



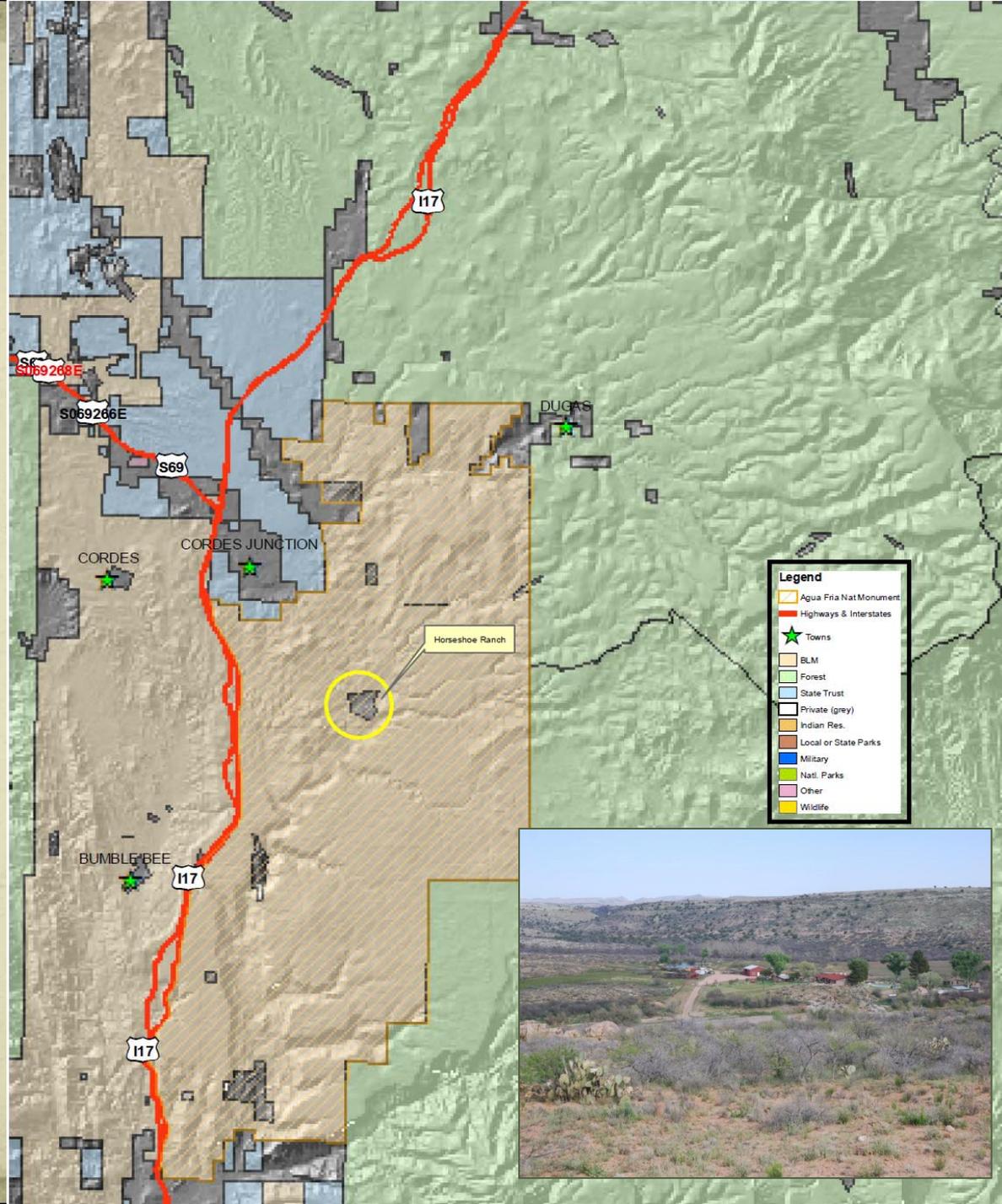
# The Horseshoe Ranch

A 2011 AGFD ACQUISITION



# Location

- Agua Fria National Monument
- 50 miles north of Phoenix
- Centrally located-Phoenix, Prescott, Flagstaff
- 15 min. access off I-17 on Bloody Basin Rd on improved dirt road



# Acquisition Funding

The deeded property was acquired using funds from the Arizona Heritage Acquisition Fund, Bring Back the Natives grant and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 Recovery Land Acquisition Fund



# AGFD and our Partners provided compensation to the previous owner for the value of two federal grazing permits and associated range improvements

- Funding partners included AZ Antelope Foundation; AZ Deer Association and Mule Deer Foundation; The Nature Conservancy; Sonoran Audubon Society; AZ Wildlife Federation; Wild Turkey Federation



# Horseshoe Ranch

~200 Deeded acres



# Agua Fria River



- Half-mile reach of the Agua Fria River on deeded
- ~ 15 acres of riparian habitat (floodway & floodplain)
- Agua Fria Important Bird Area  
(National Audubon Designation)

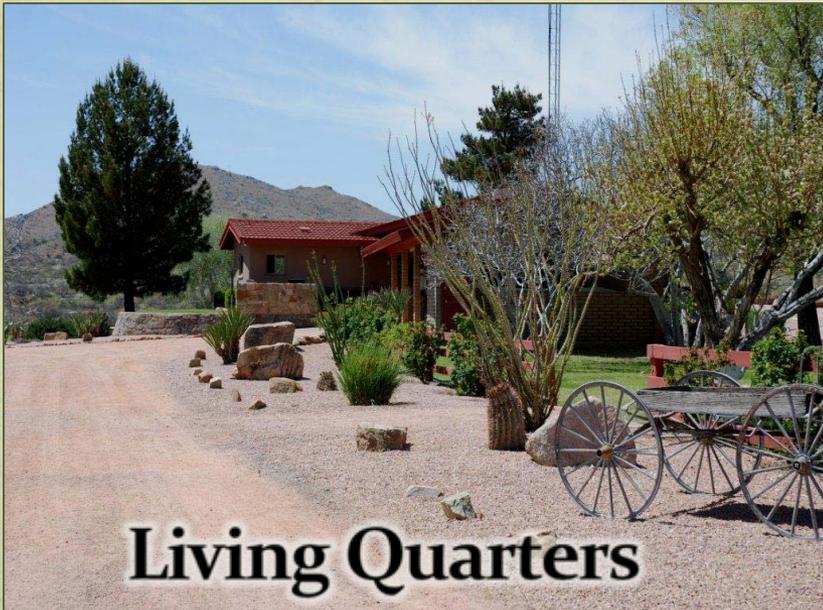
# Water Rights

- Silver Creek Spring
- Long Gulch Spring
- Agua Fria River
- Wells on deeded property

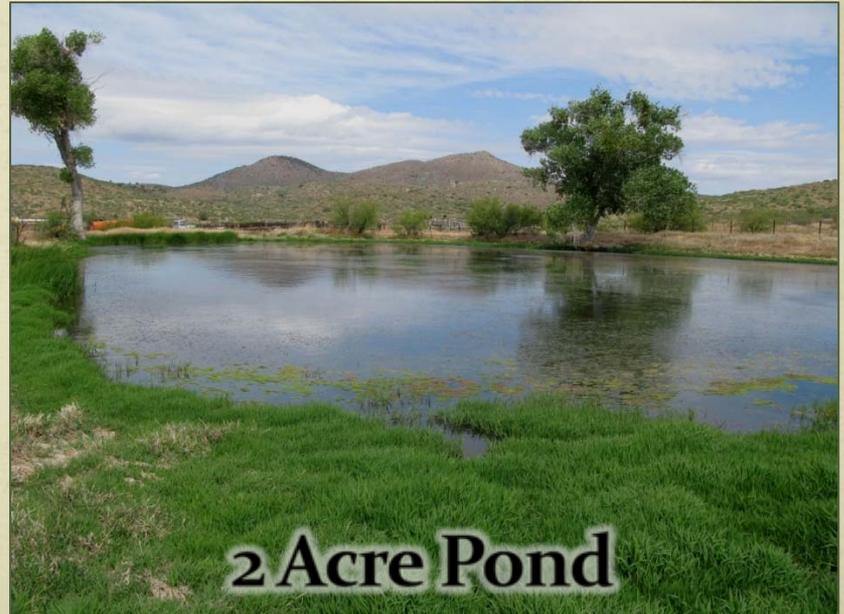




**Irrigated crop or pasture land - 25 acres**



**Living Quarters**



**2 Acre Pond**



The Ranch is a key access point for recreationists to the Agua Fria National Monument and Game Management Unit 21

A Successful Adopt-A-Ranch Program Supported by the Arizona Antelope Foundation

# Wildlife Values

- Threatened, Endangered or Candidate Species:

Gila Chub

Gila Topminnow

Desert Pupfish

Sonoran Desert Tortoise

Mexican Gartersnake

Western Yellow-billed cuckoo



- Native Resident Aquatic/Riparian species:

Speckled dace

Desert sucker

Common Black Hawk

Zoned-tailed hawk

Lowland leopard frog

Sonoran mud turtle



- Important Bird Area- National Audubon Designation:

28 species of special conservation status (13 breeding)

130 species since 2006 during annual IBA monitoring

- Game and Furbearer Species:

Pronghorn Mule deer White-tailed deer

Bobcat Mountain Lion Coyote

Quail Dove Javelina Black Bear



# Natural Habitat Values

- Riparian habitat along Agua Fria River /tributaries
- Mesquite bosque habitat
- Long Gulch and Indian Creek xeric-riparian
- Sonoran desert scrub and semi-desert grassland habitats



# Acquisition Purpose

- The Horseshoe Ranch acquisition will provide for the long-term sustainability of native wildlife populations, native habitats and habitat connectivity, public access to open space, outdoor education and recreation opportunity and the tradition of ranching in central Arizona.



# Management Concepts at Time of Purchase: Deeded Parcel

- **Manage the parcel for conservation**
  - Restore and enhance riparian and other habitats and associated wildlife along the Agua Fria River watershed
  - Manage water rights and protect streamflows
  - Expand existing mesquite bosque and xeric-riparian habitats
  - Renovate the 2-acre pond
  - Grow forage or seed crops for wildlife benefit
  - Propagate native grasses or forbs
- **Full-time ranch manager required.**

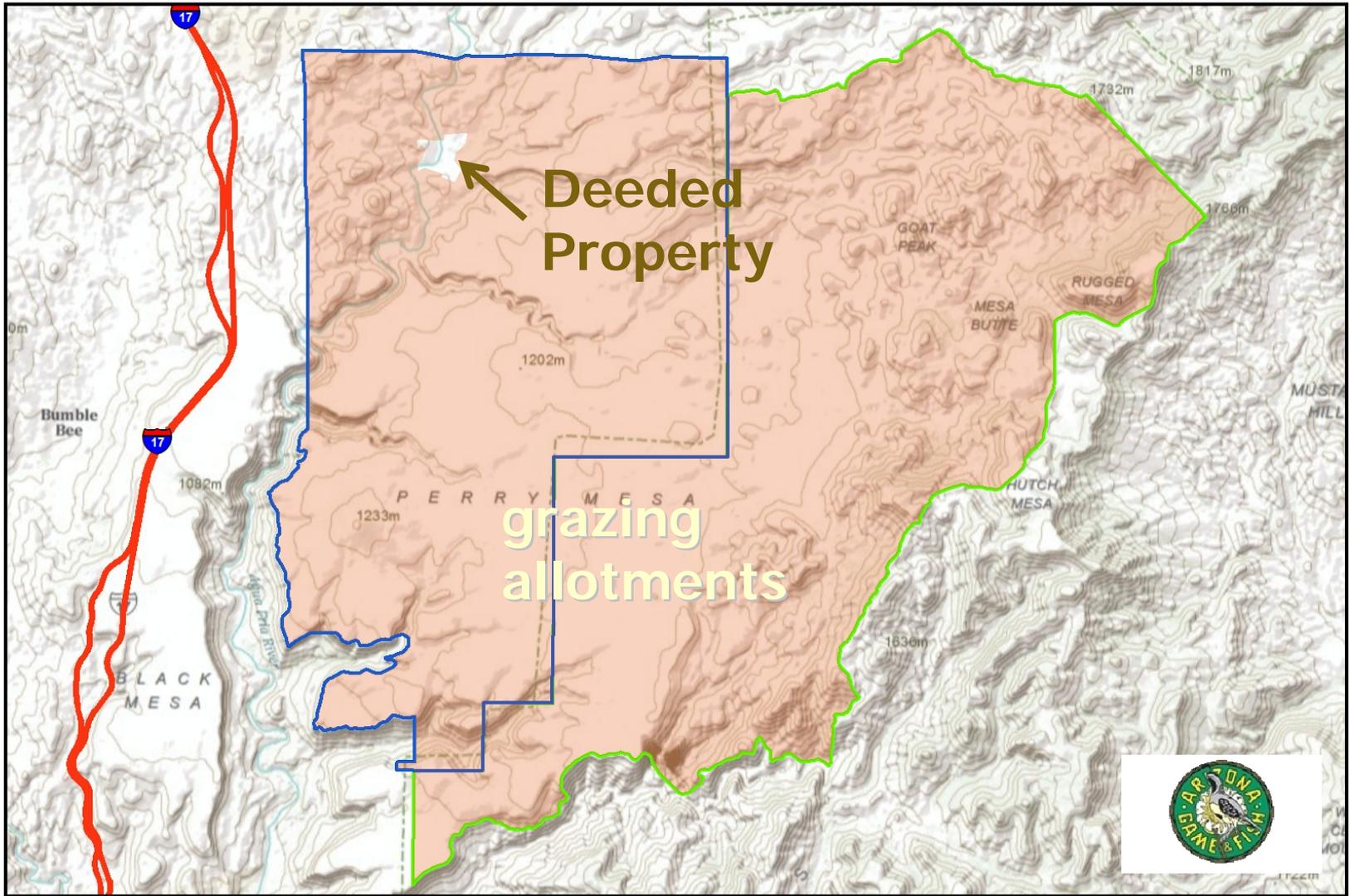
# Management Concepts at Time of Purchase: Deeded Parcel

- **Manage the parcel for public use**
  - **Develop Watchable Wildlife activities**
  - **Outdoor wildlife education and outreach events**
  - **Promote outdoor skills relating to wildlife and hunter recruitment and retention**
  - **Preserve public access to a large portion of Unit 21**
  - **Promote site stewardship and outreach in support of important designations, the tradition of livestock grazing, and other historical and cultural considerations**

# **Management Concepts at Time of Purchase: Grazing Leases**

- **Manage the federal allotments for livestock and wildlife and other natural and cultural resource purposes through a Multi- Partner Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP)**
- **Restore and enhance riparian habitats**
- **Facilitate grassland conservation and restoration**
- **Manage grasslands for pronghorn requirements, including fawning habitat**
- **Manage riparian habitats for special status species such as native fish and terrestrial riparian species**

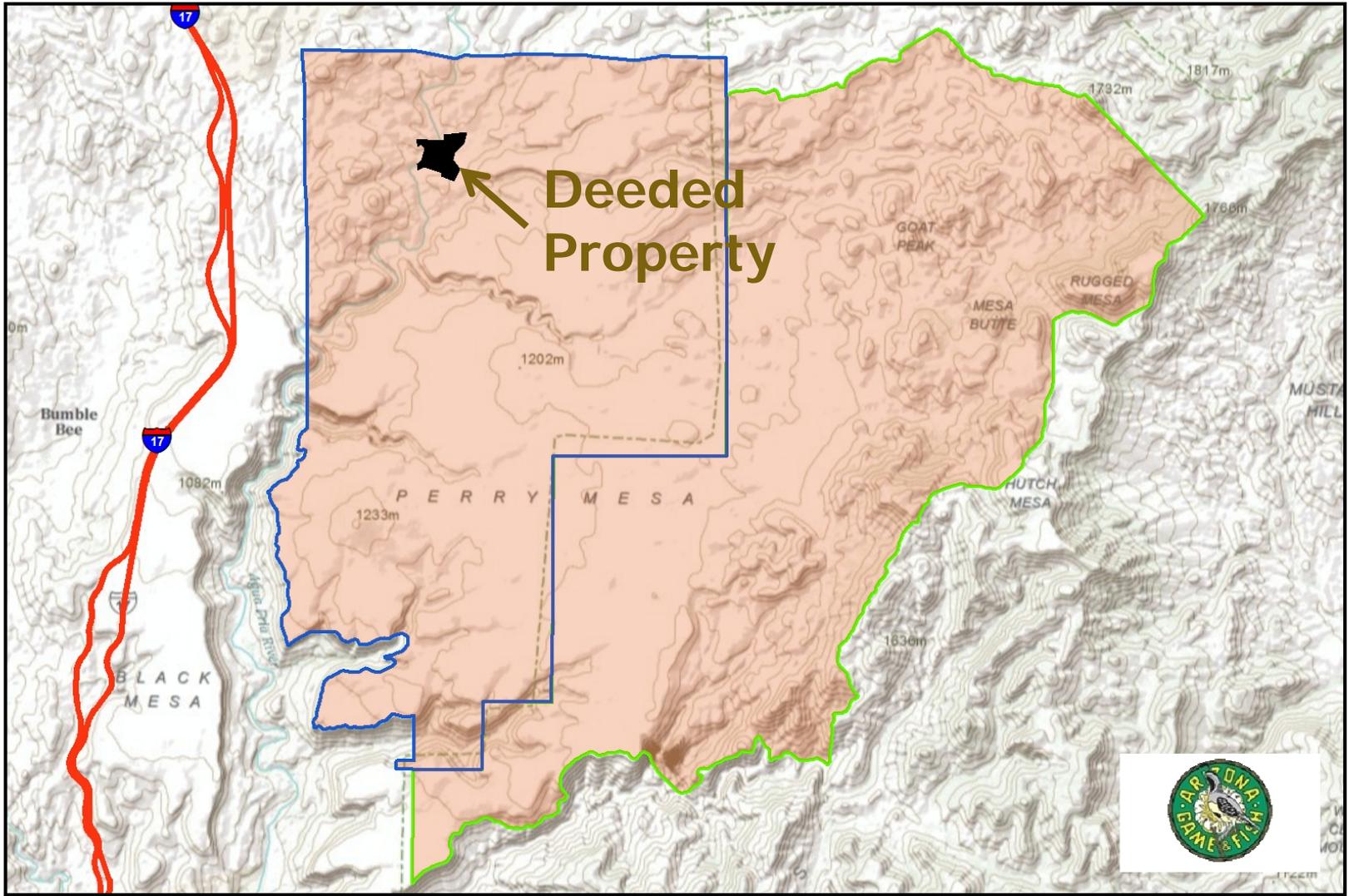
# Horseshoe Ranch



0 2.5 5 10 Miles



# Horseshoe Ranch



# **Community-Based Planning for the Horseshoe Ranch Deeded Parcel**

- **The Arizona Game and Fish Commission has asked the Department to share our ideas with the local community and interested stakeholders, and solicit ideas for management of the Horseshoe Ranch.**

# **Community-Based Planning Proposed Alternatives\***

- **Traditional Wildlife Area Model**
- **Outreach Facility Model**
- **Cost Recovery Model**
- **Concessionaire Model**
- **Other**

**\*All the alternatives are conditioned by a commitment to preserve the purposes for which the property was acquired.**

# **Traditional Wildlife Area Model:**

- **Operated by AGFD and occupied by an Area Manager**
- **Ranch used as center for species and habitat management operations and subleased grazing operations**
- **Visitor's center and some amenities**
- **Ranch and facilities available for internal/external projects, activities & events**
- **Funding for operations derived largely from Department resources**

# Outreach Facility Model

- Operated by AGFD and occupied by an Area Manager
- Ranch used as base property for species and habitat management operations and subleased grazing operations
- Ranch with visitor's center and some amenities.

# Outreach Facility Model (cont'd)

- Developed and used as a “destination facility” for outdoor and environmental education- camps, workshops, events and similar; including infrastructure development for these purposes
- Uses might result in cost-sharing
- Ranch may be occupied for periods of time by educational staff/leaders. Supervision of some activities delegated to others (educators, etc.)

# Cost Recovery Model

- Operational control maintained by AGFD
- Ranch used as center for species and habitat management operations and subleased grazing operations
- Office and other spaces rented to other users, limiting availability for outreach and to visitors
- Some Users charged via “User Play, User Pay” for access to property for parking and camping, etc.
- Operational funding would likely be a mix of Department and external sources
- Other lessees might share appropriate levels of contracted management responsibility

# Concessionaire Model

(Concessionaire model may require a change to existing state law)

- Ranch may or may not have a live-on-site Area Manager
- Ranch may or may not be used as center for habitat management operations, but acquisition purposes must be maintained
- Ranch may or may not have a visitor's center, amenities, and interpretive elements.
- Much or most of ranch turned over to a concessionaire to run as dude ranch, bed and breakfast, RV camping facility, etc.
- Concessionaire may or may not be our livestock operator
- Most operational funding would come from and be used by concessionaire, with lease income to the Department

# What are the next steps in the planning process?

- The Department will consider the input received during this public process. A final set of alternatives that benefit from this input will be presented to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission for a decision.



# Community-Based Planning

## Your Thoughts:

- **Written Comment is best: Forms in back of room**
- **Send email comments to [Horseshoe-Ranch@azgfd.gov](mailto:Horseshoe-Ranch@azgfd.gov)**

# Public Participation

- An initial public meeting has been planned to inform the public of the CRMP process and solicit participation of interested stakeholders.
- Those interested in becoming involved will be encouraged to attend a field trip to the Ranch to see firsthand, the allotments and planning area.
- Stakeholder public meeting: November 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Albins Community Center, Black Canyon City  
6PM.
- Field Trip: November 8-9, Horseshoe Ranch 9AM.

• Questions...