

Triangle NRCDD 'Onsite Listening Session'

Date/Time: Wed, Sept. 26, 2018 @ 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Location: Kirkland, AZ

Abbreviations

AACD – Arizona Association of Conservation Districts

ACP – Arizona Conservation Partnership

Advisory Council – Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

ASLD – Arizona State Lands Department

AZGFD – Arizona Game and Fish Department

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NRCDD – Natural Resource Conservation District

NRCS – National Resources Conservation Service

PA – Programmatic Agreement

USDA FS or FS – United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service

SHPO - Arizona State Historic Preservation Office

Attendees

Core Team:

Steve Barker, AACD

Mary-Ellen Walsh, SHPO

Mel Rose, Galileo Project, LLC

Attendees:

Tim Franquist	ADEQ- Air Quality Division Director
Sarah Tomsy	Forest Service Prescott National Forest, Bradshaw and Chino Valley Ranger Districts
Lynn C. Whitman	Director- Yavapai County Flood Control District
Paul Jungen	Yavapai County Flood Control District
Dave Snider	Pradera Madera L.L.C.
Andrew Pinnell	Pradera Madera L.L.C.
Stefan Wolf	Date Creek Ranch
Michael O'Hara	ASLD
Russ Shumate	AZ Dept of Forestry and Fire Management
Jim Fornara	Square GF
George Fornara	Square GF
Marques Munis	NRCS

Claudette Haverfield	7 arrow Ranch/ Triangle NRCDD
Christina Sandoval	Yavapai County Flood Control District
Chris Lowman	ASLD
Dave Daniels	Finley Iron Horse Ranch
Glen Neshem	C-S Cattle Co.
Rodella Neshem	C-S Cattle Co.
Stephen Neshem	C-S Cattle Co.
Tom Ritter	Ritter Ranch
Phoebe Ritter	Ritter Ranch
JC Satathite	N4 Ranch
Shelley Blackmore	Triangle NRCDD - Chairman/AACD - Secretary/ Blackmore Ranch
Dawn Salcido	Triangle NRCDD- Ed Center
Ty Sorrells	

Field Trip: Triangle NRCO Onsite Listening Session

AACD's Steve Barker introduced the Conservation Programmatic Agreement project, and outlined objectives to the attendees:

- BLM awarded funding to promote landscape-scale conservation projects across Arizona. The idea is to partner projects for landscape-scale projects, to get more done, and partner with other grant programs. Cultural resources have historically slowed projects down, the PA can help assist in streamlining that process, and getting conservation projects finished more quickly.
- Ranches implementing conservation practices using state or federal funding require cultural resource compliance before conservation projects can be implemented.
- The goal of these onsite listening sessions is to meet with ranchers and find out what conservation practices they need to implement, and how those practices are applied. This will help incorporate common sense approaches to satisfy SHPO requirements and reduce delays for work to be done.
- There have been misconceptions about SHPO requirements, and SHPO would like to close that communication gap to streamline conservation projects.
- The PA goal is to comply with the National and State Historic Preservation Acts, while allowing for a streamlined process. Benefits will include reduced requirements, such as reduced archeological surveys for specific types of projects, which will be outlined in the PA. The onsite listening sessions will help the writing team identify types of projects that could qualify for streamlined processing.
- The PA is currently in an outline format, using aspects of a FS PA, and the writing group is working closely with the FS, AZSLD, BLM and AACD to ensure a broad spectrum of conservation projects will be applicable to the PA.

Ritter Ranch Tour

Tom Ritter drove the group into an area of his property, along Kirkland Creek, where they used mastication and chemical stump treatment to remove vegetation in areas that were becoming overgrown. The area that was treated did not have any significant cultural resources, however it is located in a flood plain and potentially had small and ephemeral archeological habitation sites. The removal process took five days, and used new mastication equipment.



- They used a CAT 299 tracked machine with drum style Felon BH 74 Bulldog attachment. This type of equipment made little ground disturbance.

- Stumps were treated 15 minutes after removal with an herbicide mixture. If stumps are not treated immediately afterward, regrowth occurs.
- Ground cover was left after mastication to promote water retention and native grass regrowth.
- SHPO encouraged ranchers to photo document conditions that can help make cultural resource determinations, and also addressed the question of if a site needed 100 percent archeological survey before a project can begin. A site does not need 100 percent survey, especially if it is inaccessible due to thick vegetation. In that case, SHPO recommends a survey after vegetation removal has happened. An archeological site does not need to stop a project from proceeding, it only needs to be properly documented.

Satathite Ranch Tour

Tour of the area in Satathite Ranch that was mechanically treated with the same equipment used on Ritter Ranch.

- The areas that were not treated with an herbicide showed regrowth. They removed mesquite, cat claw, hackberry, and greythorn.
- The underbrush was cleared so wood harvesters could harvest firewood.
- The owner wanted to leave some mesquites since the cattle eat the bean pods.



Highlights & Additional Discussion

- Ranchers were unclear of SHPO requirements, and communication gaps were identified.
- SHPO wants assistance from ranchers to help setup protocols that are beneficial for both the ranchers, and meet the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act and State Historic Preservation Act.
- Discussion of having AACD or NRCDs store archeological survey information (maps and reports-private land only), so land owners can easily access information about what has been previously surveyed for future projects. A repository could save costs for future projects.
- Curation fees from the Arizona State Museum are very expensive, and also confusing. SHPO noted that office is on top of this, and has elevated concerns to Governor's office.
- Discussion of NRCS PA and the process for 'no findings' on a project. Concerns expressed that sites which have archeological findings are not able to use the NRCS PA.
- SHPO wants to find common ground, and clearly educate stakeholders on their requirements, as well as work with agencies to reduce confusion, duplication of effort, and project roadblocks. SHPO also discussed best practices for working with SHPO. When in doubt, contact the SHPO office directly to ask questions. You can also work through your local Conservation District and/or the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts.

- Discussed how some PAs only work for specific areas, or specific lands. The goal of this PA is to address broader use, and address projects that cross jurisdictions.
- SHPO is available for informal consultations to give guidance and help speed up the permitting processes.
- Discussion of using protocols in the PA to include information on how to receive pre-consultations, or describe steps needed to treat specific types of projects. It was noted the Forest Service has such protocols.
- The PA aims to get as many agencies involved as possible so the PA can have maximum benefits across the state.
- SHPO requested that the ranchers take time to review the various drafts of the PA and give input along the way, to ensure the end product is useful.
- Ranchers constantly work to keep the landscape healthy, while balancing land use, and preserving cultural resources. Many present-day ranches were homesteads, with original structures still intact, such as rock houses, adobe houses, picket fences, etc. SHPO noted that they are also interested in preserving the current ranching culture, not just from 50 or more years ago, and the best way to do that is through conservation projects to keep the land as it has been.
- SHPO would like to do more outreach and training to educate land owners and users of the requirements, and be educated themselves about the types of activities that are conducted, so they can more quickly finish reviews of conservation projects.
- General discussion of correct documentation procedures for SHPO. SHPO spoke to the fact that the presence of a cultural resource site does not necessarily prevent conservation work. It requires review and documentation before a project begins, but some ranchers were under the mistaken impression that having a pot sherd on the ground prevented them from doing any work in the area. SHPO explained best practices, and when in doubt, contact SHPO.
- NRCS funded projects will typically avoid any sites that require data recovery. SHPO is looking into amendments to the NRCS PA to address eligibility (rather than avoidance of all sites), and will further discuss creative mitigation, i.e., discussion of using representative samples, and not needed to recover every artifact.
- Russ Shumate of AZ Dept. of Forestry and Fire Management spoke to ranchers about the use of natural caused fire to help clear lands of brush. He asked ranchers to reach out to him for pre-fire season discussions and planning.
- Sarah Tomsy of Forest Service - Prescott National Forest, Bradshaw and Chino Valley Ranger Districts discussed forest planning, and their incident command structure, and how they address fires in National Forests. Conservation districts are encouraged to work with their local area forest planners.
- Chris Loman, Chino Valley Ranger for ASLD, encouraged private land owners who have private lands adjacent to state lands to work with ASLD on fire management plans, so in the event of an unplanned fire, there is knowledge of private land owner's desires to allow areas to burn, or needed fire suppression.

- Ranchers gave project examples of how they were held up by various state and federal agencies. Various agency staff acknowledged that internal agency processes are all different, and can change depending on leadership. All agreed the best solution is to work towards streamlining processes, and clearly communicating information across agencies, and land owners. Agency staff also acknowledges lack of appropriate staffing also added to backlog circumstances.
- SHPO discussed the batch consultation process they are using with BLM and FS as a streamlining mechanism.
- Ranchers discussed permitting hold ups for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts, since leased lands need approval before a contract for EQIP can be approved. Some land management agencies are faster than others at processing these types of requests.
- SHPO is working on a list of archeological findings that only need minimal documentation before implementing a project. It was again noted that the current NRCS PA may need some amendments.
- Steve Barker, AACD discussed the Apache NRCD Onsite listening session, and the issues they had with archeological findings preventing work, or preventing grant funding approvals.
- SHPO told the ranchers that they should expect at least 60 days of processing before they can implement a project on leased state or federal lands, however they can make sure agency reviews are being done concurrently. Tribal consultation is always required on state land projects. The PA will help remove repetitive review requirements, and small footprint projects can be exempted. Discussion of example exemptions such as t-posts done by hand; rubber tire vehicles used in dry conditions; drinker repair or replacements; cleaning out stock tanks; ploughing fields no deeper than previously ploughed.
- Question asked about the timeline of completing the PA. SHPO, estimated a rough draft by the end of 2018, but a full executed PA in approximately 1 years.
- SHPO reminded ranchers that on private lands – if no federal or state funding is involved, the only archeological site that can stop a project is the discovery of human remains or a burial site. If ranchers are told by agencies or consultants that a project can't be done due to cultural resources, SHPO wants to be contacted directly to make sure misinformation is not an issue.
- Ranchers discussed brush and water issues. They cannot install dirt tanks due to water right issues, but can use trick-tanks instead. They also discussed fire as the only option for brush removal in rough terrain areas.
- Discussion of using natural barriers or natural buffers when fire is used to clear vegetation. SHPO/ASLD noted fire does not necessarily disturb the ground, and does not require archeological surveying. Fire can be a good tool, and requires coordination with state and federal agencies. Need to identify sensitive areas beforehand.
- Discussion of how ranchers feel left out of the surveying process. SHPO can advocate for agencies and archeologists to engage with land owners, especially since many ranches

have been in the family for generations, and they have the most knowledge about the land.

- Ranchers expressed frustration that land conditions have been degrading due to lack of timely project approvals.
- Ranchers stated the use of so many acronyms by agency staff seems to make things more confusing for them when trying to communicate.

Next Steps

- Future field onsite listening sessions are scheduled for the following NRCDs. Dates, location and times, to be announced (TBA):
 - Coconino NRCD – around the Flagstaff area
 - Fredonia NRCD – on the Arizona Strip near Utah
 - Hereford NRCD – in Cochise County
 - San Pedro NRCD – north of Benson along the San Pedro River.

Attachments

- Handout form Triangle NRCD