

Arizona Wildlife News



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What is AWF?

Our Mission Statement

Arizona Wildlife Federation is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating, inspiring, and assisting individuals and organizations to value, conserve, enhance, manage, and protect wildlife and wildlife habitat.

AWF is a statewide association of people interested in the present and future well-being of Arizona's wildlife, wildlife habitat and natural systems. We believe our wildlife heritage should not be jeopardized by any activity that fails to ensure its long-term health and sustainability. From the outset of the organization, AWF's primary goal has been the establishment and maintenance of a Commission/Department form of wildlife administration, free of political influence. We continue to work with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and Commissioners to assure that science-based best practices are used in the management of wildlife and habitat in Arizona.

Our Newsletter

The official publication of the Arizona Wildlife Federation, the State affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation, Arizona Wildlife News (ISSN) is published quarterly as a service to affiliate members and Federation members. The editorials and commentaries in this publication do not necessarily reflect the mission of the Arizona Wildlife Federation. AWF is an equal opportunity provider.

The Arizona Wildlife Federation welcomes stories, art, and photographic contributions! We will consider, but assume no responsibility for unsolicited proposals, manuscripts, art, photographs, and transparencies. Contact the AWF office at (480) 702-1365 for details.

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In This Issue

Message from the Executive Director	3
Regional Roundup	4
AZ Elk Society: A Whole Systems Approach	15
Saving the Wild at a Time Like This by Mark Van Putten	16
The Misunderstood Javelina by Michael Cravens	18
Another Epic Bow by Linda Dightmon	20
Barbed Wire by Randy Tuttle	22
Why Volunteer for Wildlife by Trica Oshant Hawkins	24
Capitalizing on the Off-Season by Jeremy Romero	25
Leave Your Legacy	26

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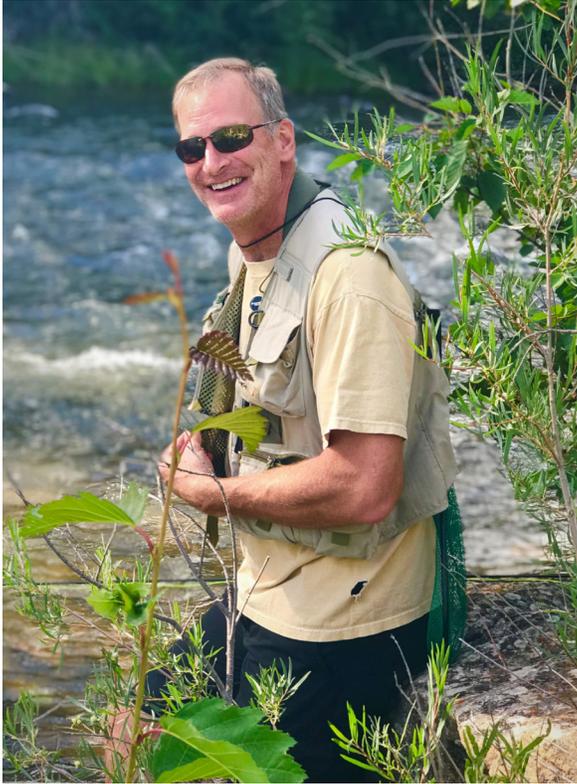
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JOIN THE CONVERSATION



A Message from the Executive Director

By Scott Garlid, AWF Executive Director



It's fall and I was planning to write about being thankful for outdoor places, the change of seasons, fall hunts, and the like. But when we uncovered "America in Crisis, Saving the Wild at a Time Like This" from our AWN archives from 20 years ago (reprinted, page 20), the parallels to today were so dramatic, I had to take a bit of a detour.

I hope you've been blessed this year and are thankful for family and friends, your health, your hunt camp, and the joy that only the outdoors can bring. I also hope when you read the reprinted article, you'll reflect on, and be thankful for, the work AWF does "at a time like this." What we learned then is a lesson that just keeps repeating itself—nature and the outdoors heal and nurture our souls, and we need that healing even more when the world seems chaotic.

Then, our country was reeling from the 9-11 tragedy, and now as we honor those we lost 20 years ago, we're just starting to recover from the depths of a global COVID pandemic. In both times, Arizonans and Americans sought solace in the outdoors. Our work at AWF doesn't compare to what first responders do after a terrorist attack or what health care workers do during a pandemic. But our work is important to the healing process. We educate, we advocate, and we do conservation work on the ground. When we do these things and when we partner with others to do even more, what we're really doing is helping unleash the healing power of nature and the outdoors.

As you read this issue of AWN, I hope you'll notice all the places where AWF is making a difference: the 4FRI program; wild horse, burro, and bison management; OHV and forest management plans; conservation of places like Yavapai Ranch; habitat improvement projects; introducing youth to volunteering, hunting, and the outdoors; educating women and particularly underrepresented women to the outdoors... and so much more.

If nature and the outdoors heal—and I'm convinced they do—then our conservation work builds bridges to that healing. This fall, I'm incredibly thankful for that, and hope you are too.

Yours in conservation,

Scott Garlid, Executive Director, Arizona Wildlife Federation

AWF Regional Roundup

Arizona Wildlife Federation divides the state into regions in the same manner as the Arizona Game and Fish Department. This map depicts each of those regions and the members of our Board of Directors who serve as directors for each area. Our Regional Directors are busy!



Bob Vahle
Region 1 Director



Travis Woolley
Region 2 Director



Loyd Barnett
Region 3 Director



Pat Headington
Region 4 Director



Duane Aubuchon
Region 5 Director



Amanda Moors
Region 6 Director

Region 1 Director's Report

By Bob Vahle, Regional Director

Four Forests Restoration Initiative (4FRI) "Rim Country Project" – Brief Review and Update

The 4FRI Rim Country Project that will affect thousands of key wildlife habitat acres in Region 1 is under current development and analysis through the 2nd 4FRI Environment Impact Statement (EIS). The project purpose is to reestablish and restore forest structure and pattern, forest health, and vegetation composition and diversity in ponderosa pine ecosystems to conditions within the natural range of variation, thus moving the project area toward the desired conditions. The outcome of improving structure and function is increased ecosystem resiliency. Resiliency increases the ability of an ecosystem to survive natural disturbances such as fire, insects and disease, and climate change without changing its inherent function. This project is needed to: 1) Increase forest resiliency and sustainability; 2) Reduce hazards associated with undesirable fire effects; 3) Improve terrestrial and aquatic species habitat; 4) Improve the condition and function of streams and springs; 5) Restore woody riparian vegetation; 6) Preserve cultural resources; 7) Support sustainable forest products industries; and 8) Improve the motorized transportation system and provide for a more sustainable road system where poorly located roads are relocated or obliterated.

To meet the purpose and need for action, the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Tonto National Forests are pro-



Thinning efforts in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

posing a suite of restoration activities on approximately 953,100 acres over a period of 10 years or when activities can be funded or completed. The area affected by the proposal includes approximately 540,020 acres on the Black Mesa and Lakeside ranger districts of the Apache-Sitgreaves NFs, 398,880 acres on the Mogollon Rim and Red Rock ranger districts of the Coconino NF, and 299,710 acres on the Payson and Pleasant Valley ranger districts of the Tonto NF.

The completion of the 4FRI – Rim Country Project –Final EIS was estimated to be completed in September 2019 with a Record of Decision in January 2022, and project implementation to be initiated in February 2022.

Heber Wild Horse Territory (HWHT) Management Plan - Brief Review and Update

The 19,700 acre “Heber Wild Horse Territory was “established in 1974 based on a census of 7 unbranded and un-claimed horses in the area under the provisions of “The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971” (Public Law 92-195). It is located in Navajo and Coconino Counties in the Black Canyon area of the Black Mesa Ranger District, southwest of the town of Heber, Arizona. The purpose of this project is to develop a territory management plan for “wild horse “management actions within the HWHT, consistent with federal laws, regulations, and the Apache–Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF) – Land Management Plan.

The HWHT does not currently have an approved “Territory Management Plan” (TMP). A TMP must identify an “Appropriate Management Level” (AML) for population management as required by law and the ASNF Forest Plan. The purpose of the project is to develop and implement a territory management plan for the HWHT.

The ASNF along with recommendations provided by the stakeholder HWHT Collaborative Working Group that the AWF participated in starting on 8/4/2017

through 2019 conducted an in-depth analysis to determine the appropriate management level for the wild horse herd. That analysis is determined an appropriate management level of 50 to 104 horses would maintain a self-sustaining population of healthy horses within the designated territory, in a thriving natural ecological balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat.

The AML analysis has identified that 104 horses is the upper limit of horses which could maintain a natural ecological balance and avoid deterioration of habitat conditions. Thus, any population level that exceeds this number has the potential to disrupt that balance and lead to deterioration of vegetative habitats. In 2017, the most recent census flight, the estimated horse population was 270 to 420. The annual growth rate for the herd is estimated to be about twenty percent. At this rate, the estimated population could be nearly ten times higher than the proposed upper limit by 2022.

Population management actions are critically needed to maintain a healthy horse herd while also maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance. Without management, the wild horse population would continue to grow unchecked with potential adverse impacts to the population and its surrounding habitat.

Proposed actions are analyzed in the EA and have been incorporated into a Draft Territory Management Plan (TMP) were made available for public comment from March 23 to April 22, 2021. The AWF provided the ASNF formal comments on this document at that time. The Draft TMP includes specifics for implementing the proposed action including standard operating procedures and an annual operating plan.

The Draft TMP will be finalized based on which actions are authorized in the final decision notice for this project. Once authorized, the Territory Management Plan can be implemented immediately. The proposed action proposes the following: 1) Establishes the appropriate management level of 50-104 horses to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance; 2) Establishes Population Control Techniques; 3) Identifies criteria to be considered when determining whether excess wild horses are present and require removal; 4) Describes methods to be used to gather and remove excess



Heber wild horses in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

Region 1 Director's Report Cont'd.

wild horses; 5) Describes fertility reduction methods that may be implemented to slow herd growth rates and reduce the number of excess animals which must be removed over time; 6) Establishes an adaptive management strategy which identifies potential management actions based on monitoring results; 7) Identifies monitoring to be used and identifies thresholds for determining when management actions may be necessary; 8) Identifies potential management actions that may be implemented based on monitoring results; and 9) Identifies design criteria to be used for resource protection measures.

It is now estimated in the current ASNF – Schedule of Proposed Action that the Record of Decision on the final Heber Wild Horse Territory (HWHT) - Management Plan will be issued by 2/2022 and the HWHT management plan implemented by 3/2022.



Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) travel by the public on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

ASNF Travel Management Plan – Brief Review and Update

In order to be compliant with the U.S. Forest Service 2005 – “Travel Management Rule” (36 CFR 212, Subpart B) the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF) is required to develop a travel management plan that designates the roads, trails and open areas where motorized travel is allowed. The travel management plan must consider environmental impacts on watersheds, wildlife habitat, cultural resources and communities. The management plan would require the development of “Motorized Vehicle Use Maps” (MVUMs) that would specifically identify the roads, trails, and areas open on the ASNFs open to public motorized vehicle travel.

Project scoping began in 2007 and in 2019 the revised Environmental Impact Statement was issued (AWF provided comments). This has been a long process and it is now estimated in the current ASNF Schedule of Proposed Action that the Final Public Motorized Travel Management Plan - EIS will be completed by 4/1/2022, a Record of Decision by 7/1/2022, and project implementation by 8/2022.

As previously reported, the continued purchase of Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs) and their use by the public on the ASNF has exploded in recent years. The AWF fully supports the legal and responsible use of OHVs by the public on public lands. However, the AWF is very concerned that without the required implementation of a travel management plan and enforcement of travel management regulations on the ASNF irresponsible use and impacts to forest natural resources by the public such as reopening of roads that were closed to protect sensitive habitats (e.g., meadows) and driving through sensitive habitats (e.g., springs, riparian areas) will continue to impact important wildlife/fish habitats across the forest.



OHV use illegally bypassing a road closure barrier leading to a sensitive meadow habitat on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

White Mountain Wildlife Nature Center, Big Springs Environmental Study Area, and Woodland Lake Park - Mountain Meadow Recreational Complex in Pinetop- Lakeside, AZ.

Located in the heart of Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ is unique parcel of isolated U.S. Forest Service public land (543 acres) that has, over a long time period, become an outstanding environmental education site and outdoor recreation complex that is used by the local public, nearby communities, and thousands of visitors each year. Through the vision, tireless efforts, funding and manpower donations, and funding grants obtained by local volunteers (e.g., “Save our Park” coalition) and many cooperators (e.g., U.S. Forest Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Blue Ridge Unified School District, City of Pinetop-Lakeside) this area has become a major attraction in Pinetop-Lakeside community and the White Mnts.

White Mountain Nature Center (WMNC) (www.wmnature.org)

Established in 2003, the WMNC is located on a 10 acre parcel purchased through public donations that adjoins the Big Springs Environmental Study Area and the Woodland Lake Park – Mountain Meadow Recreation Complex. The WMNC includes an information center, nature store, a nature gallery for educational learning and presentations, a Raptor Rehabilitation facility, trails, classroom facilities and open space for summer Discover Nature Learning Camp activities.



White Mountain Nature Center in Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ.

Big Springs Environmental Study Area

The Big Springs Environmental Study Area is located on 40 acres of U.S. Forest Service public land administered by the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF) that includes a spring fed pond along the lush Walnut Creek riparian corridor feeding into Woodland Lake. It is managed by the ASNF under a unique partnership with a special use permit for an outdoor classroom issued to the Blue Ridge Unified School District.

This site was developed as an outdoor study area and recreation site for use by local schools, the local communities, and visitors to the White Mountains. It is a cooperative project between the U. S. Forest Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Blue Ridge Unified School District, White Mountain Wildlife and Nature Center, and the City of Pinetop-Lakeside. Many of the improvements at the site (including interpretive signing and trails) were funded by the AZGFD Heritage Fund, and were made to facilitate environmental education and public use. Features and programs include: hiking trails, interpretive signage, and thematic environmental educational programs including Rich Rim Riparian Habitats, Interconnected Diversity, Springs of Life, Wonderful Wetlands, and others.

Woodland Lake Park - Mountain Meadow Recreation Complex (www.woodlandlakepark.org)

The entire Woodland Lake Park area consists of a 543 acre parcel of U.S. Forest Service public land of which 40 Ac comprises the Big Springs Environmental Study Area. Recently, the City of Pinetop-Lakeside purchased 107 acres of this parcel that comprises the Mountain Meadow Recreation Complex in order to maintain and manage the recreational developments of the site which includes softball fields, tennis courts, pickleball courts, volleyball courts, soccer fields, a disc golf course, and public restrooms.

Outside of the Mountain Meadow Recreation Complex, the Woodland Lake Park area provides many other outdoor recreation opportunities and amenities including a network of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, a paved walking track around Woodland Lake, fishing opportunities in Woodland Lake including a fish pier for public access, picnic tables, covered rarmadas, and wildlife viewing opportunities (e.g., over 128 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians have been documented in the area).



Big Springs Environmental Study Area in Pinetop-Lakeside, AZ.

Region 2 Director's Report

By Travis Woolley, Regional Director

Diablo Trust Hosts Recreation Summit

This August, Diablo Trust hosted the first annual Recreation Summit in Flagstaff to bring awareness and solution-based discussions around recreation impacts in Northern Arizona. This Summit was an extension of the Recreation Working Group, a collaborative group of several agencies and organizations that has been meeting regularly this year to discuss these impacts and work together toward solutions. Over 70 people attended representing NGOs, agencies, private land-owners, and concerned citizens. There were several speakers that kicked off the event and then the attendees transitioned into small breakout groups to discuss ideas and solutions on specific topics including; technology solutions, funding opportunities, policy and legislation, education/signage, ambassadorship, and waste management solutions. Much of the content and discussion was focused on Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) impacts and travel management, as well as data that can help the group understand who uses our open spaces, where are they from, and how we can use social media to promote positive use of natural open spaces.



Decking logs during restoration thinning in the 4FRI 1st EIS. Photo courtesy of Paul Tetterton, The Nature Conservancy.

Forest Restoration Efforts

Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) – U.S. Forest Service Cancels Request for Proposals

After several delays and a year of deliberation, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has decided to cancel the solicitation (Request for Proposals – RFP) to reconsider a variety of the specific government requirements. The entire process from release of the solicitation until this decision has been approximately 2 years. The announcement indicates that these requirements create significant risk to the successful performance of any successful offeror. The USFS could continue to amend the RFP (several amendments have already occurred) but they believe at this time adding more warrants a new revised solicitation and re-advertisement. The intent is to work

with partners on a new proposal as soon as possible. It is unclear what the next steps are, what this means for existing industry and work ongoing. AWF will continue to be engaged in both Regions 1 and 2 and track the progress of future contracting for thinning treatments and other restoration activities.

Good Neighbor Authority and Baker Butte Project

On a brighter note, the USFS-Coconino National Forest and the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (AZDFFM) have reached a Good Neighbor Authority agreement for thinning operations on the Baker Butte project, part of the Cragin Watershed Protection Project. This work is occurring in the East Clear Creek watershed that feeds C.C. Cragin Reservoir. AZDFFM will manage the contract and can now begin the search for a company to carry out the mechanical thinning treatments. Implementation of this important fuels reduction project that will reduce risk of severe wildfire and protect critical water supply and power infrastructure, has been in part funded by Salt River Project and the Town of Payson.



Post thinning drone image near Parks, AZ of a 4FRI 1st EIS project.

Lone Wolf Heads West

Earlier this year an individual Mexican grey wolf, from reintroduction efforts to portions of its historical range, made its way from western New Mexico to the Flagstaff area and was known to have roamed the Bellemont and Williams areas as well as the San Francisco Peaks. The wolf, dubbed Anibus by school children, was a 1-year old male. The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) tracked the wolf for several months until deciding to capture and relocate the wolf in August. Although the wolf was seen near residential areas, there were no reported problems. AZGFD indicated that the wolf's own safety was part of the reasoning due to dangers such as vehicle traffic on major roadways and potentially being shot. Wolf advocates wanted the wolf to remain in the area and are calling for expansion of the Mexican grey wolf's range. AWF has been strongly supportive of the cooperating agencies efforts and recognize expansion of recovery area may be needed for success. However, any expansion considerations should evaluate the biological and social information of current recovery efforts.

Colorado River Continues to Experience Declines

For the first time ever, the Colorado River, which provides drinking water for around 40 million people, supports a variety of wildlife, recreation, and at least 5 million acres of farming, has been declared to be in Tier 1 shortage by the federal government. This declaration means less water for cities and farms in Arizona, as well as Nevada and Mexico. Declines have been occurring since 2000, but reductions in use have not kept up. The Colorado river is fed very much by snowmelt in the Rockies. Decreased snowpack and precipitation over the last 20 years of record drought is indicative of the impact a changing climate is having on the river, and the human communities and wildlife that depend upon it. Short- and long-term solutions across the many stakeholders who make use of the river are needed to create a resilient river system for the future.

Grand Canyon Bison Hunt

A controlled hunt for bison within Grand Canyon National Park, the first of its kind at the Park, will occur this September and October on the North Rim. However, it is being described as a lethal removal more than a "hunt" because of the process by which it is happening. A total of twelve applicants have been selected out of over 45,000 applicants from several states across the west. These selected individuals will go through further training to participate in the "hunt." An additional difference is that participants will not be able to retain all of the harvested meat from the hunt and will be given a limited amount to take home. The typical bison hunt on the North Rim allows an applicant to draw a tag once in a lifetime. If successful, the hunter can harvest and retain the entire animal.



Bison in Arizona. Photo by George Andrejko, Arizona Game and Fish Department.

The overarching goal is to reduce the population size of the bison herd from over 300 down to around 200. Environmental analysis has shown that the bison population is currently too large and animals are damaging vegetation and other resources. This year they hope to reduce the population by around 150-200 bison using various methods. Additional methods include a partnership with the Inter-Tribal Buffalo Council (69 tribes in 19 states) to transfer live bison to tribal communities who want them. The hope is to remove 75-100 bison through this method. This year 67 tags for the North Rim bison hunt have been awarded under typical Arizona Game and Fish Department Rules and Regulations outside of the Park.

Region 3 Director's Report

By Loyd Barnett, Regional Director

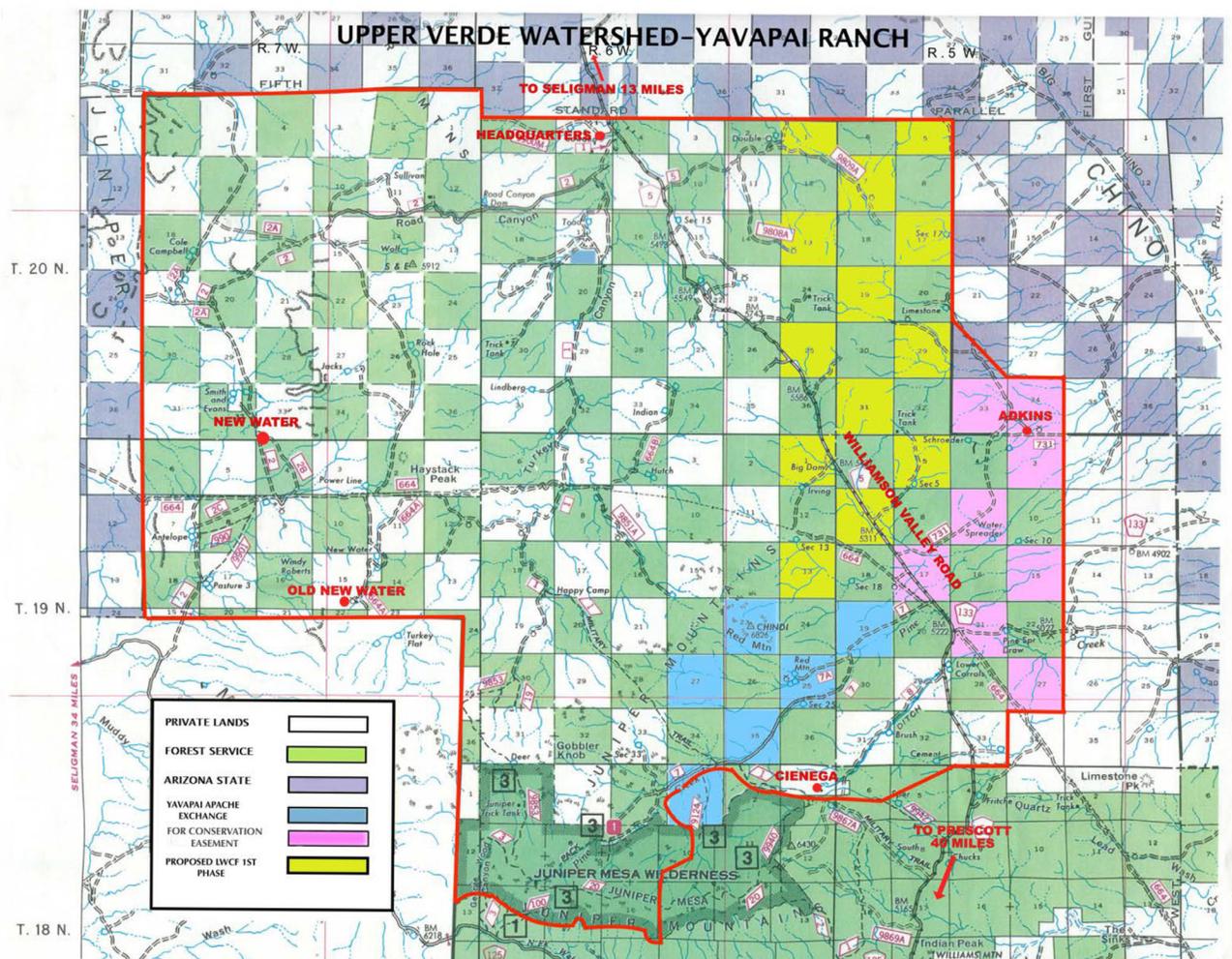
Burros

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is continuing the burro removal project begun a year ago. As previously reported, they have begun the process of reducing the population of wild burros in the Black Mountain Herd Management Area (BMHMA) in order to bring the population down from the estimated population of 2200 to the appropriate management level (AML) of 468, and then maintain it at that level. The BMHMA extends from the Lake Mead National Recreation Area south to I-40. The Black Mountains contain the largest contiguous area of desert bighorn sheep habitat.

Last fall, as planned, the BLM removed the first 500 burros, with BLM employees utilizing water and bait traps. Gathered burros were transferred to the Wild Horse and Burro Training and Off-Range Corral located at the Department of Corrections facility in Florence, AZ. Periodic adoptions occur at this facility. As of Sept. 6, 2021, they had removed 481 of this season's planned 500, which will reach the first 1,000 removed. Following the removal of the first 1,000, the plan is to do a re-inventory and then continue removal until the AML of approximately 478 is achieved. To maintain this level, a combination of maintenance gathers and fertility controls (approved vaccines) will be employed.

Yavapai Ranch

The Yavapai Ranch is located on the northwestern most portion of the Prescott National Forest. As shown on the accompanying map it is nearly all in a checkerboard pattern, that is alternating sections (approximately one mile square) in private and National Forest ownership. This ownership pattern is a legacy from the incentives given to railroads to construct tracks across the western U.S. Through public lands in western states the railroads were granted the odd numbered sections on both sides for variable distances from the track. Later, when areas were reserved from the public domain as Forest Reserves, which later became National Forests, the odd numbered sections for a number of miles each side of the track



were already privately owned by the railroad. Where these had not already been sold to private citizens, they were often exchanged for an equal acreage of vacant public land, even in another state. Later land exchanges were used for consolidation of ownerships on many National Forests. The Yavapai Ranch is the largest remaining checkerboard area within the National Forests of Arizona and New Mexico. There are approximately 50 thousand acres of private land within the Yavapai Ranch grazing allotment, and a roughly equal acreage of Prescott National Forest. The area has a wide diversity of habitats, ranging from wide open grasslands to ponderosa pine and Gambel oak.

Except for the ranch headquarters and a couple of small areas with ranch residences, the private sections are not fenced separate from the adjacent National Forest, and they are managed together. The public can recreate and hunt on the private sections as well as the National Forest. However, there is no assurance that this is permanent. The private lands are zoned so they can be subdivided as small as 2 acres. Much of the private land adjoining the north and west Forest boundaries is subdivided into “ranchettes” of about 36 acres. Land adjoining National Forest is valued for its adjacency to open space and commands a higher price for residential development. When these lands are residentially developed, especially in a checkerboard pattern, the impacts on wildlife go well beyond the private land boundaries. Fences, dogs, increased daily human disturbance all create habitat impacts. Some species (e.g., rabbits and coyotes) adapt quite well to rural residential development. Elk, and sometimes deer, have also learned to adapt,



The Verde River riparian corridor and wildlife habitat. Photo courtesy of Nikki Julien.

though not necessarily as well as with larger areas of unimpacted habitat. However, pronghorn antelope need open space and the ability to roam freely.

In the late 1990's to mid-2000's there was a proposal for a massive land exchange which would have consolidated the area with the majority of the area becoming National Forest and a portion being consolidated into a private holding, as well as acquiring some National Forest land adjacent to growing communities such as Flagstaff, Williams, and Camp Verde. Because of the massive scale of the proposal and experiences in other states with large railroad grant inholding exchanges, the owner of the Yavapai Ranch proposed to use legislation to authorize the exchange. This became quite controversial. The Arizona Game and Fish Department supported the exchange due to consolidation and protection of an

important area of pronghorn habitat. Eventually, after numerous meetings, public hearings, etc. it was passed in November, 2005 as the Northern Arizona Land Exchange Act, sponsored by Senator McCain. However, it still required land appraisals to be favorable for the government and compliance with all protective laws, such as the Endangered Species Act, archeological requirements, etc. However, within the next few years the “Great Recession” occurred and land prices made significant changes. As a result, the land exchange was not able to be completed.

In 2021, the AWF has supported two separate proposals to move toward maintaining grassland habitat. Both of our responses were led by our affiliate, the Arizona Antelope Foundation. The first was an application by the Central Arizona Land Trust to obtain Farm Bill funding for a conservation easement on eight private sections on the southeast corner, adjacent to private land in Big Chino Valley already having conservation easements. In August, the AWF submitted written support for a proposed purchase of about 12 sections of private land for inclusion in the Prescott National Forest, moving west and northwest of the area applied for conservation easement. This is proposed as the 1st phase of purchases using Land and Water Conservation Funds. The accompanying map illustrates the area and these proposals. We do not know if these proposals are being funded. Sometimes it takes repeated submittals before funding is received. It is a step toward consolidation of habitat within this area.

Region 4 Director's Report

By Pat Headington, Regional Director

Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club /Southwest Wildlife Foundation (YVRGC/SWF)

The months leading up to the weekend of September 4th were busy planning the Clint Curry Memorial Youth Dove Hunt and the Mike Mitchell Memorial Dove Hunters BBQ. The youth dove hunt saw 32 young hunters participate in a morning of dove hunting and clay pigeon shooting in Dome Valley. After the dove hunting slowed, one of the mentors set up a clay pigeon thrower and gave these young hunters an opportunity to learn how to aim and successfully hit some clays, many hitting their first target in the air! The dove hunters BBQ started later that evening, followed by lots of raffle and auction items, all to raise money to support the ongoing youth hunt camps and water for wildlife efforts. Over 300 people attended the BBQ at the new Fourpoints by Sheraton Hotel.



Camino Del Diablo / Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR)

The YVRGC/SWF President and board members participated in a BMGR Intergovernmental Executive Committee meeting on September 8th. This was a quarterly meeting for the group which included Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge manager, Organ Pipe National Monument manager, Friends of Cabeza, Marine Corp Air Station (MCAS) Habitat staff, Luke Air Force habitat staff, AZGFD Region 4 staff and others. MCAS staff presented photos of some

minor mitigation work completed along Ave 25E to restore water flows across the roadway blocked during border wall construction. Also discussed was the acquisition of lands adjacent to the BMGR to offset habitat for flat-tail horned lizard damaged by border wall construction.

Hunter Education

While hunter education has ramped up across the state following the lifting of pandemic restrictions, a backlog of young hunters remains in many areas of the state. In the large metropolitan areas of the state, new graduates of hunter ed equal those completing the course and dropping off the waitlist. Some rural Arizona locations have seen better success at removing the backlog of students.

During the September 14th Hunter Education Advisory Committee (HEAC) meeting, it was revealed that a revised hunter education bonus point program for adults is due to be finalized during the September Arizona Game and Fish Commission meeting. If approved, this program will focus on conservation, the North American Model, hunter ethics, and purpose of the department. This bonus point program will also require a one-time fee to complete the course which remains somewhat under discussion. Pending release of the commission agenda, local members of the HEAC will attend the September commission meeting.



Flat-tail horned lizard. Photos courtesy of Jake Scott.

AZGFD Region 4

As a result of rain in the desert southwest, water hauling has been suspended. Several storms in the region helped fill most water catchments in the area allowing Region 4 staff to take a break and focus on other management issues previously set aside. One water project in Game Management Unit 41 near Texas Hill was scheduled for work, only to discover the excavation was filled with water! This project will likely be completed this fall with cooler weather. Region 4 staff continue to monitor water levels in catchments while preparing for the fall hunts in the region.



Rain falls in Yuma county, near Tucna. Photo courtesy of Val Morrill.

Region 5 Director's Report

By Duane Aubuchon, Regional Director

Habitat Partnership Committee Meeting

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's annual summer Habitat Partnership Committee (HPC) meeting was postponed and then cancelled; however, the Department began accepting HPC project grant applications on August 1st with a deadline of September 1st. Application review and the selection of projects for funding will occur over the next couple months.

Habitat Conditions

Record monsoon rainfall totals, including 12 to 13 inches in many parts of Tucson, had the desert and mountains looking far greener for far longer than I have ever noted before. Hopefully this will translate into an increase in our wildlife populations. The Arizona Game and Fish Department completed aerial pronghorn surveys within Region 5 in August, and while populations appeared strong, fawn survival, which is positively correlated with winter precipitation, was about average.

Rosemont Mine

There still has not been a decision from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals regarding the Rosemont Mine case; however, in early September the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) rejected a Hudbay Minerals Inc. request to reduce jaguar critical habitat in the Santa Rita Mountains that overlaps the proposed Rosemont Copper Mine. Jaguars are listed as endangered by the USFWS. Hudbay had requested that the USFWS remove the critical habitat designation from 50,000 acres in the northern Santa Rita Mountains, which would of course include the proposed mine site. The USFWS responded that Hudbay had not demonstrated that any of the primary constituent elements that make up jaguar critical habitat had changed in the area since the designation occurred.

Region 5 Director's Report Cont'd.

Interstate 11

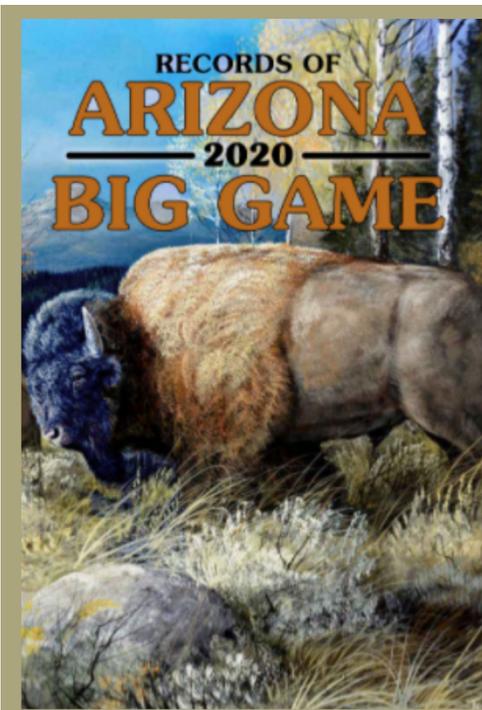
On July 16, 2021, the Arizona Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration released the Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed Interstate 11 (I-11) route from Nogales to Wickenburg. The FEIS identifies two potential Preferred Alternatives, a West Option through Avra Valley and an East Option that joins I-11 with I-19 and I-10 through the Tucson region. The 30-day comment period for the FEIS concluded on August 16, 2021. The City of Tucson, Pima County, and the Town of Sahuarita have all formally opposed the West Option through the Avra Valley. Possible wildlife impacts from the West Option (west of the Tucson Mountains in Avra Valley) include encroachment onto important wildlife areas such as Saguaro National Monument, the Ironwood Forest National Monument, and the Bureau of Reclamation's Central Arizona Project Canal Mitigation Corridor. There would also be potential impacts on wildlife movement corridors to and from the Tucson Mountains.

Youth Dove Hunt

Most sponsored youth hunt events were cancelled last year due to the pandemic. With the fall hunt seasons beginning, the Arizona Game and Fish Department was able to conduct a mentored youth dove hunt near Safford. With all the abundant plant seeds and water from the monsoons, area specific dove concentrations were difficult to come by, but some of the participants were able to get legal limits and all had a good time.



Youth Dove Hunt. Photo courtesy of Duane Abuchon.



Records of Arizona Big Game 2020

The Arizona Record Book Committee has been working diligently to make sure this edition lives up to the expectation of the Golden Anniversary edition. The Record Book, which records the scores of game animals taken by hunters throughout Arizona, has been published every five years by AWF since 1970, making the Arizona Records Book the oldest state record book program of any state in our nation. Thank you for your patience as we finish the book. Now is a great time to order your book!

Purchase the book at: azwildlife.org/SHOP

Affiliate Spotlight: Arizona Elk Society, A Whole Systems Approach

By Nikki Julien, AWF Outreach Director



For the Arizona Elk Society (AES), a healthy elk population starts with healthy habitat. Steve Clark, executive director of AES since 2013 and volunteer president of the organization since 2005, had a vision to think on an ecosystem scale. Although it was difficult at first to convince federal agencies, such as the Forest Service, to agree to use all-volunteer crews for large restoration projects, AES quickly proved they were up to the task. Instead of doing a little work here and there as support for state-sponsored projects, AES takes a whole ecosystem approach by

considering the entire watershed or the many thousands of acres grazing allotments. With the entire area in mind, AES tackles the numerous issues that affect elk including fencing, tree thinning, restoring flow to creeks and seeps, and replanting grasses.

“There’s lots of habitat for elk,” says Clark. “We work on the habitat and follow up with the water.” Water is the vital component of elk habitat. Water is most imperative at calving time (early June) which also corresponds to the pre-monsoon dry spells in our state. With the long-standing drought, wildlife have been hard hit. But thanks to the AES, there are healthy elk populations in northern Arizona. In 2020, AES volunteers (along



Photo courtesy of Steve Clark.

with Steve Clark and a seasonal employee coordinating in-the-field projects) hauled over 850,000 gallons of water to wildlife water tanks in Region 2, which includes Flagstaff to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. What makes AES projects so unique, is their low cost due to the incredible turnout and dedication of the volunteers. It’s their volunteers that make AES the largest conservation organization in the state.

“If we get a proposal for a habitat restoration project, it’s got to have a water component,” said Clark. But the water component isn’t just about hauling water to fill tanks; filling tanks isn’t enough for the long term. In years with little rainfall a few tanks will concentrate the populations of elk and other wildlife needing the water. The other part of this ecosystem-scale restoration is forest thinning, which includes removing juniper. This helps to restore riparian meadows allowing creeks and seeps to run freely again. With a few snowy years recharging the groundwater, available water becomes more dispersed and accessible. Thinned forests allow the grasses to regrow, and this good feed brings back the elk. This approach has proven successful over the years.

To learn more about the Arizona Elk Society, visit the AES website at <https://www.arizonaelksociety.org/> or contact Steve Clark directly at stevec@arizonaelksociety.org

AWF is proud to have the Arizona Elk Society as an affiliate member. Affiliates offer the AWF board a diverse set of voices, each one focusing on its own niche for conservation in Arizona. Collectively, AWF and our affiliates provide broader picture of the issues and possible solutions for Arizona wildlife, as well as an amplified voice advocating for the conservation of wildlife and public lands. To learn more about becoming an affiliate, visit our affiliate page at <https://azwildlife.org/affiliates> or contact awf@azwildlife.org

America in Crisis:

Saving the Wild at a Time Like This

The following article (which was originally published in AWN 20 years ago) was recently uncovered in our archives. The then president of the National Wildlife Federation, Mark Van Putten, had shared this special message with the NWF family of affiliates, members, and supporters following the tragedy of the 9-11 attacks on America.

Now, twenty years later, at a time when we are dealing with the national and global challenges of the Covid pandemic, we again find ourselves asking, “Do our efforts to connect all Americans with the natural world and build awareness and support for wildlife and wild places really matter ‘at a time like this’?”

In reading Mark’s message, we realize (and hope you do as well) that the same lessons from then, still hold true today.
--Scott Garlid, Executive Director, Arizona Wildlife Federation

AMERICA IN CRISIS

SAVING THE WILD

AT A TIME LIKE THIS

A Special Message From NWF President Mark Van Putten

Reprinted from AWN Fall 2001, v43 i4



Photo by Nikki Julien.

One means of sanity is to retain a hold on the natural world, to remain, insofar as we can, good animals... We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope. -- Wallace Stegner

We recoiled in horror at the unspeakable events of September 11, 2001. Then, slowly, we began to ponder the profound impact this unparalleled human and national tragedy would have on us as individuals and as a country.

Inevitably in a time of national crisis, priorities shift. We ask ourselves what we should do “at a time like this.” At the National Wildlife Federation, we’ve asked ourselves, “Do our efforts to connect all Americans with the natural world and build awareness, understanding and support for wildlife, wild places and a healthy environment really matter ‘at a time like this’?” I believe the answer is an unequivocal, “Yes, they do.”

For while this may not be a time for business-as-usual conservation, it is a time to re-affirm the enduring relevance of a fundamental national ethic: the value of our wildlife and wild places, and the healing power of nature, in an often chaotic world. Like Aldo Leopold, most Americans would not want to live in a world without wild things. And most Americans believe that securing the future of our wildlife and wild places – including irreplaceable special places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – must remain high on our list of national

priorities.

Congress has deferred debate on energy legislation and many other contentious issues to focus on our national security, as well it should. But the fact remains that drilling in the Arctic Refuge would not provide any energy for years, and its contribution to our overall needs would be slight. Drilling would, however, defile one of the last, pristine wild places left to us. We must guard against any opportunistic efforts to weaken existing protections for this special place.

Caring Americans can take meaningful action to decrease our dependence on foreign energy supplies by emphasizing conservation, and insisting that Congress make gas-guzzling SUVs meet the same fuel efficiency standards as passenger cars. We can even make a significant difference by doing things as simple as using a gallon less of gasoline each week, or installing compact fluorescent light bulbs.

But foregoing continued progress toward a healthy environment, and the protection of our precious natural resources, is not a prudent option for a strong America – even at a time when our immediate priorities may be focused elsewhere.

Disturbing projections that Glacier National Park may soon be bereft of glaciers remind us that protecting America also requires that we move aggressively and globally to deal with the causes and consequences of climate change, which threatens the health of our natural resources and economy alike. Likewise, we must continue to work cooperatively with other nations toward world trade agreements that respect the needs of wildlife and the environment, as well as the hopes and aspirations of people everywhere.

Stegner's "geography of hope" is found in such resplendent American landscapes as our national parks, our prairie grasslands, the Everglades, and national wildlife refuges like the Arctic Refuge. But it also flourishes in gardens, backyards, schoolyards and green spaces across this great country. Nature is the unifying essence that nurtures and regenerates life at every level; its loss – or the loss of our connection to it – diminishes us as individuals and as a nation.

Immediately following the terrorist attacks in New York, I was struck and moved to hear of dazed and grieved New Yorkers flocking to nearby community gardens to comfort each other and reaffirm their common humanity. In the days following the tragedy, I also heard from National Wildlife Federation members and supporters, Board members and staff, many of whom described their need to escape the horrific televised images – their need for solace and sustenance. And many told of finding that comfort and renewal as they walked by a familiar stream, hiked a favorite mountain path or even sat under a tree in a local park.

Conservation is ultimately about caring, and about community. With your continued support, we can help keep it an American tradition that is passed proudly from generation to generation.

"There are those who can live without wild things and those who cannot."

*--Aldo Leopold,
A Sand County
Almanac*



Photo by Nikki Julien.

The Mislabeled, Misunderstood, and Sometimes Mistreated Javelina

Article and Photos by Michael Cravens, Advocacy and Conservation Director



Photo by Nikki Julien.

It happens far too often. I'll be talking with another hunter and the subject of javelina hunting will come up. It never takes too long before I find myself being "educated" on how these animals are not actually pigs but rather rodents, how aggressive they are, and how inedible their meat is. Yep, you heard that first one right; I've been told they are just like rats except this rodent curiously has a pig-like snout and even-toed hooves. I've had others argue that they are more closely related to goats than pigs. Having repeatedly heard all these untruths, I believe it's safe to say that there are very few North American game animals as misunderstood as the javelina. The misconceptions about these awesome little animals so I'd like to clear some of those up.

The javelina is technically a Peccary. While there are three species recognized in the Americas, only the collared peccary (*Peccary tajacu*) occurs in North America. Peccaries are a new world pig, yes, a pig,

but not exactly the same pig that we recognize from the farm. These new world pigs belong to the family Tayasuidae which actually evolved about 30 million years ago alongside, and from a close common ancestor of, the old world or "farm" pigs in the family Suidae. In the simplest version of a very long and complex evolutionary story, the peccaries made it across a land bridge from Europe to the Americas, leaving the old world pigs behind. Freed of competition with their old world counterparts, they colonized the Americas and are still here today.

Now that we're clear, or at least clearer, on what a javelina is, let's resolve a nasty misconception about its behavior. Javelina have an undeserved reputation as aggressive animals that are prone to attack without provocation. While this couldn't be further from the truth, I believe this misunderstanding comes from a few things. First, javelina have large, sharp, canine teeth or "tusks" that, when necessary, they will use for defense. Admittedly, these tusks are impressive and quite intimidating but bites on humans are extremely rare. When they do occur, they are almost always associated with javelina that have habituated to humans feeding them.



The Misunderstood Javelina, Cont'd.

Next, javelina have poor eyesight and therefore, under certain circumstances, can allow humans to approach closer than other wild animals would allow. This can be misconstrued as a lack of fear or even aggression when in fact, it's simply a hapless javelina waiting for the wind direction to change or for some other sensory cue to come along to let it know just what's going on. It is true that a group of javelina (aka squadron), especially with babies (aka reds), will attack a dog when they feel threatened. Attacks on dogs, especially hunting dogs who have more opportunities to encounter squadrons, are not uncommon. These encounters can happen quickly and have the potential to be deadly. While this should be taken seriously, it's important to understand that this behavior is not outright aggression, but rather self-defense. Dogs and other canine predators are a real threat to javelina, especially those with reds.

Another misconception about javelina is a real pet peeve of mine. Far too many hunters will tell you that javelina meat is inedible. Others will only do slightly better and suggest that they are only good for making chorizo or highly processed products like snack meat sticks. This misconception is so widely believed that in one state, javelina doesn't

even fall under wanton waste laws and the meat is legally allowed to be left in the field to rot. I will admit, many long held misconceptions have at least a seed of truth to them or a somewhat reasonable explanation, somewhere along the line, as to how they got started. Javelina being inedible is lacking all reason. I've eaten many of them and none were made into chorizo or snack sticks. I would describe the flavor of the meat like a mild pork. I've grilled it,



smoked it, fried it, and braised it. I've served it to neighbors, friends, and family. It's all been delicious and everyone has thoroughly enjoyed it. There is perhaps one thing that might have led to all this confusion, and that alludes to the javelina's nick names: skunk pig or musk hog. The javelina can smell very much like a skunk, especially when feeling nervous or threatened. This odor in no way naturally imparts itself into the meat however. The only way this could happen is by improper or sloppy processing. The javelina has a scent gland in the center of the lower back that has the potential to contribute some foulness to the meat if it were allowed to come into contact with it. The good news is, it's easy to see and easy to avoid. In fact, it comes right off with the skin. While it would take some very poor knife work for this gland to contact enough meat to ruin a whole javelina this could be that "somewhat reasonable explanation" of how all this nonsense got started.



Nonsense aside, a lot of hunting in javelina country, regardless of quarry, is done behind binoculars. One of my favorite things to do is settle onto a hilltop perch on a cold winter morning and glass the surrounding countryside as the sun rises and warms the landscape. When I'm lucky enough to spot a squadron, I can easily sit for hours just watching these interesting animals interact with each other and their habitat. When I'm lucky enough to have a tag in my pocket and I get to bring one home, I know I'm in for some exceptional eating. Long held misconceptions can be stubborn, long lived, and hard to let go. Some who read this will simply dig their heels in deeper, but I hope a few will take a second look at these awesome animals, ditch the misconceptions, and appreciate them for all that they are.

Another Epic BOW

By Linda Dightmon, BOW Coordinator



Longtime BOW Coordinator, Linda Dightmon. Photo courtesy of longtime BOW coordinator Mark Hullinger.

Back in July, the BOW committee made the difficult decision to move forward with a full scale BOW workshop for the fall. This meant allowing the usual 100 participants and another 35 or so instructors and staff in close proximity for an entire weekend. Yikes! After a year of pandemic precautions, we were not sure if the ladies (or any of us) were ready, but we were going to try to go back to pre-pandemic BOW numbers. Registration started slow... but then, something happened when we were 6 weeks out. Our registrar, Kim, called to tell me that we had 20 people on the wait list! Our core instructors were ecstatic and ready to teach.

There is a large building at Friendly Pines Camp (where fall BOW is held) called the "Kiva." During the summer, the walls come off the Kiva and it essentially becomes a giant veranda. The weather cooperated for our weekend so we opted to leave the walls down. This became the perfect venue for many of our large group activities, effectively making them outdoor gatherings. The camp has also added more outside eating areas. These simple steps, along with hand sanitizers and

masking up in the food line proved to be successful Covid precautions.

In the past, we have offered a field dressing session in which the class guts, skins, and quarters a goat. I know, scary! But a goat is the best substitute that we have for a deer. This class is very popular; so for this BOW workshop, we added a butchering class. We left the carcass whole, found a goat meat chart, and made some handouts. Ten ladies signed up for a full class. Instructors Cliff Saylor and Mark Hullinger were really impressed with the participants' enthusiasm. It wasn't long before these ladies were sharpening knives and making steaks! Nikki Ansley was also there with her meat grinder and the class made some goat sausage to take home. Researcher say that one of the main reasons that adult women take up hunting is to bring home organic food to the table. Yup, these ladies were inspired!

Overall, there were 99 participants at this BOW camp, with well over half of them being new to BOW. We raised \$3,150 from merchandise sales and the



Longtime BOW coordinator, Kim Kreuzer, has an important job. Photo courtesy of Betty Dickens.



Crawfishing class shows off their harvest at Goldwater Lake, Prescott. Photo courtesy of Betty Dickens.

Saturday night raffle and auction. The September 2021 "BOW Follies" (fun performances by BOW participants) were exceptional. The bar has been raised. Thank you to Nikki Julien, AWF Outreach Director, for the great MC work. All we can say is, you just had to be there.

Maybe folks were just ready to gather. Maybe it was the infusion of the young women from the Bridges to BOW program. Maybe the stars and the planets were perfectly aligned. Every year I tease and say, "This is going to be an epic BOW." But this one really was! Even with some of the typical missteps, the instructors and students just carried on. There was just an atmosphere, an almost tangible, positive energy. As BOW was winding down, I received a hand-written note from one participant thanking me "for providing a safe, supportive place for the women to grow and be themselves." This is exactly why we do BOW. Wow! Epic!

Bridges to BOW Program a Phenomonal Success!

by Trica Oshant Hawkins

Fall 2021



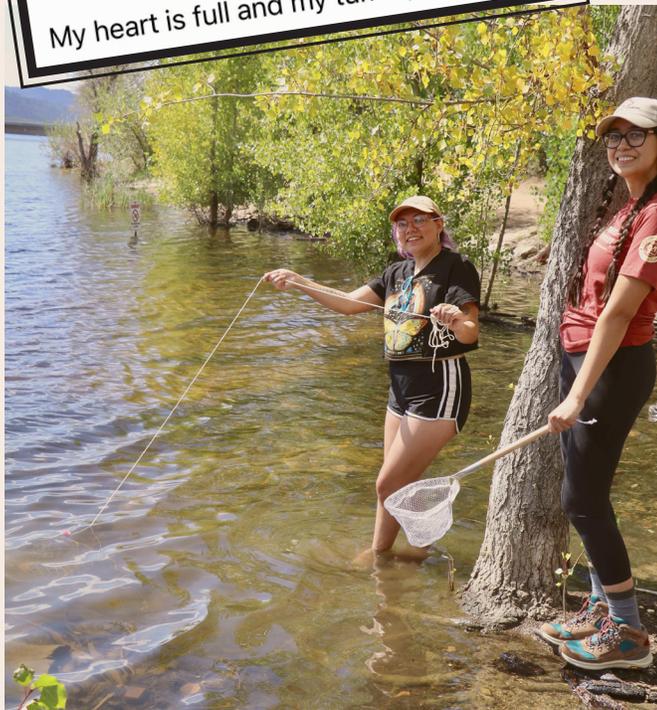
AWF's inaugural Bridges to BOW (B2B) program was a huge success. Fifteen pioneering young women, from a wide diversity of backgrounds, took part in the September Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) workshop at Friendly Pines Camp. None of these women had previously heard of BOW and thanks to their attendance, word of future BOW workshops will be reaching younger, more diverse audiences. By participating in the B2B program, these strong and courageous women are helping build bridges and pave the way for more women of color to participate in outdoor opportunities such as BOW. This inaugural B2B program was funded with a generous grant from National Wildlife Federation. Bridges to BOW will continue to be a part of all of our future BOW workshops. You can help make that happen with a donation to our B2B fund.



The love, life, tears, gratitude, laughter, and forever bonds created with these beautiful sisters, I'm soul forever thankful

Thank you @azwildlifefed and #bridges2bow for this experience

My heart is full and my tummy too 😊



TOP POSTS #bridges2bow



47 likes

liz_tulip This weekend I had the opportunity to take some workshops on camping, bagpcking, and mountain biking. In addition to that, I got to do yoga in the woods, eat s'mores, fish, try new foods and more. In the end, the best part of this weekend was getting to meet an amazing group of people/women that filled my heart with warmth and love.

Thank you #bridges2bow for this amazing opportunity and for bringing us all together. Love y'all! 💕💕

Conserving Wildlife and Habitat

www.azwildlife.org

Barbed Wire

By Randy Tuttle



Barbed Wire. Photo by Randy Tuttle.

Randy Tuttle (age 12) and his mom, Emily Bogusch, recently volunteered for an AWF Volunteer for Wildlife habitat restoration project at the Sonoran Desert National Monument. Along with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Bureau of Land Management, and affiliate organization, the Arizona Antelope Foundation (AAF), AWF volunteers have been helping to remove abandoned barbed wire fence from public lands throughout the state. Randy and Emily helped remove 2 miles of fencing on this particular project. For Randy, that effort, along with this article, became his Bar Mitzva project. Mazel Tov, Randy!

I went to the Sonoran Desert National Monument to help remove barbed wire. In the Sonoran Desert, there are hundreds of miles of barbed wire remnants from when the land was used for ranching. This barbed wire is a hazard for desert animals. This is particularly true for pronghorn, because they do not jump the fence like other animals, they crawl under it.

For this project, I woke up at around 6:00am, and the trip took an hour and twenty minutes (I live in Phoenix, by the way). I also know that to get there you take the Circle Road and go down the dirt path (this is vital information because you probably don't want to drive in circles like we did). Once we got on the dirt path, we went very slow. If you want to go there, I suggest you use a jeep or a pickup truck. We went there in a Ford Fusion—one of those low cars—and it took a really long, long time. I think my mom was scared of popping a tire (it was pretty bumpy and took her what seemed like 10 minutes to get through an extremely small ditch). I definitely think a 4-wheel drive vehicle would be better for this trip.

Once we got there, they (AWF, AAF, AGFD, & BLM) gave us a pep talk, told us about what we were going to do, and split us into different groups. It was a six mile ride from our meeting point to the project site. That might not seem

like much, but we were going around 9 miles per hour in a low, sensitive car and you felt every single bump on the road, and my mom was worrying that it would take us an hour to get there. It didn't though, don't worry.

Once we got to the project site, they showed us where and what to cut. We got our wire cutters out and started clipping. It was nice cutting down so much wire. We were clipping these little, tiny metal wires holding the strands of barbed wire in place. Not to brag or anything, but I cut a lot of those little wires. You could probably do more, but you'll have to go there and see if you can. Sometimes the wires would be double corded. If they were, you would use one

of the larger wire clippers (bolt cutters). Sometimes there was even a post which was almost completely wrapped in barbed wire. After a while, my hands and legs started to ache. We had cut a LOT of wires. We caught up to the team who started a few miles ahead of us. Then we all walked back to our starting point and ate lunch. One person (Glen Dickens) told us a story about how he organized a group (AAF) to support pronghorns and how they got money to help their organization in the pronghorn restoration effort -- but it'd be better to hear the story from him.



Randy Tuttle worked hard to remove barbed wire fence.



Thick brush makes fence work even harder! Photo by Randy Tuttle.

By now we we'd been there for several hours (maybe two and a half) and I was pretty much spent, but I stayed to work some more. Since we were leaving soon they gave me and my mom a small assignment. Some other people came with us and we pulled down some more fences of barbed wire and I did a big fence of barbed wire. It was one of the larger ones with thick wood posts. Overall it was pretty cool.

My mom wants me to write about what I thought was the most rewarding thing of this project. I would say it would probably be when your hands want to fall off and your legs turn to jelly and you sit down and it all just sort of cools over and feels good.

Some things you should take if you want to make this trip in the future would be gloves and protective clothing, like maybe a pair of tough jeans. It was pretty cold there so a good coat that you don't care if it might get ruined because when cutting barbed wires there might be a spikey plant that you need to walk by, or a uncomfortable position leaning over a bush that you need to lop off to reach that last piece of wire. And a water bottle because working is hard out there and as I said, it is sort of cold but even so water is essential. And that's pretty much it, the end. I hope you're coming to help in the future because I'm coming back, too one day. Yay!

Why Volunteer for Wildlife?

Article and Photos by Trica Oshant Hawkins, AWF Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteers help build an enclosure to capture pronghorn antelope.

If you've already read Randy Tuttle's article, "Barbed Wire," on preceding pages, you may already be able to answer the question, "why volunteer for wildlife?" While Randy made it clear that the work was challenging, he also shared how good he felt when it was all done. He was also very clear about his plans to help out again (in fact he joined us just this past month on another project). Randy also invited you to come out and volunteer for wildlife with AWF. I invite you as well.

The impact our work has on wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public lands is profound, measurable, and lasting. The work we do – the work our Volunteers for Wildlife do – contributes to a healthier landscape, expands wildlife corridors to allow for freedom of movement between habitats, helps wildlife biologists manage species, supports safe wildlife captures and translocations, provides monarchs with the milkweed species they need to ensure a larval food source for

their young, restores landscapes that have been impacted by fire, creates habitat for threatened and endangered species, helps restore landscapes to better support the wildlife that live there, and the list goes on.

When we get together with our volunteers for various projects around the state, we find we are all like-minded individuals with similar values. We are people that value nature, wildlife, and wild places. We get the opportunity to see places in

Arizona we may not have known about. We camp under the stars, share stories, enjoy great camp food, and smell like woodsmoke in the morning. Our day trips take us to places an easy drive from our homes and we learn about these natural areas that exist to support wildlife and habitat. We meet biologists and other resource people who are so happy and grateful to have the help, and who are eager to share information about the species we are helping.



Volunteers remove barbed wire fence on the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

So, why volunteer for wildlife? Because *you* can make a difference. Because you will have fun, meet new people, and see new places in our beautiful state. You will also learn so much about managing Arizona's wildlife, and get some hands-on experience while doing it! You will be a part of Arizona's wildlife conservation story.

We'd love you to join us! If you'd like to sign up and be notified of upcoming projects, visit our web page at www.azwildlife.org/volunteer. You can also reach out to our Volunteer for Wildlife coordinator, Trica Oshant Hawkins at trica@azwildlife.org.

If you can't support us with a gift of your time, you can always support us with a financial gift!

Your contribution toward the Volunteer for Wildlife program will be used directly to support these conservation projects.

Use the envelope in this issue or visit our website at:

www.azwildlife.org/donate

Capitalizing on the Off-Season to be Prepared and Productive

By Jeremy Romero, Regional Connectivity Coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation

It's early morning and you are standing knee deep in your favorite trout stream watching a trout rise for a fluttering caddis underneath a overhang of cottonwood branches. Or perhaps you're listening to the bugles of a bull elk as he is approaching through the aspens during your elk hunt. Instead of making a cast that places your caddis in the feeding zone of the rising trout, you keep getting snagged and breaking off your flies in the cottonwood branches. When you go to tie on a new caddis you realize you only have one more left in your box. Or potentially worse, that bull elk following his cows just after first light stops broadside at 30 yards only for your arrow to sail inches over his back.

Sure, mistakes and unexplained or unexpected events can always occur, but many can be prevented or minimized by keeping productive during the offseason so when fishing or hunting seasons come around you will be ready to hook that rising trout or fill your freezer with high quality wild game meat.

If you hunt with a rifle or muzzleloader, ensure your firearm is cleaned and properly functioning. Double check things like the torque of scope ring screws and bases as well as your firearm's zero.

If you hunt archery, take your bow to the local bow shop early in the off-season. Have them clean and tune it as well check for any potential problems like loose screws, cracked limbs, or frayed strings. Take this time to replace these parts. If you do replace a string, take your bow back to the shop after shooting 200 arrows or so for a tune up. Check your arrows for any cracks or deformities. This can be done by simply bending your arrows while inspecting from the nock to the insert.

Check your other gear and equipment too. Look for holes or leaks in your tents, sleeping bag, or sleeping pad that could have you waking up on the floor or in a puddle of water. Buy boots early on and spend the off-season breaking them in. This will strengthen your feet over time and help with preventing blisters on those long hikes and heavy pack outs.



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Romero.



Photo courtesy of Jeremy Romero.

If you fish, make time for maintenance and prep. Fill up that fly box. Tie your favorite patterns both dry and wet. Tie a lot of them, too. It is inevitable you'll lose some or give some to a buddy. Check your waders for holes or leaks. Send them to get repaired or buy a repair kit and do it yourself. Clean or replace your fishing line using some mild detergent and a soft cloth. Clean and oil your reels. After a season's worth of use, you'd be surprised how much dust and dirt can get into your reel. Replace the worn out, sun beaten and ripped net you've had forever. Use a rubber net that does not harm or remove the slime from fish. Replenish supplies like tippet, floatant, indicators, and split shot.

Most importantly, whether you hunt, fish, or both, in addition to using the off-season to get prepared, use this time to practice. Spend an adequate amount of time at the range with your rifle or bow so when you have that opportunity to take the shot, you make it count. A little time consistently invested over the off-season will benefit you in the long run. It will help in building confidence to make that cast or prevent misses and poorly placed shots that can non-fatally wound an animal. Take the time to practice techniques like that roll cast, or knots to make you a better angler. Taking these steps keeps you productive during the off-season and prepared for the upcoming fishing or hunting season. Practice brings everything together to make you a more efficient and experienced sportsmen or sportswomen.

Leave your Legacy with AWF

By Alan Knobloch and Trica Oshant Hawkins

Planned giving is an important and effective way that you can support the work and mission of Arizona Wildlife Federation. By including the AWF in your will, trust, or retirement plan, you can have a powerful impact on wildlife conservation in Arizona. Your gift to AWF can be a part of your legacy, one that helps ensure Arizona's wildlife and public lands are protected for generations to come.

There are several ways that you can leave a lasting gift to AWF:

- An easy and popular way is to include a gift in your will or revocable trust.
- Another easy way is to name AWF as a beneficiary in a bank, investment, insurance, or retirement account.
- If you are 72 or older, you can make a current gift from a retirement account that counts toward your annual required distribution.
- You can also make your annual gift to AWF with appreciated stock or through your donor-advised fund.

Regardless of your preferred approach, we are honored by the generosity of those of you who leave a gift through your estate. Including the Arizona Wildlife Federation in your estate plan ensures that your values will endure and future generations will benefit from your thoughtful foresight. Your legacy of caring for wildlife will live on through your gift to AWF.

For more information, please visit our website at www.azwildlife.org or email alan@azwildlife.org



Photos by Betty Dickens, Nikki Julien, AZGFD

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