Ask A Rancher, Revisited: State Land Leases
by Stephen Williams, Diablo Trust Board Member

The response offered to the question posed in the Ask A Rancher column in the Spring/Summer 2018 Ground Truth did not really provide an answer to the question. It provided a background regarding the administration of State Trust land and its grazing leases, but did not answer the question, “How are grazing permit numbers on state land calculated?”

There is no historical information regarding the initial establishment of lease carrying capacities in Land Department files that can assist in answering the question. Annual Reports provide some information, but nothing as specific as to the methodology used to determine grazing capacity expressed as head per section.

The initial report of the State Land Commission to Governor W.P. Hunt, dated December 1, 1914, identified its most important administrative duty as being the granting of permits for the continued occupancy of school lands (a.k.a. State Trust lands) held under Territorial Leases.

The rental for a period beginning with the date of Arizona’s admission to statehood, when all Territorial leases expired, was to be fixed by the Board of Supervisors of the various counties, as under the old law, but in all other respects the land was to be administered by the Commission. No mention was made as to whether the rental for

Continued on page 2

Talk From the
by Judy Prosser

Those of you that I speak to periodically are likely weary of hearing about drought. Others of you that are Flagstaff residents may find it surprising that we are still in a drought given the rainfall that Flagstaff has experienced this summer. But, the fact is, we are still way under normal precipitation in a large percentage of our low elevation pastures where cattle graze during winter (winter country).

A little history: this started on August 1st, 2017, when our monsoons quit. We had received about half the average rainfall in the
high country, and less than the average in the winter country. As most are aware, the winter of 2017-2018 was pretty anticlimactic and morphed into a down-right depressing spring. We are dependent on winter snowmelt to fill dirt tanks on the USFS permit, as well as our lakes, which provide water to the lower country tanks through our ditch system. Without that, we can be, as they say, SOL.

Then there was the Tinder Fire, at the end of April, of which 100% was on our permit. Forest restrictions and fire closure areas promptly followed. Stage 2 restrictions, combined with the closure, didn’t allow us to brand the cattle, maintain our fences with ATVs, or haul water to tanks that were not directly adjacent to a Level 1 or 2 road. Out of 250 dirt tanks on our forest permit, we had 12 with a useful amount of water. Of all 250 tanks, only about 10 are on Level 1 or 2 roads we could use. Furthermore, we only had 3 portable storages available as we were using them in the winter country. This basically rendered us useless on the forest. We had to move to Plan B, and consider not taking cattle up to the summer pastures on the forest until the restrictions were lifted. [As an aside, in all the years with droughts, we had never faced this problem before. We have always been able to go to the forest using mitigation measures that allowed us to function.] A positive that came out of this is that after meeting with the Deputy Forest Supervisor and the Deputy Regional Forester, we agreed to meet this fall to set up protocols for forest closures that will still allow for permittees to operate effectively.

Since we could not bring all the cattle to the forest, we chose to send about 20% of them up to our Hay Lake headquarters where we were able to put some on irrigated pasture and feed hay to others that were on private ground. We also elected to send off some of our two year old heifers (~400). The balance needed to stay on lower pastures. Breeding season for us starts about June 1st, a really important time. Cows, just like wildlife, need nutrition (green feed) to conceive. So we started feeding hay to the entire cow herd, which was a first for us.

Our typical spring day went something like this: Everyone met in the bunkhouse over coffee, or in the parking lot, to discuss the day’s duties. During April to mid July, at least 2, if not 3 people took pickups loaded with up to three 200-pound bales of alfalfa hay out to different pastures for the cow herds. We fed the same cows every other day for most of the spring, when we determined we were not going to have any green feed, as a consequence of no significant moisture from Jan - Mar. As a result they received about 50% of their nutrition from our feeding, with the assumption they could get the balance from the existing old dry feed.

Remember, cows are ruminants (4 stomachs) that can utilize all kinds of roughage (cellulose) as long as this diet is augmented with protein (alfalfa) to help break down the cellulose and make it useful. Mind you, we have never done this before. We have fed "supplement", mineral, and salt, which might be compared to adding chia seeds to your salad, but never hay as a large portion of the diet. These guys were putting out at least two, and sometimes three loads of hay per day. On the alternate days that we were not feeding in the winter country, we were hauling water to multiple locations, and usually pulling at least one vehicle, pickup or water truck into the shop for repairs. Lots of tires, parts, oil, grease, and fuel....and a very tired mechanic.

When USFS restrictions were lifted as the rains came, and forest grasses recovered, we were able to bring all the cows up to the
Diablo Trust wishes Program Manager Jeremy Kroneswell as he moves on with his career to help manage the Colorado Headwaters Land Trust in Granby, Colorado.

We welcome Megan Hosterman as our new Executive Director with expanded duties for programing and development.

Megan received her Master's in Regional Planning, with focus on Environmental Planning and Natural Resources from the University of New Mexico. She has experience in land management and conservation in the Intermountain West and Southwest working with diverse communities to find common ground and creative solutions. Her experience includes working as the Assistant Forest Planner for the Santa Fe National Forest where she partnered with tribes, ranchers, recreational users, conservation folks, and agencies, working at three different land trusts assisting with land stewardship, monitoring, conservation projects, and outreach, and working as a county planner in her home state of California where she helped develop greenways, planned for sea level rise in coastal communities, and managed mining permits.

As the executive director at Diablo Trust, Megan will work to expand our land projects and community programs, find new opportunities for collaborative research projects alongside Northern Arizona University and state agencies, and work with our community to connect people to working landscapes.

Feel free to introduce yourself to Megan, and join with us in Diablo Trust’s active process of land stewardship.

Norm Lowe, President
Contact: president@diablotrust.org

This year Diablo Trust celebrates 25 years of protecting nearly half a million acres of open space, wildlife, and local agriculture.

The accomplishment of sustaining a collaborative model built by two family ranches and alongside a robust network of committed federal and state agencies, innovative university researchers, and tireless volunteers, is extraordinary. This work has not only ensured the prolonged health of wildlife, land, and water, but also the livability of neighboring communities. As Diablo Trust’s new executive director, I am honored and humbled to work toward our mission of long-term economic, social, and ecological sustainability through collaborative land stewardship, with a dedicated and engaged team.

As we look toward the next 25 years, Diablo Trust is expanding our vision to meet the new challenges of a changing West. The coming years will bring over six million more people to Arizona’s sun corridor, an increased pressure to sell and develop open space and flowing waters, and a changing climate that will make the uncertain endeavor of local agriculture even more so. Ranchers across the west are aging, most are over 60 years old, and 40% of family farms and ranches, totalling 370 million acres, will soon change hands. Diablo Trust will continue to work to ensure working lands remain productive and intact, but will also need the support of communities like Flagstaff.

The dark, star-filled skies, wide open spaces, breathtaking views, and far-reaching wildlife that holistically managed ranchlands protect provide the backdrop for abundant recreational opportunities, a collective sense of place, and a reflection of ourselves. Together we will form new partnerships to learn from each other; discover knowledge through new and ongoing research on the Diablo Trust lands; and will expand our programs to better connect people to the land.

Thank you for joining us in our efforts to preserve our cherished landscapes.

Megan Hosterman, Executive Director
Contact: info@diablotrust.org
A Reflection From A Friend
by Garrett Fabian
AZ Game & Fish Department

After 14 years of serving in the AZ Game & Fish Department Happy Jack - GMU 5A district, I have decided to move on to another position within the agency, over in Show Low. While I am excited for the new opportunities, it is with a heavy heart that I am leaving. I have made some great contacts and friendships working this district, some of the most meaningful of which were with members of Diablo Trust.

I can honestly call Bob & Judy Prosser friends. What we have been able to accomplish for the good of all wildlife and livestock is impressive. I greatly appreciate their dedication to the land, and I am sure they will continue to work with new AZGFD & USFS employees to benefit the habitat.

As society’s values continue to change, the challenges Diablo Trust and all its members will face to conserve our natural resources will only increase. I can remember giving a presentation in the early 2000s to Diablo Trust about taking the “wreck” out of recreation. Most of our concerns about this were validated throughout my career.

We have worked hard to educate and regulate the public, but in today’s age of selfish ambitions, we are likely just holding steady. It will take groups such as Diablo Trust to think outside the box, like when they first formed in the early 1990s, and lead the way if we are to maintain our natural resources. I look forward to hearing what you all accomplish in the future.

Take care,
Garrett Fabian

Diablo Trust Welcomes
New Board Member Chuck Phillips

I grew up spending time on the family’s cattle ranch outside of Tucson. I graduated from the University of Arizona in 1983 with a degree in Animal Science. I worked on the Bar T Bar during summers in college, and returned after college to work on both Diablo Trust ranches, building miles and miles of electric fence and wrestling with the concepts of Holistic Resource Management.

In 1991 I moved to Chicago to complete an MBA at Northwestern University. I then took a job with the animal health division of Merck in New Jersey, where I stayed for eight years, starting in market research, and then moving through sales and international operations and ending up at mergers and acquisitions. I traveled extensively during this time and had extended stays in France and Singapore. In 2000 I joined Pfizer Research and Development, in Connecticut. I first worked on the integration of a major acquisition, ending up as the head of Finance for the Development organization. Having lost interest in the corporate world, I left in 2007 and enrolled in a two-year furniture making program outside of Boston. I moved back to Connecticut and started my own one-man custom furniture business, which I operated for the next seven years. I returned to Arizona in late 2017 to be closer to family and to marry my high school sweetheart.

Having lived and worked on both the Bar T Bar and the Flying M, I have an honest affection for the land, the animals, and the lifestyle. I hope that my experiences since can help the ranches and the Diablo Trust achieve objectives and adapt to changes.

Born in: Tucson, AZ

Occupation: In transition. Helping my dad on the family ranch.

Books I Recently Enjoyed: The Path Between the Seas and Truman by David McCullough, Killers Of The Flower Moon by David Grann

Favorite Hobbies: Photography, furniture builder/aficionado

Favorite Ranch Recipe: A well-aged steak

Favorite Western: Blazing Saddles

Favorite College Class: Calculus or Meats Lab (seriously)

Fondest Outdoor Memory: Each and every sunrise I have seen

Why I Participate With Diablo Trust: I have lived and worked on both ranches. This experience created a strong desire to preserve the landscape and the lifestyle. I am hoping that my experiences since can contribute to achieving the goals of DT.
Good Reads for the Western Life Book Club
in partnership with the Flagstaff City-Coconino County Public Library

June Book Review: The Big Burn by Timothy Egan
An examination of the West and the history of our country, The Big Burn by Timothy Egan ought to be required reading for conservation-minded individuals across the American West.
Egan dives headlong into the history of our national forest system, shedding light on events and the powerful individuals that shaped our country. Vivid descriptions of forest fires, interpersonal disputes, and political matters make clear the complicated history of our public lands. The discussion we had was one of the most engaging in Diablo Trust Book Club history, with two new readers joining us, one of whom is a retired Forest Service employee who worked alongside forest firefighters and has a unique perspective of fires on public lands.

July Book Review: On Trails by Robert Moor
Trails are everywhere, from the ants marching to and fro to the electrical power that courses all around us, connecting us to each other. Robert Moor artfully catalogues the progression of trails on the Earth from those dating back millennia. We read this book to pair with our July event, the Sportsman & Recreation Day on the Land on the AZ Trail. The book club discussion was primarily about the fascinating facts we learned from the book, but we also talked about building trails, the pros and cons of staying on trails on public lands, and what different trails mean to each of us.

August Book Review: Revolution On the Range by Courtney White
Courtney White is a leader in the collaborative environmental community throughout the Intermountain West, and this book works to show the true impact of his work. In Revolution On the Range, White outlines and examines ranchers and agriculturalists who value conservation, collaboration, and education to achieve the goals of holistic sustainability. He travels throughout the West interviewing ranchers, farmers, and environmentalists about their environmental ethics. We highly recommend this book as both an introduction and continued reading for anyone interested in collaborative conservation, environmental education, and working lands topics.

Talk from the -T- (continued from page 2)
on the high country.
However, the lower country is still suffering. Much of the blue grama grass has died. We have never seen this happen before to this extent. Once before in our lifetime, there was a partial die-off during the drought when bugs were eating the roots. This does not appear to be the same phenomenon. It is a large component of our total forage, so that is currently complicating a plan for the next 12 months. If the forage component in winter pastures does not change drastically by early October, we will be sending all weaned calves away, liquidating about 25-30% of our cows and possibly preparing to feed hay again to the balance.

In addition to the economic factor, there is an emotional component as well. The stress of constantly weighing the pros and cons of choices (if there are any), second guessing the choice, and hoping like hell it was the right one, all add up, not to mention the toll it takes on exhausted employees. It has been said that God's timing is not always the same as ours, and planning around the weather is a testimony to that. Weather is such an unknown. And such a big ticket item for a rancher or farmer. At our age we are still learning every day! Now I know what being a lifelong learner really means.
Wildlife: September Music
by Tom Mackin
Diablo Trust Wildlife Chair

It’s hard to believe that another summer is almost over. We’ve been blessed to have a decent Monsoon, much needed after a dismal winter and dry spring, and in most places the forage and water holes are in pretty good shape. For those of us that hunt, fall is the start of that wonderful period of cooler temperatures, shorter days and if the luck of the tag draw has been with you, hopefully you’ll be pursuing at least one of several species that roam the Diablo Trust lands. While not the most abundant, probably the most sought after species is the majestic Rocky Mountain elk. Not a true Arizona native (that distinction goes to the Merriam’s elk, extirpated from our state probably before 1900 by market and subsistence hunters during the heyday of the westward expansion), 83 Rocky Mountain elk were brought to Cabin Draw south of Winslow from Yellowstone Park.

September welcomes the “music” to the ears of many, hunters and wildlife watchers alike, with the piercing bull elk bugles, challenging other bulls or just sounding off in an audible display to impress the cows in his harem. Throughout the night and into the early morning hours, the bulls gather the cows and if he’s fortunate to be the dominant bull, breeding will occur with calves born late next spring. The cows are not silent though and they’re more vocal almost year round, calling their calves, broadcasting their whereabouts or just socializing in the large herds that frequently gather together throughout all seasons with an assortment of mews, whistles, and other strange sounds. Elk generally range up to elevations of 11,000’ during summer and drop down when forced by deep snow into the pinyon junipers at 5,000-6,000’ elevation in winter range. The elk need room, easily covering 5-10 miles at a time over various topography but they’re never far from water, always trying to remain within a 1-2 mile radius of dependable, adequate water. Fortunately through the water holes provided by Mother Nature and the hard work by the ranching families of Anderson Mesa, the elk have found a good home and while there will be fortunate hunters that will be stocking their freezers over the next 2-3 months, through sound scientific tag levels established by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, elk will most assuredly be around for years to come.

DIABLO TRUST INDUCTED TO OUTDOOR HALL OF FAME

Wildlife For Tomorrow Honored Diablo Trust for Protecting Wildlife
Our Arizona Section Society for Rangeland Management meetings are a great place to network, express ideas, issues, solutions, successes, failures, and tell lies. For those not around at the 1:00 am fire circle, you’re missing out on some progressive solutions. It was during one of these evening discussions that I came up with perhaps one of my best outside the box ideas, and a 15-minute bit I still use ten years later.

We were much younger in our careers and a colleague was venting his frustrations about his Wild Horse and Burro Program. He was getting grief about these non-native species from a different organization that advocates sport fishing. Stocking and sport fishing for nonnative species. That my friends, is what we call irony. While he was venting, I was thinking solutions - elusive win-win-win solutions.

Ladies and gentleman, let me introduce you to my Wild Horse and Burro Fishing Program. It’s a controversial program designed for sportsmen that combines the enjoyment of fishing, while removing our overpopulated wild horses and burros, and saving our rangelands from degradation.

Here is how it works: strap your fishing buddy into the bed of a UTV, or better yet strap yourself in and make your buddy drive. You equip him with a rather large, heavy-duty rod, but one that maintains its flex for the fight. Fiberglass, graphite, carbon fiber, the choice is yours; I just wouldn’t recommend bamboo. Buy one of those garden hose reels (a winch if you’re fancy) and attach it to your rod. Now you’re going to need some heavy test, you might want to experiment with some rope or cable. Jury is still out on whether a single, double or treble hook works best - probably personal preference. On your way out, stop by your local feed store and pick up a couple bales of hay for bait.

The most common wild horse and burro fishing technique is trolling from a UTV, or for the experienced guides - long-lining. At times, you may want to sit back, relax, and have the animals come to the bait. If this is you, may I suggest a hot air balloon to act as a bobber to let you know when you have a bite? Or to hoist your line out of the desert shrubbery? Snagging in the desert is a disaster to be avoided at all costs. Others may get more enjoyment from casting. You dear friends, are going to need a trebuchet.

Close your eyes and keep reading. Imagine yourself out there now….Wild horse and burro rod in hand, buckled in the bed of a UTV, enjoying the sun with your dry line on the fertile equineries of the desert Wild West. Out in the distance you see a dust cloud. A haboob trailing the stampede of a herd of burros. A live view of the most iconic of images of the American West glaring right back at you. And they’re coming. The burros are coming for your flake of alfalfa. And then one strikes. You set the hook and now you’re in it. Straining through the bucking, the thrashing, the bumbling and stumbling – the turbulent fight. Hours later, with sweat pouring down your face and the stinging in your eyes, you’ve finally landed your prized Jack. You take a picture and then realize because of the Horse and Burro Act, it’s all catch and release.

A Cowgal's Story
by Sheila Carlson, Flying M Ranch

There are folks out amongst us who have experienced those simple things but now due to health issues, they cannot experience them any longer. Enjoy those simple things, experience them and share them when you can.

So many times we take the simple things for granted:
The colors of the early morning sky as the sun peeks over the horizon,
letting us know another day is come,
The smell of the pines as you guide your horse through them, checking on cattle,
The warmth of the sun as it shines down on you.
Ask A Rancher, Revisited (continued from page 1)

these permits was a flat fee, or based upon its carrying capacity or number of acres.

(Note: a three-person State Land Commission, whose members were appointed by the Governor, administered State Trust lands from statehood until 1919, when a State Land Commissioner was appointed.)

Land Commissioner W.W. Lane’s 1950 Annual Report to Governor Dan Garvey noted an amendment to the State land Code by the First Session of the 19th Legislature, which provided that all appraisals be made by the State Land Commissioner. It also provided that all grazing leases be based upon carrying capacity of the land and the average price of range beef for the preceding year. The Land Department established a four-person Appraisal Division, for field work to enable billing on the new basis.

Land Commissioner Roger Ernst’s Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1954-1955 discussed the proposed method of establishing an average carrying capacity for the ranch unit as a whole, rather than the present method of setting an average carrying capacity for each section or portion thereof. Permanent Grazing Appraisal Record Forms were made effective.

(Note: Prior to 1950 it was Land Department policy to issue separate leases for each section, or fraction thereof, for grazing lands. This resulted in over 18,000 leases issued for 1,450 lessees.)

Land Commissioner Obed Lassen’s Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1957-1958 stated the average carrying capacities have been established on most leases.

Land Commissioner Andrew Bettwy’s Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1977-1978 noted that H.B.2367 provided Natural Resource Manager positions for the Land Department. They were to be fielded as the Cooperative Grazing Allotment Management Study Team.

The Bureau of Land Management was gathering data on grazing capacities on its allotments in Arizona in response to a lawsuit by the Natural Resource Defense Council. The Land Department gathered data on State Trust land within the same allotments.

Both agencies were using the forage allocation (a.k.a. forage inventory) method. This method estimated available forage production by clipping and weighing forage plants. Forage production per acre was adjusted based upon percent slope and distance from water. The forage production was then divided by the animal-unit-month (AUM) requirement on a monthly basis to determine the AUMs of forage available to livestock. A Commissioner Order, adjusting the carrying capacity of grazing leases, was prepared and issued to grazing lessees as a result of these surveys.

Now, when unleased State Trust land has to be evaluated prior to lease issuance, or an existing grazing lessee requests an adjustment in carrying capacity, the Range Resource Area Manager uses a variety of information in determining the carrying capacity.

This information consists of ecological site maps, condition class by site, historical land use, vegetation composition, vegetation production data, livestock actual use (if available), monitoring data (if available), rainfall records, and professional judgment.

Plant Spotting: Woods' Rose

**Scientific Name:** Rosa woodsii

**Common Name:** Woods' Rose

Woods' rose is a bushy, perennial, North American shrub that grows up into large, dense thickets of up to 10 feet tall. They have deciduous, widely-spaced sharp-toothed leaflets and flowers ranging from pale to dark pink. They also produce a red rose hip fruit, which are roughly a centimeter long. The rose can grow at elevations of up to 11,200 feet and are common in the Flagstaff area.
On the Ground with Diablo Trust

From the Calendar: Summer 2018 Events

07/14: Sportsman & Recreation Day on the Land

This year’s Annual Sportsman & Recreation Day on the Land focused on recreation on the Bar T Bar Ranch, via the Arizona National Scenic Trail (AZT). The AZT, which is currently the focus of a Comprehensive Plan by the US Forest Service, will plan future management of the trail corridor has been central to conflict. The width of the corridor buffering the trail and the permitted uses may impact how the ranches are able to maintain their infrastructure. 16 attendees came together on our Day on the Land, to talk and learn about the trail, including representatives from the AZ Trail Association, USFS, and a citizen’s hiking group (AZ Trailblazers).

The day included a short hike to an overlook near Jack’s Canyon, followed by productive and much needed discussion about the Comprehensive Plan. Ongoing discussions between stakeholders continue to be aimed at understanding how the plan may impact multiple uses, while Diablo Trust works to ensure that the AZ Trail community and the ranching community continues to have healthy relationships.

08/17: Hay Meadow Volunteer Day

Collaboration isn’t just about talking together - it’s also about working together! Over 30 dedicated range scientists and ranching advocates gathered together at Hay Meadow to remove an old exclosure initially built to manage the utilization of the pasture by cattle and wildlife. It is now long past the timeline of the exclosure’s original purpose, and the fences and materials are simply obstacles in an otherwise healthy field. Diablo Trust partnered with Roger Joos from the USFS and the Friends of Northern Arizona Forests to remove the fencing, and were able to do an entire day’s work in just a few hours because of the great turn-out from the SRM crew! We dismantled old fencing that surrounded and cut through the meadow. It was a great success for everyone, and we hope we can do more projects like this in the future, with equally amazing, positive, and hardworking crews!

08/17: Annual Campout Under the Stars

This year our annual campout was attended by over 30 people, including agency representatives from the US Forest Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the AZ Game & Fish Department, the Coconino County Board of Supervisors, the Bureau of Land Management, the AZ State Land Department, and the University of Arizona Extension Service.

Mother Road Brewery and Bar T Bar graciously provided beer and burgers enjoyed by all. The group stayed up late by the fire, sharing stories, jokes, songs, and reflections. There was even a short ‘roast’ of Jeremy Krones, the out-going Diablo Trust Program Manager. The next morning started slowly, but we eventually got the ball rolling towards a delicious breakfast of biscuits and gravy, with eggs and fruit. Thank you to all who joined us for a successful campout, and we look forward to seeing you next year!
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The Mountains Are Calling and I Must Go
by Jeremy D. Krones

I don't think I've ever been speechless (just ask Kit); if anything, there are simply too many words from which to choose to properly enunciate what I'm feeling, thinking, or intending at any given time.

But writing this essay, my last for Ground Truth, did not come easy. What am I to say? How am I to sum up the last three-and-a-half years of my life?

Program Manager of Diablo Trust wasn’t my first job out of college, but it was my first job without a time-sensitive contract, my first job that didn’t rely on the seasons, my first job with (gasp) my own office!

I was nervous, or as nervous as I am known to get, on my first day. I don’t remember it specifically, but I remember coming in confident and concerned. It helped, of course, to have help.

Help from the board, help from my predecessors at the office, and help from the myriad contacts I developed in and around Flagstaff, before and during my tenure at DT.

Thank you to Derrick Widmark and Carrie Eberly, my predecessors in the Diablo Trust office. They both helped guide me in my start, giving me the lowdown on what works, what doesn’t work, and what might work given the right variables. When I had doubts in my capabilities, they helped bring me back on track.

Thank you to Denise Hudson, Linda Blosser, and Sylvia Meakin, the three most loyal and dedicated DT volunteers. Denise is the owl-eyed editor of Ground Truth (and a regular at book club), and Linda and Sylvia work behind the scenes at many events throughout the year, often in Judy’s or Kit’s kitchens.

Thank you to everyone who participated with Diablo Trust over the years, from Day On the Land participants to Annual Campout attendees to Book Club readers. Most were involved prior to me, but many friends and other community contacts joined in the last few years, making my time with Diablo Trust even more special.

Thank you to every board member: Norm Lowe, Norm Wallen, Bill Towler, Jill Rundall, Rick Knight, Ellen Parish, Stephen Williams, Chuck Phillips, Tom Sisk, Judy Prosser, Bob Prosser, Kit Metzger, and Diana Kessler. For whatever length of time we overlapped with this organization, you helped me develop into the leader and advocate I am today, and your lessons (intentional or not) will continue to affect me far into the future.

To the ranchers, Judy, Bob, Kit, and Diana, thank you for teaching me about your world, a world I “knew” about but now embrace. When I first asked Kit for a job as a cowhand back in college I said that I’d worked on farms and ranches, but never a “John Wayne” ranch - a quip I’ll never live down on the Flying M. Our perceptions of ranches in the US, and around the world, are shaped by what we see: news and media, and my thoughts of the “wild west” were shaped by John Wayne, Elmore Leonard, and Gene Wilder.

A special thank-you must go to Kit. She took a chance on me in 2012 and must’ve felt the sting of taking that risk since then. But living out on the ranch for a year allowed us to grow closer. Through our dinner conversations - just the two of us eating beef and veggies with some light alcohol to wash it down, as the rest of the ranch crew preferred to eat in their own homes - I learned on just how many topics we agree, and that even when we disagree we can usually find common ground regardless.

I had a collaborative mind before the ranch, but it was still tilted towards the social environment of my youth. Being on the ranch and working for Kit helped right the ship towards the Radical Center, and I’ve been riding that line ever since.

And thank you to everyone else who played a role in my growth the last few years: my mentors and teachers, friends, students, drinking buddies, and all of the familiar faces from around Flagstaff with whom I might have had conversations but never really got to know.

During the Grand Canyon Semester, the “study abroad” program at NAU I did in my senior year of college, I never thought I’d be the one classmate to return to Flagstaff, much less return and stay for more than a season. I thought - and think - of myself as a traveler, a man of the trail. But there was something here in Northern Arizona that appealed to me, that drew me back. Some of it certainly was that sense of adventure, to see and do something that doesn’t exist on the east coast. Some of it was also the want to find a new community, make new friends, and be somewhere else for a while.

I am moving on, to the Colorado Headwaters Land Trust, based in Granby, CO. It’s a small town, just 90 minutes from Denver over the Berthoud Pass on US-40. I’m moving from the most recognizable parts of the Colorado River to the place where it all begins: Lake Granby, the headwaters of our most powerful river. To my friends who have dedicated their lives to introducing students and tourists and advocates to the River in the Canyon, I hope to do my part by ensuring that the land surrounding the birthplace of the River stays open, accessible, and protected.

I am confident in handing the reins over to Megan Hosterman. She’s coming to us with an absolute wealth of experience on lands across the Southwest. Megan has bright ideas, a clear vision, and the open enthusiasm necessary to stay afloat with Diablo Trust.

I still have some irons in the fire down here, and will be back through Flagstaff from time to time. I might not make a splash when I come through, but don’t be shy about reaching out!
"Learning from the land and sharing our knowledge . . .
So there will always be a West"

Upcoming Events

Sun, May 06–Oct 21: Flagstaff Community Market • City Hall, 211 W. Aspen Ave, Flagstaff

Mon, Sept 24: Book Club • 5:30PM - 6:30PM • Flagstaff Library, 300 W. Aspen Ave
Interwoven: Junipers and the Web of Being, by Kristen Rogers-Iversen

Friday, Nov 16: CROP Meeting • TBD
Cooperative Resource Operational Plan, for agency partners to discuss relevant matters with the Trust

Mon, Nov 26: Book Club • 5:30PM - 6:30PM • Flagstaff Library, 300 W. Aspen Ave
Cattle Kingdom: The Hidden History of the Cowboy West, by Chistopher Knowlton

Fri, Dec 14: Christmas Party • 6:00PM - 'til the cows come home! • Bill Towler & Kay Johnson’s, 409 N. James Street
Please bring cheer and a potluckl contribution of a dish or a drink!

Sun, Dec 16: Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count • Mormon Lake Lodge, Mormon Lake

Stay tuned for information on these events and more still in the works: http://www.diablotrust.org/calendar
If you have any suggestions for events, presentations, or field trips, please do not hesitate to contact us.