

Proposition 200 ...

A Vote For Our Heritage

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Proposition 200 insures the Department will have the necessary tools to acquire and protect precious riparian habitat.



George Andrejko

On November 6, 1990, the voters of Arizona made a strong statement regarding their feelings about Arizona's natural heritage. Setting a historical precedent for Arizona's wildlife and parks, Arizonans demanded that 20 million dollars of lottery funds, over and above those allocated for a specific purpose, be split between the Department of Arizona Game and Fish and State Parks. The vehicle used to deliver this message was in the form of an initiative—Proposition 200, "The Arizona Heritage Fund." Proposition 200 drew more support than any other initiative, and in fact drew more support than any one political candi-

date. The Arizona Heritage Fund will provide resources to protect our natural and cultural heritage for future generations. It is based on the idea that as Arizona grows and prospers, it makes good sense to reinvest some of today's wealth to protect our special heritage for the future.

One might ask, how could any concept gain such overwhelming support in a state so diverse when dealing with issues? The answer to this question starts with the foundation of the Arizona Heritage Alliance. The Alliance was comprised of more than 90 environmental and scientific groups, wildlife supporters, cultural and historic

preservation groups, parks associations, recreational users, and educators. It is a combination of this Alliance, along with the many Arizonans that have taken a serious commitment to protecting the natural resources, that have made Arizona what it is today (including Proposition 200).

Prior to the Heritage Fund passage, former Governor Bruce Babbitt stated, "Face it. We've taken our natural heritage for granted. Arizona has become an urban state, and we haven't done a very good job of protecting, preserving, and enhancing what brought people here in the first place. Unless we make investments now, the pho-

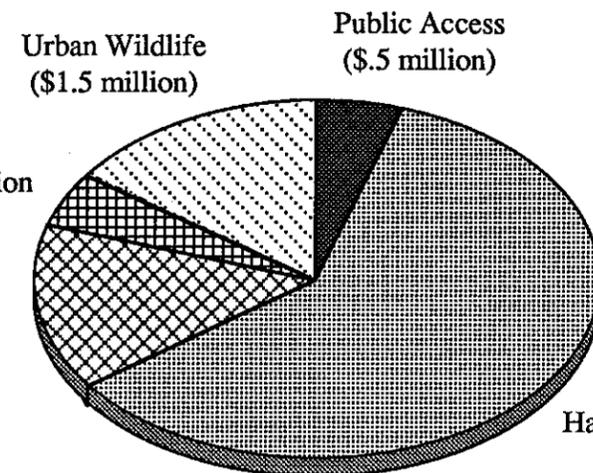
tos in Arizona Highways won't be so pretty 20 years from now."

I can say happily to Mr. Babbitt now, "Not to worry." His words and those of other great environmental leaders like Teddy Roosevelt have not fallen on deaf ears. The people of Arizona have listened and taken action, putting into motion the programs that will protect wildlife, preserve culture, and improve outdoor recreation.

With the passage of Proposition 200 a reality, the Arizona Game and Fish Department is buzzing with enthusiasm as they plan for the new future of Arizona's wildlife species, habitat protection, public access, and the further advancement in environmental education.

The Director of Arizona Game and Fish, Duane L. Shroufe, said the people of Arizona have provided a firm new direction for state government. "The voters of Arizona have made a resounding statement—the '90s are definitely the decade of the environment in Arizona. These are truly some exciting times for us, and for the citizens of this state. Future generations of Arizonans will undoubtedly be thankful for the farsightedness of their forefathers," Shroufe said.

The work is just beginning for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. It is important for all to realize that the Heritage Fund is not a quick-fix solution for the problems associated with Arizona's environment. Director Shroufe stated that the next step is establishing priorities for Heritage Fund expenditures. "There are many projects which we have been unable to fund until now. It could simply be a matter of



This chart shows the variety of programs the Heritage Fund will support.

plugging already established priorities into the newly expanded program. However, we do plan to revisit these priorities and ensure that future projects meet the will of the voters as expressed in the language of the Heritage Fund Initiative. Final approval of any and all projects will be made by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission," said Shroufe.

The Commission is now awaiting recommendations from the Department in order to prioritize programs that meet the guidelines established in the Heritage Fund language. These programs are specific to public access (\$0.5 million), habitat acquisition (\$6 million) of which \$2.5 million is earmarked for critical habitat, habitat evaluation and protection (\$1.5 million), urban wildlife (\$1.5 million) and environmental education (\$0.5 million).

Commission Chairman, Thomas G. Woods, Jr., is very pleased with the direction Arizona voters have asked the Game and Fish Department to pursue. "During my tenure on the Commission, I have been involved in many positive changes for fish,

wildlife, and associated habitats. But I can't really think of any other particular issue I've participated in that is more rewarding than the Arizona Heritage Fund. It is most definitely an investment for wildlife and habitat in Arizona, by the people of Arizona," Woods commented.

The next few months will be very hectic for all Arizona Game and Fish employees as we prepare for future direction. It is important to remember that we are what we are today because of our traditional constituents (hunters and anglers), and emphasize that the Department's support of these groups will not change. Only now, our ability to achieve our mission will be strengthened and our support base broadened. For those concerned that our future direction will no longer be jointly shared, I proudly display as a remembrance the Arizona Game and Fish Department's mission statement. I strongly urge all to continue involvement with the Department and benefit from the gift of Proposition 200, a prosperous Arizona heritage for present and future generations.

THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION

To conserve, enhance, and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and habitats through aggressive protection and management programs, and to provide wildlife resources and safe watercraft recreation for the enjoyment, appreciation, and use of present and future generations.