

# 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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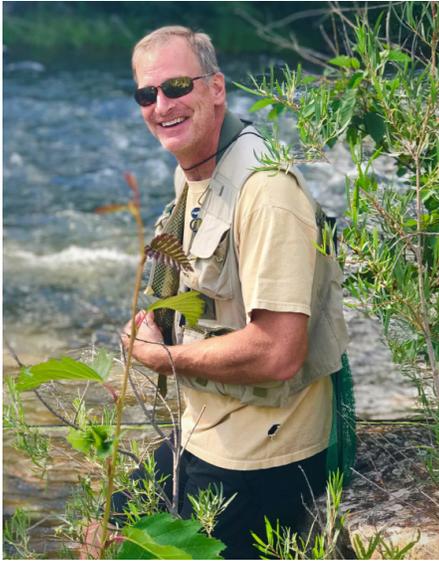
Front Cover Photo Courtesy of Michael Cravens  
Articles by: Glen Dickens, Douglas Burt, Mary Cravens, Michael Cravens, and Trica Oshant Hawkins, Back Cover courtesy of Cheryl Reuss

### JOIN THE CONVERSATION



# A Message from the Executive Director

By Scott Garlid, AWF Executive Director



## Camaraderie

(kæmə'ra:dəri) noun,  
a spirit of familiarity and trust existing between friends

I recently enjoyed a week in southwestern Colorado with friends from my childhood. We get together almost every year, and it's a time I once took for granted, but now truly cherish. We know each other well. Some of us were neighbors or went to kindergarten together. Others we got to know through little league sports or in elementary school. We grew up together, and since high school, have continued to share life's ups and downs with each other.

We are older now and we're openly grateful to each other and thankful for the camaraderie we all enjoy. We've also changed in other ways. We enjoy food more. Our drinks have changed. We can't do everything we once could. We talk more about our failures and less about our successes. We value the journey more than the destination. In reflecting back on all the things we've done over the years since school (whether kayaking on the Mississippi, hiking the Grand

Canyon, fishing in northern Minnesota, or whitewater rafting in Colorado), I realized that almost all our rendezvous are centered around something in the outdoors. I got to thinking, why is that? When not all of us grew up hunting or fishing or hiking or canoeing, what is it about the outdoors that acts as our homing beacon?

I believe it's because doing something together with others in an outdoor setting enables us to taste and to celebrate the very best life has to offer: *friends and nature*. Or more specifically, the camaraderie of friends through a connection to nature. Personally, I love time in the outdoors alone. But there's a time, a place for everything, and I also love time in the outdoors with family and friends. Relative to the work of the Arizona Wildlife Federation (AWF), I believe the connections we all have with each other are a fundamental part of making connections with wild places and wild things. It's impossible for me to imagine how we can take care of the outdoors we all love if we can't connect first with each other.

This issue of AWN is full of examples of how the Arizona Wildlife Federation (AWF) is bringing people together *AND* connecting them with the outdoors. Board President Glen Dickens kicks it off with his vision for the next 100 years of AWF and the importance of AWF's Affiliate network. Arizona Game and Fish Department's R3 Program Manager, Doug Burt, shares the department's efforts to "recruit, retain, and reactivate" sportsmen and women and why that's so important for the future of conservation. Most of our readers already know that AWF prides itself on finding common ground with both hunting and non-hunting outdoor lovers, but in this issue, you'll enjoy a thoughtful and personal perspective of a first time dove hunt by Mary and Michael Cravens. It's impossible to talk about connecting people to the outdoors without mention of AWF's BOW and Bridges to BOW programs and Trica Oshant Hawkins updates you on how those programs are bringing women together using the outdoors as a catalyst. Of course, nothing does more to connect people to the outdoors than family events like the Yuma Valley Rod & Gun Club's Fishing Clinic, or the AWF/BHA Squirrel Camp, and you'll find more here on both. Finally, be sure to check out our AWF Annual Conservation award winners—each of whom has played an important role in connecting people to the outdoors!

I hope you enjoy this issue of AWN. I hope you get out for a hunt, or a hike, or even a drive to enjoy Arizona's fall colors. I hope you'll experience not just the joy of the outdoors but get a chance to share that joy through the camaraderie of others.

Yours in conservation,

Scott Garlid, Executive Director, Arizona Wildlife Federation

# Arizona Wildlife Federation: At the Forefront of Arizona's Conservation Efforts in the Next 99 Years

By Glen Dickens, AWF President

As the Arizona Wildlife Federation prepares to celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2023, Arizona faces innumerable environmental challenges with regards to drought, population growth, and the continued protection of our public lands. For 99 years we have been steadfastly guided by the principles of *Sound Science and Best Governance*, for within this space we grow consent and consensus for our wildlife conservation actions and policy. Going forward, in partnership with your individual commitments as Citizen Conservationists we will actively improve, lead and influence Arizona's wildlife conservation efforts locally, while collaborating nationally.

At our inception in October of 1923, we were known as the *Arizona Game Protective Association*, and were made up of 18 different sporting/conservation groups scattered across the whole of a state that had just 435,000 residents. Today we total 7.2 million residents. At that October 1923 meeting, held in Flagstaff and chaired by none other than Aldo Leopold, the father of the modern wildlife management, Tom E. McCullough (“that great conservationist, the old stalwart who would fight a cornered wildcat for principle”) was elected our first president. From 1923 to 1929, McCullough and our 18 affiliates were destined to lead to a successful conclusion (through a voter approved referendum) a long, bitter fight with then Governor Hunt. This was to secure proper management of our state's fish and wildlife and their habitats, the creation of today's modern Arizona wildlife statutes, the Commission structure, and the professionally staffed Arizona Game and Fish Department. I believe our heritage can provide a roadmap to our future. Enthusiasm for our mission is critical for the AWF Board, Staff, Affiliates, and Supporters as we make our personal contributions (within our individual abilities and time constraints) count. For without personal enthusiasm, how else can we carry out our mission considering the environmental challenges facing Arizona today? I'm reminded of the words of a Navajo elder at a ceremony the morning of the 1996 reintroduction of 35 black footed ferrets to the Aubrey Valley when he said, “To have our desired future we must act collectively today.” That is the consistency, not just in message but in conservation action, that the AWF has provided over the past 99 years... and most certainly will into the future.

Compared to 5 years ago, today we find ourselves with a 4 member paid professional staff and an operating budget of \$500K all leveraged towards our 3 Pillars of *Education, Involvement, and Advocacy*. This is due to Brad Powell, our President of the past 7 years, and his commensurate grant writing, networking, and extensive relationship building skills. The good news is the AWF has a tradition of keeping the past president as a valued member of our executive board and Brad – who was recently elected to the National Wildlife Federation's board as Western Regional Director for the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah – has agreed to continue his tenure with us. To better understand the responsibilities of my role as incoming President, and to ensure the continuity of our AWF board and the day to day management of programs and staff by Executive Director, Scott Garlid, the three of us have engaged in regular weekly morning calls the past 8 months. My compliments to Brad and his due diligence to lead us this far, and to Scott for his continuing patience with my personal learning style. A key long-term goal of mine is to strive to increase our income and staff for additional program development during our tenure together. We have had two core AWF “deliverables” that continue to stand the test of time: the first being the *Arizona Records of Big Game* (recently publishing its 50th anniversary book) and the *Becoming an Outdoors-Woman* (BOW)



Photo Courtesy of Betty Dickens.

*“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.” – Andrew Carnegie*

# Arizona Wildlife Federation: At the Forefront of Arizona's Conservation Efforts in the Next 99 Years Cont'd.

program (inducted last year into Arizona's Outdoor Hall of Fame after 25 years of program delivery). More recently we have added *Gardening for Wildlife*, *Eco-Schools Arizona*, *Volunteer for Wildlife*, *Camo at the Capitol*, and *Get Outdoors Arizona*. These niche programs evolved in response to direct wildlife conservation needs and integrate education, citizen conservationists, our affiliates, and our economic partners who collectively believe in the value and protection of Arizona's diverse wildlife resources. A fledgling new chapter of BOW known as *Bridges to Bow*, with a focus on including diverse, underrepresented young women, began in 2021 and has had over 30 participants to date. Our 1923 science-based advocacy continues unabated, and as a retired Arizona Game and Fish (AGFD) biologist/manager, it directly inspires my personal and professional desires to lead and carry out our mission into the future. Our board membership is dotted as well with current and former wildlife and resource managers, thus ensuring that sound science is integral to all of our position papers and verbal testimony given on behalf of Arizona wildlife conservation. As in our beginning, we continue to be composed of a strong statewide, wildlife affiliate network who actively participate as board members or lend their support more passively, while keeping up to date with our monthly newsletters or quarterly issues of our hallmark magazine, *Arizona Wildlife News*.

So, as your new president you might ask what are some of my specific goals and objectives? Over the short-term, I am beginning a 6 month Affiliates Listening Tour to meet each Affiliate board and ask three basic questions: 1) What caused your enabling mission; 2. How do you act on that mission today; and 3. How can the AWF assist in that work? Second, we will meet with lapsed Affiliates to encourage their return to the fold and/or to better understand their respective absences. Third, we will recruit at least three new affiliates from our current identified list of potential candidates. Fourth, in conjunction with our new incoming Vice President of Conservation and current Region 2 Director, Travis Woolley, we will brainstorm and identify multiple *Benches* of individual wildlife conservation movers/shakers and experts in all of our core conservation activities including public lands protection, water, wildlife species and habitats, and public and private governance experts. These individuals will be called on as necessary when we require expert council in the short or long-term issues of the day. And fifth, maintain our strong participation by staff and board in all of the multiple topic National Wildlife Federation affiliate monthly calls, and attend and participate vigorously at the annual national conferences.

*"Nothing worthwhile was ever accomplished without the will to start, the enthusiasm to continue and, regardless of temporary obstacles, the persistence to complete." Waite Phillips, the creator of Philmont Scout Ranch*

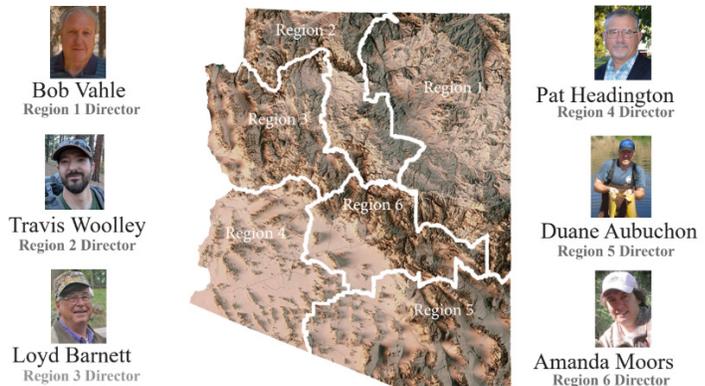
And for myself, as an Arizona native and grandson of a 1910 Cochise County pioneer (Irish farmer Frank Murphy and his renowned Suffragette spouse Ann T. McCue), blessed by a childhood growing up in the eastern shadow of the Huachuca mountains (with limitless US Forest Service lands at my doorstep to explore and hunt), I will from habit, most often default to Arizona's interest and well-being as a first priority. Discovering that the AGFD hired District Wildlife Managers (WM) in 1967 (after receiving my Eagle Scout and a single ride-a-long day with local WM Bruce Duke), I knew my 1976 University of Arizona Wildlife Ecology degree and employment in 1977 as a WM, had to become a certainty for my first 20 year career. As a 1970 high school senior, I co-chaired our school's first Earth Day celebration, and now 50+ years on our environmental challenges continue unabated. By nature, having attended a multicultural public school system for 12 years and having a New Mexico born and raised Latina grandmother (Hazel Ruckman), inclusion is inextricably woven into the fiber of my interactions and personality.

My spouse and best friend of 37 years, Betty (in her own right a naturalist and wildlife photographer with two natural resource degrees) continues to be patient with whom she refers to as her *energizer bunny*. Betty provides sound counsel on all of my writings and proposed governance actions. For 15 years Betty and I have loved working on our Elgin organic farm/orchard *Querencia* (Spanish for "Soul at Rest") with our retirement home there under construction as I pen this. With this treatise I hope you have gained an improved sense of the AWF's future and its commensurate actions on our mission with myself as your designated coach and servant leader.

Please join me, your AWF board, staff team, and Affiliates to attain uncommon, excellent results for Arizona's diverse wildlife resources!

# 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!



## Region 1 Director's Report

By Bob Vahle, Regional Director

### Heber Wild Horse Territory Management Plan & Control of Feral Horses on the ASNF

The AWF as previously reported has spent the last five years working with the ASNF including serving a year on the Heber Wild Horse Territory (HWHT) Management Plan – Working Group to assist in the development of a management plan for the HWHT. Although scheduled to be completed by March 2022, the Final HWHT Management Plan has yet to be completed, approved, and implemented. Meanwhile, the population of feral horses not associated with the HWHT on the Black Mesa Ranger District (RD) continues to increase.



*A small herd of Heber wild horses. Photo courtesy of Cheryl Reuss.*

In addition, the AWF along with other conservation organizations, have expressed significant concern to the USFS and ASNF regarding the increasing populations of feral horses in many other areas on the Apache NF portion of the ASNF including the Springerville RD and Alpine RD. In these areas, feral horses are having significant impacts on riparian and meadow vegetation, and stream health (e.g., stream bank stability, water quality and quantity) on key streams in the Black River drainage. These streams are federally designated “critical habitat” for the endangered New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse and “essential” habitat for the recovery of the threatened Apache (Arizona) trout. In addition, there are concerns that feral horses are also impacting the availability and quantity of key forage and water, particularly during current drought conditions for many species of wildlife (e.g., elk, deer) and authorized livestock (e.g., cattle) managed by permitted livestock operators.

The AWF was encouraged that the USFS and the ASNF finally made the decision to begin removing feral horses and other unauthorized livestock from the ASNF. An initial removal of approximately 20 feral horses occurred in the spring of 2022. The roundup led to protests, and a complaint was filed in court to release the horses back into the forest, stating that the horses were not “unauthorized livestock.” The motion was denied by a federal judge. For more information regarding specific management issues such as the HWHT, the New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse, and the rationale and legal requirements related to the management of unauthorized livestock such as feral horses, visit the ASNF website at: [www.fs.usda.gov/resources/asnf/landmanagement/resourcemanagement](http://www.fs.usda.gov/resources/asnf/landmanagement/resourcemanagement)

### Mexican Wolf Recovery Program

The end of year census for 2021 showed a minimum of 196 wild Mexican wolves in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area. This is a 5% increase in the population from a minimum of 186 wolves counted at the end of 2020.

# Region 1 Director's Report Cont'd.

Fall 2022

This is the sixth consecutive year of growth in the wild population and represents a doubling of the population since 2029. The Mexican Wolf Interagency Team (IFT) has been using the technique of “fostering” as a proven method to increase the genetic diversity in the wild Mexican Wolf population. The fostering program begins with the carefully managed breeding of Mexican wolves held in captive Mexican wolf facilities under the direction of the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan program to produce genetically diverse pups within the captive population. Within 14 days of being born the captive born wolf pups are transported to be placed with specific known breeding wolf packs in the wild and mixed together with similarly known aged wild pups. Once all of the pups are placed back into the wild den, the breeding female’s maternal instinct kicks in. The female will feed and care for both the wild and captive-born pups. With the help of her pack mates the pups will be raised with the skills and knowledge needed for a life in the wild. The IFT has documented that fostered pups have the same survival rate as wild-born pups in the first year of life is approximately 50%.

Since the beginning of the cross-fostering program, a minimum of 13 Mexican wolf pups have survived at least two years in the wild and reached breeding age. Four of these have reproduced in the wild, and a minimum of seven litters from cross fostered wolves have been documented through 2021. In addition to the four cross-fostered wolves that have already been documented reproducing in the wild, the IFT has observed denning behavior in the spring of 2022 from three other 2 year old cross-fostered wolves that are breeding for the first time in 2022. Over a three week period in the spring of 2022, eleven Mexican wolf pups were fostered into five wild wolf packs across New Mexico and Arizona. The pups traveled from captive facilities across the U.S. as part of the coordinated effort to place genetically diverse wolves into the wild population in support of the Mexican wolf program recovery efforts. (Information from the AGFD E-News Report - 6/10/2022).

## Four Forests Restoration Initiative (4FRI) Update

As a result of the many large scale destructive wildfires that have occurred in recent years across the West including Arizona, and the inability of the 4 FRI project to rapidly accomplish the very large number of thinning acres originally planned, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has developed a new 4FRI Restoration Strategy Implementation Update for the 4FRI project starting in Fiscal Year 2022. The USFS has approved \$54 million per year for 5 years starting in Fiscal Year 2022 for the 4FRI project to mechanically thin, remove hazardous ground fuels, and use prescribed fire in areas of highest wildfire risk to communities and critical watersheds in the 4FRI project area. In Region I within the ASNF along the Mogollon Rim and the White Mountains, this would include treatment areas around Forest Lakes, Heber-Overgaard, Show Low, Pinetop-Lakeside, Greer, Springerville, and Alpine. The acreage to be treated on the ASNF in 2022 includes 14,388 acres of mechanical thinning, 11,500 acres of hazardous fuel reduction, and 43,881 of prescribed fire to reduce wildfire risk.

## ASNF Public Motorized Travel Management Plan

To date, the ASNF has still not completed and implemented its Public Motorized Travel Management Plan. The plan is critically needed in light of the significant increase in the sales and use of Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) over many areas of the ASNF. The implementation and enforcement of regulations included in the travel management plan are needed to reduce the adverse impacts of increasing unregulated OHV use (e.g., creation of new unauthorized wildcat roads and trails; damage to key wildlife habitats such as springs, wet meadows, stream banks, earthen water tanks; and disturbance and displacement of wildlife from key foraging and bedding areas). AWF continues to hope that the proposed timelines are met without any further delays in implementing this critically needed management plan in light of the ever increasing use and impacts of OHVs on the ASNF.



*The proliferation of OHVs has caused significant habitat damage in the backcountry.*

Conserving Wildlife and Habitat

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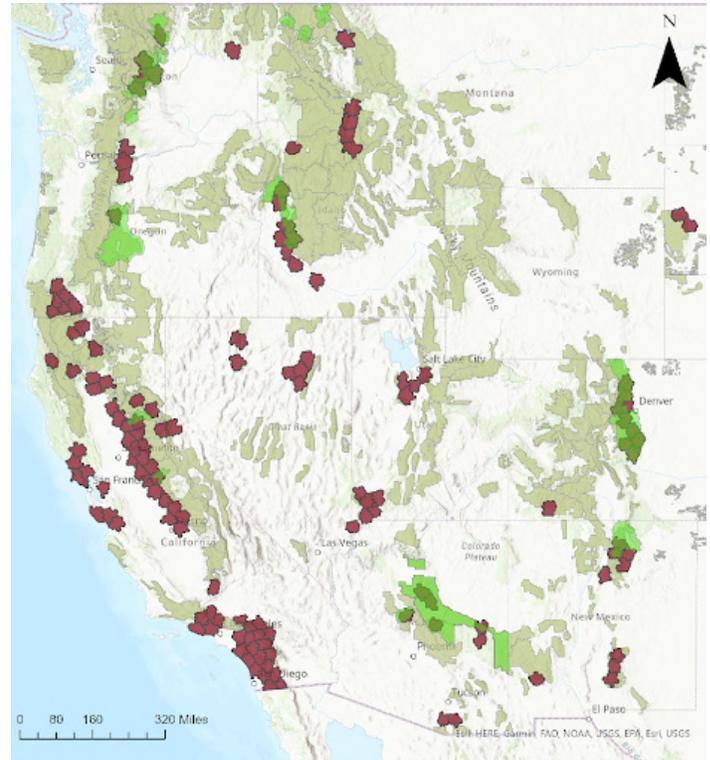
# Region 2 Director's Report

By Travis Woolley, Regional Director

## FOREST RESTORATION EFFORTS

### *Wildfire Crisis Strategy Update*

The Wildfire Crisis Strategy, a new strategy announced in January by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to confront the climate change and wildfire issues in the Western U.S., has been recently refined and an implementation strategy has been developed. This includes convening Regional roundtables with stakeholders and partners that are being led by the National Forest Foundation to help improve the implementation and rollout of the strategy. In April, the USFS announced it would initially invest in 10 top priority landscapes across 8 states (Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon, Colorado, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and California: see map below). These landscapes, including the Four Forest Restoration Initiative in AZ, were chosen because they are at scale or can be built out to scale, are collaboratively developed, allow for investment in underserved communities, could leverage current partner investments, and can make use of existing authorities. Because an infusion of funds alone will not solve the crisis we are facing, we will need these larger partnerships and collaborative efforts to help prioritize and optimize work being done on the ground. The conditions that create industry success in accomplishing the needed thinning and prescribed fire treatments also need to be enabled.



*Firesheds identified under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy are displayed with initial landscapes where the Forest Service is ready to invest in hazardous fuels mitigation.*

Following large wildfires in New Mexico, the Chief of the USFS placed a pause on prescribed burning nationally due to concerns of its safe and effective application. However, controlled burning is a critical tool in reducing the risk of wildfire to communities and wildlife habitat alike with vast research showing that in combination with thinning can be extremely effective in allowing fire to safely and effectively remove fuels and restore this ecological process in our dry forested ecosystems. We must find a balance for using these tools when and where they are appropriate, which is critical to mitigate wildfire effects.

### *Recent Wildfires Near Flagstaff*

Two wildfires (both under investigation but likely human caused) have impacted the Flagstaff and surrounding communities this spring. The Tunnel fire started on April 17th and burned nearly 20,000 acres, destroyed over 30 homes, and affected over 100 properties in communities just outside Flagstaff. A Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team has made an assessment and post-fire risk factors are being mitigated.

Less than 2 months later (June 12th) the Pipeline fire started on the south side of the San Francisco Peaks and quickly raced over the mountain (through Schultz Pass) and connected with the tunnel fire footprint. This was followed by a red flag warning day that didn't allow air support and the community watched as parts of Weatherford canyon and Fremont peak were burned over. Luckily firefighters were able to protect the inner basin, a main water source for Flagstaff and one of Arizona's few high alpine habitats. During the second day of the Pipeline fire, another fire start occurred near the Tunnel and Pipeline fire perimeters, named the Haywire fire, and burned an additional 5,000 acres. Dry and excessively windy conditions allowed these fires to spread into communities, destroying homes and habitat. Unfortunately, until we get more forests thinned or see drought and climate effects subside, this is likely to be the new normal. A BAER Team and resource advisors have begun to assess the impacts of the fire.

## Region 2 Director's Report Cont'd.

### **Northern Arizona Leopard Frog Restoration Efforts**

The Northern leopard frog, *Lithobates pipiens*, is small brown and green (sometimes yellowish) true frog that is covered with dark oval spots (see photo). Historically it was distributed widely across North America, but has recently been on the decline, particularly in its Arizona home range. It typically inhabits and breeds in permanent pools of water surrounded by vegetation, and was once found in the Grand Canyon in larger streams in side canyons and in pools beside the Colorado River. Several factors are considered to be contributing to population declines including loss of habitat, predation (bullfrogs, crayfish, other invasive fish), and a fungal pathogen. Currently the northern leopard frog only exists in created waters such as tanks and only a few populations are known to be persisting. Although the northern leopard frog has previously been proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act, it is currently considered "sensitive" and a species of "special concern" in its range in Arizona. Local wildlife biologists are attempting to change that. On June 22nd, 2022 Susan MacVean (Terrestrial Wildlife Specialist - Nongame) with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and Shaula Headwall (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) delivered 72 Northern Leopard Frogs from House Rock Wildlife Area (Tank 3) to Bearizona. Thanks to Austin Teague and Ryland Sexton for helping capture the frogs the evening prior.

This project has been long in the works and the Bearizona folks were extremely excited to welcome these frogs to their new home. This northern leopard frog population is being established as a refugium population that will serve as a new source for repatriations back to suitable historical range. Adding a new refuge location at higher elevation and closer to many repatriation sites is something they've been pursuing for several years. After attempts at other locations, Bearizona staff stepped up to the challenge without hesitation and with great enthusiasm. This is a great partnership the management and conservation of this declining native amphibian. Next steps are to develop interpretive signs for the exhibit to explain this great work and the species it is supporting.



*The frog's new pond habitat, including a waterfall and short stream segment!*



*Newly released frogs quickly went into foraging mode.*

## Region 3 Director's Report

By Loyd Barnett, Regional Director

### **Burros: PROGRESS!**

In the last 21 months the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has removed more than 2000 burros from the Black Mountain Herd Management Area (BMHMA).

For a number of years we have followed the increasing problem of burros within the BMHMA, and their impact on the resident desert bighorn sheep. 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. With no significant predation, this burro population grows at approximately 15 percent annually and can double in five years. In August 2020 the BLM issued a decision to bring the burro population down from the estimated population of 2200 to the appropriate management level (AML) of 478, and then maintain it at that level. The decision called for an initial gather and removal of 1000 burros, followed by a re-inventory and continued removal until the AML of approximately 478 is achieved. To maintain the level, a combination of maintenance gathers and fertility controls (approved vaccines) would be employed. Between September 2020 and September of 2021 just under 1000 burros were removed. In May of 2022 another nearly 1100 were removed. Outside the BHMHA, 106 nuisance

# Region 3 Director's Report Cont'd.

burros were trapped and removed from private land this last February and March. With the last two years' removals the population should be in the vicinity of the AML. Periodic gathers will be required to maintain the level.

Gathered burros were transferred to the Wild Horse and Burro Training and Off-Range Corral at the Arizona Department of Corrections facility at Florence. Periodic adoptions occur at this facility. Kudos to the Bureau of Land Management for completing this long awaited action!

## Verde River

Friends of the Verde River (now an AWF affiliate), has Restoring Habitat as one of its primary emphasis areas. The Verde Watershed Restoration Coalition (VWRC) within that emphasis area has several working groups addressing specific aspects of habitat. One of them deals with habitat corridors and connectivity. Representatives of the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) and both the Coconino and Prescott National Forests participate with this group, along with The Nature Conservancy and several others (including AWF). The working group considers both aquatic and terrestrial connectivity and have worked on some Best Management Practices for recommendations to interested stakeholders.

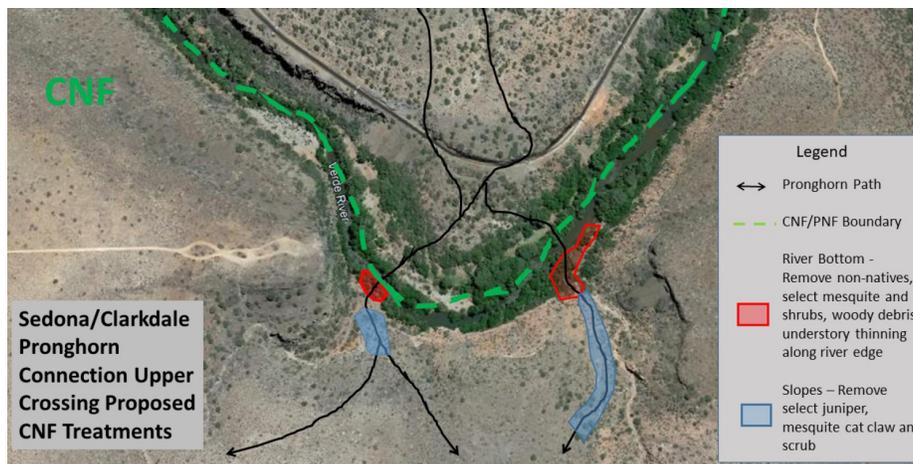
Recently, the group has looked at connectivity for pronghorn antelope, especially as related to the Verde River as a barrier. Studies on collared pronghorn have suggested that the river is a barrier to pronghorn movement. The group made a field trip to the location on the Verde River thought to be the best opportunity for crossing. Several trail cameras have been installed and volunteers have removed an old, abandoned fence which had resulted in the death of a pronghorn buck and then modified the nearest existing fence.

AGFD corridor experts believe the potential crossing, as well as access for watering and mingling with adjacent herds, could be enhanced through some strategic vegetation thinning. However, it is within potential habitat for the threatened yellow bill cuckoo, as well as the narrow-headed garter snake. Recently, biologists from AGFD, U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made an onsite review. The Coconino NF has developed a proposal for some limited thinning to enhance the opportunity for pronghorn crossing between herds. The project will require NEPA analysis and consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The situation is well described, accompanied with graphics, in an article by Nancy Steele, Executive Director of Friends of the Verde River, at [www.verderiver.org/friends/working-as-partners-to-protect-pronghorn-in-arizona](http://www.verderiver.org/friends/working-as-partners-to-protect-pronghorn-in-arizona).



*Burros can damage vegetation and compete with native animals.*



*Map depicting thinning plan. Photo courtesy of Coconino N.F.*

# Region 4 Director's Report

By Pat Headington, Regional Director

## *Regional Events (Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club/Southwest Wildlife Foundation)*

**Youth Fishing Clinic:** The Youth Fishing Clinic returned to the banks of Mittry Lake after two years off due to Covid. Just over 500 kids and their parents lined the banks for a flurry of activities on a beautiful Saturday morning. While some were focused on fishing Mittry Lake or the two drop tanks, others were busy at the BB gun range, archery range, wildlife identification booth, or kayaking. Food was also available including wild game tasting, popcorn, snow cones, and hot dogs. This event has strong support from the Yuma Community, SWF is looking for additional event opportunities in the area in the hopes of introducing more kids to fishing and other outdoor activities.

**Water Projects:** Volunteers participated in a Memorial Day project to relocate collection points for 713 and add an above-ground storage tank to Nottbusch. Volunteers continue water hauling and delivery operations throughout the region, 130,000 gallons of water have been delivered to date.

**2022 Dove Season:** Planning is underway for the 2022 Dove season, a vast majority of the events will be held September 3rd including the Dove BBQ, Dove Cook-off, Youth Dove hunt, and the Women's Dove hunt.

**AZSFWC Meetings:** AZSFWC meetings are held monthly to discuss hot topics and review grant applications for projects. Meetings are held 3rd Monday of each month



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## *State Events*

**Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Group (OHVAG):** OHVAG held meetings on March 4th, April 1, April 28th, and June 2nd to review grant applications for OHV trail enhancements and other activities. This group continues to meet through Zoom offering recommendations on grant proposals to the Arizona State Parks Board. Proposals reviewed include projects on Tonto National Forest, La Paz County, and Sedona areas.

**Arizona Game & Fish Commission Meeting:** The Commission meeting held June 10th in Payson included special tag allocations for the Big Game Super Raffle, species specific auctions and a special tag allocation for a competition.

**Hunter Education:** The AZGFD Hunter Education Program continues moving forward with minimal classes offered. The program has suffered significant instructor losses due to newly implemented training requirements. Course offerings in the Yuma area provided opportunities for 30

students to complete the course. Additional course offerings will be offered pending approval.

# Region 5 Director's Report

By Duane Aubuchon, Regional Director

## **Santa Cruz County Hermosa Mine Access Road**

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors held a study session to consider a proposal by Arizona Minerals Inc. (or South32) to donate 134 acres of land to the county near Patagonia for a new nature park, which the mining company would construct. South32, an Australian mining company that operates the Hermosa Mine (Taylor deposit) in the Patagonia Mountains, has previously tied the donation to obtaining a road easement through Cross Creek to get to the Hermosa Mine without travel through the town of Patagonia. A portion of this proposed road would also transect the property donated for a park. South32 has described this road as a short-term solution, and they would eventually like to construct a road through Flux Canyon on the Coronado National Forest. Residents have expressed concerns regarding impacts to wildlife travel corridors, though there has not been any formal comment period on the proposal as the Board of Supervisors meeting was a study session and not a formal hearing. Mining is not scheduled to start until 2027.

## **Fort Huachuca Groundwater Pumping Plan**

The San Pedro River is considered one of the last free-flowing desert rivers in Arizona. It maintains a gallery riparian

# Region 5 Director's Report Cont'd.

forest and is home to several threatened and endangered species, such as the southwestern willow flycatcher, Huachuca water umbels, desert pupfish, loach minnow, spikedace, yellow-billed cuckoo, and others. The greatest threat to this ecosystem is groundwater pumping to supply neighboring communities and the Fort Huachuca Army Base. Now, for the fourth time in 20 years, courts have rejected an environmental plan developed by the U.S. Military (Fort Huachuca), which includes groundwater pumping, and received approval from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The ruling by a U.S. District Court stems from a 2020 lawsuit filed by the Maricopa Audubon Society and the Center for Biological Diversity. From previous studies, the Defense Department has known for 50 years that groundwater pumping to meet their needs was impacting the San Pedro River. Courts have previously ruled that aquifer depletion is a threat to the river's riparian vegetation. The Court found that the Fort ignored a hydrological study showing their groundwater pumping had lowered the water table more than 60 feet in some areas, overestimated groundwater credits from fallow farmlands, and did not analyze the impacts from climate changes stated in the plan. The Court's ruling means the Fort and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must develop another environmental plan that will account for groundwater pumping and protect the San Pedro River flows, riparian habitat, and wildlife.

## Rosemont Mine and the Copper World Expansion Mine

On May 12th, in a 2-1 decision, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals panel upheld a 2019 ruling by U.S. District Court Judge, James Soto, that affirmed Hudbay, a Canadian mining company, cannot dump waste rock and tailings on U.S. Forest Service land in the Santa Rita Mountains unless the land has valid mining claims on it. And, of course, no mining company will allow mine waste and tailings to be dumped on land where valuable ore deposits exist. The decision invalidates the Forest Service's approval of the controversial Rosemont Mine, a proposed 3,000-foot-deep open pit mine on about 950 acres with an estimated 5 billion pounds of copper. The court also faulted the Forest Service for issuing the permit to let Hudbay dump 1.9 billion tons of waste rock on an additional 2,447 acres based on its assumption that the company's claims for the land without the minerals was valid. Previously, a federal judge in Tucson had found that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service violated the Endangered Species Act by approving the Rosemont project, which is expected to impact thousands of acres of critical habitat officially designated for the jaguar.



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Regarding the Copper World Expansion Mine mentioned in my last report, and occurring within five miles of the Rosemont Mine, several environmental groups and Native American tribes had completed a notice of intent to file a civil lawsuit against Hudbay Minerals for violations of section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The notice claims that grading and clearing activities there would violate the federal Clean Water Act's prohibition of "any unpermitted discharges" into federally regulated waterways. The mining company maintains that it does not need a 404 Permit for its Copper World plans, which include five open pit mines for which the company has begun land clearing operations. The same U.S. District Judge, James Soto, refused to issue a temporary restraining order and dismissed the lawsuits, ruling that Hudbay's surrender of a suspended Clean Water Act Permit for the nearby Rosemont Mine project removed the lawsuit's legal basis because the projects were not legally related. Hudbay maintains that the Copper World site is on private land where stream beds are mostly dry except when it rains, and therefore are not subject to Clean Water Act stipulations. According to drone images released in court filings, Hudbay has started placing fill material in streams that feed into the Santa Cruz River. The Copper World plans cover 3,430 acres from near the company's proposed Rosemont Mine site on the east slope of the Santa Rita Mountains, to the historic Helvetia mining area on the west. An estimated 1,290 acres will be disturbed by construction. The Pima County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution opposing the Copper World project. Wildlife and habitat concerns with the Copper World project would be similar to those expressed for the Rosemont Mine.

## Southeastern Arizona Fires

The dry weather conditions this spring resulted in several fires in southeastern Arizona. The San Raphael fire in the San Raphael Valley, burned over 11,500 acres in May. Burning through mostly grasslands with some potential short-term

## Region 5 Director's Report Cont'd.



*Photograph of the Elgin Bridge Fire.*

impacts to nesting birds, the fire effects should result in overall improved wildlife habitat conditions. Similarly, the Elgin Bridge Fire in the Mustang Mountains at the end of May, burned over 2000 acres of brushlands. Firefighters were able to protect structures from these two fires. The Contreras Fire in the Baboquivari Mountains burned over 23,000 acres. The fire burned in highly flammable grass and brush in steep and rugged terrain, and was difficult for firefighters to access. A residential building, a dormitory and two outbuildings were destroyed at the Kitt Peak Observatory, along with some power poles,

cutting off power to the Observatory. Though potentially dangerous and expensive to control, these fires are removing dense brush accumulated from years of fire suppression activities and should result in more productive wildlife habitat.

### **Beaver Restoration in Cienega Creek Watershed**

The Arizona Wildlife Federation submitted a letter of support to the Tucson Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for their plans to translocate beaver to Cienega Creek north of Sonoita, Arizona. The BLM proposes to translocate three beaver family groups into the creek to promote natural restoration of incised stream channels and lowered water tables.

### **Meadow Valley Access Project**

An ongoing trend in southeastern Arizona is the loss of recreational access. Over the last decade, landowners have closed access routes leading to public lands, but crossing private parcels, at an alarming rate. Last year, AWF provided comments in support of a Coronado National Forest (CNF) proposal on the Sierra Vista Ranger District to build 3.74 miles of new road around one such closure in the San Raphael Valley area. The CNF completed their analysis and issued a decision to proceed with this proposal. This new road will be on public land bypassing the previous road across private lands. The route will provide road access to over 30,000 acres of public land and is planned for 2023.

## Region 6 Director's Report

By Amanda Moors, Regional Director

As a representative of the Arizona Wildlife Federation, I continue to attend monthly meetings of the Community Working Group, which is a group of stakeholders meeting to discuss issues around Resolution Copper Mine (often referred to as the Oak Flat Mine). Some of the items we discussed over the last several months were water quality test results, a Good Neighbor Agreement, and the Social Impact Assessment that Resolution Copper is working on. Details on each of those items are presented below.



*Oak Flat, Arizona, the site that will be impacted by the Resolution Copper Mine. Photo courtesy of Elias Butler; Wikimedia Commons.*

### **Water Quality Test Results**

In order to determine the impacts of the mine on water quality, we need to have baseline water quality levels. The Community Working Group (CWG) has hired an independent water quality testing company (Matrix OneWorld) to

# Region 6 Director's Report Cont'd.

take measurements at the same sites as Resolution Copper is taking samples. This way we have two different companies independently taking and analyzing water samples. Those two companies presented their results from their quarterly sampling in 2021 at the April 2022 CWG meeting. It's important to note that Resolution tests at aquifer protection standards and Matrix tests at drinking water standards. Resolution Copper Company's samples were taken from various sites on or near Resolution property. Their samples, which were gathered in 2021, showed no significant levels of anything tested that would be potentially hazardous, and no significant changes from previous tests. Matrix OneWorld revealed similar findings but their samples have shown consistently high arsenic levels in some of the wells. This is likely naturally occurring arsenic and not related to the proposed mine.

## PFAS

After the large fire last summer near Superior, the Community Working Group asked Matrix OneWorld to test for chemicals referred to as PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances). Many of the older flame retardants and substances like Teflon contained PFAS. PFAS were indeed detected in September 2021, but not in levels that exceeding the Health advisory level set by the EPA. Those PFAS levels declined when measured again in December 2021. According to the EPA, PFAS (sometimes called the 'forever chemicals') are widely used, long lasting chemicals, components of which break down very slowly (if ever) over time. Because of their widespread use and their persistence in the environment, PFAS are found in water, air, fish, and soil at locations across the nation and around the globe. PFAS are found in the blood of people and animals all over the world and are present at low levels in a variety of food products. Scientific studies have shown that exposure to some PFAS in the environment may be linked to harmful health effects in humans and animals.

## Good Neighbor Agreement

The Community Working Group has been leading an effort to create a Good Neighbor Agreement with Resolution Copper. A Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) would be beneficial to both the public and the mine. A GNA would lay out the framework for holding the mine accountable to commitments it has made regarding the environment and the local communities. GNA's have been used in places like Montana where mines and the environmental groups were at odds and pursuing litigation through the courts. Litigation is often costly and the least desirable way to resolve conflict. The idea is that a GNA would lay clear ground rules and expectations should a conflict arises. These agreements led to tangible benefits to people and the environment in other states. The Arizona Wildlife Federation is considering signing onto this GNA in order to be able to influence environmental mitigation measures. It's possible, that through a GNA process, AWF may be able to increase environmental protections beyond what has been listed in the Environmental Impact Statement. We will have to wait and see how the GNA shapes up and if it will be helpful AWF to be a signatory in that agreement.



## Social Impact Statement

Most people are aware that mines on public land are required by Federal law to produce an Environmental Impact Statement that documents the expected impacts to the environment of the mining activity over the life of the mine and afterwards. Resolution Copper states that they are committed to completing a Social Impact Statement, which will focus on how the mine will impact local communities. Rio Tinto (one of the parent companies of Resolution Copper) has developed new community standards that mean they will seriously consider how their projects affect communities. They have agreed to include all voices in the community, not just the ones that agree with the mine. But include groups like the Center for Biological Diversity and the San Carlos Apache Tribe who have opposed the mine. Resolution Copper has hired an independent contractor to produce the Social Impact Statement and that contractor will be reaching out to all groups of people that have an interest (either positive or negative) in the mine. Resolution Copper has agreed to make all the findings of this study available to the public.

# This Thing Called R3

By Douglas A. Burt, Recruitment, Retention & Reactivation (R3) Programs Manager, Arizona



*The author and his son, Noah, and dog, Java, hone their skills on a dove hunt.*

R3. Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation. This acronym and slogan have been floating around our community quite a bit in the past 5 years. And while some have heard of it, many are still wondering, “What exactly is R3?”

Let’s start with what it isn’t. R3 isn’t about hunters and fishermen.

R3 is about species and habitat. R3 is about **wildlife conservation**.

Rest assured every R3 effort – whether participants know it or not – is an effort to conserve, restore, and maintain species and habitats – and their sustainability – for generations to come.

Here’s how and why:

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, many wildlife populations were in extreme decline or on the verge of disappearing due to unregulated market hunting and commercialization. Then, in 1933, Aldo Leopold’s book, *Game Management*, introduced science-based wildlife management which included regulations, seasons, sustainable use, and other approaches in order to combat market hunting and restore, manage, and sustain wildlife and natural resources responsibly.

Shortly after, in 1937, the federal Pittman-Robertson Act (PR) was created, which put an excise tax on hunting equipment to fund conservation efforts. The US Fish and Wildlife Service was designated to provide those funds to state wildlife agencies. In 1950, the Dingell-Johnson (DJ) Act (the fishing version of PR) was passed. Together, the DJ and PR Acts form the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) to fund wildlife and fisheries conservation. These solutions were foundational to the restoration and conservation of America’s wildlife, which also contribute to the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. This was also a game changer since Arizona and most states do not get any funding from their state general tax fund to operate. (Note: Through the WSFR, \$1.5 billion was allocated to states in 2022.)

## This Thing Called R3 Cont'd.

And, it worked; populations rebounded, participation from one of the largest generations of the time resulted in extensive sportsmen's groups, social and hunting clubs, and access to camping and travel exploded, all resulting in an influx of funding for wildlife agencies and conservation.

However, through the mid to late 20th Century, much of society disconnected from the rural lifestyle; people left their small farms to live closer to cities, factories, services, education, and other amenities and conveniences of the more "modern" life. As urban populations grew, the number of people participating in hunting and fishing began a slow but steady decline. At the same time, the average age of hunters and anglers was increasing, threatening the future of the wildlife conservation funding model. It was becoming increasingly evident that in the very near future there could be an extreme decrease in funding, participation, stewardship, advocacy, and relevance for wildlife and conservation.



*A lucky youth gets one on one guidance on a jackrabbit hunt.*

And that's where the R3 movement comes in. At first, we focused on doing lots of stuff to engage new participants. But then, social scientists and researchers discovered that to be successful, it takes more than just one engagement to make an advocate. It takes a process, and that process is called the Adoption Sequence. The Adoption Sequence recognizes that there are multiple stages in the process of creating hunters, anglers, or other recreationists. First you have to start with someone that has an interest and awareness and give them a trial experience we call "Recruitment." After that one experience – if they liked it – the next step is keeping them engaged, or "Retention."

This step is critical and requires social support and more experiences with support or coaching. Without it - they are likely to stop participating. Then there are the people who participated in a certain activity, but for whatever reason, they stopped. To re-engage these folks, it takes an intervention to "Reactivate" them. Usually these Reactivation activities are similar to the Retention elements above, but often to a lesser extent.

Thus, the three R's: Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation. Nearly every state wildlife agency, most non-governmental organizations and conservation groups, and many industry and retail companies are putting forth some effort



*Social hour at a youth hunt camp.*

## This Thing Called R3 Cont'd.

towards this national concern. In Arizona, we have taken a partnership approach to our R3 efforts. For over 10 years, the Hunting and Angling Heritage Workgroup (HAHWG) has provided an extensive variety of R3 programs across the state, offered by the many different partner groups. Through HAHWG's Outdoor Skills Network, partner organizations reach a wider audience to get word out about their activities, while also keeping in touch with one another to identify needs, fill gaps, and share knowledge. Together, we continue to establish best practices and standards, share models of success, share common resources, network and support each other, improve processes, identify and remove barriers, and so much more. It's an amazing machine to witness. Key to our success is that we've all learned to "turn our hats around" (logos in the back) and come together with the common interest of assuring the continued sustainability of species and habitats for the next 100 years. It's an incredible collaboration.

Paramount and unique to Arizona's R3 model, is the centralizing of all the partners' R3 events on the Outdoor Skills Network online calendar of events. This includes a registration system organized by skill levels that are aligned with the Adoption Sequence and customer experience. Since 2011, the Outdoor Skills Network has hosted over 495 events which served over 8,000 primary participants and over 16,000 attendees with family friendly R3 learning experiences. Recognizing our amazing work, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies presented HAHWG with a Special Achievement Award in 2020.

On a larger front, the Arizona Game and Fish Department has focused on removing barriers in order to help new people to get involved including simplifying our license structure, stratifying hunting seasons, improving online systems, creating a marketing department, conducting campaigns, creating partnerships with private businesses that help reach new audiences, and more.

We need your help and we need more groups to join the cause. The issue of the decline in hunting, fishing, and engaging with nature in general is huge and societal and it won't be fixed in silos. If we all don't work together, we lose, wildlife loses, Arizona loses, and our children lose. R3 is a conservation effort for all. We (HAHWG's Outdoors Skills Network) come together as a collective group twice a year to share, improve, and collaborate. We typically meet in winter (Jan / Feb) and summer (July) under a big event tent outdoors. And you're invited!

Join the movement and be a part of the Outdoor Skills Network by emailing [dburt@azgfd.gov](mailto:dburt@azgfd.gov), or visit [www.azgfd.gov/OutdoorSkills](http://www.azgfd.gov/OutdoorSkills) for more information.



*Youth learn to process jackrabbit at a hunt camp.*

# Mary's First Dove

By Mary Cravens and Michael Cravens, AWF Advocacy and Conservation Director

AWF's Advocacy and Conservation Director, Michael Cravens, finally persuaded his wife, Mary, to join him on a dove hunt just last year. According to Michael, until then, she had shown zero interest. The whole family went on the hunt and Michael said that of all the birds they bagged that day, "only one of them mattered to me... Mary's first dove."

Following that hunt, Michael interviewed Mary about her experience. We're thinking her responses might resonate with many of you.

## Tell us a little about yourself.

My name is Mary Cravens. I'm originally from Missouri, but my husband, Mike, and I came to Arizona almost ten years ago to explore, hike, and get to know the state. The plan was to stay for just two years but, as many can relate, plans changed and we're still here. For my profession, I'm a nurse at a heart hospital and I can truthfully say that caring for my patients is my favorite part of the job. I'm also a yoga teacher and I hold a bachelor's degree in biology. However, my biggest passion in life is being a mother to my two children.



Mary Cravens holds her first dove.

## Do you come from a family of hunters?

While my brothers fished (and not seriously), no one really hunted in my family. Since I was from Missouri, where hunting is commonplace, I often heard of people doing it but no one close to me ever engaged in it. I saw my brother clean a fish from time to time, but that was as close as I ever got to hunting.



Collection of doves from a successful hunt.

## What were your previous thoughts on hunting?

I don't think I really had too many thoughts on it back then. I remember it as something that some guys I knew liked to do together in a group (a.k.a. deer camp), but it didn't really come across as a thoughtful event at all. It was more a reason to get together and have a good time. Nor was it something that I ever knew people to use as a way to procure meat to feed their family.

## When and who introduced you to hunting?

The first person to introduce me to hunting (and how I view it now) was my husband, Mike. Before him, I didn't really know any serious hunters. While he has always hunted, he got distracted for a while in the earlier years of our dating/marriage with wildlife photography, traveling, backpacking, and the like. He jumped back into hunting just four years ago when we settled into a more stationary lifestyle.

## What are your thoughts on hunting now?

I have a much deeper understanding of hunting now. Securing enough meat to feed a family takes a lot of work! I now recognize this effort, the connection to the animal, and the meals that they provide as something my husband and other hunters take a great deal of pride in and have reverence for. I never understood and, admittedly, still struggle with the idea of someone mounting and hanging a deer head in their living room. It always seemed like a mockery of the animal to me. Now, I see it as adoration of the animal that once lived and a lasting reminder of the food it provided for my family.

**Locally sourced, sustainably, and ethically raised meat is of interest to a lot of people these days. What does this mean to you and how does this relate to hunting?**

I love that people are thinking about, and care about, where their meat comes from. I feel like we have a real disconnect from our food and where it comes from. When you invest the effort into a hunt, engage with the animal personally, and take their life yourself, it becomes impossible to ignore the ramifications of your actions, and you're not going to waste one bit of that animal. I believe most hunters want to cause as little suffering as possible and strive for a quick and clean kill. Under these circumstances, I would much rather consume an animal that has lived a natural life in the wild than an animal that was bred in captivity and lived a short life in confined and uncomfortable spaces, just to be led to slaughter in the end. What a horrible existence. I should point out that I am aware of, and appreciative of, the fact that there are much more ethical domestic meat producers available to those who seek them out. Still, the unfortunate fate of those animals who are produced in mass to feed the populous is nothing short of ugly and unfortunate. All living things get just one precious life to live and, if I am going to eat meat, I want to support eating animals that have had a chance to live a natural and full life. While this lifestyle might not be for everyone, I feel good knowing the meat my family eats is not only better for our health by being low in fat, rich in nutrients, and lacking antibiotics or any added hormones, but also contributes to the conservation of wildlife and the places they live.



*Game meat like dove make a delicious and nutritious meal.*

**Obviously, hunting requires the taking of a living animal's life. Are you okay with that?**

I can't say that I feel completely okay about it. While I did take my first life on purpose recently, I still struggled with it and might always struggle with it. However, I am not vegan and if I am going to consume meat, maybe a part of me wants to feel that pain that comes with taking a life. I don't know if I feel like a hypocrite or what, I just feel like that if I'm going to continue to consume meat, I need to truly know the entire experience, from start to finish.

**Can you share your feelings around your first hunting experience?**

I didn't want to hold the dove at first. I found it to be a very sad experience, its lifeless small body in my hands. I took its only life. That was a very heavy and bad feeling. I remember exactly how it felt, limp and warm, in my hands. I value life and love to help people and animals. Doing the exact opposite of this felt very off and against my nature. Still, while I felt sad to have taken the dove's life, I also realized I had been indirectly doing this my entire life simply by eating meat. While I can rationalize the experience through reason, and don't expect to carry this weight too long, the seriousness that comes with taking a life by your own hands demands to be recognized.

**Now that you've had this experience, do you think you'll continue hunting?**

Maybe. I really love to get outdoors and away from everyone else. I love backpacking. I love doing things that push me mentally. I really enjoyed the pursuit of an animal. There are so many things I think I could love about a week-long elk or deer hunt. However, I think I would struggle more by taking the life of a mammal. Their eyes just say so much! I am not sure if I could pull the trigger. While I know the dove values its life just as much as an elk, I can't help but think that would be a much larger hurdle to get over.

**Let's say your husband is already making plans to put you in for a cow elk and/or deer tag every year. How would you respond to that?**

Only if he agrees to go to yoga with me weekly. Or, at least a week-long yoga retreat.

# Becoming an Outdoors-Woman and Bridges to BOW

By Trica Oshant Hawkins, AWF Conservation Programs Director



*Over 100 women attended the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman weekend at Friendly Pines Camp in Prescott, Arizona.*

As most of our readers know, our outdoor skills program for women, Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW), is currently offered three times each year: in January, April, and September.

We just completed another fantastic BOW weekend this past September. Thanks to our BOW coordinators, Kathy Greene and Linda Dightmon, over 100 women shared a lovely weekend at Friendly Pines Camp in Prescott while gaining skills and confidence in the outdoors. Women participated in fly-fishing, rifle, handgun, and shotgun shooting, rappelling, processing small game, identifying birds and plants, kayaking, and so much more.



*Cohort 3 of Bridges to BOW.*



On Friday night, a special guest speaker from the Phoenix Herpetological Society, Kathryn Lee, presented an overview of some key Arizona reptiles. Her presentation included a “hands-on” component, giving many women their first experience holding a snake (non-venomous of course)!

This BOW weekend also included the 3rd cohort of Bridges to BOW (B2B) participants. B2B continues to increase diversity and inclusion at BOW by reaching out to, and including, a wider diversity of participants. We have also formalized the B2B Ambassador

# Becoming an Outdoors-Woman and Bridges to BOW Cont'd.

program, which brings back former B2B participants to help with recruitment and serve as “counselors” to the new B2B group.

Bridges to BOW now has over 40 alumni who continue to get together for various outdoor experiences beyond BOW. They also “pay it forward” by spreading the word about BOW, helping with recruitment, and serving as Ambassadors.

At AWF, we recognize that our mission of conservation is best advanced through the leadership and contributions of people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs. As we strive to become a more inclusive organization, Bridges to BOW is one way we are demonstrating our commitment to diversity.



*Stan shows Denise how he makes his signature smores.*

Fall 2022

## Bridges to BOW Ambassadors!

This September’s B2B Ambassadors were Lesley Rodriguez (Cohort 1, top picture ) and Marzana Aktar (Cohort 2, bottom picture). While both women had some previous experience in the outdoors, BOW has greatly inspired them to personally be more active outdoors and to encourage other women of color to get outside and connect with nature. As Ambassadors, Lesley and Marzana made invaluable contributions to the B2B program. They each shared their personal experiences with the incoming cohort, helping the newcomers feel more comfortable with both simply attending BOW, and also with participating in challenging activities like rappelling.

Thank you Lesley and Marzana!



Conserving Wildlife and Habitat

BOW could not happen without all our coordinators, instructors, volunteers, ambassadors, and willing participants! However – it also could not happen without our generous donors who support B2B and BOW with their contributions to our BOW and B2B scholarship funds. If BOW has made a difference in your life, or if you would simply like to support BOW, or sponsor a B2B participant, you can help with a donation. It means so much to so many.

**Visit [www.azwildlife.org/donate](http://www.azwildlife.org/donate).**



### 2023 BOW Dates

January 20-22:  
(Registration now open!)



April 28-30

September 8-10

Learn more & register @  
[azwildlife.org/BOW](http://azwildlife.org/BOW)



[www.azwildlife.org](http://www.azwildlife.org)

# Annual Family Squirrel Camp

By Michael Cravens, AWF Advocacy and Conservation Director, and Trica Oshant Hawkins, AWF Conservation Programs Director

The Arizona Wildlife Federation and the Arizona Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Annual Family Squirrel Camp is a fun family friendly event that is open and welcome to all. This year's event was nothing short of awesome! Hunters, conservationists, wildlife professionals, and families from across Arizona gathered on our public lands near Flagstaff to camp, hunt, eat, tell stories, and celebrate our wildlife and wild places in an inclusive atmosphere.



Some came simply to hunt and enjoy the camaraderie around the evening campfire while others came for the opportunity to hunt for the first time under the guidance of a patient mentor. Other opportunities included presentations and discussions about small game hunting in Arizona (with Larisa Harding and Jonathon O'Dell, both of the AZGFD), processing and cooking demonstrations, and a wild game potluck dinner that put on full display just how good wild game can be. Dishes included pronghorn pozole, mule deer tacos, and frog leg gumbo, among others. Fried squirrel was served up for breakfast!



*Sean and Eric after a successful hunt.*

“Why squirrel hunting?” one might ask. Squirrel hunting is overlooked by many and dearly loved by others. Squirrels span the gap from the beginner hunter to the most experienced. Their abundance promises opportunity to the novice while, at the same time, their sharp hearing and exquisite eyesight, combined with the ability to disappear like a magician, can outwit the most seasoned hunter. Regardless of your level of experience, squirrels are a tasty way to put meat – that you harvested yourself – on the table.

So, whether you're new to squirrel hunting or you're a seasoned pro, this abundant and accessible animal has something to offer everyone. Come find out! We hope you'll join us next year for our Annual Family Squirrel Camp!



# AWF's Annual Awards

Fall 2022



After a two year hiatus (thanks to a certain pandemic), AWF resumed presentation of our Annual Awards. These awards recognize exemplary conservation action by individuals and organizations, and we were honored to present them to some very deserving recipients at our annual meeting this past June. This year's Awardees were:

**CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION PARTNER OF THE YEAR:**  
**Arizona Backcountry Hunters & Anglers**

**AGENCY PARTNER OF THE YEAR:**  
**Roger Joos**

**INDIVIDUAL CONSERVATION PARTNER OF THE YEAR:**  
**Nate Rees**

**EMERGING CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR:**  
**Juan Rivera**

**VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:**  
**Aaron Dye**

**PATTI HO LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD:**  
**Valerie Morrill**

Please join us in congratulating these conservation heroes. Individuals and organizations like these inspire us all to not only be better conservationists, but also to be better, more compassionate humans.

## Thank you to our Life Members!

William Acheson	Al Crossman	Kristan Hildebrandt	Susan Marler	Robert Rausch	Charles Tyree
Michael Anderson	Roxanne Motreenc	Jeffery Hinkley	Jerry Marquis	Robert & Marilyn Recker	John Underwood
Jeff Augustine	Diana Mansell	Dale Hislop	Christina Mathew-Bowers	Judith Riddle	J. & N. Vander Linden
James Baldree	John Dupnik	Mark Hullinger	Patricia McNeil	Bryant & Marsha Ridgway	Ken Vensel
John Bauermeister	Linda Erman	Richard Humphrey	Duke Mertz	Ryna Rock	Mark Vitt
Diana Beatty	Rick Erman	Bunny Huntress	Amanda Moors	Kent Rogers	Tom Ward
David Beaty	Toni Erman-Kirch	Mike Johns	David & Victoria Morgan	Robert Schatke	Stephen White
Don Billick	Don Farmer	Terry Johnson	Valerie Morrill	Terry Schupp	Brian Williams
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