



*Those of us who knew Clarence were aware that, if you want action, you got Clarence involved. When he started on a project, things were going to happen. He had the will to win as an athlete, and he made things happen throughout life.—*

*“Clarence Burch, Diversified Activist,” in *Courageous Cattlemen*,  
by Robert C. de Baca*

The Second Annual  
**Clarence Burch Award**  
January 18, 2003

The Hilton Hotel, Albuquerque

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Sid Goodloe  
Bill Zeedyk

Keynote Address

“Putting it all Together: Why  
Keeping Animals Home on the  
Range Benefits Ranchers, the Ani-  
mals, the Consumer, and the Envi-  
ronment”

***Jo Robinson,***  
author of Why Grassfed Is Best!

# Clarence Burch

## (1906-2000)

By all accounts, Clarence Burch was a remarkable man.

Rancher, teacher, conservationist, activist, international diplomat and public servant to five governors, Clarence Burch lived an enviable career full of innovation, dedication, curiosity, and good humor. He was a man very much of his time, and yet miles ahead of it as well.

The eldest of nine children, Clarence was born in Bromide, Oklahoma, in what was then Indian Territory. Raised on various farms and ranches, he developed a love of the land that grew to become a passion for a lifetime. "My grandfather had an innate sense for natural forces," says Andy Dunigan. "Land was in his blood. Every discussion always started with a question about the weather."

In high school, Clarence set records in track before working his way through Oklahoma A&M. Upon graduation he worked for a while as a teacher, coach, and county

extension agent before scraping together enough money to buy a small ranch near Mill Creek. He settled into the ranching life with his wife, Frances, and together they raised their children, Tom and Anne.

For a rancher, however, he had one unusual, and illuminating, weakness. "He was not mechanically inclined," says his son, Tom. "He couldn't fix the lawnmower. But he knew how to get you the right tool." His main talent, in other words, was working with people. "He was an educator all his life," says Tom, "and a problem-solver. He used to say 'there isn't a problem out there that can't be fixed.' And if he couldn't do it, he knew who could."

One area that Clarence applied his "can-do" attitude to was water. While serving as Director of the Division of Water Resources in the 1940s, he traveled to every seat of Oklahoma's 77 counties to assess municipal and rural water needs. Shortly

thereafter, with Clarence's encouragement, and over the objections of the oil companies, Governor Roy Turner signed the state's first groundwater restrictions into law.

"I made the statement then and still do that water is more important than oil," Clarence said in an interview. "I think time will show me to be right in that."

He was a careful steward of his own land as well. "He knew that all he had to sell on his ranch was grass," recalls Tom. "So, he took care to do the job right." His grandson agrees. "He understood that land has its limits," recalls Andy. "And he emphasized collaborative solutions to natural resource problems."

In addition to conservation activism, Clarence was deeply involved in reforming the beef industry. Declaring that "we got a world to feed!" Clarence steered his fellow ranchers away from a professional infatuation at the time with winning "blue ribbons" at county fairs, says his son, and toward the question of animal production and performance. He became the first president of the Beef Improvement

Federation and helped found the Performance Registry International.

With typical zeal, he insisted that ranchers become note-takers too. "Records make history," he says in *Courageous Cattlemen*. "Records direct the present. Records foresee the future. Records are the working man's tools that have practical application. . .and add to the economics of the beef industry."

This attitude, considered radical in its day, today dominates the industry, observes Tom.

For his energy and leadership, Clarence was honored in 1955 with inclusion in a group of American farmers and ranchers that conducted a ground-breaking tour of the Soviet Union during the depths of the Cold War.

Later, his advice was sought by his son-in-law, Pat Dunigan, who had recently purchased the 110,000-acre Baca Ranch, located in the mountains high above Los Alamos, New Mexico. Observing that the ranch had been used pretty hard by its previous owners, Clarence's advice was twofold: quit the logging; and cross-fence the property

so that the cattle wouldn't overgraze any longer—advice that his son-in-law followed.

Clarence's people skills extended to his family as well. Andy remembers him as an "extremely warm, charismatic man who got along with people from all walks of life." Another son-in-law, Jim Wilson, says Clarence could "carry on a conversation on any topic" and did so right up to the end of his life.

Both Anne and Tom agree that family was their parents' highest priority. "The whole family went to everything," she recalls, "and he was always there for us as kids"—a point echoed by Tom who says he father "never missed one my track meets." He had a wonderful sense of humor too, says Anne, "and an immense curiosity about the world." She also describes her parents' fifty-year marriage as a "real partnership."

Clarence's warmth and vitality were evident throughout his life. A few years before his death, his family brought him into the sale barn on his favorite chair and placed him in the center of the action, so he could inspect the animals and talk

"shop" with the participants.

Tom remembers with wry amazement that his father's failing eyesight always managed to get better when they drove around the ranch. "He'd see a loose wire in a fence or ask about the condition of a cow at a distance," he says. "It was pretty incredible."

Perhaps Andy sums up his grandfather's qualities best: "Clarence embodied what we call today 'The Radical Center.' He was more than just a rancher. He was a public servant, an activist, and a man very concerned about the land and sustainable practices. He was a remarkable man."

We at The Quivira Coalition are proud to honor Clarence Burch with an Annual Award.

# 2003 Burch Awardees: *Riparian Healers*

The Quivira Coalition is pleased to honor two men involved in the critically important, but often underrated, job of riparian restoration.

In a time when water is increasingly a source of conflict and concern in the Southwest, Sid Goodloe and Bill Zeedyk have pursued a course of collaboration, innovation and education that is nothing short of inspirational. They have led by example, demonstrating how vision—of healthy land in this case—is still the key to success and improvement. Sid and Bill have pursued their vision in their own way, but each is united by their desire to learn, to teach, and to make land, and people, healthy again.

Riparian areas are sometimes called the “thin green lines” of the Southwest—the streams, creeks, rivers, and even acequias of our region. They exist almost anywhere where an upland environment meets an aquatic one, and are often characterized by riparian vegetation, such as sedges, rushes, cottonwoods, and other thirsty plants. Though

small in acreage, they are huge in significance for wildlife. More than 90% of the New Mexico’s wild bird population, for instance, will spend some portion of time in riparian zones, and many are dependent on them for water and food.

Healthy riparian areas are also critical to human populations. The production of clean, abundant, and healthful water is a primary function of these “green lines”—water that is in great demand today across the region, and will be in greater demand in the near future. Unhealthy riparian areas, by contrast, can have a deleterious effect on human welfare; rapidly eroding streambanks can fill up lakes with sediment, water quality can decline, flash floods can endanger communities, and the loss of food and cover for wildlife and livestock can diminish the value of nature.

Unfortunately, across most of the Southwest more of the latter can be found than the former – too many riparian areas exist in a degraded state in too many places, and they have been degraded for too long.

Much of this unhealthy condition is historical—artifacts of a “buccaneering” phase of western expansion and exploitation that took from nature much more than it could give, principally through overgrazing by livestock. It is an inherited legacy that we could have done without, and now must labor to rectify.

Add to this legacy the well-intentioned, but ultimately misguided, efforts of engineers and other industrious types to “fix” nature during the heady days of the 1950s and 1960s. Damming, channelizing, clear cutting, and dozens of other acts of arrogance have compounded the inheritance, with social and ecological consequences that are now becoming all too clear.

It is a sad irony that now we must spend so much time and money undoing “progress.”

Fortunately, we have healers like Sid and Bill to guide our efforts. The medical analogy is an appropriate one; if left alone, nature, like the human body, will heal itself over time, if the cause of the disease is not mortal, that is. Healers can, however, gently push the process along, speeding it up in cases, or applying restorative

remedies. In all cases, the *modus operandi* of the physician is the same: to use nature to heal nature, whether you are trying to encourage white blood cells to do their job, or get native sedges and rushes to do theirs. Sometimes radical surgery is necessary, but often it is not. Nature knows best, as they say, and we are all students on her rounds.

Sid and Bill both subscribe to a new Hippocratic Oath that is emerging in a new century: First, do no harm. They consider the needs of the patient too, as the ancient physician urged, and search for causes of sickness, rather than merely focus on symptoms. Both work to encourage natural processes to take over, to “let nature do the work,” in the words of Bill Zeedyk.

While both are doctors, in a sense, each man approaches his practice from a different direction, illustrating not only the variety of restoration “cures” that can be employed, but also the scope of the big job in front of us all.



## *Sid Goodloe*

Sid began his work in New Mexico land stewardship and education some 47 years ago. In purchasing CarrizoValley Ranch in southeast New Mexico, he found the perfect mix, a worn-out, ecologically abused ranch (i.e., affordable); a location amenable to the use of multiple resources (i.e., to make ends meet); an indication of a landscape previously including running water (petroglyphs); and a wonderful place to raise his growing family.

Because he recognized the need to make use of a variety of resources in order to be able to operate a cattle ranch, Sid soon made choices that resulted in:

- a new and better breed of cattle suited to the environment (Alpine Black);
- a range management system that included thinning of invasive vegetative species (pinon, juniper, and pine thickets), making use of the material in firewood and viga sales (to finance rehabilitation work);

- the first use of high-intensity, short-duration grazing in the U.S.; and

- overall improvement of habitat and watershed throughout the ranch.

During the early years, working day jobs for other ranchers provided the income needed to sustain the family and the herd. His education at Texas A&M encouraged his inquisitive nature and natural inclination to try new things and make them work. As he gained knowledge and experience by working abroad, he invested it by putting it to work on the Carrizo Valley Ranch, using what was at hand and fitting the techniques to his topography and resource base. Today, Carrizo Valley Ranch is the beneficiary of experiences of working with agriculturists as varied as the “old time” cowboys of Texas, the Massai, Allan Savory (then of Rhodesia), R.O. Anderson, and the Gauchos of Brazil.

Sid has combined these experiences with the use of holistic resource management to team with various

agency personnel throughout Lincoln County and New Mexico. One such effort was in creating the Carrizo Project within the Smokey Bear Ranger District. This particular project has illustrated the use of mechanical clearing and prescribed fire to rehabilitate a wasteland into a productive and sustainable ecosystem, providing ample wildlife habitat.

Sid restored his degraded riparian area by first letting it rest, and then by grazing it only in the dormant



*Sid conducting a workshop for The Quivira Coalition [above and below].*



season. His success, and his concern for healthy riparian areas in the state, led him to found the New Mexico Riparian Council. He has been a champion of riparian recovery ever since.

Sid has devoted much of his time to education of the public in general and to teaching educators, government agency personnel, students of all ages, clubs and organizations, and politicians/policy-makers by opening Carrizo Valley Ranch to numerous tours each year. Carrizo Valley Ranch is not only an educational showcase, it is a sustainable ecosystem which supports an economically viable cattle ranch and remains an environmentally sensitive operation.

Sid believes strongly in the need for sustainable agriculture and open space. Over the last five years, he has sought information about preserving his ranch from urban development. To that end, he chose to work toward placing a conservation easement on the Ranch. In his effort to find a land trust to facilitate that desire, he found there was no ranch-oriented organization and so took it upon

himself to establish one. The Southern Rockies Agricultural Land Trust is in the process of assisting several other ranchers in placing easements on their land.

Sid has demonstrated innovative and sustainable methods of land stewardship, contributed significantly to public education about sustainable uses of natural resources, promoted and implemented the collaborative process in resolving land stewardship conflicts and has demonstrated proactive leadership in promoting and achieving land and community health.



*Sid Goodloe's riparian area.*



## *Bill Zeedyk*

Bill Zeedyk owns and operates a small consulting business specializing in the restoration of wetland and riparian habitats using “low tech,” hands-on methods and native materials.

Bill holds a B.S. degree in Forestry (Wildlife Management) from the University of New Hampshire. Bill retired from the U.S. Forest Service in 1990 after 34 years. His career included assignments as Research Forester, Assistant District Ranger, Forest Wildlife Biologist, Staff Officer

for Wildlife and Watershed Management, Endangered Species Biologist, and finally Staff Director for Wildlife and Fisheries Management, Southwestern Region, Albuquerque, where he served for 14 years.

Following retirement, Bill and his late wife, Gene, toured the world for a year visiting the South Pacific, Asia, Egypt, and Europe. Upon returning home, Bill soon realized that a life of leisure was not for him. As he puts it, “I couldn’t be happy doing noth-

ing.” So, gradually he began to develop a second career focusing on simple techniques for stabilizing and restoring incised stream channels and gullied wetlands on public and private lands in the Southwest and Mexico. Successful projects include Rio Galisteo, Largo Creek, and Dry Cimarron Creek in New Mexico, the Rio Laja in Guanajato, Mexico and Nutrioso Creek, Pueblo Colorado Wash, and Tsailee Creek in Arizona, as well as wetlands in the Zuni Mountains, the Valle Vidal, Buell Park, and Cebolla Canyon.

Bill likes to share what he knows with others and has conducted numerous hands-on training workshops featuring his own low-tech measures utilizing readily available native materials. His workshops have been sponsored by various state, federal, and tribal agencies as well as non-profit organizations such as The Quivira Coalition, New Mexico Riparian Council, National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, Edgewood Soil and Conservation District, University of Missouri and others. In support of the workshops Bill has prepared several field manuals

including *Managing Roads for Wet Meadow Ecosystem Recovery*, a publication for which he received a national award in wetlands conservation from Ducks Unlimited and the Forest Service.

Bill is a life-long member of the Wildlife Society and is a Certified Wildlife Biologist. He is a member of the Society of Wetland Scientists, Past President of New Mexico Riparian Council, Vice President of Albuquerque Wildlife Federation, and Vice President of Intermountain Conservation Trust.

He has the rare ability to work with and teach his ideas to a broad audience, including environmentalists, agency resource managers, Native American youth and adults, and ranchers.

He has garnered the respect of many private and public resource managers, who before they met Bill, thought they “had it all figured out.” His integration of grazing management, ranch road construction for reducing maintenance and harvesting water, and riparian and arroyo restoration, and his down-to-earth way of communicating his ideas has created a new

way of approaching watershed restoration in the Southwest.

He is a regional treasure. The people he has so patiently taught and the restoration projects he has so diligently pursued will make a lasting and noticeable difference

on the landscape of the Southwest and the economic vitality of the people who depend on the health of the land.



*Largo Creek, near Quemado, was in degraded hydrological condition [above] before we built “Zeedyk” structures [left]. Within four months, we saw results [below].*





*Working to achieve harmony between humans and nature*

**The Quivira Coalition is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization incorporated in New Mexico on June 11, 1997 by two conservationists and a rancher. Our mission is to foster ecological, economic, and social health on western landscapes through education, innovation, collaboration, and progressive public and private land stewardship. Central to this goal is spreading the word that ecologically healthy rangeland and economically robust ranches can be compatible. We call this position The New Ranch.**

**We pursue our educational mission through a regular newsletter, workshops, conferences, lectures, site tours, a Web page, seminars, outdoor classrooms, publications, videos, collaborative management demonstration projects, monitoring, and scientific research.**

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