

Meet Your Local Conservationist, Frank Krentz Whitewater Draw NRCD



Can you tell us some history about your ranch and family?

My family has been ranching for generations. They were ranching in the San Bernardino Valley before Arizona even became a state. My family had a butcher house in Winslow, Arizona. Then my great-grandad and his son Frank came down to the southeastern part of Arizona to raise beef to support the local community. Phelps Dodge was mining in Douglas and my family felt a need to fill the void to produce beef for the local community. The family had two butcher shops in Douglas. But my family history is steeped in politics and finance, not just production.

The ranch has always been a family business, but I also had an uncle, Stuart Krentz, who was a member of the Arizona Legislature, while my granddad ran the ranch in the 1970s.



My grandfather Robert (Bob) Krentz, my father, Rob, and Uncle Phil purchased the ranch from their uncles in the later 1970s. Struggling through the rise in interest rates of banking, drought, and up and down cattle markets, they successfully ranched for several decades.

My father and uncle inherited the ranch when my grandfather Bob, who was called Grouchy Bear, passed away September 11, 1999. We fought through drought the next few years and were able to be a successful operation during my time in high school and throughout college. After leaving college, however, I knew that I couldn't survive on the family ranch so I went to get a job "in the real world" but was always able to come back home during the important times through the year. When my father was having health concerns in 2008, I came back to help out on the ranch. In March of 2010 I lost my father to a border incident and committed myself to take the reins, which he had had a strong hold of. I became a member of the Malpia Border Lands Group, Apache School Board, and the Whitewater Draw Natural Resource Conservation District. I have been trying to keep my dad's legacy of truth, hard work, and dependability alive and want to instill that into my way of being.

What breed of cattle do you raise?

With my Uncle Phil, cousin, Ben, my mother, Sue, and Aunt Carrie we have been busy making a good go at being successful beef producers in the beef industry. We raise cross bred cows on Angus bulls and try to be a leader in producing beef by participating in the GAPP program for production of beef calves.



What kind of conservation work have you done on your operation?

We have been participating in NRCS programs for many years. Many of these programs have benefited livestock, wildlife, and the idea of conserving the range. We have done projects along the lines of fences for proper rotation, water distribution for wildlife and livestock, and conservation practices to improve rangeland for our generation and future generations to come.

My family ranch has been in operation for over 100 years and we have spent many an hour promoting conservation and taking advantage of the vast resources that the range provides. My family's operation has been involved with conservation all the way back to work of

the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). There are still many CCC structures that we have kept in good working order that prove a benefit to the range that we are stewards of.

For decades we've had erosion structures and water systems to benefit our livestock and wildlife. From deer to javalina, from quail to ducks, from antelope to coyotes, we have a system of over 90 miles of pipeline and numerous wells that help provide adequate water for game in the desert southeast. We also have done extensive brush management that stretches back to the early 1960s to improve the grassland for both wildlife and cattle production.

I would like to encourage other producers out there to stay with the idea that: "You take care of the land, the land will take care of you!"

What, in terms of conservation work, is next for your operation?

My operation is currently in test trials for some brush management and further watering systems for livestock and wildlife.

What sort of technologies have you implemented on your ranch and how have they changed over the years?

Over the last decade we have worked to update the technology we use to work the ranch. We have improved our infrastructure to include up to date cattle management systems, including the use of bud boxes and quiet chute systems. One of the biggest improvements on the ranch is our move to solar pumping delivery systems. We have installed six systems that boost water up along hill sides and pull water from wells. We have found this to be more efficient than conventional motor electric pump systems. But, in a pinch, we can still power them with a generator to get caught up.



Another technology improvement that we have moved forward with is our Beef Quality Assurance* (BQA) program. With moving to proper cattle vaccination and using products that help with proper respiratory defense, we have seen an increase in herd health during weaning.

**"Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) is a national program that raises consumer confidence through offering proper management techniques and a commitment to quality within every segment of the beef industry." (www.bqa.org)*



Why did you get involved with NRCDs and for how long have you been involved?

I became involved with Conservation Districts in 2010. When I lost my father, I believed that I needed to step up and fill the void that his tremendous presence left. Also, after completing Project CENTRL, I felt that I was in a capacity to step up and do the duty that so few in the production industry have the ability to do. With help from my family, I started working with the Whitewater Draw NRCD to figure out the best needs for producers in the area.

After so many years of being involved, I have realized the importance of the Districts and how they can make an impact. By helping encourage the direction of Farm Bill funding to having influences on water issues, I realized that District Supervisors have strong sway over helping local producers. I was asked to join the executive board of AACD in 2012 and have been dedicated to spending time working on local and state issues that local state governments can participate in; for example, making comments on endangered species and water issues through the state, as well as influencing farm bill directives.

What changes have you seen in the Whitewater Draw NRCD since you joined?

Since being on the Whitewater Draw NRCD Board of Supervisors, I have seen many things change, both positive and negative. A positive I have seen in the area is there has been a reduction in invasive brush due to an increase in conservation practices. Invasive brush had been allowed to encroach on the area for many years because of poor management in the past. I have also seen a dramatic increase in farming activity in the District. I have witnessed the issues that farmers deal with like a lack of rainfall, which negatively impacts aquifers, as well as new people moving into the area which puts additional stress on the aquifer. The Whitewater Draw NRCD encourages producers to work with agencies to make improvements on the land to help combat hard times, which the last few years of bad weather has forced upon us.

The District has felt the negative effects of the border issues. Producers have had to face hardships due to these issues, and work hard and fight to address them. Water issues arise when people who are illegally crossing break pipes to get to fresh water, which interrupts the supply to animals on the range. Producers have to find different ways to manage their waters and water sources so that livestock and wildlife don't suffer because of these people's actions. Fences get cut by border crossers and that interrupts grazing management which forces ranchers to have to redistribute cattle. Many producers have endured and continue to endure these careless acts in order to make it possible to produce beef for our nation.

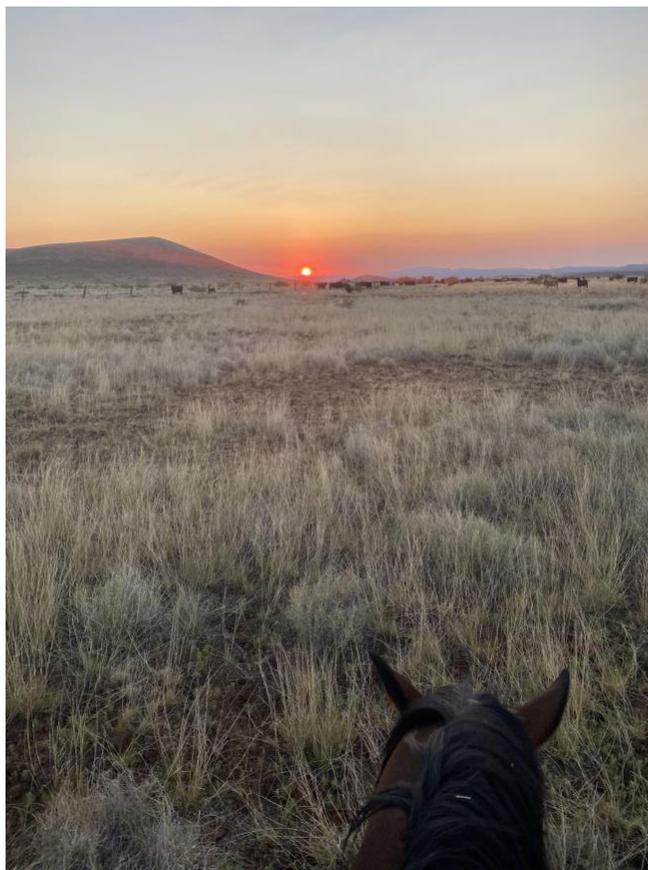
Whitewater Draw NRCD is small in size, but deals with so many different conservation issues like drought, invasive brush, border issues, etc. And even though it's small, the District has really stepped up to address these issues. In future, I hope that the District can encourage producers to get involved in more conservation efforts, and that the District will continue to be a leading example for other Districts across the state and the nation.

What is your favorite thing about being involved with NRCDs?

My favorite thing is that by working with Conservation Districts, producers can have direct contact with federal and state agencies. Together, we can make recommendations to these agencies around improving management practices and work to identify resource concerns, while also addressing wildlife issues. By working with agencies to manage the landscape and help benefit wildlife, Districts also help producers make management decisions to improve their range production. Water is a huge issue in Arizona, and I feel that the Districts, working with producers to implement scientifically based management practices, can help deliver more efficient water delivery systems on crops.



Thank you
Krentz!



Frank