife, and there are really very few surprises when you look into this question.

For the most part, mammals, birds and even reptiles and insects can usually leave the immediate area and seek shelter elsewhere.

As expected, unfortunately, those most often lost to fire include the very young, injured, and those otherwise hampered and unable to flee. Fire such as the Rodeo-Chediski in 2002 or the Wallow in 2011, while consuming thousands of acres, burned in a mosaic pattern based on vegetation, weather, and geography, so fleeing for many miles from the flames was not al-



ways necessary for much of our native wildlife. Like many of our other vegetation species, much of our wildlife have evolved in a fire regime and so they know what to do and how to avoid injury or death.

The impacts to wildlife are often greater after the fires have passed. Depending on the fire severity, important food sources may have been initially destroyed. Personal observations indicate that for herbivores and omnivores like deer, elk, bears, and turkeys, many acres are quick to green-up and sprout luxurious new growth. With a newly-opened canopy and reduced competition for water, nutrients, and sunlight, these new plants may thrive for years.

While many bird species need to find new feeding and nesting areas, for others, especially cavity-dwelling woodpeckers and others, the recently killed trees can provide new homes. With the additional new abundance of insects and beetles, a new feast is served.

Other impacts are not so beneficial, especially in riparian areas, wetlands, or other units with many streams and springs. The runoff from sediment, ash, and other debris, as well as more sunlight, can significantly alter these formerly wet oases, no longer providing a suitable habitat for many species. Without adequate vegetation, many of these areas are prone to flooding and significant erosion, further damag-

ing these important environs. The same can be said when there is significant loss of timbered acreage that once provided hiding, bedding, and thermal cover. For ground-dwelling or foraging birdlife, loss of grasslands and forest understory also negatively impacts these species.

In summary, while wildfires can be catastrophic and have devastating consequences, it's easy to see that there are often benefits in both the short and long-term, and while some wildlife will perish, they're very resourceful and adapt to changing conditions. ♦

Job Posting

Our current Program Manager, Jeremy Krones, is leaving us in the fall and we are looking for his successor!

If you are interested in applying, please contact info@diablotrust.org.

This posting closes on July 13, so act fast!



Annual Campout Under the Stars

Aug 17-18 • 12:00PM Friday – 2:00PM Saturday

Moqui Campground, Coconino Nat'l Forest

www.diablotrust.org/calendar/campout-18

Thank You to Our AZ Gives Day Donors!

This year Diablo Trust reached our goal for the Summer Agricultural Institute (SAI), a week-long intensive for grade-school educators to teach them how to integrate agricultural literacy into their classrooms. With this money we'll be able to sponsor at least three local, northern Arizonan teachers!

The remaining donations will go towards improving our newsletter.

Anonymous (2)
Stephen Cassady
Bryan Friedman
Alysa Greenberg

Donald Hancock
Denise Hudson
Diana Kessler
Jeremy Krones
Ellen Parish

Arnie Schlittenhart
Phyllis Thompson
Allison Weintraub
Stephen Yeary



Money matters & your support makes a difference!



Plant Spotting: Sideoats Grama

Scientific Name(s): *Bouteloua curtipendula* (Michx.)

Common Name(s):

Navajita banderilla
Sideoats grama

Family:

Poaceae

Growth:

Warm season grass

Ecology:

Sideoats grama is the state grass of Texas. It is monocot perennial grass native to nearly all of North and South America, and is a threatened species in some of the American Midwest. It grows in average soils of dry to medium moisture. Grama thrives in full sun, although it is very



by Max Licher
<http://www.swbiodiversity.org/seinet>

adaptable and can be found in a variety of ecosystems. Sideoats grama grows in dense clumps, which can grow up to 1.5 feet tall. The leaf blades are narrow and bluish-gray, with oat-like seed spikes hanging from one side (hence the name). Purple flowers appear on inflorescences (tall flower stems) in early to mid-summer; the stems can grow up to three feet. It is a plentiful forage plant for livestock and wildlife, and is grown for erosion control and as an ornamental. It also provides larval food for the veined ctenucha moth (*Ctenucha venosa*).

A Cowgal's Story

by Sheila Carlson

The myth of the rancher who is out to make a buck by letting his livestock damage and destroy public lands is far from the truth as I know it.

In reality ranchers care more about the land and the waterways than most people I've come across. They make their living off the lands and overgrazing it is NOT something that is done.

They carefully monitor the land, use grazing rotations, watch for invasive and non-native species of plants and work closely with local agencies to maintain a positive impact on the land. Many times they will not use a pasture in their rotation because they feel there isn't enough growth or moisture and would rather let it rest than use it.

They are the ones hauling water during drought times, not only for their livestock but for the wildlife in the area. The run-off from winter snows and summer rains flow down



ditches they maintain, to fill water tanks and flow into lakes.

This isn't something that nature has created in most places; this is something that they have worked hard at accomplishing each year. Those ditches

need to be cleared and cleaned. The same with those water tanks that provide a life source for so many different species.

Without the rancher taking time, money, and effort, those same water tanks would fail.

There are so many scare tactics out there, so many untruths being spread and the saddest part is that so many will believe what they are told without questioning the source.

Speak to your local rancher if you have a question. Treat them as you would like to be treated; don't just assume they are the "bad guy." I think that people would find out they have a common interest when it comes to care of the land . . .

Drought Turns Serious (continued from p1)

Jr., a member of the area's grazing committee.

In these areas it doesn't come as a surprise that two-thirds of Coconino County is now in severe drought — equivalent to a Level 3 on a five-point scale. The long-term forecast doesn't hold hope for a change either, with projections for above-normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation through May.

In addition to ruining snowplay holidays and ratcheting up fire danger, the dry conditions have layered new challenges onto the operations of ranchers who depend on snow and rainfall to spur forage growth and fill earthen water tanks for their animals.

"It's just really stressful, there is this underlying anxiety," Prosser said.

For one, earthen water tanks that collect precipitation are low or completely dry, said Prosser and Kit Metzger of the Flying M Ranch. That means ranchers have had to start hauling water to their cattle, a time- and labor-intensive process.

The hauling will likely have to continue through spring and early summer because scarce snowfall means there will be little if any runoff into water tanks on the ranch's summer range near Happy Jack and Anderson Mesa, Prosser said.

At the Bar T Bar ranch, the conditions have forced managers to move 500 calves up to Colorado, where they graze and are given supplemental feed, Prosser said. More than 150 additional cows were moved to lands the Prossers own near Joseph City and Concho, she said. They usually don't send cattle off the ranch this time of year but are doing so as a precau-



Cattle out on the Flying M Ranch, February 2018 (Diablo Trust archives)

tion, Prosser said.

While good moisture the past few years has created a solid base of grasses and shrubs that cows are still munching on, that is likely to change if continued dry weather limits new growth in the spring, Prosser said.

"We know that we're not going to have a spring unless we're miraculously bailed out in March so we're planning on being way below average (for range carrying capacity)," she said.

They have to manage carefully now so as not to overgraze the area, she said. If that happens, "we won't have anything to come back to in the winter," she said.

Bar T Bar ranchers are already putting out high-nutrition supplemental feed so the cows eat less of the natural shrubs and grasses, and they will be moving both cattle and water tanks more often to prevent overgrazing in certain places.

"Droughts become expensive," Prosser said. "You have to hire additional labor just when you don't need to be spending

any more."

On the Navajo Nation, Yazzie said grazing officials are trying to emphasize to elders that selling off animals now — before they start to die of thirst and lack of vegetation — would be a wise thing to consider. Many people are hauling water to their animals as well, he said.

Metzger wrote in an email that the ranchers at Flying M don't know yet whether they will have to reduce herd numbers to align with the amount of forage, but that is one possibility.

For Babbitt Ranches, which raises cattle across 700,000 acres north of the San Francisco Peaks, such an option is also on the table.

"We are taking advantage of opportunities to market cattle sooner than we would otherwise," said Billy Cordasco, Babbitt Ranches president and general manager.

Selling off cattle is a tough decision for ranchers to make because it takes years to build up those numbers again, Metzger wrote. Because the drought is statewide, ranchers also face the prospect of everyone trying to reduce their herd around the same time, crashing prices by as much as 30 percent to 50 percent, Metzger wrote.

"So not only will you have less but the ones you sell will be worth a great deal less," she wrote.

While this year is exceptionally dry, the ranchers also emphasized that none is a stranger to drought.

"John Babbitt told us a long time ago that a successful ranch will always manage for drought," Cordasco said. "I think that's just what we do." **DT**

Sportsman & Recreation Day on the Land

Sat, July 14 • 10:00AM – 2:00PM

AZ Trail, Bar T Bar Ranch, Coconino National Forest

www.diablotrust.org/calendar/srdotl18

Ask A Rancher

How are grazing permit numbers on state land calculated?

From: Anonymous

Last issue we talked about the federal leases the Diablo Trust ranches deal with. This issue, we're discussing State Trust land.

Roughly a fifth of the Diablo Trust land area is State Trust land. Contrary to popular thought, State Trust land is **not** public.

Public land is land that is owned by the public, managed in large part by the Federal government, for no explicit governmental or public purpose aside from keeping it open and unappropriated.

Arizona State Trust land refers to the roughly 9,260,253 acres owned and managed by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), for the expressed purpose of "enhancing value and optimizing economic return for the Trust beneficiaries, consistent with sound business management principles, prudent stewardship, and conservation needs supporting socio-economic goals for citizens here today and future generations."

State Trust lands were granted by Congress when Arizona was



established as a Territory in 1863, and by the State Enabling Act of 1910.

As of 2014, there were 14 beneficiaries; nearly 87% of the Trust lands are in the Common School Trust, and approximately 90% of the Land Trust revenues go to that Trust. Today, the ASLD's urban lands lease and sale program is the Trust's largest revenue producer. While the most valuable Trust lands are urban, most Trust lands are only usable for livestock grazing, through leasing.

According to Josh Grace, the Range Resource Area Manager for the Northeastern Arizona Resource Area of the State Land Department, this reality is not expected to change any time soon.

Josh has rangeland management responsibilities for all State lands from "just west of Tusayan and Williams to the New Mexico border." Rangeland management on State Trust lands, Josh says, is a "mutual effort between the ASLD and its grazing lessees," such as the Bar T Bar and Flying M ranches.

Josh's responsibilities include coordinating rangeland man-

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Field Follies: A Tasty Experience

by Andrew Brischke



The conclusion of the AZSRM Summer General Membership meeting was one of the highlights of the AZSRM Summer Meeting for me. Sure, the dessert served at the end was the main reason for this, but not for the reason you may suspect . . .

Each member that stuck it out in the rain until the end was treated to a slice of pecan pie. I didn't even

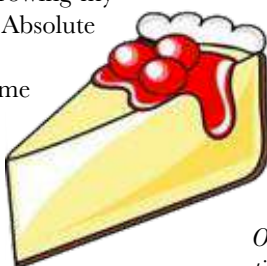
have any (honestly!). It wasn't because there wasn't enough; there was plenty. It wasn't because it wasn't any good; from all reports it was delectable. It wasn't even because I was too full; I can always hammer down some more food. The pecan pie was a highlight of the summer meeting for me because it brought back one of the best memories and desserts I've ever had in my life. It was the dessert that effectively forced me into retirement from eating dessert. It would be like getting a hole-in-one and then immediately throwing my clubs into a lake. It wouldn't get any better than that. Absolute perfection.

Now I can't really fault people for taking one look at me and reaching the conclusion that I have enjoyed a few too many desserts in my time. In full disclosure, before I retired I only ate a few desserts: ice cream, pumpkin pie, strawberry/rhubarb pie, and cheesecake. Worse than that, I only enjoyed these select desserts when other people made or brought them. But this last dessert

forced an insurmountable chasm between it and all other desserts that I didn't have a choice other than retirement.

We had just finished lunch at NRCWAY (Natural Resource Conservation Workshop for Arizona Youth) and were waiting for registration to begin. A staff member walked in to the dining hall holding a travel pie carrier. He said that he had brought some leftover dessert for us to try that he had just made. To be fair, I was hesitant at first. He had a low percentage of hitting my dessert sweet spot. But then he opened up the case to reveal a cheesecake. Not any old, typical cheesecake: a raspberry/rhubarb cheesecake. I'm a sucker for anything raspberry and rhubarb – and to combine it with cheesecake?! My excitement was growing. The ball had just landed on the green and it was rolling toward the hole. Then, I took my first bite . . .

The Big Bang just went off in my mouth. Worlds collided. My knees buckled. And I was sitting down. I wept. Really, I did. Openly, in front of the entire NRCWAY staff. I wasn't prepared for this explosion of delight. It took the rest of the NRCWAY staff a while to notice my tears. (I can only speculate they were experiencing the same feelings.) Soon they started to laugh at me. This made me laugh-while crying. I didn't know these emotions were possible. But there I was in a heap of tears and laughter all from a dessert. From the perfect dessert. I had tasted my hole-in-one, and I retired. ▯



Originally found in the Society for Range Management: Arizona Section Newsletter, September 2014 issue. Reprinted with permission.

Recreation (continued from p1)

tary or the Army Corps of Engineers.

Public land is open for nearly uninhibited recreation. Certain places have restrictions, such as for motor vehicle use, hunting and angling, and seasonal access. Those restrictions are in place to help sustain the missions and mandates of the various agencies.

The Diablo Trust land area, covering almost 500,000 acres of open space, is 52% USFS and 1.3% BLM land.

Both of those agencies are truly public, meaning that members of the public do not have to pay to simply access and enjoy themselves at a basic level on the land.

As you can learn in this issue's "Ask a Rancher" column (page 9), land owned by the AZ State Land Department (ASLD) is not truly public. Just over 20% of the Diablo Trust area, or 101,000 acres, is ASLD land. To recreate on State Land, one must acquire a permit. However, with that permit, and on allowed land, a recreationist can do almost anything they can do on Federal (public) land.

At every Diablo Trust event there are fliers from USFS, ASLD, AZ Game & Fish Department (AGFD), and the Arizona State Parks, explaining different components of recreating on the land.

There is also information about the Arizona Watchable Wildlife Experience (AWWE) and Leave No Trace (LNT). AWE is a program designed to introduce Flagstaff locals and visitors to wildlife viewing sites within 30 miles of Flagstaff. LNT is the core ethic of recreating in the American backcountry.

Both Diablo Trust ranches value recreationists on the land, but do so warily. Not everyone who ventures into our shared open spaces are cognizant of how they should act in different situations; that led each ranch to enter a Landowner Compact Agreement with the AGFD in late 2016.

These agreements have unique rules designed by and for each ranch. The rules allow the ranches some oversight on recreation within their boundaries, on state and public lands. Some of the rules are specific to certain groups, like hunters, but most of the rules are applicable to everyone on the land, such as not cutting fences or going off-road at certain times of the year.

You can read more about the Landowner Compact Agreement program in the Fall 2016 issue of Ground Truth, or at aglandownerrelations.com.

We invite recreationists out to the ranches for all of our events, especially our upcoming Sportsman & Recreation Day on the Land, currently scheduled for Saturday, July 14, at Blue Ridge Reservoir, to discuss the AZ National Scenic Trail Comprehensive Plan and the interrelationship between recreationists and ranchers on open lands. ▀

Ask a Rancher (continued from p9)

agement efforts with federal and private land and resource managers; rangeland monitoring; conducting clearances on range improvement and land treatment projects to prevent or mitigate the impact of these projects on protected plant, wildlife, and cultural resources; and representing ASLD to various rangeland and resource management groups, such as Diablo Trust.

There are approximately 320 leases on the roughly 1.8 million acres in the Northeastern Resource Area. One ranch might include multiple State grazing leases.

Leases are assigned through an application process. The process considers a number of variables, including contiguous private land; control of private and/or federal grazing lands; and whether the applicant has a valid and up-to-date registered Arizona brand.

A State grazing lease is valid for 10 years. Shorter permits may be available to graze livestock on lands classified for uses other than grazing. These permits are called Special Land Use Permits and are usually valid for two to five years.

As with any contract, there is a list of rules that lessees must follow to maintain their permit in good standing. Some of the basic rules are:

- Keep records showing the number of lessee's livestock of different classes on the ranch, including dates and estimated death loss
- Do not exceed permitted Animal Unit Months (AUMs)
- Must receive written authorization to construct improvements
- Comply with all AZ native plant and archaeological laws
- Notify appropriate law enforcement authorities to trespass
- Receive written authorization for subleases or pasture agreements



Some informational recreation fliers available at Diablo Trust events: "Laws as They Apply to State Trust Lands," "OHV Laws and Places to Ride," "Why Change Motorized Use on Arizona's National Forests?," "Leave No Trace Land Ethics," "Unmanaged Recreation," "Arizona Watchable Wildlife Experience."

"Management of State Trust land is a coordinated effort," says Josh. State Land grazing permittees must receive written approval before implementing most rangeland management practices, including infrastructure or vegetation management, and entering into a sublease or pasture agreement.

Josh interacts with ranches while processing these permits on an as-needed basis, and visits leases outside the permit process.

Ranchers are given the opportunity to adjust annual stocking rates as needed, not to exceed the permitted carrying capacity. This is often done through coordination of the grazing lessee, Josh, and other range managers who may be involved in monitoring or managing the ranch outside of the State Land permit.

For Diablo Trust ranches, coordinating with Josh is just another part of our collaborative mission.

The lands might be owned by one party, actively managed by another, and overseen by any number of others, but at the end of the day the land continues to thrive and everyone's missions are achieved, whether that's to enhance the state of natural resources or improve the financial strength of the land. ▀

On the Ground with Diablo Trust

Visit www.diablotrust.org or our Facebook page for more pictures. Articles about some events are on page 14.

Annual Meeting: February 16, 2018



Marsha Reynolds, a local teacher, presenting on her experience with the Summer Agricultural Institute



Matt Monahan discussing his work with Reliance Brush Management, Inc.



Linda Wadleigh, Ranger of the Mogollon District, summarizing the changes coming to the Coconino NF

FRSG Monitoring: Feb 26 – March 09, 2018



Steve Cassady, Sarah Gandaria, Kit Metzger, and Josh Grace monitoring on the Flying M (Feb 26, 2018)



Dixie the Dog joined us for the day on the -T- Ranch! (Mar 05, 2018)



Josh Grace, Steve Cassady, Megan Deane McKenna, Roger Joos, and Luke Apfel on the -T- (Photo by Judy Prosser • Mar 09, 2018)

Meat Processors Day on the Land: March 23, 2018



We had four newcomers join us from Ash Fork: (L-R) James Foster, Debbie Svopa Meeuwse, Sherlene Barnett, Kristine Wood, and Jeremy Krones (photo by Debbie)



The pens at the Prescott Livestock Auction. We visited the Auction to learn a little more about local agricultural businesses! (photo by Debbie Svopa Meeuwse)



Sue Durling, a Diablo Trust supporter, and Casey Ducote, from the Perkinsville Meat Processors, talk in front of the hanging freezer. (photo by Steve Cassady)

Hay Lake Volunteer Day & Picnic: June 02, 2018



The fence at Hay Lake separating grazed pasture from a NRCS conservation easement (on USFS land)



Breaking for lunch! Some friends joined us for the picnic, and we had a wonderful potluck. (photo by Kit Metzger)



Roger Joos, USFS Wildlife Biologist, adjusts wire height using a PVC "story pole." (photo by Scott Harger)

From the Calendar: *Winter 2017-2018 Events*

02/16: Annual Meeting

On Friday, February 16, 56 people gathered at Thornager's on Kiltie Lane for the 25th Diablo Trust Annual Meeting. The title and theme of this meeting – and for the 2018 Diablo Trust calendar – is *The Economics of Open Lands*.

The Meeting started with round-table introductions. We had representatives from AZ Game & Fish Department (AGFD), AZ State Land Department (ASLD), AZ Department of Forestry & Fire Management (ADFFM), US Forest Service (USFS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCD), University of AZ Cooperative Extension, Coconino County Board of Supervisors (CCBoS), the City of Flagstaff, and many "unaffiliated" folks.

We then heard our Collaborator Updates. These updates give our supporters a chance to hear what's been going on out on the land from our agency and business friends.

After the Updates, we heard from two teachers who participated in the 2017 Summer Agricultural Institute (SAI), a weeklong program for Arizona grade school educators to learn about agriculture and how to better integrate ag education into their curricula. Marsha Reynolds and Michelle Weidinger, both local Flagstaff teachers, presented on their 2017 program experience.

To thank them for attending the program, and for writing a short summary of their experience along with their presentation, Diablo Trust (through AZGivesDay) reimbursed Marsha, Michelle, and another teacher, Suze Mancini, who presented at our Annual Campout in August, the cost of their application fees.

Our featured presenters showcased the variety of businesses who work on the land.

Tom Mackin, Diablo Trust Wildlife Committee Chair, spoke on the current drought's effects on the ranches and our open lands and resources, including wildlife.

Next was Matt Monahan, president of Reliance Brush Management, Inc. Matt and his team contract with the ranches and other entities, including state agencies, to cut trees when needed – usually juniper trees on the ranches for grassland restoration. Matt spoke to his own business, and some current projects that could lead into future business.

Doug Norton works with both ranches as the vice president of Farm Credit Services-Southwest; FCS is the primary bank for US farms and ranches. In his presentation, "The Economics of Open Lands: A Banker's Perspective," Doug outlined what it really takes to start a cattle ranch: just shy of \$2.5 million!

We then went to the academic side with Sam Garcia from the University of Arizona's School of Animal & Comparative Biomedical Sciences, where he is an assistant professor and the program manager of the Food Product and Safety Lab. The Lab functions as a meat processing house, and is where Diablo Burger gets its meat. Sam's presentation was also about his family's ranch in northern Mexico. Sam gave a perspective of ranching that we don't tend to see in the States!

Finally, we had Linda Wadleigh, District Ranger in the Mogollon Ranger District, Coconino National Forest. The Bar T Bar's forest permit is primarily on the Mogollon District. Linda presented on the new Forest Plan and the changes coming to the management of the AZ Scenic Trail, of which the Bar T Bar has a small piece.

We closed with a short introduction from Stacy Davies of Country Natural Beef, a ranching cooperative from Oregon, of which Bar T Bar is a new member.

The Meeting concluded with a short open Q&A with the five featured presenters. Questions were also asked to other speakers from the morning.

This was an enlightening and engaging Annual Meeting for us, and we hope to see many of our friends, both new and old, throughout the year. ✦

03/23: Meat Processing Day on the Land

The first Day on the Land of 2018 was a unique one: a group of 18 drove out to Chino Valley to visit the Perkinsville Meat Processors, an 18-year-old family business serving the greater agricultural and sportsman communities of Northern Arizona and beyond.

Attendees were from Flagstaff, Mormon Lake, Ash Fork, the Kaibab National Forest, and Washington State!

Our host was Casey Ducote, a family member who is raising her own children with hands-on experience to appreciate where their food comes from and how it gets from walking in the field to being on a plate.

The group walked through the corrals, chutes, kill floor, and processing rooms, and got to see about five dozen hanging carcasses in the freezer. There was plenty of time for questions, most of which revolved around the day-to-day business of the facility and the laws they have to follow.

Afterwards, we had some time before lunch so the group drove down the road to the Prescott Livestock Auction. It was closed and there were not any animals (aside from the corral horses), but Diana Kessler (Flying M Ranch) was able to give the group a short tour of the facilities and describe what goes on in an auction.

The trip ended at Casa Grande Mexican Restaurant.

By the end of the event the whole group was friendly and conversational, appreciating what they'd seen over the last few hours. While everyone in the group was already at least a little bit familiar with the process an animal goes through to get from pasture to plate, this trip helped bring some visuals to that process.

We look forward to more events! ✦

From the Calendar: Winter & Spring 2017-2018 Events

06/02: Hay Lake Volunteer Day & Picnic

Despite the dryness we are all feeling in northern Arizona, there is still work to be done on the land. Fortunately for Diablo Trust, most of our ranches' forest permit areas are still open!

On Saturday, June 02, a dozen volunteers came out to Hay Lake on the Bar T Bar ranch, in the southern portion of the Diablo Trust land area, to help rehab the fence surrounding a conservation plot managed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The land is held by the Forest Service.

The work itself wasn't all too strenuous, but the heat and lack of shade made it harder than it might have been otherwise.

Fortunately, we took a long lunch break for our First Annual Picnic, an idea suggested at the 2017 Annual Campout Under the Stars. We will be trying to incorporate a potluck lunch at most if not all of our events, and this was our first time trying it out!

A few community members came just for the lunch, and there was plenty of food for everyone (and the dogs who joined us).



Getting ready for the picnic! (photo by Scott Harger)

The volunteers included AZ Game & Fish representatives, local ranchers, and interested community members.

It should take just one more day of work to complete the entire fence.

Diablo Trust has another work day scheduled in late August, to coincide with our 2018 Annual Campout, at another location in the Hay Lake area, called Hay Meadow.

Stay tuned for the Hay Lake work day! ▮

Message From the Flying M (continued from p4)

to a lot of torn up ground at the campsites.

Most of this we could remedy with better education. We try to talk to most of the people that we interact with. (Instead of just going screaming at them . . . unless it's been one of those days!) The livestock industry could do a better job in just helping people understand our concerns out on the land.

The UGLY

Most everyone is familiar with ugly campsites, litter on the roads, and generally rude people, but some of these things are particularly bad as far as a livestock operation is concerned.

There are the people who drive on dirt roads at 50 mph and don't care what or who else might be on the road. Not giving way to the "burdened vessel" (in seafaring terms), like a loaded stock trailer, water truck, or even cattle walking up the road.

If you came out to enjoy nature, slow down or you are going to miss it!

I was once told by USFS that the speed limit on our roads is 25mph. Now I admit I don't always go 25mph on the good roads, but if there is a curve, a person, or animals up ahead, I slow down.

I know that opening and closing gates on ranch roads is no fun, for visitors or cowboys. We try to have as many gates open as we can, but there are times that we can't have the cattle mix because of an

open gate.

One big time is after vaccinations. Some of the vaccines we give our young calves to prevent diseases can cause abortion in their mothers if they nurse afterwards. At 7 months the calves are weaned and are separated from their mother (you know, like college). If the calves are allowed to mix back in with their mothers' herds, which has happened, it can be a big loss to the ranch.

They also now need to go back to a corral and be separated all over again - costing us time and energy. We leave more gates closed during busy times than we might need, just as a precaution so maybe there are two gates between cattle herds. Our form of insurance.

I know that some people would like to come out and enjoy the outdoors without seeing livestock, and I understand the whole argument. I, too, would like to go into town and have everybody stay home so the stores I have to go to are empty but . . .

We do pay for our use of the land and do other beneficial things out in the countryside, like supply most of the water for both livestock and wildlife, in the form of stock tanks, wells, and pipelines. This is our home. We live out here and would like people to see the beauty that we see every day.

We need to find a way we can all play in the sandbox together and enjoy our open spaces. ▮

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Born On a Ranch: Springtime Stress

Editor's Note: This column is to educate our readers on the life of a calf on a fictional ranch very much like the Bar T Bar and Flying M. We are working with both ranches and the AZ Beef Council to make sure this story is both fun, and educational!

Tuesday, May 15

It's been a rough winter. The rains just haven't come. We've gotten a few sprinkles here and there, but nothing to make any fuss over. Just enough to keep our hopes up and then crush them when the tanks go dry not two days later.

But, the world still turns and we have to do what we do best: take care of our herd and prepare them for their lives ahead. At this time of the year, that means spring works.

Spring works is vaccinations, branding, and recording who gave birth and to what.

Like I said in my last entry, we play hardball and if a cow doesn't get pregnant, we usually sell her. This year, we definitely sell her. We just can't afford to keep her around if she isn't doing anything for us — for our pocketbook, or for our land. With this level of drought we need to be conservative with how many animals we keep on the land, making sure our business is afloat while still caring for the land and resources around us.

Unlike dairy farms, we appreciate most heifer and bull calves equally. Sure, some buyers prefer one over the other, but that's on them and we can negotiate the contracts when we know what we're dealing with (the contracts usually start to form in June or July, well past calving season). We also keep some heifer calves to replace cows we might get rid of during the year, but that doesn't really affect the herd all too much.

We brought one of the herds to the corral pasture the other day. We let them rest in the pasture for a day or two before putting them, the cows and calves, through the chutes, so as to not stress them out too much. It's easier on everyone if we let their - and our - stress decrease intermittently.

Zelda and her calf, Little 52, are in this herd.

It was easy moving this herd, partially because there are only 75 or so head in this group, but also because the cows are all experienced. Whether or not you believe in a cow's intelligence, they were given the gift of memory and once they learn that springtime = corrals, they can actually be pretty easy to move when needed.

Zelda went through and got her vaccinations with the rest of the mothers. The cows don't fight too much, and we don't handle them too much. We just record their number, give them a shot and a spray, and send them out. The calves, on the other hand . . . that's another story.

We try to process the whole herd in a day, to not keep the calves from their mothers for too long. Sometimes we have to wait for more than a day between separating them and branding the calves, but any longer than a day can turn into a stressful time for everyone.

Again, less stress is beautiful.

Zelda's calf is a good size - not too big and not too small. He has a large face with long black eyelashes, and a good demeanor. Processing him should be (relatively) easy.

The new kid, Phil, puts him through the alley. Phil isn't too experienced, but he knows enough to not push the calf too hard. He walks Little 52 towards us, and we trap the calf in the chute. Jim is flanking, which means he's in charge of making sure the calves don't waller about and kick one of the other hands. Pam, a cowgirl from Wyoming who's joining us for the season, is in charge of vaccination and castrating (when necessary). We use rubber bands out here. Some will argue that cutting is better and healthier, and in most parts of the country that might be right, but out here it's so dry even in our wet years that banding is easier and just as safe. I do the ear notch and a brand. An ear notch is for us to tell if the calf is a steer or a heifer; the brand is for everyone else to see who the calf belongs to.

There's some struggling by Little 52 when we start working on him, but it's all over in about 5 minutes, from the time he got strapped to the table to when he's released. Some pokes and prods, and that's it!

Not much different than our first visit to the doctor. Some crying, but at least we get a lollipop at the end of it!



Two calves relaxing in the Flying M Ranch corrals



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Upcoming Events

Sun, May 06–Oct 21: **Flagstaff Community Market** • City Hall, 211 W. Aspen Ave, Flagstaff

Tues, June 19: **FRSG Monitoring: Flying M North** • 6:45AM - 5:00PM • AGFD Offices, 3500 S. Lake Mary Road

Wed, June 20: **FRSG Monitoring: Flying M South** • 6:30AM - 5:00PM • AGFD Offices, 3500 S. Lake Mary Road

Mon, June 25: **FRSG Monitoring: Bar T Bar East** • 6:30AM - 5:00PM • AGFD Offices, 3500 S. Lake Mary Road

Tues, June 26: **FRSG Monitoring: Bar T Bar West** • 6:45AM - 5:00PM • AGFD Offices, 3500 S. Lake Mary Road

Thurs, June 28: **Book Club** • 5:30PM - 6:30PM • Flagstaff Library, 300 W. Aspen Ave
The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America, by Timothy Egan

Fri, July 06: **Local First Fridays** • 6:00PM - 8:00PM • Rainbow's End, 12 Rte 66 #101, Flagstaff

Fri, July 13: **FRSG Monitoring: Raymond Wildlife Area** • 7:15AM - 5:00PM • AGFD Offices, 3500 S. Lake Mary Road

Sat, July 14: **Sportsman & Recreation Day on the Land** • 9:30AM - 2:30PM • Blue Ridge, Coconino NF

Thurs, July 26: **Book Club** • 5:30PM - 6:30PM • Flagstaff Library, 300 W. Aspen Ave
On Trails: An Exploration, by Robert Moore

Fri, Aug 03: **Local First Fridays** • 6:00PM - 8:00PM • Bandera, 11 E. Aspen Ave, Flagstaff

Wed-Fri, Aug 15-17: **Society for Range Management Summer Meeting** • Moqui Campground, Coconino Nat'l Forest

Fri, Aug 17: **Hay Meadow Volunteer Day** • 8:30AM - 4:30PM • Hay Meadow, Bar T Bar Ranch

Fri-Sat, Aug 17-18: **Annual Campout** • 12:00PM Fri - 2:00PM Sat • Moqui Campground, Coconino Nat'l Forest

Thurs, Aug 23: **Book Club** • 5:30PM - 6:30PM • Flagstaff Library, 300 W. Aspen Ave
Revolution on the Range, by Courtney White

Fri, Sept 07: **Local First Fridays** • 6:00PM - 8:00PM • Criollo Alley, 16 N. San Francisco St, Flagstaff

Thurs, Sept 27: **Book Club** • 5:30PM - 6:30PM • Flagstaff Library, 300 W. Aspen Ave
Red: Passion and Patience In the Desert, by Terry Tempest Williams

***Stay tuned for information on these events and more still in the works: <http://www.diablotrust.org/calendar>
If you have any suggestions for events, books, films, presentations, or field trips, please do not hesitate to contact us.***