July 1996

Dear Friends,

We hope you have had a great year since last year’s newsletter.

Many of our board, co-directors and advisors have traveled to give speeches about what we are doing. The feedback is really encouraging.

In March, I resigned from the MBG Board of Directors. I made that choice since I have more to do than time permits. I am still Coordinator of the MBG office in our home. The office is very busy and the work load is growing.

Mary Winkler is our new board member. She and her husband are ranchers on the north end of the Peloncillo Mountains. I have known Mary since we were children. She is a great asset to the MBG.

Mary McDonald is now the Finance Coordinator in the MBG office and does lots of the other office work also. It is a pleasure to work with her and all the board. I never dreamed we could have so many people do so much besides their own regular work. The MBG is fortunate to have these people that are so dedicated to helping the land and each other.

We have had visitors from many places that are very interested in our group. They have helped us see and learn about what is going on all over the U.S. and Mexico where people are working to preserve open spaces and the rancher’s way of life. It is great to have the chance to share ideas and solutions to mutual problems with others.

The MBG has been featured on national PBS on “The Lehrer Show,” and locally on “Arizona Illustrated,” and “The Desert Speaks.”

We have had our story told in several magazines including Cowboy Magazine, Range Magazine,

Audubon, Nature Conservancy, American Cowboy, several governmental bulletins and Farm Journal. The Livestock Market Digest also did an article.

Most of you know that we have had a long drought in the entire southwest. Many of you are in the same drought. At the MBG headquarters, we have had less than 1 inch of moisture from October 1995, to June 15, 1996. It has begun to rain in some places around here now. We hope to have a good, long, wet, monsoon season this summer.

We have had board meetings, greater board meetings, beef meetings, and even a meeting about the exciting Mexican Jaguar sighting.

We could not be accomplishing the programs that we have if we didn’t have the support of many different government agencies, the support of foundations and The Nature Conservancy. We appreciate their involvement and the knowledge they share with us.

As with any new group or program, there are some doubters and some fear that we are “taking over the neighborhood.” We are working only with the people that come to us and want to be involved in the projects that we can help them with, if we are able. We send our newsletters and information out to everyone in the area, so they will know what we are doing. The neighbors make the choice of whether to work with us or not. For the ranchers that are involved, it is a chance to improve the land on our places, on the ground, that we could never have done otherwise.

The letter on the next page says a lot for what we have accomplished.

Sincerely,

Wendy Glenn
In addition to the grassbank, the MBG and some of the agencies are cooperating with the grassbankers to do improvement projects and monitor the grassbankers' home ranches to help them be in better shape when the cattle come back home.

We have just cost-shared on a fencing project with one of the grassbankers. The fence has replaced a boundary fence that was in bad condition, enabling cattle to come and go at will. The new fence will allow the rancher to control where cattle are grazing.

As part of the agreements, the grass-bankers are continuing to maintain the water systems on their place for the use of the native wildlife. This is extremely important in a year like this where the drought has hit the wildlife so hard. Explanation of grassbanking terms are on page 8

**Ranchers: Endangered Species Program**

The focus on endangered species by ranchers has caused positive results for the land and wildlife, as well as livestock.

**Update:**

Throughout the on-going drought, we have continued to work with the Chiricahua leopard frog population on the Magoffin Ranch. With some MBG help, The Rosewood Project is now focused on help from the Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Funds for a new well and pipeline on the Magoffin Ranch to furnish water to the frogs at the Bogwood Tank.

This is the first project of this kind with landowners and Arizona Game and Fish Department. Following the successful MBG project in 1995 at the Belency Tank, the new project is being carried out this summer. The Magoffin family continues to haul a tank truck of water to the frogs as often as necessary. If successful, the new project will keep permanent water available year-around for the frogs and other wildlife and will help the rancher's cattle operation as well.
Fire Plan & Prescription

Fire is crucial to the restoration of our grasslands, and has been part of the landscape here for millennia. Fire prescriptions are becoming more common now that the need for fire is understood.

Plan Update:

The 1996 fire maps are now in the hands of the participating ranchers and cooperating agencies. The map allows the ranchers and the agencies to know what to do when a fire begins. Any rancher or agency that is a cooperator in the plan has been given a new 1996 fire map of the area. These maps are annually reviewed, corrected and generated on a GIS by the office staff of the Animas Foundation, Gray Ranch, for the MBG. These maps are also available to interested parties at the cost of production.

The increase in prescribed fires shows recognition by all groups involved that the health of the land is enhanced by occasional fire.

There have been several well attended fire meetings to help residents and agency people learn and understand more about fires.

Prescription Update:

The "Maverick Burn" has been set up as a prescribed fire to follow the 1995 "Baker Burn". Because of the drought in this area this year, the fire will probably be delayed until next year. Many area ranchers have had less than 1" of moisture from the first of October, 1995, to June 15, 1996. Two ranchers whose grazing leases are involved in the fire plan are not grazing the pastures in the prescribed burn areas in order to let the fuel increase for a successful burn.

Bush Removal, Seeding, & Restoration

In addition to fire, the MBG is working with grassland ecologists to attempt restoration through brush removal and seeding with native grasses.

Update:

Range scientists and local ranchers are currently monitoring the "grass patch" project from 1994 and recording the changes over the years.

The MBG is currently working with the U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station to research different ways to reverse the trend of encroachment of shrubs into the grasslands. Ranchers that are a part of the research have been working with Dr. Carl Edminster and his team to monitor, research and record information about the areas that are involved. The participating ranchers have set out land for the use of the science team.

Science and Research

The MBG has a Science Advisory Committee that is actively working with the ranchers to advise and coordinate the different research programs that are operating independently. The group has scientists contracted to monitor the grassbank and work with the grassbankers, by monitoring their home ranches. Monitoring is also being done on other ranch lands in our area at the request of the individual ranchers.

Pete Sundt has completed set-up of several photo stations for future reference.

Peter Warren has coordinated information on all scientists and the research they are doing in the MBG area.

The Science Advisory Committee members are:
Larry Allen Ron Benis Ben Brown
Jim Brown Ben Dwyer Carl Edminster
Pete Sundt Ray Turner Peter Warren
Tom Valone

Beef Marketing

On March 28, Mel Coleman and Mel Coleman, Jr. of Coleman Natural Beef visited the Malpai area to talk about their beef marketing. On April 27, Bill Niman of Niman-Schell Beef and Doc & Connie Hatfield of Oregon Country Beef visited with Malpai area ranchers at the Apache School.

They explained the history of their formation and marketing. The common thread that seems to be present in all three of their marketing programs are:
* first: identify your market
* don't need to hire experts to contact packers, retailers, wholesalers-they enjoy dealing with "real people"
* don't invest in a slaughtering facility
* emphasize a product that fills unique market demand
* keep your message simple
* deliver on your promises
* help your retailers sell your product
* sell to as many diverse markets as possible

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The military, through various exercises involving tracer bullets and other munitions, provides plenty of opportunity for fire ignition. Two roads form a junction that splits the study area, providing fire breaks that isolate 3 distinct areas at the crossroads. These parcels, each with a different fire history, are being closely analyzed. One quadrant was burned every 2-3 years until 1989; a second was burned roughly every 5-10 years; and a third has not burned since before records have been kept, beginning in 1973. Subdivided into a gridwork of subplots, these parcels are being measured and dissected, with results subjected to careful statistical analyses. Above ground and below, samples have been taken of plant stems and roots. Hundreds of soil and plant samples have been collected and their nutrient content analyzed by conventional methods as well as more recently developed isotope chemistry techniques.

Results show that phosphorus, an essential life-giving element, is released in large quantities from incinerated mesquite crowns and from the dead roots below where it has been accumulating out of reach of the other organisms in the ecosystem. Following a fire, it remains at high concentrations right where the mesquite stood as grass and other organisms make use of the newly released bounty. The scientists conducting the study have coined the term "mesquite ghosts" to refer to these well defined patches of higher than normal phosphorus concentrations.

The other essential elements being studied include nitrogen and carbon. Because fire converts these elements into volatile compounds that float away as gasses, their loss to the environment is a concern. But even here, there is good reason to regard fire as beneficial because these elements return to the pre-fire levels in as short a time as 5 years. Even in the absence of mesquite, which has nitrogen fixing nodules on its roots, nitrogen is soon returned to previous levels and is maintained by the same mechanisms at work before mesquite came on the scene. With all these elements now available, the ecosystem is back on track, and with a more rapid turn-around time, the elements enhance the growth of the grassland which evolved under the influence of short-interval natural fires.
As we characterize grasslands as occurring within certain rainfall and temperature limits, a third physical force, fire, is responsible for producing grasslands. To be effective in grasslands, fire must occur at relatively short intervals. This study suggests that a return time of about 5-10 years is what the ecosystem is attuned to. Interestingly, tree-ring studies have shown that the pre-suppression fire-return interval for the forested mountains that punctuate the grasslands of our region is somewhere between 5 and 10 years. The artificial fire frequency, imposed during the fire suppression era, has been stretched to several times the previous natural frequency.

Based upon the Fort Huachuca studies, it looks like fires every 5-10 years will benefit grasslands by maintaining essential elements such as phosphorus in a more available form. More frequent fires, however, (every couple of years) would cause significant loss of nutrients. Perhaps the woody plants that have become recent grassland residents should be viewed as stagnant nutrient pools that impede the flow of nutrients to grasses, while properly spaced fire might be thought of as an agent for keeping the circulation pathways open.

HOW EXTREME IS THE CURRENT DROUGHT?

The current dry spell is one we will all remember, but how does it compare with those of earlier times? News reports have indicated that this is the worst drought since the turn of the century, yet there is good reason to question this.

Dr. Webb, has compiled the accompanying chart which goes right to the heart of the matter. The graph gives a regional view, combining the long-term rainfall for Lordsburg, Animas, Douglas, and Wilcox. (Because not all stations began recording at the same early date, the left side of the curve is based on only 1 station, the right side is all stations.)

The points on the graph are not inches of rainfall. Instead, the values have been converted to yearly relative dryness and wetness values. The zero line represents long-term average rainfall. The moister than average (positive values) and drier than average (negative values) rainfall fluctuates around this line. Relative values, instead of actual rainfall values, are used to satisfy mathematical requirements that arise when "comparing apples to oranges". The data covers the period through December 1995.

Using a value of -1.0 to denote extreme drought, the graph shows that 1995, was indeed, dry. However, even drier 1 year periods have occurred more than 15 times since 1861.

Clearly, the period from 1942 to 1957 was a longer period of predominantly dry years than the last few years have been. What about the sequence of dry spells ending in 1907? Let's hope those terrible conditions never return!

Although these times are tough, this is a dry country that during the last 115 years has often experienced worse conditions than those at present.

Incidentally, this analysis does not allow us to predict future rainfall.

(For cattle prices)

The MFB thanks Dr. Roy Turner and Dr. Bob Webb for sharing their information with us.

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While on a ride in April 8, 1995 in the Peloncillo Mountains, Warner Glenn and his daughter, Kelly Glenn-Kimbro noticed a track in a canyon that seemed to be a large tom mountain lion that was making the rounds. The track was not as long as most lion tracks they had seen, but it was much wider. It was a large track and they decided that this was a large tom lion with a different shaped foot from normal.

Warner and Kelly were in the mountains on and off all winter and on March 7, 1996, they were riding with their dogs and jumped the critter that was leaving the track. After a long chase, the dogs bayed him on a rock outcropping and Warner was able to take the photograph of the jaguar above. This was a very exciting and emotional event for Warner. He has ridden in the Peloncillo Mountains for 50 years and never dreamed he would happen onto one of these beautiful animals. He was able to take 19 photos. Most were good, considering the conditions of short time and a wild animal for a subject.

Through the years, many sightings have been reported in Arizona, some confirmed. This is a sighting that is documented with photos. To our knowledge, there are no other photos of a jaguar living in the wild in the United States.

The Glenns are concerned that this sighting could possibly be used in a negative, rather than a positive way for the local ranchers. In this vein, the Glenns invited agency officials and biologists to meet with Malpais Group members on May 28, to discuss this sighting, see the photographs, and hear the story. Everyone at this meeting seemed to feel that the fact that the jaguar is doing well here shows that multiple use of the land is certainly compatible with the habitat needs of the native wildlife.

Since the sighting and release of the photos to the public, Warner has been encouraged to do a book of the photos and the story of the circumstances of the experience. The book is in pre-publication at this time. It will be out in August, if all projections are correct. George and Vicki Danneman, owners of The Printing Corner in El Paso, Texas, are producing the 28 page, softcover, 8" x 10" book. It will contain 10 of the best color photographs and Warner’s story of the event. Ray Turner, one of the MBG board members and co-author of The Changing Mile and Sonoran Desert Plants-An Ecological Atlas, has done a short essay for the book.
by Dusard, author/photographer of The North American Cowboy: A Portrait, and Open Country has written an
Afterword", and has taken a portrait of Warner and Kelly, on their mules for the book. (Jay also donated the
Working Wilderness print for the MBG poster to the Group.) Joel DiIartolo has done the computer work for the
book. Ross Humphreys, MBG board member is featuring the book in his Treasure Chest book catalog. Many
people have donated their time to the project.
The Glenns will be donating a portion of the proceeds of the book to a fund established by the MBG.
The Jaguar Fund, will be used — in the Malpai Borderlands Region—to compensate livestock owners in the event
of confirmed depredations by a jaguar; to protect the habitat of jaguar and other native mammals; and toward
other wildlife projects.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

AWARDS

In the past year, the MBG and some of the people involved with the group have received awards for the
work they are doing on the ground. We are proud and grateful for the recognition. We hope that the work we
are doing will lead to continued cooperation with all those that make the decisions and policy for open country
and our ranching livelihoods.

—1995 RECOGNITION—

Coronado Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc.:  
Outstanding Achievement Award for Innovative Resource Management (MBG)

Arizona Game and Fish:  
Conservation Organization of the Year (MBG)

Wildlife Habitat Stewardship Award  (Bill McDonald)

U.S. Forest Service:  
National Chief's Award for Range Management (MBG)

Award for Ecosystem Management, (Larry Allen)

New Mexico Society of Range Management:  
Range Man of the Year (Ben Brown)

Arizona Society of Range Management:  
Technical Assistant of the Year (Ron Bemis and Larry Allen)

—1996 RECOGNITION—

U.S. Forest Service:  
Course to the Future Award (Larry Allen and MBG)

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Secretary's 50th Honor Awards,  
Environmental Protection Awards (Ron Bemis and Larry Allen)

—AWARDEES—

Larry Allen from the Forest Service and Ron Bemis from Natural Resources Conservation Service are
advisors to the MBG. Larry has a degree in Forestry. He is a Range Conservationist for the Forest Service. He
has worked for the Forest Service for 39 years. In the past he has been a District Ranger or Staff Officer in several
places in Arizona and New Mexico. Ron has a degree in Range Management. He worked for the Forest Service
for 6 years. Now, he is a Rangeland Management Specialist who has been with the Natural Resources
Conservation Service for 22 years.

Ben Brown is Program Director of The Animals Foundation. He is an advisor to the MBG. He has
degrees in Wildlife Ecology. In the past, he has worked for the Texas General Land Office, has been staff and
faculty at Texas A & M and Kansas State University. He is a former regional Science Director for The Nature
Conservancy.

Bill McDonald is the President of the MBG Board of Directors. He is a past President of Cochise-
Graham Cattle Growers. He has been co-owner and manager of the Sycamore Ranch for 27 years.
MBG GRASSBANKING TERMS

Grassbanking:
A rancher grazing his cattle on grass on other range while agreeing to allow his home ranch and grazing leases to exist for a specified amount of time years.

Easements:
Voluntarily placing of restrictions on the private property belonging to the rancher. The easement is held by the MBG stating that no one will ever subdivide the property described in the easement. The easement goes with the property if the ranch is sold or inherited by the ranch owner's survivors. Easements with the MBG are voluntary and not a condition of doing projects.

Easement value:
An appraisal is made to determine the difference between the value of the land appraised at the ranching value and the "highest best use" value. (subdivision or industrial development)

The easement value is then determined by taking the two appraisal values and finding the difference. The difference is the value of the easement.

PROPERTY RIGHTS:

Grassbank Value:
The grassbank forage is valued at a dollar figure per Animal Unit per Month (AUM).
On the Gray Ranch Grassbank, Animal Units are calculated as follows:
1 Bull or horse = 1.25 animal unit
1 Cow or cow-calf pair = 1 animal unit
Yearlings = .04 or .06 depending on whether they are lightweight or heavyweight cattle.

Hypothetical Example:
The ranch is appraised at $250,000. for subdivision.
The ranch is appraised at $200,000. as a ranch.
The difference of $50,000. is the value of the easement.

In AUMs, the value is figured by the grass value. At $10.00 per AUM, this is valued at 5,000 AUMs.
The value could be 100 Animal Units grazing for 50 months, or just over 4 years.
The value could be 150 AU grazing for 33 months. The value is also 200 AU grazing for 25 months. etc.

***

Property Rights have been described as a "bundle of sticks". In the easements, the subdivision stick has been given to the MBG.
The Cooperators:

State Sector:
- Cooperating Ranchers in Hidalgo County, New Mexico and Cochise County, Arizona
- United States Forest Service, Coronado National Forest
- Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station

Public Sector:
- United States Department of Agriculture: Forest Service, Coronado National Forest
- United States Department of Interior: Bureau of Land Management, Las Cruces & Safford District
- Ecological Services, Fish & Wildlife Service, Phoenix, Arizona
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, in Arizona and New Mexico
- Hildago Soil and Water Conservation District
- Whitewater Draw Natural Resource Conservation District
- New Mexico State Land Office
- Arizona State Land Department
- University of Arizona’s Desert Laboratory
- University of New Mexico
- New Mexico State University
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Nonprofit Organizations: The Animals Foundation, The Nature Conservancy

The Meetings:
Board of Directors:
Meetings are held bimonthly. Some of the meetings have been with the Greater Board, to work on our 1 year plan and our 3 year plan. Greater Board Committees made recommendations for the plans.

Public Meeting:
We held a well attended public meeting at the Animas, N.M., High School in October, 1995. We board many questions and were able to explain our programs and what we are working to do.

Beef Marketing Committee:
These people meet frequently to investigate marketing local beef. They put together 2 beef marketing meetings described on page 3.

Jaguar Meeting:
After a jaguar was sighted in the borderlands area, the Glenn family hosted a meeting with the MBG and officials from the Arizona and New Mexico Departments of Game and Fish, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM and U.S. Forest Service. The purpose for the meeting was to show the photographs and tell of the sighting. A discussion was held and the people involved were in agreement that this would be a project that the local people would keep the departments informed about. Although Mr. Glenn felt there was no evidence that the jaguar was killing livestock, solutions for the possibility that the jaguar might kill livestock were discussed. As a result of the meeting, the MBG has designated a “Jaguar Fund”. In the event that a jaguar makes a confirmed livestock kill in the area, there will be restitution paid to the livestock owner, for the loss.

More about the Jaguar sighting on page 6.

The Gifts:
General Motors has generously donated a 1995 GMC pickup truck to the MBG through one of our cooperators, The Nature Conservancy’s Last Great Forests campaign. The pickup has arrived and is being put to good use. We are grateful for the support we have received from The Nature Conservancy and General Motors.

The Printing Corner in El Paso, Texas has continued to donate printing costs and some supplies for the MBG’s packets, newsletter, envelopes, and other mass produced printed items. These are large donations and there are more to come in the future. The MBG thanks George & Vicki Drennan for their continued support.

Jay Dusard donated a photograph taken in the San Bernardino Valley, and the layout for a fund raising poster titled Working Wilderness. George and Vicki Drennan of the Printing Corner donated the printing of the poster. Sunset Graphics, El Paso, did the laser duotone separations.
There has been a limited edition of 500 Working Wilderness posters printed. These are signed and numbered and a few are still available at the MBG office for $20.00 plus $5.00 for shipping and handling.
A meadowlark warbles, the radio plays. He listens and dreads what the newsman will say. Each fall of the gavel seems to bring the old rancher one step towards the end.

The forest graze permits are tighter each year. The cost to just make it gets more and more dear. People in places that he'll never see are writing up plans what his future should be.

Government grazing fees soar out of sight. Environmental do-gooders seem to delight in their near-sighted studies and half-baked facts, which just put the rancher's heads under the axe.

They're all trying to save the same great, open land, but some folks refuse to see room left for Man. They talk about wildlife and wilderness, too, as if it's the humans they want in the zoo.

Plant studies, surveys, and impact reports: he sees nature's balance from right on the porch. He'd rather see turtles and pupfish and piovers, than see the wild places torn up, by the dozens.

Yet if humans mean less than a critter or bird, and livelihoods vanish in conflicts of words, than stockmen and tree-huggers both lose the fight, for while hauling each other, it's the LAND that will die!

THE VISITORS

This year has seen many different people coming to meet and talk to the MBG participants. We have learned about other people that are very interested in our ideas. We appreciate the time and effort that the agency personnel have spent here. We also thank them for the suggestions they have and the information we have been given from other areas.

An interesting visit was from a couple on their honeymoon. Jim and Kate Maynard "dropped by" for a couple of hours to see what the MBG was all about. They ended staying at the Malpais Ranch for 2 days. They helped work cattle, then assisted in the MBG office. We all worked long hours, getting the 1995 year-end appeal letters folded, put in envelopes, addressed, stamped, and sorted.

Then, as they left, they delivered the New Mexico letters to New Mexico for mailing, saving about a week of mail time from Arizona to New Mexico. Now that's neighborly! We appreciated their help a lot.
THE MALPAI BORDERLANDS GROUP

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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<thead>
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<td>John Cook</td>
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<td>Bill Miller, Jr.</td>
<td>Joe Austin</td>
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<td>Mary Winkles</td>
<td>Jim Brown</td>
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<td>Ross Humphreys</td>
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<td>Peter Warren</td>
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<td>Ray Turner</td>
<td>Mike Dennis</td>
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Advisors

- Larry Allen
- Ben Brown
- Dan Dwyer
- Pete Sundt
- Bill Weeks

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- Ron Bemis
- Kelly Cash
- Peter Warren

Office Staff

- Wendy Glana, Coordinator
- Mary McDonald, Finance Director

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Printing donated by The Printing Corner, El Paso, Texas.

Recycled paper