2008 Commission Awards Winners

- **Awards of Excellence – multiple recipients.**

  Senator Linda Gray. Senator Gray was elected to represent District 10 in 2005 and before that was in the Arizona House of Representatives. She was a crucial supporter of two pieces of legislation vitally important to the Game and Fish Department in the 48th legislative session: the watercraft Operating Under the Influence (OUI) bill and the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) bill. Without her efforts, these two important laws would probably not have passed.

  Clyde Halstead. As a deputy county attorney in Navajo County, Clyde has been the lead prosecutor for most of the wildlife law violation cases brought by the Arizona Game and Fish Department before the Show Low and Pinetop justice courts. Clyde has an in-depth understanding of wildlife laws and handles these cases with the highest level of professionalism and dedication.

  John Wintersteen. Recently retired as Paradise Valley police chief, John has been an invaluable partner in community outreach efforts to resolve and minimize human-wildlife conflicts. He worked with the department to implement an innovative community action plan in Paradise Valley to deal with human-wildlife conflicts. He also was a supporter of the wildlife feeding bill that passed in 2006. John continues to serve Paradise Valley in the role of town marshal.

  Chandler Rod and Gun Club. This long-standing organization is well known for its family and youth outdoor programs and events and its promotion of conservation ethics and education. The club partnered with the department on a variety of events, including small game camps, a women's outdoors program, the Robbins Butte juniors dove hunt, and the Game and Fish Outdoor Expo, among others. The club also hosts many of its own events and is a strong participant in hunter education, SCTP shooting sports, and habitat enhancement and restoration projects.

  Off-Highway Vehicle Legislative Workgroup. Thanks to the tireless dedication of this coalition of sportsmen groups, off-highway vehicle (OHV) user groups, elected officials, OHV dealers and elected officials, Arizona has passed one of the most significant pieces of natural resource and recreational access protection legislation in recent memory. The group worked through diverse viewpoints for the past three years to help pass Senate Bill 1167, the "Off-Highway Vehicle Law," that will help provide the state with much-needed resources for OHV management.

  United Arizona Anglers Foundation. This group of avid anglers formed out of concern about the negative impact golden algae was having on fish at Apache, Canyon and Saguaro lakes. Responding to a challenge from a Game and Fish commissioner, the group collaborated on efforts to raise $30,000, which was donated to the commission and department. The money has gone toward purchase of fingerling fish from different hatcheries as well as materials to support volunteer fish habitat efforts at Canyon Lake.

- **Youth Environmentalist of the Year - Arizona Envirothon State Champions.**

  Students Clint Hales, Zach Hare, Natalie Lucas, Michelle Scmoker and Rachel Stringer were members of the Sinagua High School (Flagstaff) team at "Envirothon," North America's largest environmental education competition. Teams competed in a series of hands-on, problem-based activities, including soils/land use, aquatic ecology, forestry and wildlife. The Sinagua team won the Arizona competition and finished 15th out of 50 teams from the U.S. and Canada—the best Arizona showing since the state entered the competition in 1997.

- **Outdoor Writer of the Year – J.C. Amberlyn.**

  J.C. has been a proponent of conservation for many years. Her work for the Kingman Daily Miner newspaper has supported the department's mission through her photographic and writing skills. She has gone out in the field with department biologists and written comprehensive stories on bighorn sheep conservation (including the importance of keeping the Black Mountains herd healthy), the black-footed ferret, big-eared bat and desert tortoise.

- **Media of the Year – Arizona Boating and Watersports.**

  Arizona Boating and Watersports is a free, statewide publication started three years ago by publishers Jim and Carol Allen. It continually features articles promoting boating safety, fishing, invasive species management efforts, fishing, and Game and Fish Department activities. It provides excellent "how and where to" information for prospective anglers.

- **Conservation Organization of the Year – Phoenix Zoo.**

  The Phoenix Zoo has been an indispensable partner in the department's efforts to conserve, enhance and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources. The zoo has participated in recovery efforts for many threatened and endangered species through captive propagation efforts. Zoo staff and volunteers have also participated in development of scientific and conservation documents, habitat improvement projects, and conservation outreach to the community.

- **Conservationist of the Year – Marty Underwood.**

  Marty has worked tirelessly on cooperative wildlife conservation efforts during the course of his career. Most recently, in 2006 he initiated and established the first "Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program" office in the Region 2 Fisheries Division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In the first two years he provided technical assistance for more than 40 projects and obtained funding for 14 projects on the ground as of June 2008. He is currently working with the department on four potential projects.

- **Environmentalist of the Year – Warner Glenn.**

  Warner, a rancher in the Douglas area, has helped educate people about jaguars and borderland conservation. His 1990s photographs of two jaguar encounters in southern Arizona were the first taken of a live jaguar in the wild in the U.S. His subsequent book, Eyes of Fire, vividly tells the story of his encounters and has helped enhance perceptions of jaguars in the local community. He received the "Regional Recovery Champion" award for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2008.

- **Volunteers of the Year – two recipients**

  Steve Hopkins. Steve is an active member of many wildlife conservation organizations. He chaired the Tucson chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation for the past four years (making it the number one RMEF fundraising chapter in the nation in 2006) while taking on the role of RMEF state chair. He has donated his time and efforts to countless habitat enhancement, water development and cleanup projects, and he is active in outreach to teach the next generation an appreciation for wildlife and the conservation ethic. He has also donated his expertise as an electrician toward the Gould's reintroduction project.

  David Hoyle. David is a past president of the Chandler Rod and Gun Club and currently serves on the Sportsman, Landowner, Lessee Commissioners' Committee, representing sportsmen. He has volunteered many hours throughout Arizona to round up equipment, supplies and additional volunteers for habitat projects and cleanups. In 2007 he volunteered more than 300 hours at the Robbins Butte and Powers Butte wildlife areas and provides invaluable assistance at the Robbins Butte juniors dove hunt. He is an active hunter education instructor and has helped organize numerous small game camps, fishing clinics and more.

- **Educator of the Year – Debi Molina-Walters**

  Dr. Mo, as she asks all who know her to call her, is a professor of education at ASU Polytechnic. Game and Fish has been significantly benefitted from her work in environmental education. She has integrated study of the department's Focus Wild Arizona program into her Science Methods class and invites department personnel to lead field activities. She is also working to create an environmental education certification program within the School of Educational and Teacher Preparation at ASU Polytechnic.

- **License Dealer of the Year – Sportsman's Warehouse**

  Since their arrival in Arizona several years ago, Sportsman's Warehouse has been a huge asset to the local conservation community. The organization has proactively promoted license sales on behalf of the department through innovative approaches and community involvement. In addition, they regularly sponsor conservation seminars, host outreach events for department staff, support hunter education, and provide prizes and support materials for conservation-related charitable events.

- **Outdoor Woman of the Year – Betty Mason**

  Betty, a resident of Tacna, has a long-held passion for wildlife and has developed a close relationship with Game and Fish. She has volunteered many efforts toward stewardship of the Quigley Wildlife Area over the past 15 years, including habitat restoration, trash cleanups, and assistance to law enforcement and other department personnel. She has also taken steps to create a legacy that will benefit the wildlife area for future generations.

- **Wildlife Habitat Stewardship Aware – Peggy Ingham**

  Peggy has owned the M Diamond Ranch in Game Management Unit 6A since 2000. The ranch provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife. Peggy is an advocate for the range and for wildlife and has received ADEQ, Game and Fish Stewardship, and Habitat Partnership Committee grants for erosion control, grassland restoration, water development, riparian habitat protection and other projects. She also teaches members of the public about collaborative conservation and appreciation of the outdoors.