

San Pedro Riparian NCA - All Partner Meeting

April 11, 2025 | Fairbank Historic Townsite

Meeting Summary



Announcements and Next Steps

Announcements:

- May 9: Terrenate Mud Party (contact Ralph Burrillo at BLM)
- June 21: Wet-dry (contact Bailey Winston or Haylee Short at The Nature Conservancy)
- Dec 6: Next beaver survey (contact Catlow Shipek at Watershed Management Group)
- April 24: First meeting of the statewide Beaver Working Group, initiated by Watershed Management Group (contact Catlow/Nadira)

Follow-up/next steps:

- Uplands Working Group - Explore creation of an "Adopt-a-Fence" program to help monitor the boundary fence
- August 19 SPRNCA mid-year virtual check-in (SDR send info)

BLM Updates

Colleen Dingman, BLM

- Staff updates:
 - New range technicians: Ava Hamstead and Wade Horton
 - New park rangers: Jeremy Carlin and Michelle Pelley
 - New Gila District Manager: Lance Brady

- There are new site hosts at SPRNCA (Ray and Jackie) and the San Pedro House (Chris Hartman).
- New batteries and new software have been installed at the San Pedro House, through a grant from the Foundation for America's Public Lands.
- Terrenate mud party on May 8th (more information from Ralph Burrillo)

Working Group Updates

Recreation + Cultural/Heritage

Fairbank ADA trail improvement project (Robert Walter, BLM)

- This project was completed in November 2024. The goal of the project was to provide access to this multi-use trail for those with disabilities.
- Over 1.5 miles of surface tread was improved, with 1" gravel aggregate and improved drainage. Total cost was \$191k. Francisco Mendoza (previous long-term BLM Recreation Planner) had envisioned a more elaborate project here, over about 4 miles of trail, but with increases in costs this was no longer feasible. Hopefully this can be completed in the future.

Special Recreation Permits (Robert Walter, BLM)

- The Tucson Field Office has issued about 12 SRPs, and there are more in the queue.
- Permits have been issued for user groups at Fairbank – equestrian tours, interpretive and nature walks.
- The process goes through the Raptor tracking system; this has been challenging for some people, but BLM is trying to help.
- Those who want to host an event should contact Robert and have a pre-determination meeting to discuss details.
- There is some language in the EXPLORE Act that still needs to be translated from BLM headquarters to provide specific guidance about organized groups.

Electric pole replacement (Megan Resor, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative)

- The Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) has completed pole replacement on the main line and the line that goes through Fairbank. When they approached BLM, they had a valid existing right (pre-designation of the SPRNCA). This included guaranteed access, but the route was not defined. SSVEC worked with the BLM to identify the least impacting access route. They determined that the ADA trail was the easiest access. Hopefully they won't need to use it often. If they do, they have to return the trail to its original state.
- The line starts at Ft. Huachuca and ties into the Tombstone junction. The section in the SPRNCA is the middle phase of project. SSVEC wanted to be good stewards and spent years looking at how to rebuild with the least amount of disruption.
- They used drone equipment to inspect the lines. They found that the poles were so old they couldn't be climbed to see the top of the poles and it wasn't possible to get in with a truck. Fairbank was one of the first areas they inspected. The

drone images showed that the chance of poles falling was higher than desired; this also posed a possible fire risk.

- SSVEC replaced 28 poles, including distribution poles to Fairbank Townsite. 33 conservation measures were identified with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. There was a biological monitor on site every day, and an archaeologist was on site when working in cultural areas. They de-energized the line to avoid any possible issues while the work was being done.
- SSVEC is excited to work with agencies and partners to learn about environmental needs and issues in order to be the best stewards possible.

Discussion/questions

- The Friends of San Pedro River took a group up to the cemetery a few weeks ago and noticed there was still some debris remaining from the work.
 - SSVEC clarified that it was all cleaned up as of two weeks ago, but they will double-check.
- Was any consideration given to undergrounding the line?
 - SSVEC noted that these are typically not undergrounded due to geology, the river and the expense. This is the middle portion of two overhead portions, which causes big engineering challenges. There is significant impact to the ground during undergrounding. Sometimes overhead, if done with best practice, is the least impactful.

Murray Springs Interpretation (Ralph Burrillo, BLM)

- A sub-team of the Recreation + Cultural/Heritage Working Group is working on a project to update and replace the interpretive trail signs at Murray Springs. Ralph is the BLM lead.
- In December, Colleen Dingman and Ralph met with the Tribes to invite their participation in the process. While they were excited, they are distracted at the moment, so can't participate now.
- BLM wants to do this right, so replacing the physical signs is on pause until Tribal partners can be involved as much as they want. The group is still moving forward with beginning to gather some of the content.
- The first priority is conducting interviews with Vance Haynes, the original excavator of the site. Vance knows about the project and is excited to be involved. However, he is getting older, so the goal is to move quickly. John Welsh and Skylar Begay at Archaeology Southwest are working with the BLM to organize and complete the interview.

Other cultural updates

- Repairs to the mercantile building at Fairbank are in process. BLM recently fixed the door and window recently, and are currently working with Friends of the San Pedro River to get materials together to fix the west-facing façade.
- On May 8th the first mud party since Covid will be held at Presidio de Terrenate. The Presidio consists of a series of low adobe walls that need continual maintenance. Historically, BLM hosted this event every year to protect the

original construction with a mud veneer that can be washed off during the monsoon, leaving the original structure intact.

- A partner asked if the foundation of the San Pedro House will be patched anytime soon. Ralph will look into this and report back.

Riparian

Bird surveys and wildlife waters (Hannah Pierce, BLM)

- Bird surveys conducted: Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. Pygmy Owl is also surveyed, but not in the SPRNCA.
- BLM is working with the Sky Island Alliance to put out wildlife drinkers in the SPRNCA in areas where the river is drier. They will be above ground guzzlers with ramps for smaller wildlife. Drinkers will be filled using a portable tank on the back of a truck.

Water umbel and Arizona eryngo monitoring (Theresa Condo, BLM)

- These are the two endangered plants in SPRNCA.
- Water Umbel
 - Historically occurred throughout the river. In 2022, BLM surveyed all perennial portions of SPRNCA and found 12 occurrences.
 - This year they will revisit the 12 occurrences. A full survey is planned for 2027.
- Arizona eryngo
 - One of the four populations in the southwest, and one of only two in Arizona, occurs at the Lewis Springs wetland. In 2002 demography plots were set up. Since then, BLM has re-monitoring each year and will do so again this fall.
 - Overall, the population is somewhat stable. However, there are invasive species issues at Lewis Springs.
 - The BLM has tried to re-introduce eryngo at St. David, but this was largely unsuccessful. It's not clear why – perhaps it was due to overcrowding from native vegetation, challenges for fluctuating water levels, or maybe animals were just digging it up.
 - The planting at Maternity Well on Las Cienegas was not successful; all plants were gone within a month of planting. There were issues with the seal on the bottom of the pond and it dried out.

Federal Reserve Water Rights (Pete Christensen, BLM) – handout available upon request

- A water right is a legal right to use water. There are three parts to a water right – the amount, the date the right was claimed (oldest rights take priority), and the purpose of the water right.
- When the SPRNCA was designated in November 1988, the BLM immediately began work to file a claim to determine what water rights BLM is entitled to. This was recently finally decided.
- BLM received two instream flow rights, on the San Pedro and the Babocomari. They are also the only BLM office to receive groundwater rights. There are nine wells, with a designated level they are entitled to have maintained. The priority

date was decided to be the designation date. Any rights in the area before then have priority over SPRNCA, and those after are lower priority.

- Surface water rights determination for the San Pedro:
 - There are three gauges monitored by USGS. A flow reading is taken every 15 minutes, every day.
 - USGS took all the data from 1981-2015 and found the daily average and monthly average.
 - The water right shows an amount that should be at each gauge, each month.
 - Surface water gauge data are update hourly.
- Groundwater rights determination
 - Similar to surface water, this is based on historic data to establish a minimum level.
 - This is recorded on the USGS website as “depth to water.” Another way to calculate this is the elevation of the water – this is how it was designated for the federal water right.
 - Groundwater data is updated quarterly - this has to be field monitored by hand.
- Pete’s handout shows how to find and interpret the data on the USGS website.



Discussion/questions

- It’s not clear what constitutes a failure or breach to maintain levels. The BLM is also looking for guidance on this. Is it down to a single measurement, or a trend over time?
- This information is also available on the [WHIP website](#) of the Upper San Pedro Partnership. They are working to get instantaneous data from the USGS site included here.
- Dataset length: For the nine Federal Reserve water right wells the records are a bit spotty. USGS took these over last April. Discreet measurements go back to about 1969. The early wells were related to the riparian health studies that Julie Strom did in 2000.

Wet-dry mapping results (Bailey Winston/Haley Short, The Nature Conservancy)

- Wet-dry mapping is a citizen science project to monitor surface flows in the San Pedro. It has occurred annually, in mid-June, since 1989. June offers the best chance to see base flow (the shallow groundwater expressed on the surface) because it is before monsoon, at the hottest, driest time of year. SPRNCA has the longest standing data set.
- The effort is supported by many staff and volunteers.
- June 2024 results:
 - 125 mappers in the US and Mexico. 62 teams mapped 166 miles of the river.

- Over a dozen organizations were involved, including Friends of San Pedro who hosted teams at San Pedro House. The Community Watershed Alliance has also participated for many years in mapping the St. David/Benson sections.
- BLM came out in force to help with mapping; this support is really important.
- For the Upper San Pedro, percent wet is great, but there is significant decline in reach one, and it is drier overall.
- New techniques in 2024:
 - Began using tablets, which saved 70% of time on data input and analysis.
 - Included a new place to note observations while surveying – this results in locations for further exploration (e.g. logjams)
 - Updated the spatial data line work. The data are now more accurate.
 - Historically, results have been shared as percent base wet. The new line work changes these percentages, however, so it may not continue being reported in this way.
- 2025 wet-dry will take place on June 21st (contact Bailey or Haylee)
- TNC is developing a Story Map to tell the story of the San Pedro watershed wet-dry and other partner work. Hope to have it ready before wet dry this year.

Discussion/Questions

- BLM hasn't yet changed their GIS line work. How does a big change in the line work impact the year-to-year analysis?
 - TNC noted that reach 1 has significantly different line work now. Looking at percent wet historically here isn't really useful.
- Is there any way to distinguish the effects of the on-going drought as opposed to human demand on the aquifer?
 - It is hard to attribute causes to any one thing. The TNC freshwater scientist has been looking at the impact of precipitation and temperature. This has shown that the presence of surface flow in June, in the tributaries, is driven more by precipitation, whereas the mainstem is tied more closely to temperature and the timing of leaf out.
 - Holly Richter, who started the wet-dry project, noted that this has always been a key question that is almost impossible to answer. Wet-dry mapping was never designed to say "why." There are, however, predictive models to help us understand more about causation.
 - A partner noted there are ways to tease out the impacts of pumping using models.

Beaver monitoring (Catlow Shipek, Watershed Management Group)

Handout available upon request

- Last year over 100 volunteers surveyed about 60 miles of the river over three days in the US and 1.5 days in Mexico.
- TNC and NPS help to fund the effort. Many partners are involved. BLM supports with access.

- Fall 2024 was the first year to survey the whole watershed (although not all tributaries). The focus was on perennial, and some intermittent, reaches that have historic beaver evidence.
- Results
 - 20% decline in SPRNCA reaches over past two years.
 - One family was seen near the Hereford Road, and five roaming beaver.
 - Found one roaming beaver in the lower Babocomari on private land.
 - Found less cow activity on the SPRNCA reaches than in the past (WMG shares this information with BLM staff).
- Over the entire system connectivity is being lost, due to impacts of the border wall, drought, etc. The populations are tightening up and maintaining isolated, diminishing populations. The results show strongholds that are important for re-population after hard years. One of these is in San Manuel mine with a large beaver complex. WMG wants to identify more of these and think about linkages.
- WMG recently hosted two practitioner workshops:
 - 1 – Babocomari: This work is showing increases in lateral and linear extent of wetted reaches and beaver presence.
 - 2 - AZ Game and Fish Department land in the lower San Pedro: They have put in Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs), and think there may be a roaming beaver. A BDA is an attempt by humans to mimic beaver work – trying to help beaver establish by giving them something to build on.
- Dec 6, 2025 is the next beaver survey. Contact Catlow for more information.

Discussion/questions

- Beaver can travel amazing distances. Are there ways to track this?
 - WMG is not doing this, but there are ways to tag and track beaver. There is one landowner working with Cochise College to do a genetic assessment that could help to identify beavers.
 - BLM shared that the beaver in the Cienega Creek re-introduction will be radio-tagged. AZGFD captured and tagged a beaver in the lower San Pedro recently to test out the technology.
- Why does WMG think the population is declining?
 - The data indicate presence and trend, but don't necessarily say why this is happening. There are many theories. WMG thinks it might be that increases in flood and drought years may open beaver up to more predation.
- Are there thoughts to try Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAS) in SPRNCA?
 - WMG has been thinking about it. They are trying it out on Babocomari now and seeing good results (i.e. increase in wetted area). AZGFD is doing this in the Lower San Pedro and having good success. It may be possible to apply these lessons to other sections of the river.
 - BLM has also been thinking about BDAs in the SPRNCA. Originally, they thought about including BDAs in the Restoration EA for SPRNCA. Now it looks like it may be possible to do this through a CX (categorical exclusion). It seems unlikely that a BDA would survive the monsoon in the San Pedro, but it may be possible to try adding on to existing log jams, or a PALS (post assisted log structure) to increase meander.

- A partner asked about CXs (categorical exclusions), what they cover, and how to learn more.
 - BLM explained that this covers instream structures like BDAs, some erosion control structures, etc. It does not cover earth moving activities; it is intended for low impact work. Groups who are interested in doing this type of work can reach out to the BLM and work together to develop a proposed action.

Uplands Working Group

SPRNCA boundary fence (Joan Breiner/Colleen Dingman, BLM)

- Funding for this work was identified last year. The contractor has completed 5 miles (from Fairbank to past Contention). Another ~5 miles from south of Hwy 83 has been prepped.
- Noland Tough Fencing is the contractor. They have done an excellent job. Their workforce is Native American.
- BLM hopes to start round two soon (~20 miles). Each mile of fence costs about \$100k. It will cost over \$10M to complete all of the SPRNCA. BLM is doing the best they can to get it done with existing funding.
- Challenges include terrain and access. One water gap that was quite large had to be specifically designed. The BLM engineers said it would cost \$150k for just the design of this one water gap alone; the design is not transferable to other water gaps.
- In 2023 the Arizona Youth Conservation Corp surveyed 87 miles of the boundary. The problem areas they found, along with known areas of cattle influx, are being used to phase the project and identify where to work first.
- Last year the St. David Cienega fence was completed, and it is doing well.

Discussion/Questions

- One partner recalled that when the SPRNCA was first established there was a range rider position who maintained fences. BLM said there are currently no plans to provide this position again.
- BLM confirmed that much of the boundary does have old fencing in place, but much of this is in poor condition.
- One partner thought it could be a good idea to get volunteers to monitor sections of fence and report back (like Adopt-a-Highway; this could be Adopt-a-Fence). About 15 years ago The Nature Conservancy partnered with BLM to map the entire perimeter, and at that time, there was interest in this idea.

Unauthorized cattle

- A partner shared that there are more unauthorized cattle again.
 - BLM is still working to address unauthorized use as much as possible. They receive many reports that are only pictures of cow dung. Without photos of cattle and tags, there is not much they can do with this information.
 - When people share photos where cattle can be identified, BLM staff quickly contacts the owners. Often, however, the cattle are feral and have no owners.

- Another partner suggested that even though photos of dung aren't helpful in identifying cattle, the BLM could still document this and work with Game and Fish to identify impacts of unauthorized cattle. For example, BLM could document impacts to banks and riparian vegetation. The roundups are appreciated.
 - BLM confirmed that they do track all the information that is sent. If information arrives within a reasonable amount of time from the sighting, they send someone out to try and identify the cattle. All the information is shared with the cattle gatherer.
 - The area cattle owners have come together to fund someone to gather unauthorized cattle. Most cattle gathered will go to the Willcox sale to be inspected. Revenue from non-branded cattle sales goes back to the state to help recoup costs. This is a more formal tracking method. Less wrestling is happening now, but it does still occur.

Herbicide Treatments and Restoration EA (Dan Quintana, BLM)

- The first vegetation treatments on the SPRNCA allotments were done last year. This year one was done in the Lucky Hills allotment.
- This will complete almost all the acres identified in the EA, at least with initial treatments. BLM is hoping to get another 4,900 acres awarded for next fall for the allotments.
- This is a spike treatment (Tebuthiuron). It is a pellet root treatment, not foliar. It is applied with a helicopter.
- Hopefully there will be rain this summer to begin to see results on areas that were treated last year.
- BLM is currently in the process of developing a Restoration EA that will take a landscape scale approach across multiple ownerships. This is in contract. It was temporarily paused, but is moving again. BLM is working with the contractor to get the scope.

Discussion/Questions

- Why are these areas being treated?
 - According to the EA upland health objectives, the shrub cover in these areas was too high. BLM is trying to address this, and also reduce erosion potential and increase overall watershed health.
- A partner reported that private landowners nearby who have removed shrub are seeing dramatic improvements to the landscape.
 - BLM noted that it usually takes a least a couple years to see results, with our precipitation levels. This year we are coming off a dry summer and winter. We may start to see results if we have a wet monsoon.

Grazing update (Eric Baker)

For more information see presentation to Uplands Working Group, March 2025 (available upon request)

- There are four grazing allotments within the SPRNCA. These decisions were signed in 2023.

- The Land Health Evaluation includes desired plant community objectives for shrub cover. Starting in 2023 there was an across the board 50% reduction in AUMs due to these shrub cover objectives not being met in all allotments (in both grazed and ungrazed areas).
- This is the first year BLM is implementing the full Adaptive Management (AM) protocol. AM objectives are specific to perennial grass cover and bare ground. AM monitoring occurs in the fall. Between October and March, an offer of AUMs is made to the permittee, based on this monitoring. Producers can decide to accept this offer, or take non-use for the year.

Fall 2024 AM monitoring results across the four allotments:

- *Babocomari*
 - There are four key areas. The perennial grass cover objective was not met in one of these. There was a further 25% reduction in AUMs (taking it to 25% capacity of the BLM lease).
 - The producer decided to take non-use for the 2025 grazing year. This is a conservation-based choice to help ensure the vegetation treatments have the best chance of positive impact.
 - WMG is working with the BLM on the fence line here which has provided opportunity for riparian enhancements. The boundary fencing will create different pastures that didn't exist before. There will be a river pasture in two different zones.
- *Brunckow Hill*
 - One key area near the highway did not meet objectives for bare ground and perennial grass. There was a further 25% reduction in AUMs.
 - The producer decided to take non-use for the 2025 grazing year. This is a conservation-based choice to help ensure the vegetation treatments have the best chance of positive impact.
 - One condition of this lease is to restrict access to the river on private land. The area cleared of mesquite near the bridge was done entirely on private lands. The conservation practice was completed and contributes towards fencing off river access for the lease.
 - A partner noted that the owner deserves credit for allowing continued public access to the river through his land.
- *Three Brothers:*
 - All three key areas met all AM objectives.
 - The producer will continue with the 50% reduction for the 2025 grazing year.
- *Lucky Hills*
 - There is only one key area within the NCA, the other sections are outside. This area met the perennial grass cover objectives, but did not meet bare ground objective for first time in 12 years.
 - The producer accepted the 25% AUMs for the 2025 grazing year.
 - There is a lack of water available in this key Area. The closest water is 3-4 miles away, so it is not seeing the use it could. It is interesting that there was an increase in bare ground, given the low use.

- Four key areas were used as reference in ungrazed areas in the SPRNCA, outside of the allotments. While these areas aren't subject to the AM objectives, it is important to note that 3 out of the 4 are not meeting the perennial grass cover and bare ground objectives either.

Discussion/questions

- How long has the AM system been in place? Can we look backwards for trends?
 - The AM process is new as of this year. The indicators of Rangeland Health, however, have been in place since the 1990s.
- Are the perennial grass objectives looking for specific species, or could this include invasives?
 - These objectives do not look for a specific species, so they could include invasives such as Lehmann's. This is an invasive in some ecological site descriptions, but it is throughout southern US at this point.

Partner Updates

Upper San Pedro Partnership, CCRN and the Adaptive Management Committee of the SPRNCA MOU (Holly Richter, Resilient Rivers)

Handout available upon request

- Upper San Pedro Partnership (USPP)
 - The USPP was established in 1998 by the Arizona Department of Water Resources. The focus was to develop a predictive groundwater model and use science to inform decision-making.
 - There is an active technical committee (Pete Christensen (BLM) is the chair, Haylee Short (TNC) is the co-chair, they have an active website with many technical references (uppersanpedropartnership.org)
 - Over the years project work began. A spin-off group was formed to implement projects (Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network)
- Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network (CCRN)
 - The CCRN has 7 member agencies. There are three types of projects in their regional network: groundwater recharge projects, retired high-volume pumping, and precluded future development.
 - They manage 8 project sites totaling more than 6,000 acres along 25 miles of the San Pedro and Babocomari Rivers near the SPRNCA. This included acquisition of 3 different proposed subdivisions adjacent to SPRNCA and the permanent retirement of development on all three through conservation easements.
 - Recharge of treated effluent at the Sierra Vista Environmental Operations Park has helped create a groundwater mound, miles in extent, to help support groundwater of San Pedro.
 - Additional recharge projects are being designed.
- Adaptive Management Committee of SPRNCA MOU
 - This group is comprised of 4 agencies – Department of Defense, BLM, City of Sierra Vista and Cochise County.

- The MOU is focused on adaptive management of groundwater to help sustain the SPRNCA. The group supports ongoing hydrologic monitoring with the USGS that is needed to inform models.
- The group also secures grants and funding to support regional hydrologic monitoring and modeling.
- The SPRNCA Riparian Health inventory was re-initiated in 2023 and 2024, for the first time since 2003. This is posted on the Upper San Pedro Partnership website (uppersanpedropartnership.com).
- Everything done in the basin impacts how much water gets to the SPRNCA.

Western Watersheds Project (Cyndi Tuell)

- Healthy Public Lands Conference: May 28-30 in Salt Lake City (more info at www.hplconference.org).
- Western Watersheds has joined the lawsuit about federal layoffs. The case is still alive and together with others they are still fighting for the jobs they want federal employees to keep.
- Western Watersheds has unionized - Western Watersheds Workers. Cyndi is the President and wants to network with other unions.

Watershed Management Group (Nadira Mitchell/Jace Lankow)

- WMG is initiating a statewide Beaver Working Group. April 24 is the first virtual meeting. Contact Catlow/Nadira for more information.
- Jace is the new Desert Rivers Manager. They have been doing restoration work in the Babocomari – have installed 17 PALS (post assisted log structure). Upcoming work is being permitted now.
- Volunteer workshops: Riparian practitioner workshops help people learn how to steward the river.
- Working on a groundwater level monitoring study in Tucson. If you have areas in mind, particularly in the CDO wash area, contact Jace.

Sky Island Alliance (Emily Burns)

- SIA does wildlife monitoring in the SPRNCA and other locations on both sides of the border. They published a paper in November looking at species interacting with border infrastructure. The question was whether the small wildlife openings, which have been installed on the SPRNCA and some other areas, are effective. These are 11" high and 8.5" wide.
- Unsurprisingly they found that the border fence stops 86% of wildlife. But the little openings are effective for mountain lion, javelina, and bobcat. They don't help deer, black bear, pronghorn or turkey. There are still concerns, but overall, this is positive.
- Arizona doesn't have many of these small wildlife openings yet. SIA is talking with CBP about how to make border infrastructure more wildlife friendly. They will expand the study to the Animas Valley and Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge next.
- The information learned from the SPRNCA work has helped make the case for why these are effective. They are hoping to inform future design of border infrastructure.



Friends of the San Pedro River (Ron Stewart)

- The Friends was established 1987. Before the designation of the SPRNCA, probably 70% of people were opposed to establishment. The Friends came into existence at this time with the purpose of working slowly and non-confrontationally to change public attitude toward SPRNCA.
- They work to engage people to help support and celebrate SPRNCA. Since 1988 they have done docent led walks, tours, bird watching walks, events, etc. They staff and maintain two visitor centers (San Pedro House and Fairbank Schoolhouse)
- Now they think if you polled people, you would find overwhelming support for SPRNCA.
- Their annual festival is tomorrow at the San Pedro House.
- More info at: <http://sanpedroriver.org/wpfspr/>

Arizona Cross watershed Network (Tahnee Robertson)

- The AZWN links watershed practitioners across the state to talk about issues of common interest.
- More info at: www.azcrosswatershed.net

Arizona Game and Fish Department (Nick Schobinger)

- Nick works in the landowner relations program to fund mutually beneficial projects for partners and wildlife.
- If partners know of any projects that need funding, reach out to Nick.

Closing Reflections

Participants shared final thoughts and reflections on the day:

- Good to talk to other BLM staff about things outside our normal resource specialty.
- Great to see so many partners and so many BLM.
- Good to see people in person.
- In light of everything that's going on, it's good to be with similar minded people.

- Thanks to BLM; appreciate all their work.
- Good to see new people and young folks doing this important work.
- Nice to be together with people who have shared value of the land.
- Appreciate everyone coming out.
- Always good to see people in person.
- Good to have conversations in person.
- Good to see people interested in wildlife and conservation, and identify opportunities to collaborate.
- Appreciate the Friends of San Pedro River and all partners.
- Appreciate all the work, the updates and information. Big shout out to Joanne - the San Pedro House Garden is amazing, with all native plants.
- Good to network.
- Good to get more of the historical perspective here, for someone who is newer.
- Good to see people face to face who usually talk to virtually. Enjoyed learning about wet-dry; good to compare notes.
- Nice to meet people that were only names before.
- Enjoyed learning about projects, what is going on in other areas and making connections.
- Appreciate the great work partners are doing.
- Good to have partners pushing the feds to do what is in alignment with shared values. Thanks to SDR.
- Good to get out of our silos and think about the bigger picture.
- Thanks to the Friends of the San Pedro. It's amazing to learn how many people are willing to come out and help.
- Great to see everyone and see how all the work is connected.
- Good to talk to people and think about the positive things we are working on together.
- Appreciate the grazing allotment updates very much. Great to see so many interns; long may it continue.
- Good to learn more about beaver dams.
- Learned about a lot of issues - water rights, Categorical Exclusion opportunities. Good to learn more about the context.
- There's never enough time. Something came out of every conversation. Let's camp out next time. Thanks to Joy Banks (landowner whose property WMG is working on).
- Great to see so many BLM and dynamism in BLM activities. People are actually doing a lot of work.
- Good to learn about wet-dry and see the data.
- This is inspiring as a young professional. Cool to see that everyone can get along.
- On any given day so much is being done for the SPRNCA in so many ways. Inspiring to know this, particularly during time of change.
- Great to see progress being made by BLM and partners. Excited about the restoration planning.
- Thanks to BLM staff for having these conversations. Thanks to partners for being here. Thanks for being honest and telling us what you want to see done

and how we can strengthen the partnership in support of the NCA. So grateful to be here and be part of this.

- Nice to meet new people and reconnect with some old friends. Places like this wouldn't exist without partnerships. Inspiring to see what we can achieve together instead of pulling each other apart.
- Big thanks to all. Thanks for supporting SPRNCA, public lands and federal employees. We love the work. We love this. It brings us all together.

Fairbank Historic Townsite Tour

Ron Stewart (Friends of the San Pedro River) led the group on a tour of the historic townsite. Highlights are summarized here.

Site history and overview

- The Coronado expedition came through Canelo Pass and hit the San Pedro near Fairbank at Terrenate. They were using Native guides.
- At that time there was active trading in this area. The San Pedro was part of the major trade routes.
- In 1881 the Southern Pacific Railroad reached Benson. The Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad built a spur route south of Benson (the New Mexico and Arizona Railroad), and in 1882 it reached this spot.
- When it became known that the railroad was coming, two brothers filed a homestead claim and started selling lots here for \$50 (this claim was later found to be illegal).
- Until 1902, this was the closest railroad to Tombstone. Fairbank was a sort of "bedroom community" of Tombstone. The railroad also made it more possible to have cattle ranches here.
- There was a Mercantile which acted as a general store and the railroad freight office.
- There was also a hotel that was razed in 1937 because it was in the right of way of the new highway.
- In 1972 the railroad closed. At that time there were about 20-30 people still living here.
- This area was the site of Native American villages for thousands of years. There are Hohokam style irrigation canals found here, and artifacts dating back thousands of years.



Mercantile

- From 1882-1972 this was the post office. There was also a constable here.
- Once the highway came in, they diversified to a gas station and convenience store.
- It was once a family business of the Goldwater family
- The BLM did great work to save this building when the roof collapsed.



Schoolhouse

- The schoolhouse opened in 1920 and closed in 1944.
- The classes were divided by age.
- There were likely 20 students at most.



Appendix A: Agenda

San Pedro Riparian NCA - All Partner Meeting

April 11, 2025 | 9:00am - 2:00pm | Fairbank Historic Townsite

Working group leads

- Recreation and Cultural/Heritage: Robert Walter and Ralph Burillo (BLM)
- Riparian: Christina Perez and Pete Christensen (BLM)
- Uplands: Eric Baker (BLM) and Kim McReynolds (Cooperative Extension)

9am – Arrivals, bagels, coffee and socializing

9:15 – Welcome, Introductions, meeting overview (SDR)

9:25 – BLM Updates (Colleen Dingman, BLM)

9:45 – Working group updates

Recreation and Cultural/Heritage

- ADA improvements to trail near Fairbank - *Robert Walter, BLM*
- Special Recreation Permit updates - *Robert Walter, BLM*
- Electric poles replacement by SSVEC - *Colleen Dingman, BLM + Megan Resor, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative*
- Murray Springs interpretation - *Ralph Burrillo, BLM*

Riparian

- Boundary fence replacement - *Joan Breiner, BLM*
- Bird surveys and wildlife waterers - *Hannah Pierce, BLM*
- Water umbel and eryngo - *Theresa Condo, BLM*
- Note: Additional updates shared during afternoon discussion

Uplands

- Herbicide treatments - *Dan Qunitana, BLM*
- Restoration EA - *Dan Qunitana, BLM*
 - Grazing update and discussion - *Eric Baker, BLM*

11:00 – Partner Updates

11:30 – Fairbank Historic Townsite Tour

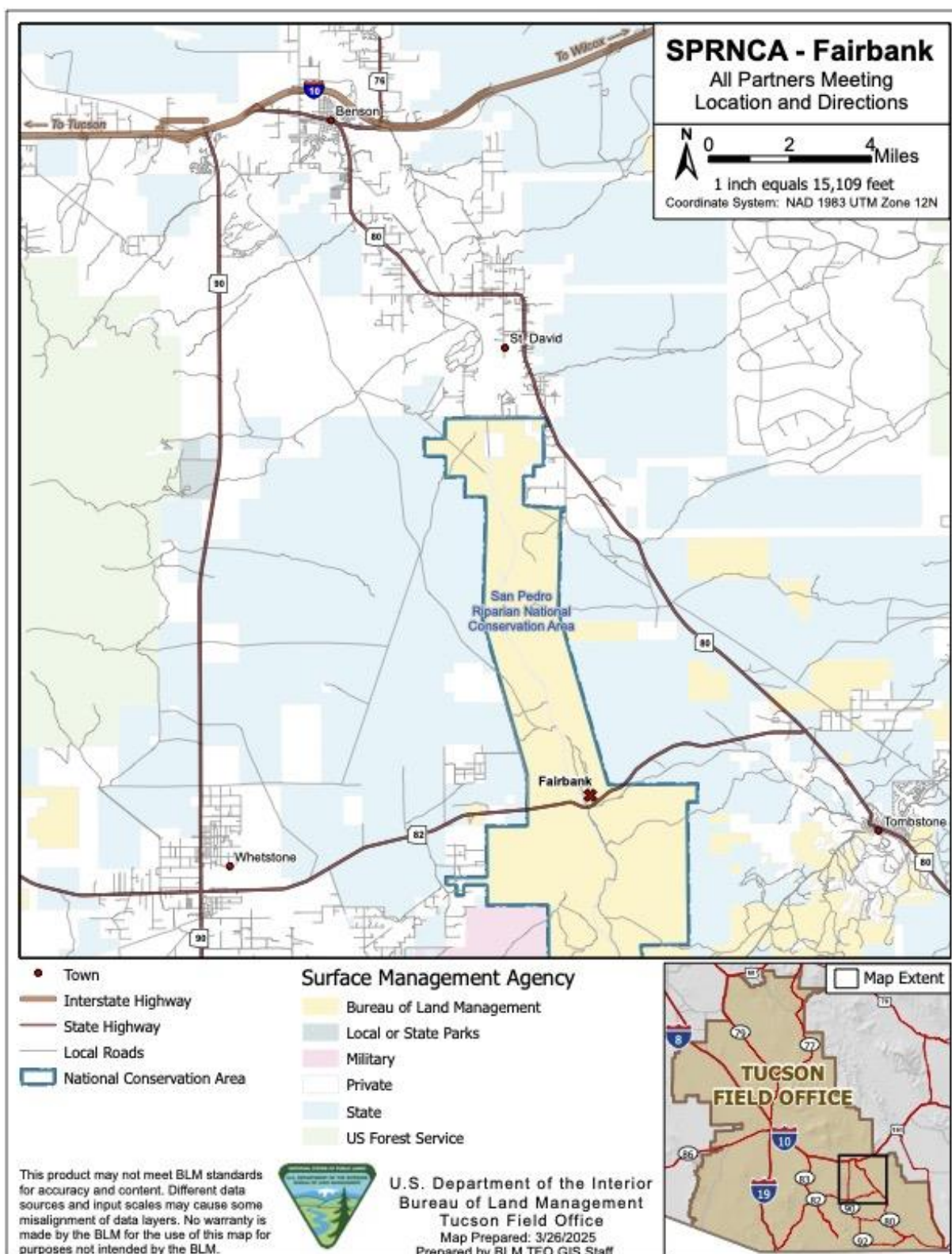
- Tour of schoolhouse and site - *Ron Stewart, Friends of San Pedro River*
- Historic site management

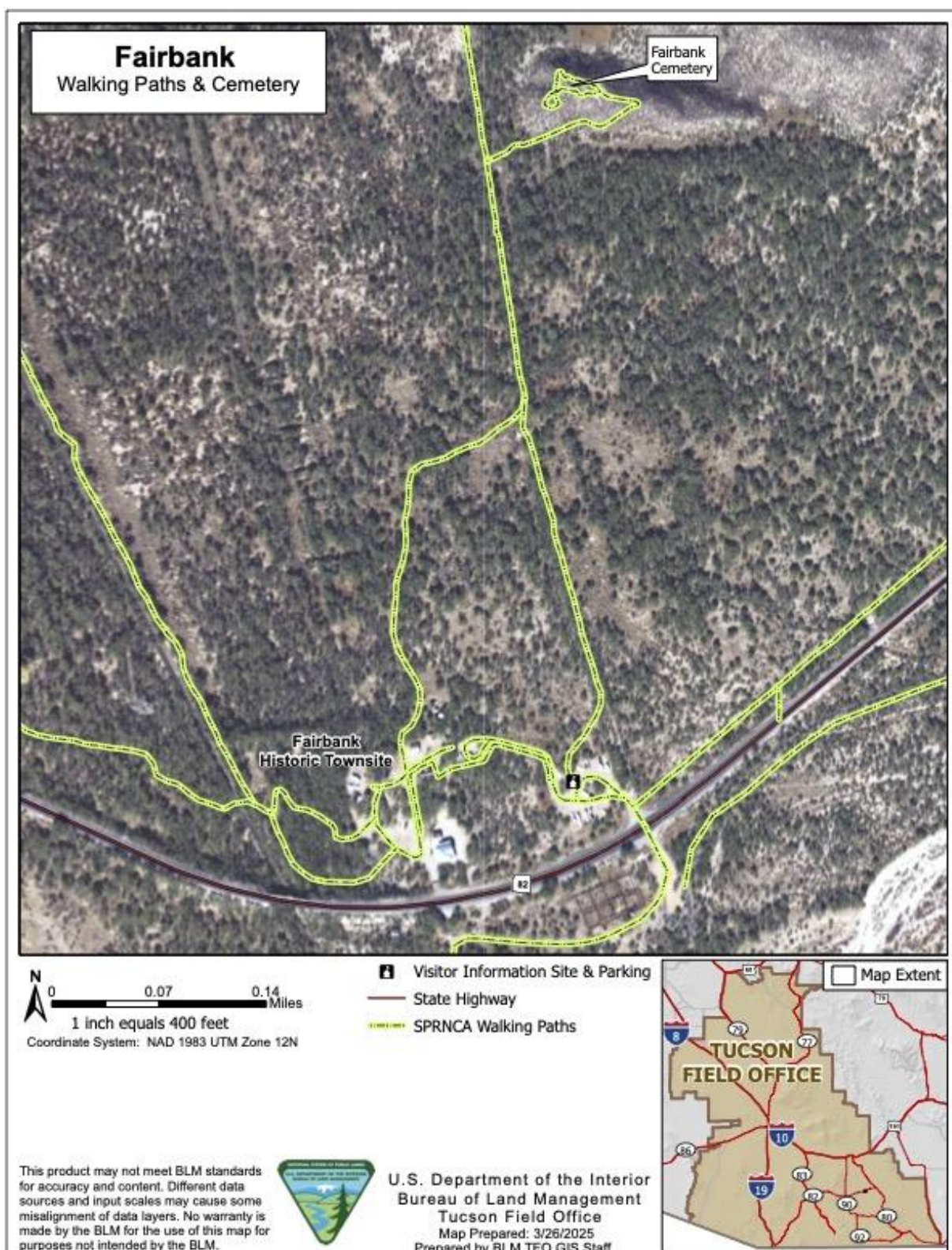
12:15pm – Lunch at Fairbank

12:45 – Riparian Discussion

- Federal Reserve Water Rights - *Pete Christensen, BLM*
- Wet-dry mapping results - *Bailey Winston/Haylee Short, The Nature Conservancy*
- Beaver monitoring - *Catlow Shipek, Watershed Management Group*

1:15 – Wrap Up and Next Steps; 2pm adjourn





Appendix B: Participants

- John Welsh, Archaeology Southwest
- Nick Schobinger, AZ Game and Fish Dept / Quail Forever / Pheasants Forever
- Aaron Peretz, BLM
- Anthony Johnson, BLM
- Ava Hamstead, BLM
- Christina Perez, BLM
- Colleen Dingman, BLM
- Dan Quintana, BLM
- Eric Baker, BLM
- Hannah Pierce, BLM
- Joan Breiner, BLM
- Peter Christensen, BLM
- Ralph Burrillo, BLM
- Robert Walter, BLM
- Theresa Condo, BLM
- Tiffany Verlander, BLM
- Wade Horton, BLM
- Sharon Flissar, City of Sierra Vista
- Laura White, Community Watershed Alliance
- Dwight Long, Friends of the San Pedro River
- Joanne Roberts, Friends of the San Pedro River
- Renell Stewart, Friends of the San Pedro River
- Ron Stewart, Friends of the San Pedro River
- Joy Banks, Landowner
- Holly Richter, Resilient Rivers
- Wyatt Shannon, SPRNCA Permittee, Babocomari Allotment
- Tricia Gerrodette, San Pedro 100
- Emily Burns, Sky Island Alliance
- Megan Resor, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative
- Bailey Winston, The Nature Conservancy
- Haylee Short, The Nature Conservancy
- Michelle DeSplinter, Tombstone Monument Ranch
- Laura True, True Ranch / Tombstone Monument Ranch
- Jennie MacFarland, Tucson Bird Alliance/Tucson Audubon
- Kim McReynolds, UA Cooperative Extension
- Meaghan Conway, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Catlow Shipek, Watershed Management Group
- Jace Lankow, Watershed Management Group
- Nadira Mitchell, Watershed Management Group
- Cyndi Tuell, Western Watersheds Project

Facilitation and documentation: Southwest Decision Resources (Tahnee Robertson and Colleen Whitaker).