



ARIZONA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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January 2005

Arizona Wildlife Federation Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy Position Statement

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is developing a "Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy" a 10-year plan for managing Arizona's fish, wildlife and natural habitats. According to the agency, the CWCS will address the "full array of wildlife," but will focus on identifying and managing the "wildlife and biotic communities of greatest conservation need." This includes AZGFD's goal of "Keeping Common Species Common."

According to AZGFD, Arizona's CWCS will be based on a landscape-level approach—identifying important habitats and conservation needs to sustain fish and wildlife populations and maintain ecosystem health. The Arizona Wildlife Federation (AWF) encourages the agency to emphasize the role of protected wildlife cores, linkages, and permeable landscapes through explicit management prescriptions including:

- 1) Reducing road densities to less than one mile per square mile in national forests and other public land;
- 2) Reducing grazing impacts so that all public lands exceed the BLM standard of "good" rangeland conditions (Fleischner et al. 1994); and
- 3) Restoring natural fire regimes as a critical component of protecting and restoring native biodiversity. A natural fire for any given ecosystem burns within the range and frequency distribution of fire intensities, frequencies, seasons, and size found in that ecosystem before arrival of western technological man, and yields the range of fire effects results found in that ecosystem before the arrival of technological man (Kilgore 1985).

In order to provide long-term assurances of effective populations of all native wildlife species, important habitats and connectivity between those habitats must be protected. The AWF encourages the agency to integrate the interagency "Missing Linkage" effort and recommendations as an integral part of the CWCS process.

References:

Fleischner, T.L., D.E. Brown, A.Y. Cooperrider, W.B. Kessler, and E.L. Painter. 1994. *Society for Conservation Biology Newsletter* 1(4):2-3.

Kilgore, Bruce M. 1985. What is "Natural" in Wilderness Fire Management? In Lotan, James E. et al., technical coordinators. *Proceedings--Symposium and Workshop on wilderness Fire*; 1983 November 15-18; Missoula, MT. General Technical Report INT-182. Ogden, UT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station: 57-67.

