



SURFACE WATER USERS OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Final Report

DEVELOPED FOR

Verde Natural Resource Conservation District

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Introduction

The Verde Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCD) implemented a *Surface Water Users Education and Outreach* project beginning in 2020. The goal of this project was to educate a targeted group of surface water users in the Verde Valley to support both water conservation and water security for people and the environment. The final task for this project was to complete a final report that includes information on the level of education surrounding water conservation issues. The results of the final survey and a summary of workshops and events for the project is presented in this report.

Survey Results

We surveyed participants at the final workshop and received responses from 15 individuals and families. The questions and responses are below.

1. What do you consider the most important issues facing surface water users in the Verde Valley? Please select your top five (5) issues from the list below and number your choices, with #1 being your most important issue and #5 being the least important of your top five choices.

Adjudication of surface water rights: 13

Agricultural producer profitability: 1

Insufficient water quantity: 9

Loss of Wildlife Habitat: 8

Poor water quality: 1

Preservation of agricultural land: 13

Preservation of agricultural heritage: 8

Soil Erosion: 0

Surface water user education: 9

Surface water user technical assistance: 4

Unregulated groundwater pumping: 6

Other: Wastewater management: 2

Other: Keeping water in the Verde

Summary:

Adjudication of surface rights and preservation of agricultural land are the top two priorities for this particular group of surface water users. Insufficient water quantity and surface water education are considered the second most important issues and loss of wildlife habitat and the preservation of agricultural heritage are considered the third most important issues to this group.

For the next series of questions, we have incorporated some of the responses and summarized the numbers.

2. Did you gain any information or a greater understanding of these topics from the Surface Water Users Workshop series?

Please describe:

- Scope of adjudication
- Water quality and conservation

- Uses and options for ag irrigation
- Good source for water issues
- Connection to local community
- Erin's surface water demonstration
- Resources
- Feeling encouraged
- Kim's presentation on how to use the computer resources

3. How would you rate your level of understanding of the following topics? adjudication, surface water law, groundwater law, small parcel irrigation options Circle your answer
High: 2 **Moderate: 10** Low: 0

4. How important is water conservation to you and your property? Circle your answer
Extremely: 5 Very: 4 Moderately: 2 Slightly: 0 Not important: 0

5. How concerned are you about the security of your drinking water supply and your surface water rights?
Very concerned: 8 Moderately concerned: 3 Not concerned

Water conservation, adjudication and water supply are all of significant concern for surface water users in the Verde Valley and continued support from the NRCD would be most appreciated and is needed to support these individuals.

Workshop Summaries

Workshop 1- Adjudication, April 21, 2021

We had an hour and a half long Zoom workshop with the emphasis on adjudication. We had presentations from five panelists: Scott Deeny from The Nature Conservancy on Water Rights 101 and Adjudication, Robyn Interpreter from the Yavapai-Apache Nation on How federal reserve rights for Indian Tribes factor in to adjudication, Grant Smedley from Salt River Project on SRP and its role as a claimant in the adjudication process, and Anna Magoffin a rancher in Aravaipa Creek in the San Pedro area on lessons learned from the adjudicating rights on the San Pedro River. There were presentations and discussions and 34 people participated in the workshop and numerous others requested the link to watch the recording at a later date.

Workshop 2- Water Law 101, June 16, 2021

We had an hour and a half long Zoom workshop discussing water law basics with Jocelyn Gibbon from Freshwater Policy Consulting. Jocelyn presented on water supply, the history of water law and water policy. There were 43 people in attendance.

Workshop 3- Innovative Water Conservation, October 29, 2021

We were finally able to have workshops in person and led a four hour long field trip to visit the Hauer Farm, Sunnyside Farms and Plowing Ahead Ranch where we learned about pivot irrigation, irrigation efficiency and crop conversion. We had 22 participants in the field trip

Workshop 4- Water Saving Irrigation Practices, May 13, 2022

We had another four hour field trip to visit several farms and ditches along Oak Creek. We visited the Tres Hermanos ranch and the Mason Lane Ditch. We had 14 participants in the field trip.

Workshop 5- Converting Grass Fields, Irrigation Options for Wine Grapes, Surface Water Runoff and More About Irrigation Efficiency!, September 30, 2022

This was a two and a half hour workshop at the Camp Verde library. During this workshop we saw presentations from Matt Halldorson from the University of Arizona Extension, John Ford from The Nature Conservancy, Chip Norton, and Erin Cody from the Verde NRCD Environmental Education Center. We had 9 participants at this workshop.

Workshop 6- Surface Water Users Group Wrap Up Workshop, December 2, 2022

We had a two hour long wrap up workshop at the Camp Verde library. Topics included adjudication, small parcel irrigation efficiency and technical assistance. We had a panel discussion on adjudication from Lucas Shaw and Carter Benson from SRP and Kim Schonek from The Nature Conservancy and Zach Hauser from Speck Farms and Hauser and Hauser Farms, an interactive discussion from John Ford from The Nature Conservancy and Zach Hauser and a discussion about the Right to Farm Draft Ordinance from Chip Norton and Claudia Hauser