

# LANDOWNER-LESSEE/SPORTSMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

## Minutes of Regular Meeting

Thursday, July 28, 2011

Prescott Resort and Conference Center - Prescott

### Committee Members Present

Sanford Cohen, OHV-Sportsmen Group  
Jim O'Haco, Livestock Grower  
Darcy Ely, Livestock Grower  
David Hoyle, Sportsmen Group  
Steve Carmickle, Sportsmen Group  
Dennis Moroney, Livestock Grower  
Norm Freeman, Arizona Game and Fish Commission  
Duane Coleman, Livestock Grower  
Tami Emmett, Coronado National Forest  
Stephen Williams, Arizona State Land Department  
Joe King, Livestock Grower  
George Reiners, Sportsmen Group  
Larry Audsley, Sportsmen Group  
Bill Gibson, Bureau of Land Management

### Others Present

Steve Pierce, Arizona Senate/Livestock Grower  
Jack Husted, Arizona Game and Fish Commission  
Maria Baier, Arizona State Land Commissioner  
Larry Voyles, Director, AGFD  
Philip Bashaw, Arizona Farm Bureau  
John Savino, Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Group  
Christy Davis, Arizona Farm Bureau  
Sue Chilton, Livestock Grower  
Jim Chilton, Livestock Grower  
Jeff Gursh, AZ Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition  
Susan Krentz, Livestock Grower  
Simone Hall, The Nature Conservancy  
Jesse Davis, Livestock Grower  
Bas Aja, AZ Cattlemen's Association  
Therese Hicks, Livestock Grower  
Wally Armer, Livestock Grower  
Patrick Bray, AZ Cattle Growers Association  
Jeff Homack, Livestock Grower  
Santana Nez, Livestock Grower  
Don French, Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Group  
Tyler Wiese, Livestock Grower  
Ed Monzingo, Livestock Grower  
Leonard Ordway, AGFD  
Jimmy Simmons, AGFD

Mark Weise, Development Branch Chief, AGFD  
Andy Clark, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD  
Matthew Walton, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD  
Troy Christensen, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD

### **Meeting Notes**

The Landowner-Lessee/Sportsman Relations Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. Many people were sitting in on this meeting, so there was a very brief explanation of the Committee and description of the agenda. Sanford Cohen gave recognition to several VIP's in the audience. Mr. Cohen also made sure that the Committee was aware that the former Chairman of the Committee, Joe Melton, was recently inducted into the Arizona Outdoor Hall of Fame.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The Committee approved the minutes from the January 29, 2011 meeting.

### **Updates from Land Management Agencies**

Due to the full agenda, the land management agencies only gave very brief updates. Tami Emmett said at the Coronado National Forest, they had mostly been focused on forest fires lately, although work on the Travel Management Rule continues.

Stephen Williams gave an update from the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). His department is working on a report to the legislature on SB1167, the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Bill; the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) and Arizona State Parks (ASP) are responsible for reports as well. ASLD has been in discussion with the AGFD regarding the Perrin Ranch, which will be limited to archery hunting only this fall due to active construction on a wind energy development. ASLD has been working with AGFD to control off-road travel in the meteor crater/Bar T Bar Ranch area. Mr. Williams added that ASLD is also working on the Memorandum of Understanding for the Desert Wells Multi-Use Area.

Bill Gibson gave an update from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). He informed the Committee of the progress on multiple Travel Management and Resource Management Plans and their upcoming public meetings. He suggested that people participate in the meetings to help create plans that work for everyone.

### **Landowner Relations Program Update**

Due to the limited time, Mark Weise kept the update from the Landowner Relations Program (LRP) very brief. He commented that he was happy to see so many people from such a broad spectrum participating in this meeting. Mr. Weise said three new access agreements had been completed, including one which involved the M-Diamond Ranch assuring access through some private property in exchange for road repair/maintenance which the rancher needed to maintain their waters. Cooperative habitat improvement projects were completed on the Bar-Triangle and Sands Ranches, which restored over 2,000 acres. Federal Stimulus funding was put to use to restore over 11,000 acres of grasslands on the Rogers, Timberline, Babocomara, and Carlotta Ranches. LRP worked with NRCS to write a cooperative habitat partnership initiative which could bring 2 million dollars worth of work into the Bonita-Wilcox area over the next 5 years. He also mentioned that anyone was welcome to submit nominations for the Commission's Wildlife Habitat Stewardship award.

Jim O'Haco took a moment to present a plaque to Troy Christensen for his years of "hard work and dedicated service to the livestock producers of Arizona."

### **OHV Funds**

Sanford Cohen introduced this agenda item, which he had requested to be added to the agenda. Jeff Gursh, from the Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the state's \$3.8 billion OHV industry and OHV-rancher partnerships. Volunteers working through the Adopt-a-Ranch, OHV Ambassadors, and other partnerships can accomplish much to help ranchers and agencies address OHV issues – these partnerships can include assistance from OHV funding, as well as, volunteer labor. The assistance could be in exchange for an access agreement, to completing a mutually-beneficial project, or simply to build good will which will help preserve OHV recreation. Mr. Gursh also talked about efforts to improve education on legal, ethical use of OHV's and to promote continued compliance with the OHV Decal Program. AGFD has worked with the Arizona Department of Transportation to get OHV decal renewal notices mailed out; this will help increase compliance also.

John Savino, Chairman of the OHV Advisory Group which is housed at ASP, provided information about the two OHV funding sources and how they are currently administered. He said the OHV community feels that the administration of these funds would be a better fit under the AGFD, which is more involved with OHV recreation and enforcement. He explained that they were not speaking negatively about ASP, but that they felt AGFD would be better equipped to put the OHV funds towards improvements on the ground in a timely manner. However, moving the programs would be a huge undertaking requiring changes to both agencies and it would necessitate reopening the Off-Highway Vehicle Bill to another vote which could be potentially risky. No matter how it is accomplished, getting the current funds put to good use and where the public can see it is important to assuring continued user support of the gas tax and OHV decal program.

### **Commissioner's Comments**

Commissioner Norm Freeman was present in place of Commissioner Woodhouse, who was unable to attend. He stated that the Commission and the Department, as well as the other agencies that were present, are extremely dedicated to improving OHV and access issues. Commissioner Freeman commented that one of the major things the Department provides to address OHV issues is a good law enforcement program, including nine officers that are dedicated specifically to OHV enforcement. He thanked Sanford Cohen and his radio station for always willingly cooperating with the AGFD to get important messages out to the public. He said that he felt privileged to be on a Commission that is so committed to solving access issues. With that he introduced the next agenda item, which was a mini version of an AGF Commission workshop held in April.

### **Open Discussion on Recreational Access Issues**

Mark Weise and LRP staff facilitated an open discussion with all present to gather feedback on recreational access issues. There was good discussion identifying the varied issues experienced by landowner-lessees throughout the state. The group of forty-plus participants brainstormed a list of suggestions to improve access issues, which the Commission and Department will explore. Many of the suggested solutions involved getting ethics education to more recreationists, getting landowner-lessees more involved in hunt recommendations, and maximizing the effectiveness of law enforcement.

### **Next Meeting**

Sanford Cohen informed all in attendance that they were welcome to attend future Committee meetings and that the next meeting would be held in Phoenix in conjunction with the "Meet the AGF Commission Event" on January 14, 2012.

### **Action Items:**

1. Compile the information gathered from the access discussion for the Commission (LRP staff)
2. Meeting minutes distributed. (LRP staff)

End of Document