

**Arizona State Land
Department
NRC Manager**
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ASLD Year End Requirements

Due June 20th

- Applications for State Supplemental Funds (ASLD Standard Forms)
NOTE: NRCs two are necessary –
1 for Supplemental Funds, 1 for Environmental Special Plate Funds
NOTE: education centers one is necessary—application for Supplemental Funds.
- Annual Plan of Work

Due July 20th

- Annual Report
- Annual Financial Statement (ASLD Standard Form)

AZ Envirothon

Competition to
take place on
April 19-20, 2013



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NRC D INFORMATION

NRC D Newsletter

April 1, 2013

Issue 2 Volume 1

Education Centers Visited by NRC D Manger

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January marked the month when I, Amber Morin the NRC D Manager, was given the keys to an Arizona State Land Department truck and sent out on my own. Over the past three months, I have had the privilege of visiting some of the NRC D sponsored Education Centers. The Yuma Conservation Garden, jointly sponsored the Yuma and Laguna NRC Ds, was the first of many desert gems I would discover. Among the hustle of farm trucks and tractors eager to tend their fields sits a pristine 28 acre botanical garden. Within its boundaries are identified rare and well known cacti, a desert tortoise habitat, a very lively duck pond, and a collection of antique farm machinery. The Garden is a quaint getaway in Yuma that attracts thousands of visitors each year and reaches hundreds of students.

After my trip out west, I had the opportunity to visit the Desert Willow Conservation Garden, sponsored by the East Maricopa NRC D. The Garden features an outdoor classroom; a native plant, healing, cacti and succulent garden, and a high desert garden; in addition to a tortoise habitat. All of the structures within the Garden such as benches and fences are made from recycled materials with the help of volunteers.

My final Education Center visit of the quarter took me to Central Arizona College where the Natural Resource Education Center, sponsored by the Eloy, Florence-Coolidge, and West Pinal NRC Ds, is located. The Center is a classroom and farm dedicated to student outreach relating to water issues, crop production, and Arizona's natural resource conditions. While I was there, myself and about 40 fourth graders recieved a lesson about

Arizona's 5 Cs. It was, without a doubt, a fun and hands on learning experience. The students got to hold a cotton boll, acknowledge the uses of copper, and even got to have an orange smoothie. Thank goodness these children were fed well because they ended their agriculture experience with lessons in roping and branding.



Pictured Below:

Left is the NREC's Branding Lesson, Center is the map of the Desert Willow Conservation Garden, Right is the Yuma Conservation Garden tour. Sheryl Christenson, Yuma/Laguna NRC D clerk; Michael McLaughlin, ASLD Ag Leasing Specialist; and Amber Morin, NRC D Manager

It's more than just education, it's connecting to the land!





Open Meeting Law Online

The importance of adhering to Open Meeting Law (OML) cannot be stressed enough. It holds governments accountable to the public by requiring that decisions be made in the open. Consequently, it encourages public officials to act responsibly. It helps maintain integrity in government, an informed citizenry, and trust between both. As functional as Open Meeting Law can be, gray areas do exist about the topic that can cause concern. One of these areas is the internet.

How do governments

begin to manage having an online presence? This can include the use of email, websites, blogs and bulletins, and social media networking sites. When deciding to utilize one of these resources, make sure that it is set up as non-interactive. This eliminates the possibility of public officers soliciting a response from his or her fellow public officials and thus accidentally creating a means to violate OML.

If an online presence is only outgoing and non-interactive, it serves the purpose of an electronic newsletter, column, or advertisement. It can be

used to highlight an individual member's or the whole board's views and actions. Having an online presence can be beneficial because it allows public officials to inform the public about government happenings in a timely manner.

Email sets itself apart from the other online resources because it can be viewed by a selected few. It is legal to hold email meetings under A.R.S. § 38-431(4). However, because of the strictness of OML it is highly encouraged not to do so.

Who can be a Cooperator?

There may exist some confusion about who can serve as a District cooperator. Do they have to be a land owner? Do they have to live in the District? A.R.S. § 37-1002 states that a District cooperator is any individual who has entered into a cooperative agreement with a NRCD for the pur-

pose of protecting, conserving, and practicing wise use of natural resources under his/her control. The vagueness of statute allows any individual with control over any type of natural resource to be a cooperator. Natural resources can mean air, water, land, plants, natural

gas, oil, minerals, solar energy. The list goes on. Therefore, anyone can become a District cooperator, and becoming one allows for the opportunity to vote in NRCD elections and serve on a District Board as an elected or appointed supervisor.

If an informed citizenry is to meaningfully participate in government or at least understand why government acts affecting their daily lives are taken, the process of decision making as well as the end results must be conducted in full view of the governed.

Oklahoma Ass'n of Municipal Attorneys v. State, 577 P.2d 1310, 1313 -14 (Okla. 1978)

NRCD Supervisor Training

Long time district clerk, Vicki France, will be offering "Everything Conservation District" training in the coming weeks through the AZ NRCD (Arizona Natural Resource Conservation Districts State Association). The training will take place from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. in different areas around the state. It will cover most topics in the *Supervisor's*

Manual, and will be free of charge. For more information about dates and locations please contact Vicki using this email address: redbud5613@cox.net



Writing an Annual Report

Annual reports are communication tools used to clearly describe to public officials, the public, and district cooperators NRCD and Education Center achievements over the previous year (July 1 through June 30).

Annual Reports should include a mission statement and explain the projects and programs organized throughout the year that reinforce it. Be specific. Quantify your achievements in acres, tons, feet, gallons, number of students, volunteer hours.

Exemplify your accomplishments.

Use the report to acknowledge special people including donors, volunteers, and board members. Highlighting District actions and thanking supporters has the potential to interest other donors and volunteers. This is especially true when it is apparent that donation money is being put to good use.

Provide an accurate and complete record of all receipts and disbursements, accounting for both public

and private funds. Use charts and graphics to explain your financial situation. Make it easy to read and understand. Financial statements are tedious and difficult to read, so may not have to use one to explain your finances.

Lastly, make your annual report enjoyable. It might end up in hands of a student, a Congressman, a donor, or state agency personnel.



"Cultivators of the earth are the most virtuous and independent citizens."
Thomas Jefferson



Pictured left is Karen Stamp, Yuma Conservation Garden Director, pointing out a rare species of white flowering ocotillo.

Winter Legislative Meeting

Arizona's NRCD's are accustomed to managing natural resource concerns, but timid when it comes to the funding they receive from the finite resources in the State's budget. February 25th, Supervisors from across the state came to the State Capitol to meet with their respective Legislators to discuss District accomplishments supported by allocations from the General Fund.

Appointments scheduled were eagerly attended after a briefing from officials of the State Land Department. The State Land Department administers the funds received from the State's budget, and ensures that each NRCD is in compliance with reporting and expenditure requirements.

Following those appointments, Supervisors were treated with lunch sponsored by the AZ NRCD State

Association, and a legislative update by Representative Frank Pratt on natural resource related bills currently in the Legislature.

Funding for the NRCD's has been at the same level for decades, and yet they are able to accomplish their wide array of responsibilities even as the cost of doing business increases. Districts prioritize the natural resource concerns for the

benefit of landowners and other local jurisdictions wanting to keep abreast of where funding and time should be focused to meet the conservation goals for the area. **For every dollar the state obligates to the Districts, at least 40 dollars in Federal return by way of conservation program funds is put into action for some type of conservation practice or planning.** This is a great investment for Arizona's soil and water resources, as well as Arizona's future generations.

By: Stefanie Smallhouse, Executive Director AZ NRCD