



Facilitating cooperative actions that steward
the natural and cultural resources of the Cienega Watershed
while enabling sustainable human use.

The Cienega Watershed Partnership

ORAL HISTORY WORK GROUP

*A collaborative project to collect,
manage, and disseminate oral histories
in southeast Arizona*

www.cienega.org

The Oral History Work Group

The Cienega Watershed Partnership (CWP) is a 501(c)(3) organization committed to the long-term goal of sustaining the watershed and its resources through collaborative actions of the communities, landowners, managers, institutions, and citizens who live, work, and enjoy the landscapes of southeast Arizona. A variety of agencies and organizations actively participate in the area: the Arizona Zoological Society, Empire Ranch Foundation, Vail Preservation Society, Amerind Foundation, Colossal Cave Mountain Park, Sonoran Institute, Rincon Institute, The Nature Conservancy, Sky Island Alliance, the Crossroads Community Forum, Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch/National Audubon Society, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Coronado National Forest, Arizona State Lands Department, and Pima and Santa Cruz counties.

The Oral History Work Group is supported by the CWP. The work group collaborates by combining skills, resources and shared knowledge to more effectively collect, manage, and disseminate the oral histories in the watershed and adjacent areas. The CWP participates, facilitates meetings, provides administrative support and manages funds.

Who are the participating members?

Amerind Foundation	Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Tucson Field Office
Colossal Cave Mountain Park	Empire Ranch Foundation
Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance	U.S. Forest Service, Coronado National Forest
Vail Preservation Society	

Why gather oral history?

Connecting old and new, young and old: In an area with a rapidly increasing population, oral history stories offer connectivity between newer residents in new communities to long-term residents in historic communities. Oral histories educate newcomers about the area, bring history alive for schoolchildren, and promote heritage values.

Understanding and appreciating the watershed: Natural events such as droughts, fires, and changes in the vegetation community have long been noted by ranching families and other community members living in this area. The changes in the environment, the adaptations made by local residents, and the limits of adaptation are all issues relevant to our current use and management of this landscape.

What objectives frame the oral history activities?

- Improve skill levels ranging from interview techniques to new technologies in managing, converting, storing, and utilizing data
- Obtaining resources to bring collections up to acceptable standards and the facilitate uses in a variety of settings
- Address issues on shared databases, archiving, standardized digital formats, and strategies for continued curation and access
- Create opportunities to include oral history in programs for schools and the public
- Ensure that interviewees and their families have access to their stories
- Connect communities, residents, students and managers with the landscape history

What has the Oral History Work Group accomplished?

- Oral history collection inventories are almost 100% complete for participating agencies and organizations; almost 200 tapes have been inventoried
- A google website has been set up for sharing information
- Using grant funds from the BLM, the Empire Ranch Foundation collections has been digitized and the Coronado National Forest and Colossal Cave Mountain Park collections are ready to commence migration from analog to digital.
- Transcription of interviews has commenced beginning with the Amerind Foundation
- Two training workshops have been completed for oral historians in southeast Arizona: The Fundamental of Interviewing and Using Current Technology and Media.
- Over \$10,000 in volunteer time has been contributed to the project

What is the current program of work for 2011?

- Complete the analog to digital migration of existing tapes
- Finish transcribing existing oral histories
- Training on the best practices for using oral histories in public programs and education ranging from audio tours to social media posting
- Complete the Voices of the Cienega project as part of the Arizona Memory Project
- Plan and hold a workshop "Back Then" on the applicability of oral history to ecology and environmental issues and reconstruction
- Design and complete outreach packages for each participating group, initiate in 2011 and complete as funding supports

How do I support the work of the CWP Oral History Work Group?

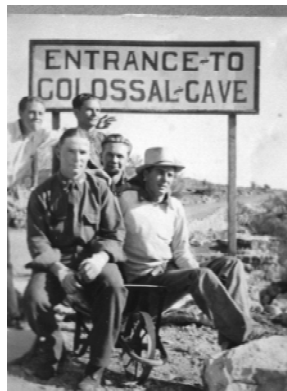
The CWP accepts donations and grants on behalf of the oral history work group. Go to the CWP website for further information, to join the CWP, and to support its important work.

How do I find out about scheduled meetings and trainings and becoming a participant?

- Refer to the website www.cienega.org, or to the websites of participating organizations
- Contact: Shela McFarlin, CWP, shela_mcfarlin@yahoo.com



*Dusty Vail at the Empire Ranch
Courtesy of Empire Ranch
Foundation*



*Civilian Conservation Corps Enrollees
Courtesy of Colossal Cave Mountain
Park*



*Vail Junction, 1940s
Courtesy of Colossal Cave Mountain Park*