

# Ground Truth



A Publication of the Diablo Trust – A Northern Arizona Collaborative Grassroots Land Management Team



The Diablo Trust is a 501(c)(3) land management team created in 1993 to promote the social, biological and economic sustainability of 426,000 acres of intermingled federal, state, and private lands southeast of Flagstaff, AZ by engaging in a collaborative stewardship process that is in harmony with the natural environment and the broader community.

The phrase “Learning from the land and sharing our knowledge, so there will always be a West” captures our mission.

Ground Truth is the publication of the Diablo Trust, mailed free of charge to everyone on our mailing list. If you would like to be added to, or removed from, the mailing list, please contact us at:

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Contributors are solely responsible for the content of their articles, and the opinions expressed in articles, linked materials, and comments are not necessarily those of the Diablo Trust.

## Diablo Trust President’s Message

By Judy Prosser

*“The only thing that is constant is change.”*  
- Heraclitus

The topic for this article is “relevance.” One definition of that word is, “Connected: having some sensible or logical connection with something else such as a matter being discussed or investigated.” Another is, “having social significance: Having some bearing on or importance for real world issues, present day events, or the current state of society.”

Things have changed in the northern Arizona community in the last 22 years since the Diablo Trust was born. Ranching has changed, somewhat. The beef industry has changed. The political wind has changed. Even though we don’t discuss politics amongst Diablo Trusters, national policies have an effect on the ranching business. People have different views about what is important. Technology makes us feel we must do everything immediately. And, we are all older. . . these are just a few things that have changed during the time we have been operating, and have made me recently wonder how “relevant” Diablo Trust is to our community.

I think it is healthy to ask that question of an organization periodically. Especially when it is made up of volunteers and when it depends upon its volunteer “members” for a significant amount of its funding, especially when it touts itself to “ensure the long-term economic, social, & ecological sustainability of the DT land area by providing a forum for active community participation in a collaborative land stewardship process.” That’s a mouthful for a mission statement, but one of the key words is “sustainability.” Since sustainability is dependent on a long-term outlook, it only makes sense to evaluate our relevancy and think about our future. Another key word is “collaborative,” and if we are to walk the talk, we must check in occasionally to see if we actually do have a pulse on the current membership’s view of what’s important as it pertains to land stewardship in northern Arizona.

The Diablo Trust Board recently completed the first step in a three-step process to address how we see our future, act upon our mission, and reevaluate our goals. With the help of the firm ‘Southwest Decision Resources,’ their staff members Andi Rogers and Carrie Eberly put us through the hoops of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) analysis. I will cut to the chase and tell you that we did indeed enthusiastically decide that DT is relevant to each of us personally, and to the ranches. However, we concluded we do not necessarily know how the 950+ people on our mailing list feel. Hence, Step II.

Step II is a survey our board compiled and you will have received by now. This will truly help us determine our Plan of Work for the next several years. I thank you for taking the time to do this.

We will finish this process up in December when we tally our survey and meet again to really delve into planning for the next year and beyond. I want to conclude by saying that identified in the SWOT analysis, amongst our strengths, Commitment (of members) and Longevity rose to the top, along with Valued Relationships (with people and partners).

And for contributing to that, I thank you. I am grateful for your loyalty and for providing the strength and long-term sustainability we need for the sustenance and growth of this organization.

## Diablo Trust



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## Getting to Know . . . Linda Wadleigh

*District Ranger, Mogollon Rim Ranger District, Coconino National Forest, Arizona*

Linda is the District Ranger for the Mogollon Rim Ranger District in Coconino National Forest. She is from Ohio, and received a BS in Forest Management and an MS in Fire Ecology from Utah State University. Her career spans over 30 years in fire management, from her first job on an engine on the Uinta National Forest to a Regional Fire Ecologist in the Southwest and includes diversions as an Assistant Fire Management Officer, a Forest Ecologist and a Fuels Specialist. She has been fortunate to travel the country for the Forest Service, living in Utah, New Hampshire, Washington, Maine, and Arizona, and working on wildfires and prescribed fires in states from coast to coast.



Her other diversions include a husband and two children, cheering for Ohio State sports, and for whatever sport her kids are participating in at the time. She is an avid reader and Dutch oven cook, loves camping and hiking, volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America, and regularly participates in 60-mile walks for the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

When she recently became a District Ranger, someone asked her why she left Fire Management. Her response was working in natural resources in the Southwest, you never really leave fire. Her District has a legacy of managed wildfire and a very active fuels program, and she is proud to join that program.

Born in: Oxford, OH

Childhood Hero: Wonder Woman

Current Hero: My mom

Contribution to the Flagstaff Community: Girl Scout leader, frequent volunteer at kid's school (Northland Preparatory Academy), helped form wrestling team at NPA. Raised over \$20,000 for breast cancer research by walking over 300 miles.

Hobbies: Hiking, movies, travel, road trips and travelling to new places

Favorite Western: "El Dorado," "True Grit" (both versions), "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," "Cat Ballou"

Favorite Western-Wear: Boots

Favorite Ranch Recipe: Anything by Pioneer Woman - her salsa is the best! And anything cooked in a dutch oven.

Book You Recently Enjoyed: "A Man Called Ove" by Fredrik Backman

Fondest Outdoor Memory: Fishing for trout in Utah using corn and marshmallows and staying out on the lake in a small rowboat all day long, so long we ran out of people-food and started eating the fish bait.

Currently Unrealized Life Dream: Visit every continent

Favorite college class: Fire management

Favorite Quotation: "Wish we would stop arguing about it and do something."  
- Anonymous

## Satisfying Grass-Fed Beef Demand, Not So Easy for Ranchers in Northern Arizona

By Melissa Sevigny

*Reprinted with permission of KNAU and Melissa Sevigny*

Demand for local, sustainable beef is on the rise. But getting into the alternative beef business isn't easy. In drought-stricken Arizona, grass and water are in short supply, and the infrastructure—like processing plants—isn't in place for robust local markets. So how does grass-fed beef get from pasture to plate?

Chuck McDougal's cheeseburger just came off the grill at Diablo Burger in downtown Flagstaff. For years he didn't eat beef. He didn't trust how commercial ranchers raised their cattle. But the burgeoning business of grass-fed beef has brought him back to the carnivore's side of the table.

"Places like this started to open," McDougal says, "you know your rancher, your farmer. Yeah, I feel much more comfortable eating it. And I love it."

That's just what Derrick Widmark was hoping for when he opened Diablo Burger six years ago. He wanted to serve a "taste of place" with local, grass-fed beef. "It tastes different," Widmark says. "It tastes clean, it tastes lean, you can pick up the grassiness. You are literally eating the open range of northern Arizona."



Cattle graze on national forest land west of Flagstaff  
(credit: Melissa Sevigny)



A Diablo Burger made with free-range beef. (credit: Melissa Sevigny)

Grazing is the dominant land use in Arizona. According to a University of Arizona study, almost 500 farming operations sell cattle in Coconino County.

Kit Metzger runs about 900 head of cattle on the 90,000-acre Flying M Ranch, on Anderson Mesa south of Flagstaff. "It is a challenge in Arizona because it's dry," she says. "But we've been raising livestock here 100 years and we've seen the cycle, we know what we're getting into."

Metzger sells most of her calves to larger beef producers, who fatten them up on grain for a few months before slaughter. That's how she pays the bills. But she's started to hold back some cows to sell locally. These cows are finished on grass, meaning they graze the open range their whole lives.

"These cattle are born and raised right here in northern Arizona," says Ellen

*(continued on page 5)*

## Meet Arizona Agriculture's Prosser Family

By Julie Murphree

*Reprinted with permission of Arizona Farm Bureau and Julie Murphree*

The Bar T Bar ranch family has had a long tradition of ranch improvements: land acquisition, water development, vegetative treatments, incorporation of a variety of grazing systems, and livestock production through selective genetics and culling practices. In a phrase, they care about the land and the animals – livestock and wildlife – that roam its range. But the story behind the story is this long-time ranching family.

### **An interview with Judy Prosser – Winslow, Arizona**

*Part of an ongoing series about Arizona Farming & Ranching families.*

#### **Tell us about your ranch:**

The Bar T Bar Ranch, Inc., is a Subchapter S Corporation owned and operated by Bob and Judy Prosser. An Arizona agribusiness since 1924, I represent the third-

*(continued on page 8)*



Judy and Bob Prosser understand the legacy they represent and as a result have established efforts like The Diablo Trust, a collaborative land management team in northern Arizona, founded by the ranch and their neighbors, the Metzger family.

(Credit: AZ Farm Bureau)



## Getting Outside with Diablo Trust



Kit Metzger overseeing the breakfast gravy, with some young company, at the Diablo Trust’s Annual Camp-out, at Ashurst Run on the Flying M Ranch. (08/22/15)



Some of the Camp-out crowd getting dinner. We had all sorts of goodies, from home-made jalapeno poppers to camp-made ice cream! (08/22/15)

Read more about the 2015 Annual Camp-out on Page 8.  
You can see more pictures from the event on our Facebook page, and on our website.



Students from a Northern Arizona University (NAU) seminar on animal ag take a break from our discussion at -T- to work a bit! (10/10/2015)

You can read more about their field trip on page 8, and see more pictures from this trip on our Facebook page.



Eric Burden, Judy Prosser, and Royal (from the -T-) monitor forage during an Forage Resource Study Group (FRSG) trip on the -T-. (11/03/15)

You can see more FRSG pictures on our Facebook page.

## Money Matters & Your Support Will Make a Difference

Please visit our “Support” page at <http://www.diablotrust.org>  
You can support us through AmazonSmile and Fry’s Food Stores, too!  
Learn more at our website.

## Satisfying Demand *(continued from page 3)*

Parish, who markets Flying M beef to businesses in Flagstaff and Williams. “They’re not being trucked in or shipped out. All the feeding happens right here on the land we’re looking at.”

As appealing as that is to customers, raising grass-fed beef doesn’t make the ranch a lot of money. That’s partly because infrastructure isn’t in place to process and store local meat. Nationwide, grass-fed, natural and organic beef make up only about 3 percent of the market.

That doesn’t mean ranchers aren’t giving it a try.

Ernesto Castro raises purebred Angus cattle on 70 acres of emerald-green pastures in Cornville. The cows at Tres Hermanas Ranch are entirely grass-fed.

“When we go to farmer’s markets, of course, that’s what we get asked a lot: where’s the grass? There’s no grass in Arizona,” Castro says. “Then they see the pictures that we have . . . everybody thinks we Photoshop them.”



Part of Flying M’s summer pasture on Anderson Mesa.  
(credit: Melissa Sevigny)



Kit Metzger (left) and Ellen Parish (right) at the stock pens at Flying M Ranch. (credit: Melissa Sevigny)

Castro keeps his pastures green with irrigation water from Oak Creek and Page Springs. His biggest challenge is a lack of land. Cornville is close to Sedona and filling up with subdivisions. “The demand is there, we just don’t have enough grass to get more cows,” he says.

Castro’s already sold out of beef until next spring, and he sells only at farmer’s markets and directly to customers. So far, he hasn’t turned a profit.

So, why get into the grass-fed beef business at all? “Well, cause I’m crazy,” Castro says. “This is just a little part of Mother Earth that I guess we were chosen to take care of. We’re going to try to keep it as long as we can.”

And for ranchers like Castro, it’s all about giving customers a chance to taste their local landscape.

*Melissa Sevigny is the science & technology reporter with KNAU: Arizona Public Radio. You can find this article, its radio broadcast, and more pictures at [www.knau.org](http://www.knau.org). This article was originally published on August 28, 2015.*

## Remembering Helen Sisk

*Thanks to Judy Prosser and Norm Wallen for their help in writing this message.*



Helen Roelker Sparrow Sisk  
(November 20, 1961 - October 1, 2015)

We recently lost a dear and valued member of our community: Helen Sisk. Helen served on the Diablo Trust Board for three years and dedicated her life in Northern Arizona to empowering others to achieve their greatest goals. She was known to Diablo Trust members as a passionate, wise woman who was committed to her beliefs, which were focused on environmental and social sustainability. One of her greatest contributions to the Trust was visiting beef processing facilities and investigating the problems and possibilities of a local plant. She was diligent, perceptive, and a pleasure to work with in all situations.

Her cooking was wonderful – she always brought unique and delicious dishes to our Camp-outs, and she opened her home to our Christmas party numerous times. As a hostess she was welcoming and gracious, and provided a wonderful setting for the holidays.

Helen was a friend to many and to all she was a person who exuded happiness, caring, and sensitivity. Most of all, she was a loving mother.

Helen passed away on October 1st. Please visit the Norvel Owens Mortuary website for Helen’s official obituary. Donations can be made in honor of Helen R. Sisk, Flagstaff Foodlink, which is starting a Community Greenhouse in her honor: Flagstaff Foodlink, P.O. Box 23813, Flagstaff, Arizona 86002.



## Shared Ideals

*By Craig McMullen*

Last September, I was invited to speak during the Diablo Trust's board retreat about the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. While preparing for the discussion, I was struck by the similarity between the principles that drove the evolution of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and those that drove the evolution of, and continue to guide, the Diablo Trust. What does a system of wildlife management devised more than 100 years ago have in common with how Diablo Trust lands are managed today? Plenty, it turns out.

### **The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation**

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation has been called the world's most successful system of conservation. Among its founding principles are that fish and wildlife should be available for use by all citizens and should be managed for healthy, sustainable populations.

No other continent retains such a complete balance of native wildlife species. Our user-pay public-benefit model relies on sound science, public participation, active habitat management, strict regulation, and active law enforcement to sustain wildlife populations. The end result is a harvestable surplus of game and fish species every year, a robust complement of nongame fish and wildlife, and an opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife through hunting, angling, wildlife viewing, or simply by knowing healthy wildlife populations are free-ranging on the landscape.

No game laws existed back when the West was being settled, and the idea of wildlife conservation had not yet taken root. American settlers had fresh memories of a home country with limited natural resources and, more significantly, limited access to wildlife. But wildlife in America was so plentiful that the supply seemed inexhaustible, with enough game for every person to cobble together a living off the land. Hunting was not reserved exclusively for royalty and a privileged few. Americans were free to take wildlife without fear of punishment by the government.

Unregulated access to wildlife, and the associated markets for wild game, led to the drastic depletion of many game species. The elk and bison, once so common their numbers defied description, were in peril of annihilation. Conservation was at a crossroads.

There are those today who would tell you that to love nature, you must keep your hands off it. However, the conservation movement was engineered by men who were avid hunters, sportsmen, and conservationists. They loved wildlife because they could use it. These original conservationists were men of means who could easily have excluded the "common folk" from hunting and, in the tradition of the privileged European elite, protected game for their exclusive benefit. Instead, these visionaries, led by Theodore Roosevelt, realized that the common man needed a stake in the outcome if wildlife recovery efforts in North America were to succeed. Utility fosters interest and attention.

Promoting use, rather than preservation, helped capture the enthusiasm and support of all strata of society. The notion that all Americans should have equal access to wildlife resonated with the principles of democracy, and game was seen as a resource of such value to all that it should be managed by all yet owned by none. On these founding principles, the successful North American Model of Wildlife Conservation was born.

### **The Diablo Trust**

I became involved with the Diablo Trust in 2012. It was easy to sense the wisdom underlying the Trust's architecture. It took me a little longer to see striking similarities between the evolution of, and underlying principles that guide, the North American Model and the Diablo Trust.

Like the NAM, the Diablo Trust was born in conflict. The early 1990s were a time of open challenge to public land grazing and disagreements over wildlife and livestock on the landscape. It wasn't clear what the future would hold for management of these



Craig McMullen, Arizona Game and Fish Department  
(courtesy of Craig McMullen)

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## Shared Ideals *(continued from page 6)*

426,000 acres of private, state, and federal lands, the wildlife that inhabited them, or the businesses that depended on them. They were at a crossroads.

But like the founders of the North American Model, the architects of the Diablo Trust understood that, in order for people to become invested in sustainable management of the Trust's lands, they have to have a stake in its management. Diablo Trust lands are managed so everybody can enjoy them. Their management takes into account the needs and values of ranchers, environmentalists, federal land managers, state wildlife agencies, scientists, and all types of recreationists. Like the architects of the NAM, the leaders of the Diablo Trust invited stakeholders to become invested.

One of the core concepts of the NAM is that wildlife policy is created through a public process. The Trust's board is made up of a diverse group of people from the public at large. As in the NAM, a diverse cross-section of society is invited to help shape the management of natural resources that make up the Diablo Trust.

Like the NAM, I believe the Diablo Trust is founded on the principle that you can make use of natural resources, and still love them. The Trust's established goals of sustaining open space, living in balance with biodiversity, producing high-quality food, restoring watersheds, creating stable living soils, and achieving community tell the story perfectly. The story? We are going to work together to use our natural resources wisely, so everybody can benefit, because we love our natural resources — not because we have to.

I believe the NAM is an enduring model that will continue to evolve and continue to deliver good outcomes for conservation. I believe the model the Diablo Trust has developed likewise will endure and continue to deliver good conservation outcomes. Both will succeed because they are founded on the principles of collaborative stewardship, sustainable resource management, and shared love of the land.

Norm Wallen, environmental activist and Diablo Trust board member, perhaps said it best, "My involvement in the Diablo Trust for the past twenty years has convinced me that it is a model for saving what we all profess to value about the West."

*Craig McMullen is the Region II Regional Supervisor  
for the Arizona Game and Fish Department*



Kit Metzger (center) discussing the ranch's watering tank systems to a group of sportsmen, hunters, and agency officials who visited the Flying M Ranch in April for the 2015 Sportsmen's Day on the Land (credit: Jeremy D. Kronos)

**The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is the foundation for wildlife conservation in Arizona and throughout the country, and hunters and anglers are essential to its effectiveness. The Arizona Game and Fish Department's core concepts of the North American Model are:**

### Wildlife is held in the public trust

The public trust doctrine provides that wildlife belongs to everyone. Through shared ownership and responsibility, opportunity is available to all.

### Regulated commerce in wildlife

Early laws banning commercial hunting and the sale of meat and animal hides ensure sustainability through regulation of harvest and regulating commerce of wildlife parts.

### Hunting & angling laws are created through public process

Hunting seasons, harvest limits, and penalties imposed for violations are established through laws and regulations. Everyone has the opportunity to shape the laws and regulations applied in wildlife conservation.

### Hunting & angling opportunity for all

The opportunity to participate in hunting, angling, and wildlife conservation is guaranteed for all in good standing, not by social status, privilege, financial capacity, or land ownership. This concept ensures a broad base of financial support and advocacy for research, monitoring, habitat conservation, and law enforcement.

### Hunters & anglers fund conservation

Hunting and fishing license sales and excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment pay for management of all wildlife, including wildlife species that are not hunted.

### Wildlife is an international resource

Proper stewardship of wildlife and habitats is both a source of national pride and an opportunity to cooperate with other nations with which we share natural resources. Cooperative management of migrating waterfowl is one example of successful international collaboration.

### Science is the basis for wildlife policy

The limited use of wildlife as a renewable natural resource is based on sound science. We learn as we go, adapting our management strategies based on monitoring to achieve sustainability.

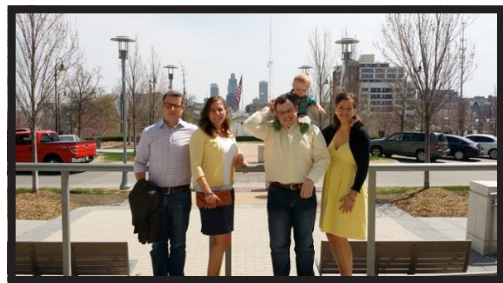
## Meet the Prosser Family *(continued from page 5)*

generation of the Chilson family. Our cattle operation runs approximately 1,150 commercial cows, 800 replacement heifers and 350 registered Balancer, Angus, & Gelbvieh cows.

For our history and from our website: Napoleon Warren “Boss” Chilson, my grandfather, had ranch holdings with his brothers in the Tonto Basin, south of Payson, as early as 1913. In 1924, he purchased the first summer permits, Hay Lake and Little Springs, plus numerous homesteads.

Since most of the Bar T Bar lies south of the Hay Lake and Little Springs grazing permit area, the ranch soon pursued acquiring more deeded land and contiguous land, with the goal of eliminating the 70-mile cattle drive between Little Springs and the Tonto Basin (which required numerous 7–10 day treks through downtown Payson each year). As the move to the north continued, they purchased the Pitchfork Ranch from the Babbitt Brothers in 1939. The Pitchfork probably accounts for most of the northern portion of the present day Bar T Bar. It included the lands around Meteor Crater. Several years later, in 1941, the families acquired a 199-year lease on the Meteor Crater property from the Barringer Family. Other significant purchases between 1937 and 1946 included the Wolfolk allotment, two townships in the area, which provided the connection between the summer and winter ranges, and Moqui Ranch, all from Fred Bixby.

Ernest Chilson, my father, was instrumental in building the waterworks that keep water in front of the livestock and wildlife that make their home on the Bar T Bar. Soldier Annex Dam was enlarged in 1940 to store 2,600 acre-feet of water. The supply canals from Canyon Diablo to Soldier Lake were constructed. In 1942, the Chilson Canal was built, connecting Soldier Annex Dam to the Hay Lake headquarters, a distance of 7 miles. Tremaine Dam was built by Bar T Bar in 1950 to store more runoff for the irrigated pastures. Water is transmitted to over 60 stock ponds in the winter country on state and private land through 73 miles of canals and ditches, providing relatively permanent water for 80,000 acres of rangeland.



The next generation of Prossers includes (From left) Warren, Kathleen, Spencer with little Burton on his shoulders and Meg. The boys in agribusiness stay very engaged in all things agriculture. (credit: AZ Farm Bureau)

In 1952, Ernest launched the first large-scale juniper-management program in Arizona. This aggressive program continued for 16 years. Some 40,000 acres were treated in several manners, but primarily cabled/chained, piled, and burned.

In 1990, the Prosser and Chilson families purchased most of the ranch properties from their partners, the Tremaines. Properties that were not purchased included Moqui Ranch and the most of the Hay Lake farmlands. To make up the loss of summer grazing land, Bar T Bar, Inc., purchased the adjacent Lost Eden Allotment in 1996 from the Kennedy family.

With the generational transition to the Prossers, Angus and Gelbvieh were integrated into the traditional Hereford herd in the 1980s — hence, the versatile Balancer cattle of today. Currently, steer calves and bred commercial replacement heifers are merchandized in the fall, and registered bulls in the spring and fall.

### What changes have you seen within your operation?

Bar T Bar has had a long tradition of ranch improvements: land acquisition, water development, vegetative treatments, incorporation of a variety of grazing systems, and livestock production through selective genetics and culling practices.

In the very recent years, an additional 28,000 acres of pinon-juniper country have been treated on private, state, and federal land to benefit pronghorn antelope and livestock. Pipelines have been added and extended. A circular pivot irrigation system waters the deeded acreage at Hay Lake. These projects are ongoing. Bar T Bar is proud of its long history of improving its resource.



An Arizona agribusiness since 1924, the Bar T Bar Ranch represents three generations of the Chilson family that runs approximately 1,150 commercial cows, 800 replacement heifers and 350 registered Balancer, Angus, & Gelbvieh cows. (credit: AZ Farm Bureau)

*To view this article in its entirety, as well as more pictures, please visit [www.azfb.org](http://www.azfb.org) or [www.diablotrust.org](http://www.diablotrust.org)*

*Julie Murphree is the Communications, Education & Marketing Director with the AZ Farm Bureau. This article originally appeared in Arizona Farm Bureau's blog, *The Voice*, at [www.azfb.org](http://www.azfb.org). You can find this article and more pictures there. This article was originally published on August 11, 2015.*



## *M*eanwhile, Back at the Ranch...

It's been a year since I last wrote this and I always have a hard time figuring out what to say, so here goes.

Starting with moisture we had a so-so winter compared to Flagstaff, especially on the open parts of Anderson Mesa, and we didn't run much snowmelt into the dirt tanks on the east side. Yeager Lake, Dry Lake, and Boot Lake had very little to no water, so if you travelled across the 125 road you probably saw our water hauling set-ups. Poly plastic tanks are the best thing around! We set up two or three of them together with a trough, and aha! - you have a water hole. And yes, it takes a while for wildlife to get used to them . . . about until dark the same night you set them up. We saw antelope and elk drinking there very soon after. We haul water from either the headquarters or from Kinnikinick Lake; both are long trips and the roads are really bad either way, so it's an hour for each load. 400 head of cattle in June will drink 20 gallons a day (at least) and our truck carries 3000 gallons, so that's 3 trips to each place every day, even on weekends (we can't really get them to quit drinking on those "days off"). Then we had that great rain in June and it grew the feed!



Kit Metzger, Flying M Ranch (Diablo Trust Archives)

Summer rains were spotty: good in some places and fair in others. This is the first year in a while that we did not have water run in Anderson Canyon during the summer rains. Winter range did not fare as well as last year but grew enough feed to winter the cattle and wildlife. We had a lot of heavy rains, but really not enough soaker storms. Then came fall and October made up for it! I think the mud in our corrals was a foot deep. We weaned, which is taking calves away from their mothers, right in the middle of the rain and wicked lightning. That's a little nerve-racking when your entire calf crop and paycheck is wet in a steel corral in the lightning! In the 1940s over 200 sheep were killed at Wallace Lake, just off FR125 near Mormon Lake, in one strike, so you never know what can happen. Our dad said it took the shepherders several days to skin them and at least save the hides.

On the projects side, we completed a 500-acre brush management project, between Grapevine and Diablo Canyons in the winter country. In just one rainy season you can see the difference in the vigor of the browse plants. Even though this project is more of a thinning of the trees 50 years and younger, in an old stand the difference in browse growth really shows. Our Diablo Trust goals call for a diverse plant and animal community, and a complete stand of PJ (piñon-juniper) just will not support that. We have some areas where no critters have left a track in years because of the tree density. We have started a 1,800-acre project north of Grapevine Canyon, and have a small 300+ acre project to do in the next year. The 1,800-acre project will be connecting the open country to the trails up Anderson Mesa and will really open up the corridors for antelope. Right now you can't find your rear-end with both hands there, and it will be back to open vistas when we get through with it.

Cattle prices were unbelievable this year: they started off better than last year but then in September and October the market did a correction. There was a 30% drop in prices that I don't think anybody saw coming. As of today in December, the market has still not moved very far back up. It always drops as the bulk of the calf crop in the country sells in the fall and the old cows come out of the herd, but a drop that big at one time does not happen often. We had that type of correction back in the '70s and as one of our cattle buyers said, "The calves blew the top out of every bank in Texas!!" That is one of the things that makes the business side of ranching always a little iffy – not only do most ranches get paid once a year, but the income can be drastically different than planned. And yes, I know it has not showed up at the grocery counter yet. Personally, I hope it does make beef prices drop a little so we still have consumers, but since a lot of the price of an animal is due to overseas sales when the world gets a little shaky, so too do agricultural markets. We do sell a little beef locally, but that market probably will never be more than 5% to 10% of our production. We can still take grass, sunshine, and precipitation and make a great protein food here and have more than the local market can use, so it helps with the balance of trade for the State of Arizona. I kind of like that.

We had a successful year selling vegetables again and were able to start selling at Mormon Lake. The folks in both Blue Ridge and Mormon Lake are a great bunch and it is always great to see them all happy with their vegetables. We are looking to expand to Winslow this year, if at all possible. Hopefully it snows so that we have lots of spring water! We are going to expand our garden area again this year, so maybe soon it will be big enough to really call it a farm.

So there is a little bit of 'Back at the Ranch' in 2015. As always, if anybody would like to know more or come see what's going on, all are welcome. See you at the next Diablo Trust function!!

## From the Calendar: Community Events

### The Annual Camp-out: August 22nd - 23rd

Our Annual Camp-out this year was held at Ashurst Run on the Flying M Ranch. Approximately 50 Diablo Trusters attended the gathering, ranging from veteran participants to brand-new community members. Some of the new attendees included a hunter who was camping across the road, another northern Arizona rancher, an NAU sustainability manager, and friends of Diablo Trusters.

As with most Camp-outs, there wasn't a set schedule, although there was a brief 'welcome' speech by Jeremy and the Board of Directors presented printed photographs and certificates of appreciation to Jack Metzger, of the Flying M Ranch, and Denis Humphrey, formerly of the AZ State Land Department, as 'thank-you' gifts in honor of their retirements and years of service to the community.

Jack retired from the Diablo Trust Board this summer, and Denis retired from the AZSLD in January. Denis performed the Forage Resource Study Group (FRSG) monitoring for nearly a decade and is still a close friend to many of the ranchers and range managers in northern Arizona. Both prints were displayed during Diablo Trust's "Love of the Land" photo exhibit at the High Country Conference Center on NAU's campus earlier this year.

As usual, Kit managed the fire pit and 'kitchen' area, making sure we had a warm and welcoming fire to eat our potluck dinner around. In the morning we had delicious biscuits and gravy and most people left by noon on Sunday.

We hope that next year's Camp-out is as successful as this one! Keep your eyes and ears open for news on when and where the 2016 Camp-out will be!

### Better World Film Series: October 15th

Diablo Trust participated in this year's Better World Film Series, produced by GreenNAU, the sustainability program at Northern Arizona University. The film promoted by the Trust was 'Farmland,' a documentary following six young farmers and ranchers in the United States. It was made in 2014 by James Moll, a multi-award-winning filmmaker best known for his documentaries and educational programs about the Holocaust, and is focused on the human side of American agriculture. Each subject is in their 20s, and most have taken over the farming operation after the death or retirement of their parents.

The film has its critics, but it is an excellent look at what ag-

*(continued on page 11)*

### NAU Seminar Field Trip: October 10th

Diablo Trust and Bar T Bar Ranch hosted seven NAU students and their professor for a half-day field trip in October, about three weeks after Jeremy presented to the class on campus and in-between two agricultural documentaries shown during the Better World Film Series, one addressing the climate impacts of cattle ranching and the other showing the human side of American agriculture. Most of the morning was spent discussing the ethics, efficacy, and environmental impacts of cattle ranching, Holistic Resource Management (HRM), and intensive grazing in northern Arizona, but the students also took a short tour of the headquarters and even put in some work, cleaning up spilled hay alongside the corrals. The students came with many preconceived notions of ranching, many of which were negative, but Judy, Bob, and Jeremy addressed each question and challenged the students to think 'outside the box' on topics like active open-lands management, conservation vs preservation, livestock production practices in the Southwest, and the 100+ products that are created out of 'beef' cattle.



The 7 visiting students from NAU Freshman Seminar 121 Aesthetic & Humanistic Inquiry First Year Seminar: Human and Animal Oppression, with their professor Mara (4th from left), Kali Jo Hovey of the -T- (6th from left), and Judy (far right), on -T- Ranch. (credit: Jeremy D. Krones)

### Autumn Community Meeting: November 13th

Our fall community meeting, this year held at the Flagstaff Ranger District office on US-89, drew a crowd of over two dozen Diablo Trust supporters, ranging from first-time attendees to veteran land managers. After our traditional round-table introductions, most of the meeting was conducted by Tom Mackin, the Diablo Trust Wildlife Committee Chair. The ranches, represented by Judy and Bob Prosser of the Bar T Bar and Kit Metzger of the Flying M, gave their updates, and then Tom presented a powerpoint overview of various projects and project types that are ex-

*(continued on page 11)*



## Autumn Community Meeting *(continued from page 10)*

ecuted on the ranches, including infrastructure improvements, water tub installations and tank cleanings, and grassland restoration (which includes clearing brush, as Kit discusses on page 9). Here are some pictures from Tom’s presentation:



Facing north, before (left) and after (center) grassland restoration treatment in sections 3 and 4, 2014. (courtesy of Tom Mackin)

Equipment being used for restoration in sections 3 and 11. (courtesy of Tom Mackin)

After Tom spoke we had a guest presentation by Bonnie Swarbrick, a Miami University graduate student from Tucson, AZ, who surveyed some Diablo Trust board members for a study on how wildlife is viewed differently and similarly between urban and rural residents of Arizona. Per our mission, we encourage academic research into how ranching and rangeland management fits into the region and state whenever possible, and Ms. Swarbrick’s research proved insightful and promising for future research.

Please stay tuned for future community meetings! All events are open to the public and we look forward to seeing you soon!

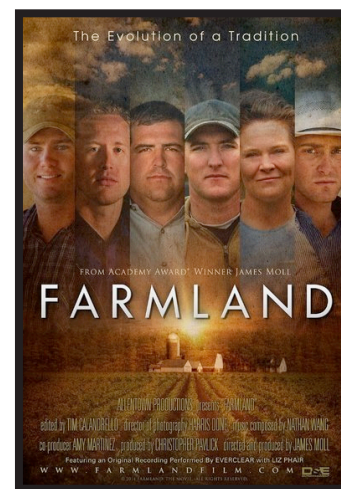
## Better World Film Series *(continued from page 10)*

riculture is in the USA, from the small organic farmer to the large-scale conventional rancher. We chose this film to sponsor because, while DT is not specifically an agricultural organization, we wouldn’t be who we are without our founding ranches and our dedication to holistic management stems directly from our appreciation of active land managers: that is, farmers and ranchers.

Due to unavoidable circumstances, our showing of *Farmland* during BWFS was in the late evening; however, the Diablo Trust hopes to screen this film again for our members, in early 2016.

Other films in the series included: *Shattered Sky*, *Cowspiracy*, *Vanishing of the Bees*, *DamNation*, and *This Changes Everything*. This is an annual film series, so if you have an idea for a film for us to propose next year please let us know!

You can learn more about the film series at: <http://nau.edu/green-nau/bwfs/>. For more on *Farmland*, visit: <http://www.farmlandfilm.com/>.



# Diablo Trust Annual Meeting

The Diablo Trust’s 2016 Annual Meeting will be on  
**Saturday, February 20th at 8:00AM**  
**Thornager’s**  
**2640 W. Kilde Lane, Flagstaff, AZ 86001**

For more information, please go to the calendar at our website or contact  
 Jeremy by phone: (928) 523-0588 or email: [info@diablotrust.org](mailto:info@diablotrust.org).



**Diablo Trust**  
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## Upcoming Diablo Trust Events

Friday, December 18, 2015: Diablo Trust Christmas Party at 521 West Beal Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86001, 6:00PM  
Please bring good cheer and a potluck contribution of appetizer/fingerfood/dessert.

Saturday, February 20, 2016: Annual Meeting at Thornager's, 2640 W Kiltie Ln, Flagstaff, AZ 86001, 8:00AM  
Stay tuned to future announcements for the agenda and more information!

Saturday, April 16, 2016: Sportsmen & Recreation Day on the Land at Flying M Ranch HQ, 10:30AM - 2:30PM  
Stay tuned to future announcements for the agenda and more information!

**If you have suggestions for events, presentations, or field trips, please do not hesitate to contact us!**

For further information on all events, please email [info@diablotrust.org](mailto:info@diablotrust.org) or call (928) 523-0588  
Please visit our website, <http://www.diablotrust.org/>, for details and further information on these and all future events.



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