



Dear Friends,

I hope that this letter finds you in good health and a positive spirit.

Every year as my children grow older, I am aware of the challenges and changes that they will face as ranchers in our area. Many of the ranches surrounding ours have been split up into housing developments. Each week new roads, houses and structures are being built in our valley. Our fence line is the boundary to many of these developments. As the houses are constructed, I know that these areas will never return to ranching or open space.

Growing up in the Rodeo valley and working on our family ranch has been a lifelong learning experience and a source of pride to me. I want my children to learn to love the outdoors and learn the skills needed to be ranchers. It is great to see my children working cattle and taking care of our ranch along side of my parents and experience a common goal for the third generation.

Our family is proud to work with the Malpai Borderlands in their efforts to keep open spaces and to work on common goals for cattle ranching, as well as conservation. As a board member I am pleased at the efforts that the Malpai continues to put forth in the areas of conservation easements, working with individual ranchers to enhance

range conservation, fire planning, and science monitoring. Although there is an economic recession in our country, the Malpai continues to work on these projects and many more. We have been reaching out with a Ranching Today workshop in September and a science meeting this winter.

Ranching this year has not been an easy business. The continued drought, increased expenses, illegal immigration issues and changing cattle market are only a few of the challenges that many ranchers have faced this year. I know that the continued work of the Malpai group will be a start to solving many of these problems in the coming years. The Malpai group has shown that they can work collectively with partners of various groups to solve problems. We have asked some of our neighbors to share their experiences with us in this newsletter.

I ask that you participate in our goals to keep open spaces and work in them. The continued financial support of our members is appreciated and needed more than ever. I hope to speak with you at one of our events. I'll be looking forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rich Winkler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a distinct "Winkler" ending.

Rich Winkler

MALPAI GROUP GOAL STATEMENT

Our goal is to restore and maintain the natural processes that create and protect a healthy, unfragmented landscape to support a diverse, flourishing community of human, plant and animal life in our borderlands region. Together, we will accomplish this by working to encourage profitable ranching and other traditional livelihoods which will sustain the open space nature of our land for generations to come.

UPDATE ON ACCREDITATION WITH THE LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

By *Bill McDonald*



As reported in last year's newsletter, the Malpai Borderlands Group began in 2009 the process of getting accredited by the Land Trust Alliance. We have now completed a Guided Organizational Assessment of our operations, and have worked hard to write new policies and rewrite some old ones to meet the Alliance's standards. As this is being written, we are about to begin the final step in the application process that will end in November. This is the most intensive part of the entire process. We believe we are well positioned to successfully complete this last step and achieve our goal of being fully accredited by year's end.

We invite you to submit comments about how well you think we are doing in meeting the Alliance's national quality standards for technical and ethical operation of a land trust. You can find information about the Alliance's standards at www.landtrustaccreditation.org, and you can submit comments through their website. There is also more information about this on the Malpai Group website www.malpaiborderlandsgroup.org. The deadline for submitting comments is Dec. 30, 2011.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT MONITORING

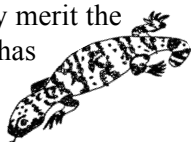
By *Matt Killeen*

As autumn settles in I find myself embarking upon my third year of easement monitoring for the Malpai Borderlands Group. This involves visiting all 13 ranches for which conservation easements have been done, and looking at a good portion of the 77,500 acres that have been protected. The truck is loaded with a second spare tire, a good shovel, and a long tow rope. At times like this I consider myself a lucky man, as I'm headed deep into the open country that the Malpai Group has been working to protect for the last 17 years. The only downside is the amount of time spent driving from my Patagonia home to the heart of Malpai country. That drive time does provide plenty of opportunity for reflection though—I thought I'd share with you a couple of my observations.

Divided lands quickly degrade. What I see among the ranchettes sprawling around Sonoita or the wildcat subdivision west of Rodeo are smaller parcels that invariably are pushed beyond their ecological tipping point. Loss of grasses is followed by erosion after which the grasses have a heck of a time returning to the barren soil.

A respected grassland is resilient. In my short tenure we've swung from drought conditions to a nice, if average, wet year in 2010. A rancher can do many things to protect their land while providing for their families, but they can't make it rain. They can set the stage to capture and benefit from the moisture that does fall by sustaining adequate ground cover. I have seen that recovery of well-managed grassland from drought can be remarkable.

Working on Nature Conservancy preserves for over a decade now, I have developed a reasonable eye and a keen appreciation for healthy landscapes. Yet I remain blown away, at times, by the beauty of the land that the Malpai easements protect. Some of the healthiest grasslands I've come across lie here and they merit the attention that the Malpai Borderlands Group has garnered in their efforts to preserve them.



PITCHING IN ON HABITAT RESTORATION ON THE PITCHFORK RANCH

By *A.T. and Cinda Cole*

We were exploring for ideas about grassland restoration that we could use on our place, the Pitchfork Ranch, when we first went to a Malpai Science Meeting. The people and ideas were so stimulating we have gone to every science meeting since. The restoration practices we are now applying to our ranch are based in no small part from what we have learned that Malpai ranchers have done.

The Pitchfork Ranch, which at one time was part of the Diamond A, lies to the northeast of the Malpai Borderlands in the New Mexico Bootheel. At an elevation of 5100 feet, it is located just west of the Continental Divide, an hour's drive south of Silver City, NM. Native grasslands and perennial streams in arid regions are now among the world's most endangered ecosystems. The Pitchfork Ranch has both.

Archaic peoples, Mimbres, Apache, Spanish and finally Anglo settlers lived along the Burro Cienaga, a unique desert wetland and the ranch's most important feature. The cienaga, a Spanish term meaning "slow moving water or marsh", literally "cien-agua" or "100 waters", is perennial and bisects the ranch north to south for a stretch of 2 miles, going underground for another 5 ½ miles before leaving the ranch. The cienaga is fed by a perennial spring and six canyons that drain the 58-square-mile watershed upstream of Burro Cienaga.

Beginning in 2005, our restoration efforts focused on the upper 2-mile perennial reach of the cienaga, funded by grants from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Partners in Wildlife and NRCS Wetland Reserve programs. The goal of the restoration is to arrest the deep incision there by trapping sediment and to raise the cienaga bottom toward the level of the historic, pre-trenchment terrace—a task being accomplished by installing Bill Zeedyk-inspired grade control structures and removing 350 acres of one-seed juniper from the riparian corridor.

With support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and TNC we are restoring drainage-bottom swales and upland

tobosa-black grama grasslands in four small watersheds that feed Burro Cienega. Installation of grade control structures, Zuni bowls, small woven-weirs, one-rock dams and straw wattles will prevent further down-cutting and soil loss from the drainages and will increase upland water retention for successful reestablishment of grasses. Two severely damaged dirt tanks in these grasslands will also be decommissioned and rock structures installed along the drainages to prevent continued erosion. Plans for a demonstration project to restore a degraded dirt tank with a new, smaller footprint design to reduce evaporation rates and increase water delivery to the cienega are also being explored.

This work will improve grassland condition and watershed function, benefitting species like Gila topminnow, Chiricahua leopard frog, Wrights Marsh Thistle and Aplomado falcon, which have been reintroduced to the ranch. With 12,000 acres potentially in need of restoration, we are working with TNC and the Jornada Experimental Range to create a map of the “ecological sites” (also known as range sites) and “states” (vegetation condition) for each section of the ranch. The map will help to identify areas with the greatest restoration potential and specific treatment methods that will be most successful in reducing shrubs and increasing perennial grasses. We are looking forward to getting more good ideas, and making helpful contacts, at future Malpai meetings.

JAGUARS IN THE BORDERLANDS: UPDATE ON RECOVERY PLANNING BY THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has started to develop a Recovery Plan for the jaguar in the borderlands. Although on two previous occasions the Service determined that a Recovery Plan and Critical Habitat are not appropriate for the jaguar because they are so rare in the U.S., a recent lawsuit resulted in a judge’s decision requiring that a Recovery Plan be prepared. In late 2010 the Service convened a binational Jaguar Recovery Team with experts from the U.S. and Mexico. The team consists of two subgroups: a Technical team of feline biologists and ecologists who can evaluate the ecological needs of the jaguar; and an Implementation team consisting of landowners and land managers, including Federal and State agencies, as well as private landowners, from both sides of the Border. The Malpai Group was asked to participate in the Implementation team.

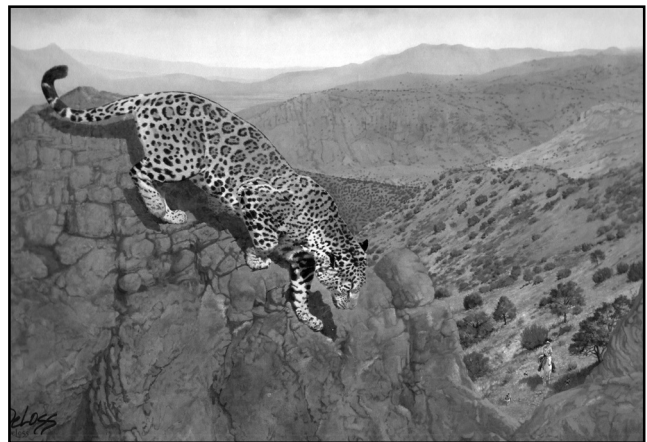
The Recovery Plan is intended to identify site-specific management actions needed for conservation and recovery, with measurable criteria defining steps to recovery. However, the jaguar is listed throughout its range from the US to Argentina including fifteen countries, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has extremely limited ability to conduct recovery actions in other countries.

Due to the huge range of the species, this plan will primarily address recovery of the northern jaguar population in northwestern Mexico and the southwestern US, although information on the jaguar throughout its range will be included. In its comments to the Service about the plan, the Malpai Group emphasized that the real need for jaguar conservation is in Mexico where the true population center is located. To see our complete comments, go to our website: malpaiborderlandsgroup.org

One of the first steps in recovery planning is to conduct a Population Viability Analysis (PVA). This analysis will include all of the best available information to evaluate how vulnerable the jaguar population is, and what factors are most important to sustaining it. The Service plans to have a draft plan done by fall 2012, which will then be available for public comment.

The Service is also considering proposing Critical Habitat and will probably make that decision in spring 2012 after the jaguar population analysis is done. If Critical Habitat is proposed, it can only apply within the U.S. The results of the Population Viability Analysis will be a key part of the decision.

This year the Service is beginning a 3-year jaguar survey and monitoring effort along the Arizona/New Mexico border with Mexico. This monitoring effort is being funded by Customs and Border Protection as mitigation for development of border infrastructure.



Jaguar painting by DeLoss McWilliams

GET YOUR OWN JAGUAR!

Arizona artist DeLoss McWilliams and her husband Tom came to a Malpai workshop several years ago, and while here saw the jaguar photos that Warner Glenn took in 1996 in the Peloncillo Mountains. She was so enthralled with this cat that she asked permission to use one of the images in a painting. DeLoss did a beautiful painting of the jaguar, with Warner on a mule in the distance looking up at it. The painting has been reproduced as high quality prints on stretched canvas or on rag paper, available in several sizes. 20% of the cost of all print sales will be donated to the Malpai Group. If you are interested in a print, contact Wendy at email [<mbg@vtc.net>](mailto:mbg@vtc.net)

A NEW FIRE PLAN FOR THE MALPAI BORDERLANDS

By Don Decker, NRCS-MBG Project Coordinator

An important effort is underway to create a new prescribed and wild fire plan for the Malpai Borderlands. Through grants from the Arizona and New Mexico State Forestry Divisions, funding is in place for a new, comprehensive fire plan for the entire Malpai area. Though the Group has promoted and been involved with a significant amount of prescribed fire in its history, there never has been one overall plan for the entire area.

Currently, the Peloncillo Programmatic Fire plan covers the US Forest Service portion of that mountain range and the Chiricahuas are covered under another Forest Service plan. The rest of the New Mexico portion of the MBG area that is not Forest Service is planned under the Bootheel Fire Management Plan, which is due for an update. The non Forest Service Arizona side of the Malpai has never been under a fire plan other than the yearly update of the MBG Regional Fire Management Map.

The current effort will recognize the existing Forest Service fire plans while creating a plan for the Arizona side and updating and coordinating the New Mexico side. A working team has been formed made up of myself, Sam Smith from Grassland Restoration Inc., Doug Boykin from the New Mexico State Land Office Forestry Division, Phillip "Flip" Elliott from the Arizona State Forestry Division and Wally Alexander, retired Arizona State Land Department rangeland conservationist, who heads the team.

Interviews are currently taking place of all ranchers in the Malpai planning area along with neighboring ranchers who are interested in participating. Their views about fire management on their ranches, both prescribed fires and wild, are recorded. The finished fire plan will incorporate the ranchers' wishes and recognize areas for future prescribed fires. It is hoped that large, multi-ranch blocks will be identified to allow prescribed burning at a watershed scale. Some of the grant monies are set aside to carry out some initial planned burns.

Though there have been great accomplishments in the Malpai area towards reintroducing fire at the rate and scale that it used to occur at, large portions of the MBG have not seen fire for a very long time. Both prescribed and wildfires, planned and applied according to the rancher's desires and to meet objectives for desired future plant communities, can be very useful and economical tools towards creating healthy and sustainable rangelands in the Malpai Borderlands.



TRENDS IN SUSTAINABLE RANCHING: WATER HARVESTING

By Dennis Moroney,

"We got rain, life is good."

Most borderlands ranchers have really felt the sting of persistent drought the last few years. Much of the science work monitoring vegetation change in the Malpai Borderlands area over the last 60 years has attributed loss of plant and animal diversity in large part to changes in climate. Total annual rainfall seems to be decreasing, and the duration of dry conditions between wet periods seems to be getting longer.

The best forecasts for climate trends in the foreseeable future seem to indicate a strong possibility for continued periods of drought; and perhaps more extreme weather events, including heavy rainfall once in a while. Since we depend on the rainfall more than anything else, we ranchers are paying attention like never before to climate trends and any new information we can use to improve our chances of getting through the next drought, and maintaining or improving the condition of our rangelands and watersheds.

Perhaps the most compelling trend in sustainable ranching today is water harvesting. This is not a new idea in ranching by any stretch of the imagination. Ranchers in the desert southwest have been harvesting water for well over a century through the construction and improvement of water harvesting catchments we call "dirt tanks". But there is renewed interest in improving the effective harvest of whatever precipitation falls on the ranch.

For the most part, ranches in this part of the world are not blessed with an abundance of surface water. At the same time, we can go through years of droughty conditions punctuated by isolated rainfall events that can dump several inches of rain in an hour! The results can be to produce an incredible amount of runoff whenever the rate of precipitation exceeds the ability of the soil to absorb the moisture.

Planning to take advantage of these infrequent guleywashers is the best way to increase effective precipitation. In other words get more water into the soil profile where it can do the most good for rangeland grasses and forbs. The best way to do that is prepare the soil surface to slow run off and absorb as much moisture as possible. Excess moisture can be spread out over the land or collected in dirt tanks for use by livestock and wildlife.

To that end MBG ranchers and their neighbors have been engaged in a number of practices targeted at restoration of watersheds and improvements to effective water harvesting. These have included the adoption of rotational grazing strategies for pasture management; the implementation of prescribed fire, and brush management to check back woody species encroachment in grasslands; and the active repair of erosion damage in drainages.

A number of ranchers have been very active in constructing one rock dams, induced meanders, and rock armored channels, all designed to slow water velocity, trap silt and organic matter and increase water infiltration. The net result, when combined with conservative range stocking and careful management, is improvement in perennial grass cover, increased water absorption, and an increase in the net productivity of our rangelands. The goal is to capture much of the rain and snow that falls on the land and put it to use where it falls, growing plants.



LIFE AND ART ON THE BORDER

By Anna Magoffin,

Art Contributor to the Malpai Newsletter

I think it is safe to say my career as an artist is similar to the Magoffin Ranch, both are works in progress. When Matt’s family decided to split up the Guadalupe Canyon Ranch in Arizona, Matt and I ended up with “just enough to starve to death”. So, over the years we have purchased more of the original family holdings, added additional acreage by putting a conservation easement on the deeded lands, had electricity run to the headquarters and got a real phone line as well.

Once we got started trying to build what we had into a working ranch our years have been spent putting in miles of fences, waterlines, wells, corrals and watershed improvements. Along the path we ran into some Chiricahua Leopard’s frogs looking thirsty and added building frog ponds to our weekend lists of things to do. None of this would have been financially possible had Matt not gotten a job with the federal government, but it does make weekends the only days when we can help one another.

We have made progress, but undoubtedly the worst set back to us has been the repeat damages done to projects by illegal aliens and irate drug smugglers. With that said, my original goal to take an art class has been on hold for many years, but someday I want very much to learn to paint. I have been able to scratch out line drawings of events I have encountered on the ranch. I know one of the drawings I did for the MBG newsletter was of a flock of birds on a fence wire. When I saw that in real life I had to laugh at the similarity of those birds making all that noise talking back and forth to one another and the similarity to all of us “at a Malpai meeting”.

It’s pretty easy to get a laugh out of the antics that go on in our region, as Billy Darnell once said, “ranchers laugh and entertain themselves daily.” When I eventually get those art lessons maybe I can get some color into my scratches, not to mention a way to show the action. I can recall so many brandings with a little extra humor and lots of outrageous action that I would like to share things you don’t typically

see, like Will Edington chasing a skunk down the road in a water truck. Or maybe just the colors of the days - seasons of drought, rain, winds, sunsets and sunrises.

Every day on the ranch there is a masterpiece given to us by God to behold and one day I want to paint those on canvas for others who may have otherwise missed them. So one day when the fences are up, the water lines are all intact, the corrals are finished, the grass is green and the cattle are fat I plan to find a class in art and let the picture tell those stories. Until then, the Magoffin Ranch and my drawings remain works in progress.



**HONORING A FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR –
THE ROB KRENTZ
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

By Reese Woodling



Soon after Rancher and Malpai Borderlands Group Board Member Rob Krentz was killed in 2010, the Malpai directors met and established a scholarship in his name. This scholarship was designated for a high school student from one of the five local schools near the Malpai area. A scholarship committee was appointed by Edward Elbrock, the board president. This committee set criteria for selecting one student to receive the \$2,000.00 yearly scholarship. The need of the student was paramount in the selection process, along with academics and activities at school and within the community.

After reviewing 18 applications, the scholarship committee selected Rogelio Elias from Animas High School as the first recipient. During the selection process, Reese Woodling, chair of the scholarship committee, and Kasey Rudiger, the high school counselor, interviewed Rogelio and were very impressed by his maturity, intellect, work ethic and interest in furthering his education at a technical school in Phoenix.

Rogelio was born and grew up in Animas, N.M. During his middle and high school years he volunteered at St. Jude’s Catholic Mission doing yard work. He also did volunteer work around the high school and did such an outstanding job that the maintenance department hired him part time. While volunteering and working, he had time to maintain a 3.63 GPA and serve as Junior Class President. He was awarded the outstanding English student, the outstanding computer repair student and the most improved welder in his Metal Fabrication class. He is now attending Universal Technical Institute in Phoenix, studying to become an Automotive Technician.

At the Animas High School graduation in May, he was presented a certificate of recognition for being awarded the first Rob Krentz Memorial Scholarship. Kasey Rudiger read a testimonial about Rob written by his son Frank, which reads as follows:

“Rob Krentz grew up on his family ranch in Southeast Arizona. Growing up, he was instilled with the knowledge of caring for his family, working hard for what you believe in, and that you can never learn too much. His life revolved around helping others and ways to make the world a better place for people around him. People who knew Rob knew that he believed in supporting his family in everything that they did. Rob attended the University of Arizona and encouraged others to strive to increase their knowledge in the world. With education, anything can be possible. Congratulations on receiving this scholarship and taking the next step for making the world a better place.”



REPORT FROM THE NRCS-MBG PROJECT COORDINATOR

Don Decker, NRCS-MBG Project Coordinator

As Malpai Borderlands Group Project Coordinator with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, I work with the MBG on their conservation activities, both in the planning and implementation stages. This includes a variety of projects which align with the resource conservation goals of my agency. The following is a summary of what I have worked on with Malpai ranchers during in the past year.

There has been a lot happening on the science and monitoring side:

- To assist with the Malpai Borderlands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), I have been tracking activities and working with ranchers to ensure that in the course of applying practices, the provisions of the HCP are being met.
- I worked with scientists who are involved in the long term studies headed by the Rocky Mountain Research Station. These studies include the watershed research at the Cascabel Experimental Watershed Study site and the three large scale grassland restoration plots.
- The Horseshoe II wildfire in the Chiricahuas affected some MBG ranchers. I worked with the assessment team that was formed after the fire to see where short term flood control structures should be installed to protect homes from the resulting flooding, with the help of Cochise County and the NRCS Emergency Watershed Program.
- I assisted researchers from the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory with winter migratory grassland bird surveys in the Borderlands. This portion of North America is very important for many grassland birds that come from as far away as Canada to spend the winter.
- I met with members of the Arizona Antelope Foundation as they look for partnering opportunities around the State to improve antelope habitat. They informed me that the antelope herd in the San Bernardino Valley is currently the healthiest in the State in regards to reproduction.

We have also done a lot of ranch improvement projects this year:

- We worked with four ranchers on cooperative projects which included replacement of old boundary fences which were hazardous to wildlife and water developments which have important livestock management and wildlife values. All of these projects are conducted as three-way cost-share between the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Malpai, and the landowner. These projects represent over \$285,000 worth of planned conservation practices.
- I participated in the new Arizona/New Mexico Borderlands Cooperative Conservation Initiative. This five year project directs special EQIP cost share monies specifically for rangeland restoration with an emphasis on brush control. NRCS funds are joined with BLM funds to work across ownership boundaries on large scale efforts.
- More than 1,400 erosion control structures were installed on three different ranches with the help of \$72,000 dollars in cost share money. With Van Clothier of Stream Dynamics, we are planning where the next phase of erosion control work needs to take place, and what kind of structures are appropriate.

It has been a pleasure to work with the MBG ranchers and other individuals involved and to be part of this important conservation effort that the Malpai Borderlands Group has undertaken.



Photo by Bruce Taubert

We're hanging on by our fingernails, and we can really use your help!

Include the Malpai Group in your estate plans. Contact us to find out how simple it can be to leave a bequest that will protect our working wilderness for generations to come.

MALPAI BORDERLANDS GROUP

2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Edward Elbrock	Elbrock Ranch, Animas, New Mexico	<i>Chairman</i>
Larry Allen	Nat. Res. Consultant, USFS (ret.), Albuquerque, NM	<i>Vice-Chairman</i>
Seth Hadley	Diamond A Ranch, Animas, New Mexico	<i>Treasurer</i>
Reese Woodling	Rancher, Tucson, Arizona	
Warner Glenn	Malpai Ranch, Douglas, Arizona	
Richard W. Winkler	Winkler Ranch, Rodeo, New Mexico	
John Cook	The Nature Conservancy, Little Compton, Rhode Island	
Randy Walter	Walter Ranch, Animas, New Mexico	
Don Kimble	Kimble Ranch, Douglas, Arizona	
Billy Darnell	Darnell Ranch, Animas, New Mexico	
Sadie Hadley	Guadalupe Canyon Ranch, Arizona-New Mexico	
Carl Edminster	USFS, Rocky Mountain Research Station (ret), Flagstaff, Arizona	
Frank Krentz	Krentz Ranch, Douglas, Arizona	
Bill McDonald	Sycamore Ranch, Douglas, Arizona	<i>Executive Director</i>

Emeritus Board Members

Drum Hadley	Diamond A Ranch, Animas, New Mexico
Ray Turner	Ecologist, USGS (ret.), Tucson, Arizona

Legal Counsel

Mike Dennis	Conservationist, Blue Ridge Mountains, Virginia
-------------	---

Staff

Peter Warren, Program Coordinator	Ben Brown, Science Coordinator
Wendy Glenn, Office Manager	Kelly Glenn-Kimbrow, Cook
Mary McDonald, Finance Director	Mackenzie Kimbro, Volunteer
Carrie Krentz, Systems Specialist	Anna Magoffin, Art Work



Malpai Borderlands Group
6226 Geronimo Trail Road
P.O. Drawer 3536
Douglas, AZ 85608

phone: (520) 558-2470 fax: (520) 558-2314 E-mail: <mbg@vtc.net >

<www.malpaiborderlandsgroup.org>

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Arizona Time



P.O. DRAWER 3536
DOUGLAS, AZ 85608

Address Service Requested

NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Tucson, AZ
Permit No. 365