

**Las Cienegas National Conservation Area**  
**Fall 2016 Biological Planning Meeting**

December 7, 2016

9 AM – 4 PM

**Empire Ranch HQ and Associated LCNCA Field Visits**

**Themes:** Landscape and Uplands

**Meeting Objectives**

1. Facilitate information sharing, education and learning among stakeholder participants.
2. Update participants on relevant decisions in last 6 months, plans ahead and upcoming decisions in next 6-12 months.
3. Gather and document stakeholder/partner feedback on specific management treatments, proposals, and other issues.
4. Review relevant management objectives as outlined in the RMP, utilize available data to evaluate progress, and discuss possible adaptations or adjustments as appropriate.

**AGENDA**

| <b>Morning Session – Empire Ranch Headquarters (8:30 – 10:00am)</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <b>8:30am</b>                                                       | <b>Bagels, Coffee and Networking</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>9:00</b>                                                         | <b>Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review – <i>Karen Simms, BLM</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>9:10</b>                                                         | <b>BLM and Team Updates</b><br><br><b><u>BLM Updates</u> – <i>Karen Simms, BLM</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Announcements</li><li>● Personnel update</li><li>● Completed projects</li><li>● Upcoming projects</li></ul><br><b><u>Landscape Tech Team</u></b><br><b>1. BLM Landscape initiatives updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Arizona Landscape Enhancement Collaborative (invasives and grassland restoration) – <i>Karen Simms</i></li></ul><br><b>2. Cross-cutting initiatives, adjacent lands, and partner updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● SLURP/Sentinel Landscapes – <i>Alix Rogstad, AZ Department of Forestry</i></li><li>● Sentinel-Sands Ranch project – <i>Ian Tomlinson</i></li><li>● Restore Arizona – <i>Dan Quintana</i></li><li>● Cienega Watershed Partnership – <i>Larry Fisher, UA SNRE and Shela MacFarlin, CWP</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ State of the Watershed (March 8, 2017)</li><li>○ Science on the Sonoita Plain (June 4, 2017)</li></ul></li></ul> |

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|                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Indicators Project</li> <li>o Watershed Tour</li> <li>o Youth Engaged Stewardship (YES!)</li> <li>o Timeline Project</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pima County Multi Species Conservation Plan – <i>Brian Powell, Pima County</i></li> <li>• Coronado National Forest – <i>James Heitholt</i></li> <li>• Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch - CRMP – <i>Linda Kennedy</i></li> <li>• Desert LCC Climate-Smart Landscape Conservation Planning &amp; Design – <i>Tahnee Robertson</i></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Heritage Tech Team</u></b> – <i>Shela McFarlin, CWP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Newsletter</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Youth</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Newsletter</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Riparian Tech Team</u></b> – <i>Dennis Caldwell, FROG and Cat Crawford, USFWS</i></p> <p><b><u>Uplands Tech Team</u></b> – Topics covered in field visit</p>                  |
| <b>Field Tour (10:00am – 4:00pm)</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>10:00</b>                         | <b><i>Load up and Drive to Johnson Pasture – 15 min</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>10:15</b><br>(45 min)             | <p><b>Stop 1: Johnson Pasture (Key Area 10)</b><br/><i>Ian Tomlinson, Vera Earl Ranch, and Dan Robinett, Robinett Rangeland Resources</i></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Ongoing Discussion on drought recovery and rest rotation system</p> <p><b>Management objectives</b></p> <p>Ecological site: Loamy Swale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bare ground &lt;30% (&lt;50% immediately after severe disturbance like fire or drought)</li> <li>• Perennial grass basal cover <math>\geq 10\%</math> (<math>\geq 8\%</math> after disturbance)</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion/Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Follow-up on last year’s discussion here. Is the grass recovery continuing? How has grazing and/or precipitation influenced recovery?</li> <li>– How was this pasture grazed last year?</li> <li>– Overall thoughts on this rest rotation system and how it has been working, and how precipitation patterns may affect decisions.</li> </ul> |
| <b>11:00</b>                         | <b><i>Drive Road Canyon – 20 min</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>11:20</b>                         | <b>Lunch near Road Canyon Camp Area</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>12:15</b>                         | <p><b>Stop 2: Road Canyon (Hilton Pasture)</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on grazing practices - <i>Ian Tomlinson, Vera Earl Ranch</i></li> <li>• Discuss vegetation treatments in pasture and conduct scoping for new Vegetation treatment EA - <i>Dan Quintana and Amy Markstein</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|                          | <p><b>Management objectives:</b></p> <p>Ecological site: Loamy Hills and Limy Slopes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bare ground &lt;30% (&lt;50% immediately after severe disturbance like fire or drought)</li> <li>• Perennial grass basal cover <math>\geq 7</math> or 8%</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion/Feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was this pasture grazed last year? How does it work into the rest-rotation system? What is working and what is not?</li> <li>• How effective were vegetation treatments in this area (which has a much lower density of mesquite invasion than areas to the North)?</li> <li>• What issues should be addressed in the new Vegetation Treatment EA?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>12:30</b>             | <b>Drive to Davis Pasture</b> (On route look at Blue Pasture) - <b>10 min</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>12:45</b><br>(45 min) | <p><b>Stop 3: Davis Pasture (Key Area 14)</b> – Ian Tomlinson, Karen Simms, AZ Antelope Foundation (Tentative)</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Discussion on Key Area, utilization and antelope</p> <p><b>Management objectives</b></p> <p>Ecological site: Loamy Upland Swale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bare ground &lt;30% (&lt;50% immediately after severe disturbance like fire or drought)</li> <li>• Perennial grass basal cover <math>\geq 7\%</math></li> <li>• Last years Pronghorn objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Maintain vegetation cover 10-18 inches during fawning season (April through June each year) in key fawning areas, and presence of &gt;5 grass and shrub species in the vegetation communities.</li> <li>o Limit trees to no more than 5% of the total cover.</li> <li>o Maintain scattered trees &gt;12 feet tall in the habitat.</li> <li>o Ensure usable water within 1 mile of key fawning areas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>1:30</b>              | <b>Drive to #1 and #2</b> (near headquarters) - <b>30 min</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>2:00</b><br>(1 hr)    | <p><b>Stop 5: Vegetation Treatments in #1 and #2</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Look at completed and proposed vegetation treatments; updates on arroyo restoration work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetation treatments - Karen Simms/Dan Quintana</li> <li>• Arroyo Restoration work – Trevor Hare</li> </ul> <p><b>De-brief and next steps</b> (at headquarters if weather is cold and windy)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>3:00</b>              | <b>Drive to headquarters – 5 min</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>4:00pm</b>            | <b>Head home</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- State of the Watershed (March 8, 2017)
- Science on the Sonoita Plain (June 4, 2017)