

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Arizona Game and Fish Commission
Wednesday, August 8, 2007 – 12:00 p.m.
Thursday, August 9, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.
Friday, August 10, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.
Saturday, August 11, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.
Radisson Woodlands Hotel
1175 West Route 66
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

PRESENT: (Commission)

(Director's Staff)

Chairman Michael M. Golightly
Commissioner William H. McLean
Commissioner Robert D. Hernbrode
Commissioner Jennifer L. Martin
Commissioner Robert R. Woodhouse

Director Duane L. Shroufe
Deputy Director Steve K. Ferrell
Assistant Attorney General Jim Odenkirk
Assistant Attorney General Shelley Cutts

Chairman Golightly called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. The first two days of this public meeting, August 8 and 9, 2007 were scheduled for Commission work sessions. The second two days of this public meeting, August 10 and 11, 2007 were scheduled for conducting regular Commission business. This meeting followed an agenda revision #1 dated August 6, 2007.

* * * * *

1. Commission Media Training

Presenter: Bob Miles, Information Branch Chief

Mr. Miles introduced the instructor for the media training, Scott Hanson, President of H.M.A. Public Relations. Mr. Hanson provided the Commission with a two part training course. The first part was a lecture, which included a Power Point presentation about the media, the roll of a news reporter, how to respond to the media, and how to prepare for and control an interview. The second part involved simulated media interviews with the Commission in which feedback was provided. This training was for informational purposes only. The Commission did not take any action regarding this item.

* * * * *

2. Hiring a new Director for the Arizona Game and Fish Department

Presenter: Shelley D. Cutts, Assistant Attorney General

Ms. Cutts briefed the Commission using a Power Point presentation on the various State laws that govern the Commission process of recruiting and hiring a new Director for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Director Duane Shroufe will be retiring upon the expiration of his current contract, which is January 21, 2009. Included in Ms. Cutts presentation was a gantt chart outlining the necessary steps and timeline to complete the hiring process before Director Shroufe's contract expiration date.

Discussion between the Commission and Ms. Cutts included how to conduct the interview process in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. The Commission expressed that they would like to develop the examination or interview questions in Executive Session and that they be kept confidential and not disclosed in the Public Session.

Further discussion resulted in the Commission requesting Ms. Cutts to look into and report back to the Commission on the following: 1) to look at the Open Meeting Law in regards to Executive Session issues for formulating questions and discussing scoring; 2) the payment of travel expenses for candidates (a gift clause analysis); 3) what would be required in regards to financial terms and requirements if a new Director was hired and it didn't work out; and 4) a question of federal law involving interjecting certain types of physical and body substance testing into the pre-employment process.

Chairman Golightly requested the following: 1) a copy of former Director Bud Bristow's initial contract; 2) a copy of Duane Shroufe's initial and current contract; and 3) salary information provided by the Department's Human Resources Manager.

The Commission agreed that this item should be on every agenda until further notice so that the Commission can discuss and further work on matters related to hiring a new Director.

* * * * *

3. Call to the Public

There were no requests from the public to speak.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for the day at 4:43 p.m.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Thursday, August 9, 2007 -- 8:00 a.m.

* * * * *

1. Public Work Session on Using Human Dimensions Data in Determining Game Management Direction.

Presenter: Leonard Ordway, Game Branch Chief
Mark Duda, Executive Director, Responsive Management

Using a Power Point presentation, Mr. Ordway briefed the Commission and re-capped the presentation provided to the Commission at the April 21, 2007 Commission meeting on the results from the Hunter Opinion Survey conducted after the 2006 Fall Hunt Draw. There has been a lot of discussion concerning the collection and use of the hunter preference data to determine game management direction for Arizona. During the spring of 2006 a sportsmen's group conducted a survey of hunters to assess attitudes toward the Department's hunt guidelines.

The survey run by the organization showed hunter preference toward quality rather than opportunity, but there was question by the Commission as to the scientific validity of the results. Subsequent to the fall draw for 2006, the Department conducted another hunter preference survey using Responsive Management as a consultant. This survey showed that hunters prefer opportunity over higher hunter success or the availability to take an older age class animal. The new hunt guideline package drafted by the Department for the Commission to consider at this August 2007 meeting uses this latest hunter preference information to recommend actions to increase hunter opportunity.

Mr. Duda discussed with the Commission survey protocol, processes and information used in determining game management direction, and other comparative information. Discussion included how the survey questions were constructed in order to get a true answer, the quality of the survey questions, survey demographics, and the validity of the survey.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for a break at 9:19 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 9:39 a.m.

* * * * *

1. (Continued) Public Work Session on Using Human Dimensions Data in Determining Game Management Direction.

Presenter: Leonard Ordway, Game Branch Chief
Mark Duda, Executive Director, Responsive Management

The Commission continued with a question and answer session with Mr. Duda and Mr. Ordway.

Public Comment

Tom Britt, representing himself, commented that the survey was well done and further questioned Mr. Duda on the timing and other variables associated with the survey.

Bruce Johnson, representing himself, commented that the Department has a lot of data besides the survey to look at such as the Hunt Arizona book from 2007 and reports on how many put in for various units and so on. In the units north of the Colorado, which are basically the trophy mule deer units, this past year there were about 14,900 people who put in, first choice, for the trophy hunts there; roughly 15%. In looking at the second choices, you get a better indication of how many are true trophy hunters, because many of them put in for first choice, a trophy unit, and then an easier draw, run of the mill unit for second choice. A better indication is the report on how many people have how many bonus points for deer. The maximum this year going into the draw was nine bonus points. One of those is the loyalty point you get for five years of applying and the other is the hunter education point, so those people who have nine bonus points have waited seven years for a tag. There are only 231 of those people going into last year's drawing. So, only 231 people out of roughly 90,000-100,000 were willing to wait for that trophy hunt and to put in only for that hunt until they get it. People with three bonus points, which means they've gone one year without a tag, were 12,000 people. People with four bonus points were 2000 people. So if you just look at this and look at the way people put in for the draw, there are really very few people who are willing to wait more than two or three years for one of

those trophy hunts. I think that says volumes about how many really trophy hunters we have. So the survey results can be confirmed by looking at other actual data. There is a mass silent majority out there that probably is not quite as interested in trophy class animals as they are in an opportunity to get to go hunt.

Mr. Duda concluded with an example of an invalid survey in North Carolina regarding hunting on Sunday, and further commended the Department for their efforts on their survey.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for a break at 10:21 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 10:36 a.m.

* * * * *

1A. Public Work Session on Legislative and Electoral Issues

Presenter: Anthony Guiles, Legislative Liaison

Mr. Guiles introduced Bob Grossfeld from The Media Guys Inc., a nationally-known strategic communications firm specializing in public affairs. Mr. Grossfeld provided a Power Point presentation on legislative and electoral issues, focusing on costs associated with placing an initiative on a ballot and the process of doing so. Discussion and a question and answer session with the Commission followed the presentation. This item was for informational purposes only and the Commission did not take any action regarding this item.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for lunch at 11:28 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

* * * * *

2. Public Work Session on Management of Deer in Unit 12A.

Presenter: Ron Sieg, Flagstaff Regional Supervisor
Leonard Ordway, Game Branch Chief
Chasa O'Brien, Research Branch Chief

Using Power Point presentations, the Department provided an overview of the history, management objectives, data collection and use, habitat restoration efforts, and ongoing research on the mule deer herd that occupies the North Kaibab in Unit 12A; one of the most renowned deer herds in North America, and managed according to alternative deer management guidelines approved by the Commission. Although this deer herd has been the subject of substantial research and study, the management of hunting remains a focal point for much discussion among sportsmen, the Department, and the Commission. The Commission was also briefed on the projected timelines for population surveys, research study completion, and implementation of research conclusions. Research and study data directly correlates with Department hunt guideline recommendations to the Commission on the Kaibab.

Mr. Sieg provided the Commission with a DVD, which was recently sent to Kaibab deer tag holders. The DVD is an outreach tool created by the Department on how to have a successful deer hunt on the Kaibab and also encourages participation in the non-lead program related to the Condor Program on the Kaibab.

Public Comment

Bill Noble, Forest Biologist, Kaibab National Forest Supervisors Office, was not present but provided a written statement which was read to the Commission by Mr. Sieg. Mr. Noble stated that he was proud of the habitat changes and improvements collectively initiated on the Kaibab and requested that the Commission consider plans for future hunts that can effectively control the expected growth in deer numbers before those numbers are realized.

Bruce Johnson, representing himself, questioned the research staff regarding the long term perspective and about the history of the deer numbers. Mr. Johnson made the observation that it probably doesn't matter what the Commission does regarding the number of doe permits on the Kaibab (500 more or 500 less), because the history shows that the number of permits is one of the lesser variables compared to weather, fire, and so on, in terms of the size of the deer herd.

* * * * *

3. Call to the Public

There were no requests from the public to speak.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for the day at 2:55 p.m.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Friday, August 10, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.

* * * * *

Chairman Golightly called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The Commissioners introduced themselves and Chairman Golightly introduced the Director's staff. Director Duane Shroufe was not present until after the lunch hour due to a personal matter. Deputy Director Steve Ferrell acted as Director. This meeting continued to follow an agenda revision #1 dated August 6, 2007.

* * * * *

Awards and Commission of Officers

Chairman Golightly on behalf of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission presented an award to Assistant Attorney General Shelley Cutts and County Attorney Terry Hance and his staff members David Rozema, Ted Reed and Aaron Hall for excellence in their responsibilities to wildlife in the State of Arizona in the successful litigation of a license revocation matter. Ms. Cutts and Mr. Rozema were present and received the awards.

* * * * *

1. State and Federal Legislation**Presenter:** Anthony Guiles, Legislative Liaison

The Commission was provided with a 2007 Legislative Summary (A report on the Department's legislative communication and effectiveness - also available to the public), which included statistics on how the legislature voted on matters of interest to the Commission.

Mr. Guiles also provided the Commission with a Power Point presentation on potential Legislative Proposals for 2008 as follows:

Proposal	Summary	ARS
Minimum Age for Hunter Education certification	Move from title 15 to title 17 the age requirements for hunter education, possibly change hunter age	15? To 17?
Strike "married" from immediate family definition	Strike "married" from immediate family definition in an effort to increase recruitment and retention	17
Free hunter day coupon on license	With the purchase of a hunting license include free coupon for one hunter day for an additional hunter, recruitment and retention tool	17
Sell for Profit	Allow the Department to sell items for profit (specifically at Department run shooting ranges)	17
Gift Certificates	Allow individuals to obtain gift certificates for use at Department regional offices/shooting ranges for licenses, etc	17-330
Watercraft Changes	Various changes to title 5 to mirror DUI law (title 28)	5-3xx
Longer Watercraft Registration	Allow for longer watercraft registrations (up to 3 years)	5-321
17-340 clarification	Include unlawful "transportation" as a revocable offense, clear up Charles Johnson v. AZ (other changes)	17-340
Landowner liability	Indemnify landowners who allow hunters on their private land	17
Lead on Shooting Ranges	Indemnify Commission owned Shooting ranges relating to lead/environmental issues.	17-273
Travel Expenses for Volunteers	Pay travel expenses for volunteers (example - HPAC)	17

These were ideas and just a starting point for the Commission to consider and provide the Department with direction on what they might want to move forward with. The Department has not drafted any language for these proposals. With Commission direction, the Department will work on the language, find sponsors, finalize the language and then introduce the legislation.

Commissioner Martin requested that Mr. Guiles look into a statutory change so that the Department has more flexibility in denying a guide's license application when there is a history of illegal activities.

Mr. Guiles will find out if that would require a statutory change or a rule change and report back to the Commission.

Deputy Director Steve Ferrell reminded the Commission that they have until December to finalize their legislative agenda for the next legislative session and that this was the time to discuss, delete or add items to that agenda.

Motion: Martin moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT TO BRING BACK A COST AND BENEFIT ANALYSIS ON EACH ITEM ON THE LIST.

Vote: Unanimous

Mr. Guiles further briefed the Commission on some recently introduced Federal legislation; a potential land exchange involving Resolution Copper, Inc.; and legislation on the Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness Proposal. The Department will provide the Commission with a full analysis on these items at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Guiles provided an update on the OHV legislation from the last session. It was good legislation and should be moved forward without making any major adjustments. The Department plans to reintroduce this bill and will be meeting with supporters of the legislation in the next couple of weeks.

Public Comment

Mike Quigley, representing Sky Island Alliance based in Tucson, stated for the record that they strongly support the Wilderness Designation for the Tumacacori Highlands.

Jon Fugate, Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club (YVRGC), expressed his opposition to the Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness Proposal and stated that his organization continues to oppose this or any future Wilderness Designations in Arizona.

Commissioner McLean commented on his surprise that Congressman Grijalva filed his Tumacacori Highlands bill without affording the Commission an opportunity to discuss and negotiate some of the language. The Department will be providing the Commission with a full presentation on the issue at the September Commission meeting and Commissioner McLean invited both Mr. Fugate and Mr. Quigley as well as other interested parties to that meeting.

Commissioner Hernbrode requested that as part of the presentation the Department provide a briefing on the agreement between the Forest Service, BLM, and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), since he understands that part of that agreement is in Congressman Grijalva's bill.

2A. Update on Uranium Mining and Activities on the Arizona Strip

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief
Scott Florence, BLM Arizona Strip District Manager

The Department provided the Commission with an update on uranium mining and activities on the Arizona Strip. The price of uranium has spiked dramatically in the last year to \$136 per pound (as of June 25, 2007, after 47 consecutive months without a price drop), sparking a renewed interest in uranium exploration and mining. The Arizona Strip District has seen a market increase in mining interest and claims on BLM lands. Mining activities are of grave concern to the Arizona Game and Fish Department in terms of potential resource damage to wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Mr. Avey introduced Scott Florence and Becky Hammonds from the BLM's Arizona Strip District Office. Ms. Hammonds provided the Commission with an update on uranium mining activities on BLM lands on the strip, including a general summary of the General Mining Act of 1872 and the anticipated effects on natural resources from these activities.

The Commission asked several questions including how many mines are expected to be developed. Ms. Hammonds stated that it is estimated that there will be six underground uranium mines over the next twenty years with the maximum acreage disturbed to be 20 acres for each mine.

Commissioner Martin asked about the potential for watershed contamination, to which Ms. Hammonds stated that there was no potential for watershed contamination; that berms are built around the twenty acres for surface runoff within that twenty acres and rainfall runs into an evaporation pond that is lined. Further, the mines are only 1,500 feet deep and the watershed is 2,500 feet deep, so the watershed is 1000 feet deeper than the mine.

Discussion between Ms. Hammonds and the Commission also included road issues, foreign companies that are able to mine as long as they are incorporated in the United States, and that reclamation cost sometimes exceeds performance bond amounts and leads to litigation.

Commissioner Martin further asked about other types of contamination such as dust. Ms. Hammonds stated that monitoring equipment is placed at the mines and on the roads, and that with this equipment the mining companies monitor themselves.

* * * * *

3. Statewide Shooting Range Briefing

Presenter: Ty Gray, Assistant Director, Information and Education Division

The Commission was provided with a Statewide Shooting Range Update prior to this meeting of Department activities related to shooting range support and development statewide. The update (also available to the public), covered activities that occurred since the June 2007 Commission meeting. The statewide shooting range briefing is part of the Department's ongoing commitment

to provide the Commission with updates on statewide shooting range development and shooting sports in general.

Mr. Gray provided a Power Point presentation to the Commission with pictures and maps of several shooting range developments; recapping the Shooting Range Update and providing some additional information.

Commissioner Woodhouse briefed the Commission on the Adair Shooting Range. The Department, along with Commissioner Woodhouse met with a representative of Adair Ranges Inc., a non-profit corporation, to discuss the possibility of transferring the Recreation and Public Purposes (RPP) Patent for the Adair Range from Yuma County to the Department. The County currently holds the property under an RPP Patent issued by the BLM.

Motion: Woodhouse moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT TO EVALUATE THE INS AND OUTS/ PLUSES AND MINUSES FOR THE DEPARTMENT, AND THE BENEFIT TO ADAIR SHOOTING RANGE, IN REGARDS TO TRANSFERRING THE RECREATION AND PUBLIC PURPOSES (RPP) PATENT FOR THE ADAIR RANGE FROM YUMA COUNTY TO THE DEPARTMENT.

Vote: Unanimous

In regards to the Wickenburg Shooting Range, the Department is working with the Wickenburg Sportsman's Association on the possibility of relocating the existing shooting range to a parcel of BLM property. The club has located a new parcel of land with county maintained road access. The Department has conducted a site visit and evaluation of the property and has determined that it is a suitable location for relocating the existing range. The next step would be the acquisition of the property through the BLM application process (RPP Patent).

Mr. Gray outlined the necessary steps to complete the RPP Patent application process as follows, and asked the Commission for direction:

- Plan of Development (Engineering)
- 5 Year time table and costs
- Archeology and Phase I Study
- Description of Range Management and Operations
- ADOA Risk Management Requirements
- Additional permits, topography & ariel surveys, Geotech, Sound Study
- BLM acceptance (discretion of BLM Field Manager)
- Time line (2 years after acceptance - Lease obtained in 1.5-2 years)
- Reclassification of Land (current grazing permit)
- Lease until substantial development
- Patent issued

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUE WORKING TOWARD COMPLETION OF THE BLM APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE RPP PATENT FOR THE WICKENBURG SHOOTING RANGE RELOCATION SITE; INCLUDING DEVELOPING A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH BLM, WHICH WILL DEFINE RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES.

Vote: Unanimous

Public Comment

Alan Dapp, Wickenburg Sportsman, completed a speaker card, but had to leave. He will schedule to meet with Mr. Gray regarding the Wickenburg Shooting Range.

The following Munds Park residents were present and addressed the Commission in opposition to the Northern Arizona Shooting Range location. Concerns included noise, damage to wildlife and wildlife habitat, congestion of traffic and people in the area, and loss of peace and quiet:

Judy Strohmeyer
Lois Barnes
Gerald Davidson
Robert Ganelin
Mac Jett

Mr. Jett offered his private residence for the Department to conduct additional sound studies.

Mr. Gray advised the Commission that the Department will be doing that as part of the NEPA process.

Chairman Golightly requested that sound studies be done as soon as possible to alleviate the concerns regarding noise, and further that he would like to see a zero decibel reading, through berming or other methods, for the residents at Munds Park.

The Commission further discussed with Mr. Gray the sound study results that were completed last year and what are acceptable decibel readings. Mr. Gray will provide the Commission with the sound study results from last year.

Commissioner Hernbrode stated for the record that he lived within a half a mile from a shooting range for many years and understands the issues.

Commissioner Hernbrode asked about the land exchange properties for the Northern Arizona Shooting Range.

Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief, reported that the decision for the land exchange will be at the end of the EIS process. Currently the Department is conducting preliminary appraisals on the properties for exchange and anticipate having those back by the end of September. The Department should be able to present to the Commission at the October Commission meeting the appraised values and the potential use of those properties.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for a break at 10:20 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 10:46 p.m.

* * * * *

4. Information and Education Activities Briefing

Presenter: Ty Gray, Assistant Director, Information and Education Division

The Commission was provided with a written Program Report dated August 2007 prior to this meeting (also provided to the public), which presented new information as well as progress toward ongoing issues and concerns related to Information and Education programs. The update covered activities and events that occurred since the June 2007 Commission meeting and was provided in fulfillment of the Department's commitment to brief the Commission on a regular basis regarding the Department's Information and Education programs.

Mr. Gray added that the online Hunter Education Program went live on the Department's website yesterday at 5:15 p.m., August 9, 2007. A press release went out this morning to notify the public.

There were no questions or comments from the Commission.

* * * * *

5. FY 2008 Scholastic Clay Target Program Structure and Update

Presenter: Ty Gray, Assistant Director, Information and Education Division

Mr. Gray provided the Commission with an update of Department activities related to the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP). A Power Point presentation was provided as part of the update, which covered program structure, support and funding requirements for the coming project year. The Department asked the Commission to approve additional funding for FY 2008 for the SCTP. The following is a description of the Department's funding request:

Description	Costs
New Club Costs (2 at \$10,300)	\$20,600
Existing Club costs (16)	\$105,750
Total Additional Funding Requested	\$126,350

Budget Category	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08
Staff	\$57,500	\$58,700	\$64,300	\$67,900
AOO	\$93,260	\$242,500	\$290,000	\$38,800
Add. Funds*	\$84,240	-	-	\$126,350 (WCF)
Total	\$235,000	\$301,200	\$354,300	\$233,050

Public Comment

Hays Gilstrap (former Arizona Game and Fish Commissioner), representing the Arizona Shooting Sports Education Foundation, addressed the Commission in support of additional funding for the SCTP and opposed cutting back on the budget, stating that it will create too much of a hardship for fundraising organizations and will be detrimental to shooter participation.

Joe Melton (former Arizona Game and Fish Commissioner), representing himself, addressed the Commission in support of the Department's funding request and further asked the Commission to approve an additional \$100,000.

Chairman Golightly stated that initially the SCTP program was heavily funded with the idea that it would become self sufficient by year three, and further mentioned that fundraising should have started in year one.

The Commission discussed the Department's role in funding the SCTP, what the organization's and club's responsibilities were in fundraising and finding sponsorship, and what effect the lack of funding may have on shooter participation, especially in recruiting and retaining new participants.

Commissioner McLean stated that the Department was supposed to step back in year three and let the clubs and organizations raise the funds (and/or find sponsors) for the SCTP and that the Commission should follow through with that.

Commissioner Woodhouse stated that there are some areas around the State that just don't have the money or support to participate in this program, and there are some kids that would never have the opportunity to be involved. These kids may never go to a national or Olympic shoot, but with sufficient Department support they may be kept involved in shooting sports as it relates to recruiting and retaining young hunters.

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR SCTP FOR FY08 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$126,350.

Vote: Aye - Golightly, McLean, Martin
Nay - Hernbrode, Woodhouse
Passed 3 to 2

* * * * *

6. An Update on Current Issues, Planning Efforts, and Proposed Projects on All Lands in Arizona and Other Matters Related Thereto

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

A copy of the Lands Update report was provided to the Commission prior to this meeting and is included as part of these minutes. The update addressed decisions or activities since the June 2007 Commission meeting. This update is in fulfillment of the Department's commitment to

brief the Commission on a regular basis regarding decisions and actions on all state and federal lands in Arizona.

Mr. Avey provided the following additional updates:

- The Coconino National Forest released the proposed action for their Travel Management Plan. The public has 45 days from the date of release, July 25, 2007, to submit written comments. The Department is currently drafting comments on the plan. After the comment period, the Forest Service will provide a draft EIS in the summer of 2008 with another 45 day comment period. The final EIS is expected to be completed in early 2009. To keep the public informed, the Department continues to update its website on federal land planning including upcoming meetings, documents released for public comment, and Department letters to the Forest Service or the BLM.

The Commission requested to review the Department's written comments on the Travel Management Plan prior to it being submitted.

- A fence is being proposed along the Arizona-Mexico border east of Douglas. On August 7, 2007, Border Patrol agents met the local ranchers in the Douglas area to discuss new permanent vehicle barriers and associated road projects proposed to be implemented east of the Prieta Mountains, approximately five miles east of Douglas through the San Bernadino Wildlife Refuge to the New Mexico border (The NEPA document in the Lands Update only pertains to the port of entry area surrounding Douglas including the area five miles to the east as well as areas west of Douglas). The Department believes the area they are proposing for the new fences is beyond the scope of anything that would be touched in the 2003 EA that had been completed. On July 25, 2007, the Refuge was contacted directly by members of the Border Patrol to discuss the project. Currently along 2-3 miles of the Refuge border to Mexico, there is approximately one mile that is accessible to vehicles based on terrain. The refuge has already installed vehicle barriers similar to the style on the Organ Pipe National Monument. Along with the barriers will come the need for road construction, maintenance, and patrol. Much of the area east of the Refuge includes terrain that is impassable by vehicles, so the Department questions the installation of vehicle barriers in those areas. Concerns related to the increased illegal use of roads, increased use of the area by Border Patrol agents, destruction of habitat, lack of concern by the Border Patrol for the current ranching activities, and impacts to wildlife and habitat are just a few of the issues that concern the Department. The Department is also concerned that the vehicle barriers may be upgraded to impenetrable pedestrian fences depending on future operational needs. It's not clear if the laws pertaining to NEPA or ESA have been waived in this case, but it has happened previously with the San Diego border fence. In 2006, Congress passed a Secure Fence Act which directs the Department of Homeland Security to construct five separate stretches of fence along the southern border; however, this particular stretch was not identified as part of the Act, only the area extending from ten miles west of Calexico, CA to port of entry to five miles east of Douglas port of entry. The Department is paying close attention to this subject and will continue to monitor the situation and report to the Commission.

Commissioner Hernbrode requested that the Commission be provided with an update and any additional information by the next Commission meeting so that the Commission can make a formal statement of opposition.

Public Comment

Jon Fugate, Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club (YVRGC), addressed the Commission regarding the BLM's Resource Management Plan (RMP) process that is taking place statewide and the Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the BLM as it relates to the RMP. Mr. Fugate is concerned that the language in the MOU does not adequately address the Department's needs in order to manage wildlife and wildlife habitat in the State of Arizona.

Joe Melton, representing himself, concurred with Mr. Fugate and further expressed concerns regarding RMP related road closures.

* * * * *

10. Call to the Public

There were no request to speak at this time.

* * * * *

7. Consent Agenda

The following items were grouped together and noticed as consent agenda items to expedite action on routine matters. These items were provided to the Commission prior to this meeting for review and the Department requested that the Commission approve these matters as presented, subject to approval or recommendations of the Office of the Attorney General. Deputy Director Steve Ferrell presented all of these items to the Commission and none were deemed necessary for removal for further discussion.

a. Request for Commission Approval for an Agreement for Permit with Citizens Communications, for Telephone Service at Mohave County Shooting Ranch in Mohave County, Arizona.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

Citizens Communication is requesting a right-of-way to construct, operate and maintain underground and overhead telephone cables, appurtenant facilities and service to provide telephone service through a portion of the Commission owned Mohave County Shooting Range southwest of Kingman, Arizona. The Department prepared an agreement (provided to the Commission prior to this meeting for consideration) with Citizens Communication for construction, operation and maintenance of underground and overhead telephone cables and related facilities through Commission property. The Commission acquired the range from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under the Recreational and Public Purposes Act for public shooting range purposes. Accordingly, to recover administrative costs, the Department is

recommending minimum lease fees of \$1,200 for the ten year term. The Agreement will require concurrence from the BLM.

The Department recommended that the Commission VOTE TO APPROVE AN AGREEMENT FOR PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN UNDERGROUND AND OVERHEAD TELEPHONE CABLES, APPURTENANT FACILITIES AND SERVICE TO PROVIDE TELEPHONE SERVICE WITH CITIZENS COMMUNICATION AT MOHAVE COUNTY SHOOTING RANGE IN MOHAVE COUNTY, ARIZONA AND EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT AS ATTACHED OR AS RECOMMENDED AND APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL PENDING CONCURRENCE FROM THE BLM.

b. Request for Commission Approval for the Department to Execute a Special Use Permit issued by the U.S. Forest Service at Fairchild Draw in Navajo County, Arizona.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

The Forest Service approved a Special Use Permit for the construction and maintenance, for a minimum of ten years, of approximately 2.2 miles of 8-foot high elk exclosure fencing to protect and provide for the recovery of approximately 16 acres of wet meadow, including approximately one mile of intermittent stream channel in Fairchild Draw (Black Mesa Ranger District). The Arizona Game and Fish Department has been awarded an Arizona Water Protection Fund Grant to fund the construction of the fence.

The Department recommended that the Commission VOTE TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF AN ELK EXCLOSURE AT FAIRCHILD DRAW IN NAVAJO COUNTY AND AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE THIS PARCEL AS RECOMMENDED OR APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

c. Request for the Commission to Approve a Three-Party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Exchange of Information on the Status and Distribution of Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive (TES) Plants and Animals on Forest Service lands in Arizona and New Mexico.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

Both the Arizona Game and Fish Department through the Heritage Data Management System (HDMS), and the University of New Mexico, through its Natural Heritage New Mexico (NHNM) maintain a centralized, computerized and standardized database of current information on the location, biology, and status of TES plant and animal species for their respective states. The HDMS and NHNM are part of an international Network of Natural Heritage Programs and Conservation Data Centres.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has the responsibility to manage and protect the habitat for TES plant and animal species on National Forest lands. To do this most effectively, the USFS needs the most complete, accurate, and up-to-date information available on TES plants and animals. The USFS uses such information in preparing Biological Evaluations and/or Biological Assessments, and in developing ecosystem management plans and activities that require determining the known locations of TES species. In order to be most useful, such information should be stored in a readily

retrievable format at a central location. Further, such information would be an essential contribution to the expanding body of knowledge maintained by the Natural Heritage Programs in Arizona and New Mexico. The information contained in the HDMS and NHNM have proven invaluable to the Department, and various State and Federal agencies as a source of information from which biological evaluations and land management decisions can be made with regard to the status and conservation needs of TES species in Arizona and New Mexico. Distinct mutual advantages and cost efficiency will occur for all parties involved through the updating and maintenance of data entered into the HDMS and NHNM.

This MOU is a renewal of a previous three-party agreement approved by the Commission on September 18, 1998, (KR99-006-EQS) and which expired in 2004. This MOU will replace the expired MOU and make adjustments for newer technologies as a means to exchange data.

The Department recommended that the Commission VOTE TO APPROVE THE MOU BETWEEN THE COMMISSION, THE SOUTHWESTERN REGION OF THE FOREST SERVICE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON THE STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION OF THREATENED, ENDANGERED AND SENSITIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS ON FOREST SERVICE LANDS IN ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO AS ATTACHED, OR AS RECOMMENDED OR APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

d. Request for the Commission to Approve a Memorandum of Understanding for the cooperative development of the Altar Valley Fire Management Plan.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

In June 2004, a Cooperative Agreement was completed to convey approved Non-traditional Section 6 Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation funding to the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance (AVCA) to draft a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Implementation Agreement, and associated Section 10 application and NEPA compliance documentation. The AVCA drafted an HCP, which the Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Arizona Ecological Services, and the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) approved. However, the AVCA determined that it did not wish to pursue an HCP further, and in September 2004, the Department rendered final payment to the Alliance for reimbursable costs to date. The Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and Arizona State Land Department cooperated with Federal Assistance to convert the project to development of a fire management plan for the Altar Valley to achieve the same benefits to wildlife species as proposed under an HCP. Documentation for this conversion was submitted to the FWS in September 2004, and approved in October 2004.

The intent of this MOU, and resulting Fire Management Plan (Plan), is to predetermine appropriate fire management strategies, including suppression strategies, for fires occurring on private and State Trust Lands within the Altar Valley and adjacent areas. This Plan will be prepared by a qualified consultant in consultation with affected landowners through a representative of the AVCA, appropriate state agencies including the Department and ASLD, Pima County and technical assistance from The Nature Conservancy and appropriate Federal agencies including FWS, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and U.S. Forest Service.

The Department recommended that the Commission VOTE TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALTAR VALLEY FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS A, B, C, AND D AS PRESENTED.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

8. Hunt Permit-tag Application Schedule for Spring 2008 Hunts

Presenter: Harry Seck, Assistant Director, Special Services

The Commission was provided with a brief presentation relating to the hunt permit-tag application schedule for the spring 2008 hunting seasons (attached to these minutes). The application schedule identifies proposed acceptance dates and deadline dates for all hunts associated with the draw process. In addition, the proposed dates for when hunt permit-tags and refund warrants will be mailed are also identified, along with information relating to the first-come/first-serve process for any permits that may still be available.

Motion: McLean moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION SCHEDULE FOR SPRING 2008 HUNTS.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

9. Commission Briefing on Status of New Headquarters Facility

Presenter: Mark Weise, Development Branch Chief

Using a Power Point presentation, Mr. Weise provided the Commission with an update on the development of the Department's new headquarters. The project is entering its eighth month of construction. The update included pictures of construction progress, budget status, and other current issues related to the project. Substantial progress was made since the last update at the June Commission meeting. The completion date is scheduled for October 15 and the tentative Department move-in is slated for late October. In regards to the move, the Director recently approved the Creative Solutions Transition Team Report and the Department will begin implementing the recommendations from the team. Employees will be apprised of components that will make the move and transition easier. Also, there are plans in the works for a grand opening ceremony in which the Governor will be invited as well as the public and all employees and their families.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for lunch at 12:07 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

* * * * *

11. Executive Session

The Commission voted to meet in Executive Session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (A)(3) and (4) for the purpose of discussion and consultation with legal counsel.

Motion: McLean moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

12. Hearings on License Revocations for Violation of Game and Fish Codes and Civil Assessments for the Illegal Taking and/or Possession of Wildlife

Presenter: Pat Barber, Law Enforcement Branch Chief

Record of these proceedings is maintained in a separate minutes book in the Director's Office.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for a break at 2:58 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 3:16 p.m.

* * * * *

13. Request to Modify the Funding Priorities for the Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Fund to Include the Sunset Habitat Restoration Project

Presenter: Jon Cooley, Pinetop Regional Supervisor

Mr. Cooley briefed the Commission and provided a map of the restoration project areas related to this subject. In June of 2006, the Department was appropriated money for the Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Fund. One of the approved purposes for the expenditure of the funds was the Pinetop region deer habitat restoration project, including the Chitty Creek habitat restoration project, the Pigeon habitat restoration project, and the Sheep Wash ecosystem improvement project.

On June 30, 2007, a lightning strike ignited a wildfire within the northern portion of the Chitty Creek Habitat Restoration Project (Chitty Project) area. Although the initial strategy was for full control and containment due to natural resource values within the area, it was subsequently decided to use the existing containment lines for the Chitty Project and allow the wildfire to burn within the prescribed fire area to achieve Project objectives, reduce fire suppression costs, and Project implementation costs. It is important to realize that this wildfire was actively managed for Project objectives, which created a savings of originally allocated Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Fund money. While the wildfire did burn a substantial amount of the Project area, there are still untreated areas within the Project area that will need to be burned to achieve overall Project objectives. Of the initial \$460,236 allocated to the Chitty Creek

Habitat Restoration Project, \$217,560 is still needed to complete the Chitty Project, providing \$242,676 in project savings. All work remaining on the Chitty Project is scheduled to be finished by April of 2008, with the bulk of the work being complete by December of 2007.

It is proposed that unexpended Chitty Project funds be allocated to initiate the Sunset Habitat Restoration Project. Specifically, these funds would be used to complete NEPA and archeological clearance requirements. Contracts for the clearance work on the Sunset Project would be obligated in the fall of 2007, with completion expected by late spring of 2008.

The Sunset Habitat Restoration Project is a landscape scale restoration treatment encompassing approximately 60,000 acres. The Sunset Project is located in southern Unit 27, and is contiguous to the completed 36,000 acre Pigeon Creek Habitat Restoration Project. The project would entail the application of prescribed fire over much of the project area, as well as mechanical juniper woodland tree thinning on approximately 3,000 acres. In addition, through the NEPA process, approval will be sought for natural fire use at a landscape scale of up to 60,000 acres. Combined with the existing decision for natural fire use within the Pigeon Creek Habitat Restoration Project area, there will be nearly 100,000 contiguous acres approved for natural fire use in southern Unit 27. Benefits of this Project will be long lasting and will be similar to those of the Pigeon, Chitty, and Sheep Wash projects, including significant landscape scale improvements to deer habitat.

The Sunset Project encompasses three separate grazing allotments which include the Hickey, Pleasant Valley, and Blackjack allotments. The Hickey and Pleasant Valley allotments are currently not stocked, and Blackjack is stocked minimally with a small horse herd. This creates a very good opportunity to treat the area without displacing any grazing operations or practices.

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE REQUEST TO MODIFY THE FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR THE WILDLIFE HABITAT RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT FUND TO INCLUDE THE SUNSET HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

14. Director's Goals and Objectives – 2007

Presenter: Duane Shroufe, Director

This item was addressed in Executive Session.

* * * * *

15. Call to the Public

Kerry Baldwin, Assistant Director of Natural Resources, Pima County National Resources, Parks and Recreation, addressed the Commission and thanked them for another year of successful partnership between the Department and Pima County in terms of natural resources management and wildlife.

* * * * *

11. (Continued) Executive Session

The Commission voted to meet in Executive Session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (A)(3) and (4) for the purpose of discussion and consultation with legal counsel.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for the day at 4:46 p.m.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Saturday, August 11, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.

* * * * *

Chairman Golightly called the meeting to order at 8:11 a.m. The Commission introduced themselves and Chairman Golightly introduced the Director and the Director's staff. This meeting continued to follow an agenda revision #1 dated August 6, 2007; however, Director Shroufe announced that the agenda items would be addressed in the following order: 1, 2, 3A, 5, 7, 8, 6, 5A, 8A, and 9.

* * * * *

1. Request for Commission Approval for the Department to Acquire the Headstream & McVey Property in Yuma County, Arizona.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

Mr. Avey briefed the Commission using a Power Point presentation, which included a map of the Headstream & McVey property and project area. The City of Yuma prepared the Yuma East Wetlands Restoration Plan for restoration and enhancement of riparian and marsh areas within the lower Colorado River area. The project will restore, enhance and protect native riparian, wetland and aquatic habitats as well as provide cultural preservation, environmental education, low-impact recreation and eco-tourism opportunities within the project area. The Department has an opportunity to participate in the project through the acquisition of the 20.84 acre Headstream & McVey property at the purchase price of \$125,000. Once the property has been acquired the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Corporation, a partnership among government agencies, nonprofit groups and civic organizations, will use a \$75,000 grant for restoration of the property and will continue to operate and maintain the property as part of the Yuma East Wetlands project. The project will include restoring water flow and the creation of wetland, cottonwood/willow/mesquite and inland salt grass flat habitats. In addition to the

habitat enhancements, the project will benefit the endangered Yuma clapper rail and southwestern willow flycatcher.

Motion: Martin moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE ACQUISITION OF THE HEADSTREAM AND MCVEY PROPERTY IN YUMA COUNTY FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE YUMA EAST WETLANDS AND TO PREPARE AND EXECUTE A PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH THE LANDOWNERS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE THIS PARCEL AS RECOMMENDED OR APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

2. Request for the Commission to approve the revision of the Master Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arizona State Office, and the State of Arizona, Arizona Game and Fish Commission (Commission).

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

Mr. Avey briefed the Commission on the final draft of the statewide Master Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BLM. The Commission was provided with a copy of the final draft prior to this meeting for consideration. The BLM and the Arizona Game and Fish Department have been in the process of revising the statewide Master MOU to reinforce the agencies' commitment to cooperate and coordinate efforts related to wildlife, wildlife habitat management, and wildlife recreational opportunities. New sections titled "Joint Policy Statement" and "Conflict Resolution" included in the revised MOU contain language to address Department concerns and issues arising from the redevelopment of BLM's Resource Management Plans. The Department asked the Commission to approve the Master MOU revision and to provide direction for signature.

Public Comment

Jon Fugate, Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club (YVRGC), addressed the Commission regarding the language in the MOU stating that it does not adequately address the Department's needs in order to manage wildlife and wildlife habitat in the State of Arizona as it relates to wilderness designations and the BLM's Resource Management Plan.

Bruce Johnson, representing himself, expressed concerns for the Department's authority to manage wildlife in the State of Arizona as it relates to wilderness designations and the BLM's Resource Management Plan. Mr. Johnson suggested that the Commission postpone action and keep working toward language in which the federal government recognizes the State's right to manage the wildlife resources.

The Commission discussed with Director Shroufe and staff that the Department has already had an MOU with BLM for a long time and that now it has been revised and improved for handling conflicts. The Department has worked for a long time to get certain language into the MOU that is just not going to happen; however, with the language that is in the revised MOU, issues will not linger in the field but will be handled in a timely fashion by the Directors of BLM and the Department.

Commissioner Woodhouse stated that he understands the revised MOU is better than before, but he was still not satisfied with the language and further asked Mr. Avey if the Department would lose ground by going back and continuing negotiation of the language.

Mr. Avey stated that the Department would not have an active MOU to assist with issues that may arise during implementation of some RMPs if we tried to renegotiate the language, and further pointed out that the current language is significantly stronger than it was before.

Motion: Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE MASTER MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT ARIZONA STATE OFFICE AND THE STATE OF ARIZONA, ARIZONA GAME AND FISH COMMISSION, AND AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS AS SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION.

Vote: Aye - Golightly, McLean, Hernbrode, Martin
Nay - Woodhouse
Passed 4 to 1

* * * * *

3A. Request for Commission Approval for the Arizona Conservation Prioritization (ACP) Model.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

Mr. Avey briefed the Commission using a Power Point presentation that included maps of areas of conservation. Following completion of the CWCS (also known as the state wildlife action plan), the Department committed to generating a GIS-based map that would use data collected to identify priority areas within the state to guide the implementation of priority conservation actions and/or acquisition. In July 2006, the Department began work on the model. The initial model was completed in June of 2007. This model remains a dynamic tool that will change with the inclusion of additional ecological data and the changing threats throughout the state. This tool will allow the Department to work cooperatively with sister state agencies, municipalities, counties and other partners to emphasize wildlife conservation needs for future planning purposes. Concurrently the Department has entered into a contract with State Parks to provide a state wildlife inventory to be used in the Governor's Smart Growth Initiative.

Motion: Martin moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE The Department recommends that the Commission VOTE TO APPROVE THE CURRENT ARIZONA CONSERVATION PRIORITIZATION MAP THAT ESTABLISHES AND

GUIDES DEPARTMENT CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES ON LANDS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

5. Donation of Land and Water Assignments from the Mohave County Water Authority (MCWA) located at the Cibola Valley Conservation Area in La Paz County, Arizona.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

Using a Power Point presentation, Mr. Avey provided the Commission with an overview of the proposed land and water assignments transfer and the MSCP, of which the Commission is a signatory. Lorri Gray with the Bureau of Reclamation and Tom Griffin with the Mohave County Water Authority were present to assist with any questions the Commission might have.

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) administered by the Bureau of Reclamation (BR), is a comprehensive, 50-year species conservation and habitat management program that seeks to conserve habitat, work toward the recovery of threatened and endangered species, and reduce the likelihood of additional species being listed under the Endangered Species Act. MSCP is designed to accommodate present water diversions and power production and optimize opportunities for future water and power development.

With support from BR, the Department is negotiating the details of a land and water assignments transfer by which MCWA would transfer to the Commission 1,309.1 acres of land and water assignments to 1,300 acre-feet (a/f) 4th priority Colorado River water, 750 a/f 5th priority (unused apportionment) Colorado River water, and 1,000 a/f 6th priority (surplus) Colorado River water located at the Cibola Valley Conservation Area in La Paz County, Arizona.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE ACQUISITION OF THE CIBOLA PROPERTY AND WATER AND AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENT NECESSARY AS RECOMMENDED OR APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

7. Consideration of Proposed Commission Order 21–Waterfowl and Commission Order 22–Snipe for the 2007-2008 Hunting Season.

Presenter: Mike Rabe, Small Game and Migratory Gamebird Program Supervisor

Mr. Rabe presented the Department's waterfowl and snipe hunt recommendations using a Power Point presentation that included charts, graphs, and historical information supporting the recommendations.

Commission Order 21 – Waterfowl

Ducks - State waterfowl seasons and bag limits are set each year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) following the results of the May Canadian pond counts and the mid-continent breeding pair index for mallards. This information is used to select season framework packages under Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM). The AHM packages are as follows:

Liberal, 107 day season, 7 bird bag limit;
Moderate, 86 day season, 7 bird bag limit;
Restrictive, 86 day season, 4 bird bag limit.

At this time, it is uncertain which AHM package will be allowed under the Service frameworks. In 2002, the Service approved season extensions, to the closest Sunday to January 31st for the Moderate and Liberal packages in the Pacific Flyway. The Department recommended taking full advantage of this opportunity for a late-season closing date when it benefits hunters. These alternatives apply to ducks, geese, and snipe.

Both the Liberal and Moderate 2006 Federal framework packages for the Pacific Flyway allowed for a 7-bird bag limit, with species bag restrictions of no more than two female mallards, two redheads, one pintail, one canvasback, and three scaup. The long-term average for pintail and scaup remain below the goals outlined in the management plans for both species. Because the population indices are below population goals, a continuation of the restrictive bag-limit of one bird per day will probably be in place for pintail (and canvasback) for the 2007-2008 season. This year, all indications are that there will be a full season for both pintail and canvasback. Should partial, 60 day seasons be necessary for any species, the Department will recommend the full 60 days. Scaup numbers remain below the long-term average by about 30%. In 2005, the Pacific Flyway frameworks reduced the daily bag on scaup from four to three. A further reduction in bag limit (from 3 in 2006-2007 to 2 in 2007-2008) is likely for scaup.

Geese - In 2002, the Pacific Flyway Council requested that the Service include geese in the duck framework extension as well. This was approved, allowing duck and goose seasons to run the same number of days. To assure that goose reproduction in Northern Arizona is not disrupted, goose seasons within Units 1, 22, 23, and 27 start later than goose seasons in the rest of the state.

The Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) of Canada geese are the most important geese in the bags of hunters in the interior states. In July of 2001, the Pacific Flyway Council adopted the management plan for this population of Canada geese, which established a breeding population index of 117,000 birds. Although Arizona typically supports approximately 20 to 40 breeding pairs, the majority of RMP geese wintering in Arizona migrate from northern interior states and southern Alberta, which are already above their respective breeding population objective. In 1999, the Pacific Flyway Council approved a recommendation to increase the daily bag limit on Canada geese from two to three birds. Arizona adopted the framework in the 1999-2000 Commission Order and has continued that recommendation. Results from the January 2006 waterfowl harvest survey revealed that of the 1,996 geese harvested in Arizona, the majority (approximately 1,400 birds), are harvested along the Colorado River.

The Department recommended the following waterfowl season structures based on which framework package is approved by the Service. If the AHM model allows a liberal season

a season within a season structure for either canvasback or pintail, the Department will recommend selecting the maximum allowable days for a Canvasback and Pintail season.

Under the Liberal package, there are 107 total hunt days allowed. Under the Moderate package, there are 86 days of general and youth waterfowl hunt days allowable. In the Liberal recommendation above, 101 days are devoted to general waterfowl, four days are a Falconry-Only season and there is a weekend Juniors-Only season in each zone. Federal frameworks require that the youth hunt be on weekend days within 14 days of the General season, but may be outside the General season frameworks. The bag limits for the Juniors-Only hunts will be the same as during the General season.

Coots and Common Moorhens - Commission Order 21 includes bag limit and season structure for coots and common moorhens within the general duck season frameworks. The Department will continue to recommend the full Federal framework and bag limit on coots and moorhens which is 25 per day, either singly or in the aggregate. Possession for coots and moorhens is 25 in possession, either singly or in the aggregate. Although an Arizona State Waterfowl Stamp is not required for harvest of these species, hunters taking coots or moorhens must have in their possession an Arizona Migratory Bird Stamp that registers them for the Harvest Information Program.

Commission Order 22 – Snipe

The Department recommended that the Commission approve a general snipe season consistent with the total allowable season days and bag and possession limits allowed by the Service for Pacific Flyway states. In Arizona, the allowable bag is 8 snipe per day with a possession limit of 16 after opening day. Seasons for snipe are recommended to run concurrent with the general waterfowl seasons in each of the states zones.

Motion: McLean moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE, SUBJECT TO FINAL FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS, COMMISSION ORDER 21 - WATERFOWL AND COMMISSION ORDER 22 - SNIPE, AS PRESENTED, WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF MAXIMIZING ALLOWABLE HUNTER OPPORTUNITY.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for a break at 9:21 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 9:43 a.m.

* * * * *

8. Consideration of Proposed Commission Orders 5, 6, 8, and 9, for Spring 2008 Hunting Seasons.

Presenter: Brian F. Wakeling, Big Game Management Supervisor

Mr. Wakeling presented the Department's recommendations for Commission orders 5, 6, 8, and 9 (spring turkey, spring javelina, spring buffalo, and spring bear) using a Power Point presentation that included charts, graphs, and historical information supporting the

recommendations. No public meetings were held specifically regarding hunt recommendations for spring 2008, although an open house was held in each region where the public could review these hunt recommendations. The Commission previously provided the Department with direction about enhancing opportunity for hunters in Arizona, specifically targeting junior opportunities for turkey and javelina. Specific allocations for javelina permits by season types have been adjusted to reflect first choice applicant demand statewide within these recommendations.

Commission Order 5 – Spring Turkey

The Department recommended for spring 2008, 6,983 permits (737 permit increase from 2007 season), which is the highest number of recommended spring permits to date. The 2008 spring turkey season was recommended to continue stratified seasons in all units. The first stratified hunt would have the dates of April 25 to May 1 and May 9 to May 22, and the second stratified hunt would have the dates of May 2 to May 22. Six permits were recommended (3 in each stratified season) for Gould's turkey in Unit 35A, and a new Gould's turkey hunt with 2 permits (1 in each stratified season) was recommended in Unit 29. Three permits were recommended on Fort Huachuca in addition to the 6 permits recommendation off of the Fort in Unit 35A for a total of 9 permits in that unit.

In 2008, the juniors-only season was recommended for 350 permits (4.8% of total) to begin one week earlier than the standard seasons and run for 5 weeks, April 18-May 22, 2008; this season structure is similar to last year. Juniors-only permits were recommended for an increase of 125 with 25 permits in Unit 6A, 50 permits each in Units 1, 3C, 5B, 8 and 10, and 23, and 75 in Unit 27. Junior opportunity was distributed across the state.

Motion: McLean moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT COMMISSION ORDER 5 – SPRING TURKEY, AS PRESENTED.

Vote: Unanimous

Commission Order 6 – Spring Javelina

In December 2006, the Commission directed the Department to equitably distribute permits according to demand. Based on the 5-year average of application demand, the Department recommended providing about 42% general, 35% archery, 19.5% handgun, archery, and muzzleloader (HAM), and 3.5% junior permits. Archery seasons were recommended for January 1-24, 2008, juniors seasons for January 25-February 3, 2008, HAM seasons for February 8-17, 2008, and general seasons for February 22-28, 2008.

This year's spring recommendations were for 11,705 general, 970 juniors, 5,440 HAM, and 9,645 archery permits. This is an increase of 225 general permits, an increase of 105 juniors permits, a decrease of 25 HAM permits, and an increase of 445 archery permits.

Public Comment

Don Martin, representing himself, opposed the increase in javelina permits in Unit 18B stating that there has been a steady increase of permits offered in that area and that it is adversely affecting javelina numbers and herds.

The Commission discussed the javelina numbers in that area with Mr. Wakeling. Survey numbers have varied over the past five years. In 2004-2005, 61 animals were surveyed, in 2005-2006, 232 animals were surveyed. In the last survey in 2007, 133 animals were observed and the average herd size was 10.2, so the Department is at the top end of the guidelines on those populations. Also considered were previous high hunt success numbers and the Department's confidence level in their recommendation.

Commissioner Hernbrode suggested that Mr. Martin work with the Regional Office and the Wildlife Managers and provide his input in regards to the javelina surveys.

Motion: McLean moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT COMMISSION ORDER 6 – SPRING JAVELINA, AS PRESENTED.

Vote: Unanimous

Commission Order 8 – Spring Buffalo

One season is proposed for the House Rock herd with 10 any buffalo tags. The proposed dates are January 1-May 11, 2008. For the Raymond Wildlife Area, five hunts for yearling buffalo (2 permits each) were recommended. The proposed season dates are January 5-6, January 12-13, January 26-27, February 2-3, and February 9-10, 2008.

The Commission discussed extending the dates for the House Rock herd in order to reduce the number of animals. The concern in doing that was that if there was too much pressure put on the herd, they may move onto the Park and not be accessible.

Motion: McLean moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT COMMISSION ORDER 8 – SPRING BUFFALO, AS PRESENTED; EXCEPT EXTEND THE 12A, 12B, 13A HOUSE ROCK WILDLIFE AREA HUNT TO MAY 31, 2008.

Vote: Unanimous

Commission Order 9 – Spring Bear

The Department recommended a March 21 to April 29, 2008 general spring bear season with 405 permits, which would also close the first Wednesday after the female harvest objective is reached. This year's general spring bear recommendation is identical in structure and female harvest objectives as that approved by the Commission last year, with the addition of 15 permits in Unit 34A. Fort Huachuca was again recommended to be open in conjunction with Units 35A and 35B.

For 2008, the Department recommended a 250-permit archery-only spring bear season with no change to female harvest objectives, except an increase of 1 to Unit 33 (total of 2). All seasons were recommended to be standardized, either beginning on March 21 and running to July 31,

2008 or, if they also have a general season, beginning on April 30 and running to July 31, 2008. Fort Huachuca was also recommended to be open with a harvest objective established in conjunction with Unit 35A/35B, although this season would remain open until August 31, 2008.

Each open unit was also recommended to have an associated annual harvest objective that is generally equivalent to 10% of the estimated adult female portion of the population subject to harvest. If that annual harvest objective is reached either through hunter harvest or Department action (i.e., euthanasia), subsequent hunts would not be initiated. As with the fall 2007 hunts, the individual hunt harvest objective will also reflect removal through hunter harvest or Department action (i.e., euthanasia).

Motion: McLean moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT COMMISSION ORDER 9 – SPRING BEAR, AS PRESENTED.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for a break at 10:34 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 10:41 a.m.

* * * * *

6. Presentation of the Proposed Hunt Guidelines for the fall 2008 through spring 2010 for Commission Approval.

Presenter: Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

Mr. Ordway briefed the Commission on the proposed Hunt Guidelines for fall 2008 through spring 2010 using a Power Point presentation which included charts, graphs, and historical information supporting the Department's recommendations. The Department's proposed hunt guidelines (provided to the Commission prior to this meeting for review and consideration) were developed to reflect prior Commission direction, biological limitations, Department input, and public comment. The Department held 12 public meetings during June 2007 to present the proposed guidelines and solicit public input. At the public meetings, 174 members of the public attended and provided comments and the Department received 98 individual written responses (provided to the Commission prior to this meeting for review and consideration).

The proposed Hunt Guidelines for the fall 2008 through spring 2010 reflected Commission direction to the Department to:

- Increase hunter recruitment and retention
- Consider biological limits and constraints
- Maximize hunt opportunity and availability
- Standardize seasons
- Simplify regulations
- Emphasize youth and new hunter opportunity (javelina and turkey)
- Emphasize small game opportunities
- Increase deer and elk permits 10% by 2009 per Director's Goals and Objectives
- Distribute limited opportunity by demand

- Increase elk herds consistent with Elk Management Plans (Elk and pronghorn plans reviewed with Commission every 2 years during December).

Mr. Ordway only presented the changes that occurred since the last guideline package.

Proposed Changes – Deer

- Increase Juniors-only opportunity to 3%
- Multiple 7 day seasons for deer, although 10 day seasons possible if no overlap with elk seasons or a single deer season offered
- Alternative guidelines were incorporated into guideline package (no longer two separate documents)
- Most alternative guidelines remain unchanged except for 1) taking a proportion of white-tailed deer permits offered in December down from 10% to 5% and 2) the designation of specific units for white-tailed alternative management units similar to mule deer
- Units 6A, 23, 30B, 31, and 36C will be alternative white-tailed deer units (manage for higher buck:doe ratios, 30% of harvest during December for these units)
- 5% December opportunity statewide for white-tailed deer - 17,340 early permits, 990 late permits = 5.3% increase (+710 permits); this is an estimate based on an analysis of current year's data and may differ after analyzing data for next year
- Reduced buck:doe ratios (both down by 5 – 10-20 mule deer, 15-25 white-tail)
- Total permit increase based on data used to formulate 2007 recommendations: General - 1,010 permits, Muzzleloader - 35 permits, Shift from late to early white-tailed deer - 710 permits. Total increase = 1,755 permits; these estimates are approximate and may differ when 2008 data are analyzed
- Archery deer harvest limited to 20% of harvest based on demand, with increasing restriction to include permitting. 20% limit on archery harvest was recommended based on data from demand similar to elk allocation model. Some units would receive a restricted season length, while those with only an August-September season would need to be permitted to restrict archery take.

Units that would probably have the December archery deer season removed include Units 17A, 20A, 22, 23, 35A, 37A, and 42.

Approximate archery deer permits and units based on data used to formulate 2007 recommendations:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>ESTIMATED PERMITS</u>	<u>5-YEAR MEAN HUNTERS AFIELD</u>
Unit 1	200 archery permits	843
Unit 3A/3C	150 archery permits	323
Unit 3B	75 archery permits	176
Unit 7	500 archery permits	1,124
Unit 12A	1,850 archery permits	2,042
Unit 13A	120 archery permits	206
Unit 13B	120 archery permits	0

*The 10% cap on nonresidents would apply for these draw hunts.

For those units with less than 10% archery harvest, provide some January opportunity:

Units 4A and B Add first 2 weeks in Jan
 Unit 8 Add first 2 weeks in Jan
 Unit 9 Add first 2 weeks in Jan

Public Comment

The following members of the public addressed the Commission in opposition of the hunt guideline changes, specifically regarding archery deer:

Chris Agnew, representing himself
 Richard Anderson, representing himself
 Randy Phillips, Archery Headquarters (submitted a petition to the Commission with 178 signatures opposed to archery changes)
 David Myrick, Desert Christian Archers
 Dick King, Arizona Bowhunters Association (further suggested mandatory reporting for survey purposes)

The following turned in Speaker Cards in opposition to archery deer changes; did not address the Commission:

Anthony Stalone, representing himself
 John Stalone, The Hunting Channel
 Shannon Hollingsworth, representing himself
 Carl Guilliams, Broken Arrow Archery Team
 Vernie Abbitt, representing himself
 Todd Phillips, representing himself
 Mike Kentera, representing himself
 Lynn Tonkinson, Mohave Sportsman’s Club (opposed hunt guidelines in general)
 Fred Marino, Huntech Scent Elimination (opposed hunt guidelines in general)

* * * * *
 Meeting recessed for a break at 11:58 a.m.
 Meeting reconvened at 1:03 p.m.
 * * * * *

6. (Continued) Presentation of the Proposed Hunt Guidelines for the fall 2008 through spring 2010 for Commission Approval.

Presenter: Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

Public Comment

The following members of the public addressed the Commission in opposition to the hunt guideline changes, specifically regarding archery deer:

Marsha Rute, Mohave Sportsman’s Club
 Pat Smith, representing himself

Donald Rutz, representing himself

Bruce Johnson, representing himself, addressed the Commission in support of the hunt guidelines.

The following turned in Speaker Cards in opposition to archery deer changes; did not address the Commission:

Kenneth E. Sloan, Black Canyon City Archery
Dennis Charney, representing himself
Kevin Presmyk, representing himself
Bill Brannen, representing himself
Jeff Blalock, representing himself
Jeff Hines, representing himself
Tim Neal, representing himself
Robert Caldwell, representing himself
Doug Koepsel, representing himself
Kevin Harris, Arizona Deer Association

The following members of the public addressed the Commission in opposition of the hunt guideline changes, specifically regarding archery deer:

Darren McDowell, White Mountain Rod and Gun Club
Blaine Bickford, Buckskin Chapter, Arizona Deer Association
Randy Spray, Arizona Bowhunter Association

Mr. Ordway addressed some of the comments made by the public. One of the concerns was that the Department was going to a complete draw. There is no intent or desire within the guideline package to do that. It doesn't have to do with hunt success, it has to do with harvest. In talking numbers and disbursement, this is the same thing that has happened previously with javelina when it was permitted. The intent from a management perspective is to allocate hunter numbers equitably. With permitted archery hunts, you can still buy an over-the-counter tag and go to other areas that are not currently being restricted. The goal is to distribute hunters and equitably allocate harvest.

Commissioner Hernbrode commented that this is not a biological issue, it's a social issue and an issue of fairness to the total hunting public in the State of Arizona. There are units being managed alternatively for higher buck:doe ratios, lower hunter density and higher quality situations. Neither archers nor rifle hunters should have more than their fair share of that very limited opportunity. Further, Commissioner Hernbrode recommended that all alternative management units have the same limited archery access as based on the statewide pie chart and that the rest of the state remain open without limitations.

Mr. Ordway clarified that for mule deer it concerns all the units north of the Colorado River and for white-tail it would include 6 units.

Commissioner Woodhouse commented on the number of people from the public who addressed the Commission in opposition of the guidelines. The numbers of archery hunters have gone up,

but hunt success has not. Some middle ground needs to be found between the social issue and the hunt guidelines. Further, Commissioner Woodhouse questioned reducing the buck:doe ratio.

Chairman Golightly confirmed that the issues were the buck:doe ratio and permitted hunts north of the Colorado River and suggested that he ask for a vote on these as separate items and then what is left will be combined with the recommendation.

Commissioner McLean commented that the Department/Commission needs to re-evaluate the most effective means of doing post hunt surveys for deer and all game, and further believed that the archery hunters at this meeting have a misunderstanding of what the guidelines are intended to do. The guidelines would cause some archery deer hunters to go to a permitted system in some areas where they currently can buy over-the-counter permits; however, those units are extremely limited. If the proposed guidelines are implemented, they would affect six units that have archery hunts, plus it would add another unit. Another concern was that this was a precursor of what's going to happen tomorrow. Commissioner McLean stated that neither he nor the Commission have a hidden agenda. As the population increases in Arizona, it will unfortunately continue to decrease habitat availability for all big game species, which will result in fewer hunting opportunities. For example, fifty years ago, all permits except for elk were purchased over-the-counter.

Commissioner Martin expressed her intent to go with the Department recommendations stating that the Department is not going in a liberal direction; the changes are conservative and are in line with a number of other states with a lot of big game hunt success, producing record book animals. The guidelines are going from very conservative to slightly less conservative.

Commissioner Woodhouse restated his concern regarding the buck:doe ratios and the effect it may have on quality deer hunts in Arizona.

Chairman Golightly asked the Commission to vote on the Department's recommendation on buck:doe ratios.

Commissioners Hernbrode and Martin voted aye, Commissioners Golightly and Woodhouse voted nay.

Commissioner McLean abstained, stating that he can only answer that question with all the other factors included, and also questioned whether breaking down the guidelines into individual components and voting in that manner was in compliance with the Open Meeting Law, and further that it was not on the agenda to be addressed in that manner.

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR DEER FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Aye - McLean, Hernbrode, Martin
Nay - Golightly, Woodhouse
Passed 3 to 2

Public Comment

Todd Phillips, representing himself, addressed the Commission and expressed his dissatisfaction with the manner that the Commission handled the vote on deer. It was understood by him and others present that the hunt guidelines was a working document and that components of those guidelines would be discussed and changed at this meeting as approved by the Commission, and not just voted on as a whole.

Dick King, Arizona Bowhunters Association, stated that some of the issues that were important to the public members at this meeting were not addressed or debated by the Commission, and that those public members have left believing that their presence and their comments were not important to the Commission.

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for a break at 2:23 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 2:39 p.m.

* * * * *

Proposed Changes - Pronghorn

- Buck to doe ratio widened to 20-30:100

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR PRONGHORN FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous

Proposed Changes – Elk

- Increase split archery elk season structure (First year – additional tags after allocation, Subsequent years – balance with allocation formula)
- Limited opportunity hunts may be offered over the counter
- Introduced performance measure on alternative management hunts (50% \geq 6 pts)
- Reduced bull to cow ratios (15-25:100)

Total permit increase based on data used to formulate 2007 recommendations:

- Increase bull opportunity by 1,310 permits
- November archery bull opportunity increased by 450 permits
- September archery bull opportunity increase by 50 permits
- Total increase yields 1,095 more permits (5%) (Last year increased bull permits by 665 (7% increase) + 1,810 = 2,475, or 26% increase in bull permits); these estimates are approximate and may differ when 2008 data are analyzed

Public Comment

The following turned in Speaker Cards in opposition to elk guidelines changes; did not address the Commission:

Randy Spray, Arizona Bowhunters Association
Steve Clark, Arizona Elk Society

The following members of the public addressed the Commission in opposition of the hunt guideline changes regarding archery elk hunts:

David Myrick, Desert Christian Archers
Dick King, Arizona Bowhunters Association

Motion: Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR ELK FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Aye – McLean, Hernbrode, Martin
Nay - Golightly, Woodhouse
Passed 3 to 2

Chairman Golightly explained his vote stating that he supports some components of the recommendation for elk and opposes some components, and therefore cannot support the whole guideline.

Proposed Changes - Turkey

- In specific units, offer juniors over the counter spring (score A or B) and/or fall seasons (score A) (E.g., Units 1, 5A, 6A, 12A, 23, and 27 spring and fall, E.g., Units 3B, 3C, 4A/B, 5B, 6B, 7, 8/10, and 22 spring only)
- Fall seasons will be limited weapon shotgun shooting shot as are spring seasons
- Fall seasons will begin 1 week earlier than in prior years to mirror small game opener

Public Comment

David Myrick, Desert Christian Archers, discussed potential future recommendations
Bruce Johnson, representing himself, discussed potential future recommendations
Darren McDowell, White Mountain Rod and Gun Club, was not present, but earlier mentioned opposition to the turkey recommendations
Scott P. Lerich, National Wildlife Turkey Federation, did not speak, but submitted a speaker card in support of the turkey recommendations.

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR TURKEY FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Aye - McLean, Martin, Woodhouse
Nay - Golightly, Hernbrode
Passed 3 to 2

Chairman Golightly explained his vote stating that he supports some components of the recommendation for elk and opposes some components, and therefore cannot support the whole guideline

Proposed Changes – Javelina

- Fall permits in southeastern Arizona will be offered only to juniors
- Fall juniors-only permits will be offered during seasons that coincide with a juniors deer season
- Units with juniors deer hunts may have a juniors only javelina hunt that coincides
- $\geq 10\%$ of permits to juniors
- Metro units will have over the counter archery permits, coinciding with standard archery season
- Manage for hunt success of 20-25%

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR JAVELINA FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous

Proposed Changes - Bighorn Sheep

- Manage for harvest of 15-25% of Class III and IV rams

Public Comment

David Myrick, Desert Christian Archers, stated that the Commission should look at an archery only bighorn sheep season.

Bruce Johnson, representing himself, stated that the bighorn sheep units only have one tag, so if an archer gets that tag, he is not going to have any competition and can use whatever weapon he wants.

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR BIGHORN SHEEP FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Aye - Golightly, McLean, Woodhouse
Nay - Hernbrode, Martin
Passed 3 to 2

Commissioner Martin explained her vote stating that in regards to issues on the Kofa, the Department should be looking to reduce tags.

Commissioner Hernbrode explained his vote stating that in areas where there is a population below 30 animals there should not be a sheep hunt.

Proposed Changes – Buffalo

- Implement season that may run yearlong on HRWA
- As successful hunters harvest, may issue PMH tags

Public Comment

David Myrick, Desert Christian Archers, would like to see a buffalo archery only permit.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR BUFFALO FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous

Proposed Changes - Bear

- Each hunt will still have a female harvest objective
- An annual female harvest objective will be established for each unit
- Cumulative female harvest may close a unit before a hunt begins
- Early spring hunts (March through April-early May) may be offered over the counter, as are fall hunts. Archery hunts during summer months may remain permitted.

Public Comment

Bruce Johnson, representing himself, addressed the Commission regarding issues with the September seasons.

Mr. Ordway stated that the guidelines provide for some September opportunity and suggested that Mr. Johnson work with the Regional Offices in the hunt units he is interested in and provide them some input on the hunt structure.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR BEAR FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous

Proposed Changes – Small Game

- Quail season will begin 1 week earlier than in prior years and close on a Sunday
- Tree squirrel seasons will begin 1 week earlier and are scheduled to run through year end
- Tassel-eared squirrel season is recommended to run yearlong in Units 31 and 33

Motion: Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE HUNT GUIDELINES FOR SMALL GAME FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous

There were no changes recommended for Mountain Lion, Predator Furbearer, and other Birds and Mammals.

Public Comment

Stephanie Nichols-Young, Animal Defense League of Arizona, addressed the Commission with concerns about mountain lions and further thanked the Commission for the dialogue that she has been able to have with the Commission.

Commissioner Martin requested to vote on mountain lion separate from the remainder of the hunt guidelines packet.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE REMAINDER OF THE HUNT GUIDELINES PACKET NOT PREVIOUSLY VOTED ON FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT EXCEPT FOR MOUNTAIN LION.

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Martin moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION ON MOUNTAIN LION WITH THE EXCEPTION THAT THE CLOSURE BE IN EFFECT IN UNITS WITH MULTIPLE BAG LIMITS AS THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE STATE.

Vote: Aye - Hernbrode, Martin
Nay - Golightly, McLean, Woodhouse
Failed 3 to 2

Motion: McLean moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE DEPARTMENT'S HUNT RECOMENDATION FOR MOUNTAIN LION FOR FALL 2008 THROUGH SPRING 2010 AS PROPOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

Vote: Aye – Golightly, McLean, Woodhouse
Nay - Hernbrode, Martin
Passed 3 to 2

* * * * *

Meeting recessed for a break at 4:03 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 4:26 p.m.

* * * * *

Presenter: Marty Fabritz, Executive Staff Assistant
Heidi Vasiloff, Wildlife For Tomorrow Foundation

Ms. Vasiloff provided the Commission with a Power Point presentation on the Wildlife for Tomorrow (WFT) Foundation. The update included recent activities and involvements as well as information on future activities and direction. The WFT Foundation was created in 1990 to enhance the management, protection and enjoyment of Arizona's fish and wildlife resources. It is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works closely with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to provide additional support for projects and educational activities. WFT focuses entirely on worthy projects within Arizona. WFT does not influence regulatory, management or legislative decisions. Its single purpose is to support important and worthy projects that make a difference to the wildlife and people of Arizona.

* * * * *

5A. Supplemental Funding Initiative Language

Presenter: Anthony Guiles Legislative Liaison

Mr. Guiles briefed the Commission on the development of draft language regarding a potential supplemental funding initiative that may include provisions for a new funding source from a sales tax; protection for the Heritage Fund; preservation of Commission authority; authorization for the Commission to participate in certain court actions; and removing legislative appropriation of the Game and Fish fund. On Thursday, August 8, 2007, the first day of this meeting, the Commission was provided with a presentation by Bob Grossfeld from The Media Guys Inc. and a following discussion of the initiative process. The Commission also met in Executive Session on Friday, August 9, 2007 to discuss and consider language for a proposed supplemental funding initiative.

Commissioner Hernbrode recommended that the Department draft and submit the draft initiative to the working group committee by August 24, 2007, that would include language approved by the Commission; a funding source that would provide an annual minimum of about 50 million a year; protection of that money as much as possible; creating a new Fund called the Wildlife Beneficiaries Fund; and categorize what the money will be used for. Commissioner Hernbrode provided the Commission with a list of items that the money would be used for as follows: 1) habitat protection and restoration, 2) enhance public access, 3) water restoration and development, 4) preserve Arizona's wildlife heritage, 5) wildlife education, 6) watchable wildlife, 7) urban wildlife, and 8) fund matches.

The Commission further discussed the language for initiative, whether to create a new fund or use and existing fund, and how broad or specific the initiative should be in regards to what the funds would be used for.

Commissioner McLean recommended that the Commission direct the Department to draft an initiative in simple language that would result in a sales tax initiative in 2007 dollars, approximately 50 million dollars, and that the language would create a new fund protected by the voter's right initiative, not subject to appropriation by the Arizona Legislature, and that it would

be used to fund activities in areas outlined by Commissioner Hernbrode, plus law enforcement and shooting sports.

The Commission further discussed how the initiative language should be written to include the Arizona Parks and Recreation as part of the initiative, including what Fund they would use and what percentage they would get.

Public Comment

Bruce Johnson, recommended that the Commission be specific about what they would use the funds for and to be careful to know how much of a sales tax voters will support.

Stephanie Nichols-Young, ADLA, emphasized that simple language is really important and the Commission needs to be prepared to make changes to the language based on the opposition, and also that time was running out if the Commission was going to move forward with this.

Don Farmer, Arizona Heritage Alliance, thanked the Commission for their support, and reiterated that time is of the essence regarding moving the initiative forward.

Director Shroufe suggested that the Department take the concepts provided by Commission discussion and draft the language as simple as possible, and then bring it back to the Commission at a Telephonic Commission meeting next week.

Commissioner Hernbrode requested that the Department draft a document on what the sales tax will mean to the public, specifically how it will impact them realistically and in simple terms.

Chairman Golightly requested that Mr. Guiles schedule some appointments with legislators so that he can further investigate the probability or improbability of getting a referral from the Legislature.

* * * * *

9. Call to the Public

Dick King, Arizona Bowhunters Association, addressed the Commission regarding mandatory reporting and Point of Sale licensing. Other states have these and he would like to see Arizona move in that direction. Also, Mr. King reiterated his objection to the way he felt the Commission disregarded the public that attended this meeting in regards to the hunt guidelines.

* * * * *

10. Litigation Report

There were no comments or questions on the Litigation Report.

* * * * *

11. Director's and Chairman's Reports

Director Shroufe reported that he attended three Telephonic Commission meetings in July, participated in the WAFWA Conference, and has been dealing with a couple of issues that the Department needs to move forward on within the next couple of weeks.

Chairman Golightly participated in the July Telephonic Commission meetings; spent a lot of time in Phoenix working with members of the Legislature and members of Congress on shooting ranges issues and recreational shooting sports; participated in a tour at the Willard Springs shooting site with Governor's staff; and spent time on the phone on issues associated with Commission meetings.

* * * * *

12. Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Woodhouse reported that he attended the second Sportsman's Roundtable Meeting in Phoenix with Commissioner Hernbrode; spent time working with Department staff and people with the Adair Range; spent time with YVRGC working on the BLM MOU; worked with the Yuma Regional Office staff and others on a junior dove hunt and a small game camp.

Commissioner Martin participated in the July Telephonic meetings; had a couple meetings with the Governor's Natural Resources Advisor; participated in the WAFWA event; assisted with organizing the Commissioner's Forum for the AFWA conference in September; met with Representative Ableser regarding the Bald Eagle and his interest in legislation for a State endangered species status; went to Washington D.C. to testify in support of HR 2262; participated there in meeting with some of Arizona's Congressional Delegation regarding shooting range legislation; had the Land Owner Lessee Sportsman's Relation Committee meeting; attending the Arizona Elk Society's annual meeting; and attended a funding initiative meeting with Commissioner Hernbrode.

Commissioner McLean attended the July Commission meetings; attended the WAFWA in Flagstaff; worked with staff regarding funding issues; met with the Arizona Sportsman for Wildlife to discuss funding issues; took some personal time off; and spent a lot of time on the telephone regarding Commission business.

Commissioner Hernbrode attended the July Telephonic Commission meetings; attended the WAFWA conference (attended a lot of Committee meetings there); met with 65-70 sportsman as a follow-up meeting to WAFWA; met with Legislators; spent a lot of time on the funding initiative; participated in this workshop and meeting.

* * * * *

13. Approval of Minutes and Signing of Minutes

Motion: Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR JUNE 22-23, 2007 AND JULY 6, 2007.

Vote: Unanimous

Following approval, the Commission signed the minutes for June 22-23, 2007 and July 6, 2007.

* * * * *

14. Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Martin requested an update on the Wildlife Conservation Fund.

Mr. Ferrell captured the following future agenda items:

- Provide a presentation on legislation sponsored by Senator McCain regarding Resolution Copper Inc.
- Provide an analysis on Congressman Grijalva's bill proposing wilderness designation in the Tumacacori Highlands, including a briefing on the agreement that exists between AFWA, BLM and the Forest Service
- Update the Commission at the next meeting on the international border barrier proposal.

* * * * *

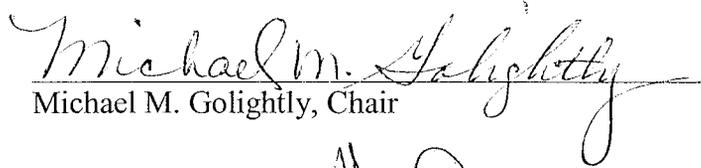
Motion: Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADJOURN THIS MEETING.

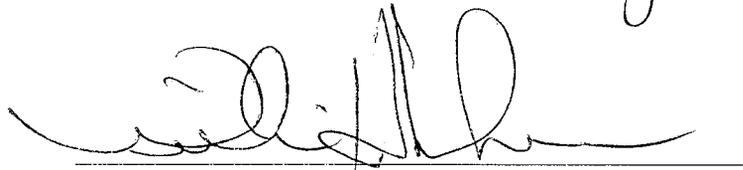
Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

* * * * *


Michael M. Golightly, Chair


William H. McLean, Vice Chair


Robert D. Hernbrode, Member


Jennifer L. Martin, Member


Robert R. Woodhouse, Member

ATTEST:


Duane L. Shroufe
Secretary and Director

**Game and Fish Litigation Report
Presented at the Commission Meeting
August 10, 2007**

The Assistant Attorneys General for the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the Arizona Game and Fish Department are representing these agencies in the following matters in litigation. This report does not include claims and lawsuits for damages against these agencies in which the agencies are represented by Assistant Attorneys General in the Liability Defense Section of the Attorney General's Office.

1. *State v. Johnson, CV2005-002692.* On February 14, 2005, the State of Arizona ("State") filed a multi-count complaint against land developer George Johnson and related individuals and entities ("Defendants") alleging that Defendants: (1) bulldozed over 270 acres of State Trust Lands and 2,415 acres of other lands in and near the Ironwood Forest National Monument ("Monument") and the Los Robles Archeological District; (2) irreparably damaged protected archeological sites on State Trust Lands; (3) destroyed thousands of protected native plants; (4) discharged pollutants into waters of the State and altering and damaging watercourses of the State; (5) breached the terms of a State grazing lease; and (6) allowed diseased domestic goats to roam into the habitat of the Silver Bell desert bighorn sheep herd on the Monument, thereby infecting 47 desert bighorn sheep with keratoconjunctivitis and contagious ecthyma and causing the deaths of 21 members of the herd.

Along with the Complaint, the State filed a motion to place the case into Arizona Superior Court's Complex Litigation Pilot Program.

On March 18, 2005, the State filed an amended Complaint wherein the State Land Department added claims for waste and punitive damages.

On March 25, 2005, the Court issued an order designating the case as complex and assigning the matter to Judge Rebecca Albrecht. The parties held a case management conference before Judge Albrecht on May 11, 2005.

On May 23, 2005, Defendants filed motions to dismiss the Commission's negligence per se and unlawful killing of wildlife claims. Defendants did not move to dismiss the Commission's negligence claim. The Attorney General's Office filed responses to Defendants' motions on June 21, 2005. Defendants filed reply briefs in support of their motions to dismiss on July 6, 2005, and the Court heard oral argument on the motions on July 21, 2005.

On August 23, 2005, the Court issued a ruling denying both of Defendants' motions to dismiss. On September 15, 2005, the State filed a Second Amended Complaint at the Court's direction to more fully address the State's basis for asserting personal liability against George Johnson for certain of the State's claims related to trespass, destruction of native plants, damage to archeological sites, and violation of water quality and storm water discharge laws.

On October 13, 2005, Defendants filed a counterclaim for defamation against the Attorney General and the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality arising from statements made to the press about the case. On October 14, 2005, Defendants filed an answer to the State's Second Amended Complaint. As required by Rule 26.1 of the Arizona Rules of Civil Procedure, the parties

will exchange comprehensive disclosure statements regarding the factual and legal basis of the claims in the case on November 10, 2005.

The parties served initial disclosure statements on November 10, 2005, and are working on a proposed case management order. Due to the retirement of Judge Albrecht, the case was transferred to Judge Barton. The defendants filed a notice of change of judge with respect to Judge Barton, and the case has been reassigned to Judge Kenneth L. Fields. Judge Fields has scheduled a status conference for February 13, 2006 to discuss the proposed case management order. The parties held a status conference before the Court on February 27, 2006. The Court ordered the parties to prepare a Joint Case Management Order no later than noon on March 8, 2006. The parties have started the written discovery process, and depositions will commence the second week of May.

The parties held a status conference on June 5, 2006, and filed a Joint Alternative Dispute Resolution Statement with the Court. The parties agreed to mediate this dispute, and have Tom Toone of Beer & Toone to serve as mediator. On August 7, 2006, the parties filed their respective mediation statements. The mediation took place on August 18, 2006, but the parties were not able to resolve the dispute. Following the mediation, the defendants noticed the depositions of several Department employees. These depositions took place in the fall of 2006.

The parties held a status conference in April and the court agreed with the request to extend discovery deadline from August to December.

2. *Charles M. Johnson v. Arizona Game and Fish Department, LC2006-000775.* On November 13, 2006, Charles M. Johnson filed a Complaint in Arizona Superior Court appealing the Commission's orders revoking his license privileges for three (3) years, requiring him to complete a hunter education course before obtaining another license to hunt in Arizona, and denying his request for a rehearing. Mr. Johnson filed with his Complaint an Application for Order to Show Cause ("Application") asking the Court to stay his license suspension pending the outcome of the appeal. On November 17, 2006, Game and Fish filed an Opposition to Mr. Johnson's Application. On November 21, 2006, the Court issued a minute entry finding that Mr. Johnson's Application was "neither procedurally appropriate nor substantively adequate" and declining to issue a stay.

The parties held their first status conference before the Court on January 10, 2007. The Court set the briefing and oral argument schedule as follows: (1) Johnson's Opening Brief due March 5, 2007; (2) the State's Response Brief due April 16, 2007; (3) Johnson's Reply Brief due May 16, 2007; and (4) Oral Argument on May 30, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

Oral argument was held on May 30, 2007, and the Court took the matter under advisement. **On July 31, 2007, the Court issued a decision reversing the Commission's revocation order.**

3. *Wilderness Watch, Inc. et al. v. United States Fish and Wildlife Service et al., CV01185-MHM.* Plaintiffs filed suit on June 15, 2007, challenging the decision of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ("FWS") to redevelop two water structures on the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. The water structures provide supplemental water to wildlife populations that have suffered due to persistent drought. Plaintiffs allege that these water developments violate the National Environmental Policy Act because the FWS did not first determine the environmental impact of these projects. Plaintiffs also allege that such permanent structures are prohibited by the Wilderness Act. Plaintiffs seek declaratory and injunctive relief. They are asking the

court to find that the FWS violated the law and to order the FWS to remove the structures.

The Commission has voted to file an application with the court to intervene on behalf of the FWS. Any court order finding that the FWS violated federal law will impair the Commission's ability to restore the wildlife populations in the refuge and in other wilderness areas in Arizona. The Attorney General's Office anticipates that a motion to intervene will be filed by August 15th.

(8/6/07) (JFO/SDC)

Lands Update

For the Arizona Game and Fish Commission

August 3, 2007

Flagstaff, Arizona

FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Forest Service

The Department hosted a series of public meetings to inform and engage our constituents in statewide federal land management planning affecting Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public lands. In April and May 2007, eight regional meetings were held in Mesa, Pinetop, Flagstaff, Sierra Vista, Tucson, Yuma, Prescott, and Kingman to ensure the public understands how the planning processes work, what resources and public uses are affected, how to effectively provide comment, and how to become engaged in planning. Public turnout at these meetings ranged from approximately 15-70 individuals. The Department has also established a website page dedicated to updating information about both BLM and FS federal planning processes. The page was recently updated to provide more comprehensive planning and contact information. An announcement was sent via wildlife views E-newsletter and other media outlets. In addition, the Department sent letters signed by the Commission to the BLM State Director and FS Regional Forester reasserting the Department's interest in planning statewide, our authorities for management, and concerns related to wildlife management activities and wildlife-based recreation.

Coconino

The Coconino National Forest has scheduled a third round of public meetings on the Travel Management Rule July 31 to August 4. In this round of public meetings the Forest will be presenting a proposed action including maps and will be taking Public Comment. The Department will be represented at all four meetings.

Kaibab

The Kaibab has not scheduled any more public meetings or made any decisions at this point. The Kaibab has said they hope to resume collaborative efforts on the Plan Revisions in September. The following are excerpts from the letter we received:

“Nationally, the Forest Service has filed a notice to prepare an environmental impact statement to address the flaws identified by the court in the 2005 Rule process. The Arizona Forests have all continued to work on several tasks associated with Plan revision in a manner consistent with the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and neutral with respect to the various planning rules that might apply. The Kaibab NF will continue to work on those over the next several months to identify needs for change to the Plan. We intend to do much of this with those of you who would like to help us.

The work many of you helped us with previous to the court ruling is not lost. Nearly all of it will continue to be used in identifying the needs for change. Specifically:

- *Public participatory processes will resume. Although the 2005 Rule was the only one that required collaboration, none of the others prohibited it, and we think it's a good idea.*
- *We will continue to aim for a more strategic, less prescriptive Plan as an end product, with a primary focus upon desired conditions and objectives to make progress toward the desired conditions.*
- *Sustainability analyses are continuing in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of NFMA. We are preparing a rough draft of the ecological sustainability report, incorporating information and public input for the two primary parts of this analysis – ecosystem diversity and species diversity. While we are not sure how species will eventually be addressed in the Plan, the information developed with your help is captured in a database that will serve as an invaluable reference, regardless of which process we use. We have finished a rough draft of our social and economic sustainability report, incorporating information and public input. Once these sustainability analyses have been reviewed internally, we will share them and engage in dialogue with our publics to identify the social and economic needs for change.*

Beginning in late September, we hope to resume public processes to continue this work, aiming toward completion of a comprehensive assessment of the needs to change the Plan this winter. As we move through the summer, we will be sending you specifics about meeting topics, times and places”

SB 1441 HABITAT RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT FUND

Anderson Mesa Grassland Restoration

Both the grassland restoration and the lake fencing have continued since the last commission briefing. An estimated 1500 acres of grassland restoration and 200 acres of seeding have been completed. This brings the total project up to approximately 2600 total acres of grassland restoration and 530 acres of seeding. Diablo trust is currently talking with additional contractors and considering hiring more crews to speed up the work.

Region I Deer Habitat Restoration

Chitty Creek: On June 30, 2007 a lightning strike ignited a wildfire within the northern portion of the Chitty Creek Habitat Restoration Project (Chitty Project) area. Although the initial strategy was for full control and containment due to natural resource values within the area, it was subsequently decided to use the existing containment lines for the Chitty Project and allow the wildfire to burn within the prescribed fire area to achieve Project objectives, and reduce fire suppression and Project implementation costs. It is important to realize that this wildfire was actively managed for Project objectives, which created a savings of originally allocated Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Fund money. While the wildfire did burn a substantial amount of the Project area, there are still untreated areas within the Project area that will need to be burned to achieve

overall Project objectives. Of the initial \$460,236 allocated to the Chitty Creek Habitat Restoration Project, \$217,560 is still needed to complete the Chitty Project, providing approximately \$242,000 in project savings. All work remaining on the Chitty Project is scheduled to be finished by April of 2008, with the bulk of the work being complete by December of 2007.

Pigeon Creek: This project has been completed under budget. The Clifton Ranger District is currently preparing the project completion report, which should be available by the end of August.

Sheep Wash: In addition to the savings realized on the Chitty Project, there is an anticipated cost savings on the Pigeon Creek Project of approximately \$75,000 to \$85,000 (of the original \$280,646 allocated for the project). Savings were partially a result of the application of prescribed fire during optimal burn windows which made the burn much less expensive while still achieving excellent Project results. The exact savings realized should be known within the next few weeks. Unexpended Pigeon Project funds will go to aid in the completion of prescribed burning of approximately 12,000 acres of the under-funded Sheep Wash Habitat Restoration Project (in addition to the original \$179,248). This work will be slated for completion by spring of 2008.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

The Department provided comment on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Long Tom Allotment (permittee Joseph Auza, Casa Grande) on the Black Mesa Ranger District. The Department recommended for the selection of Alternative 3, which would convert the permitted class of livestock from domestic sheep to cattle. This decision was based on a 1997 evaluation of all unoccupied bighorn sheep habitat in Arizona, which rated the Chevelon Canyon area within the Long Tom Allotment as the best site to establish a Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep population in Region I. Based on the Department's reintroduction criteria, however, bighorn sheep cannot be released in areas of close proximity to domestic sheep due to disease implications. The selection of Alternative 3 would not only provide conditions favorable for the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the Chevelon Canyon area, but would also allow for the continuation of livestock grazing on the allotment.

Additional comments included concern that there was no vegetation treatments included in the analysis to address poor range conditions even though the EA indicated that the poor range conditions on the allotment were in part a result of high tree densities. The Department also expressed concern that the monitoring plan for the Long Tom Allotment was not sufficient to address wildlife and wildlife habitat concerns.

A chemical renovation on Conklin Creek in Greenlee County was completed on June 6-7 to remove non-native trout. This action was part of a comprehensive effort to recover Apache trout within their historic range. The project was a cooperative effort by the

Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service. The treatment is considered a success and the stream is ready to be restocked with pure Apache trout from a wild donor population this fall.

The Department completed two chemical renovations on Stinky Creek in Apache County on July 17 and 20, to remove non-native brown trout. This action was part of a comprehensive effort to recover Apache trout within their historic range. The project was a cooperative effort by the Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service. The treatment was considered a success and the stream was restocked on July 24 with Apache trout that were salvaged from Stinky Creek prior to the treatment. Pure Apache trout and native speckled dace were salvaged from Stinky Creek on July 12. The speckled dace were released into the West Fork Black River, of which Stinky Creek is a tributary of, and the Apache trout were held in a raceway at the Pinetop Office. Speckled dace will be repatriated to Stinky Creek later this summer.

Preparations continue for a chemical treatment on the South Fork of Little Colorado River, Apache County, to remove non-native brown and hybrid trout. This action will be a part of a comprehensive effort to recover Apache trout within their historic range. The treatment was originally scheduled for June 25-29, but was rescheduled because of issues with the Fintrol chemical. Bioassays indicated that the chemical was not working well at normal concentrations, which was being caused by low potency chemical. The Forest stated they would not allow the use of more chemical to effectively kill fish without an amendment to the Environmental Assessment (EA) if the concentration used was higher than 20 parts per billion (ppb). The Department is currently coordinating with the U.S. Forest Service and Arizona Department of Agriculture on a plan to determine effective concentrations for the treatment of South Fork based on the true amount of Antimycin in the Fintrol chemical, and still fall within the 10-20 ppb concentration dictated by the EA.

The Department assisted with a wild fish health survey and conducted a native fish salvage on the South Fork of Little Colorado River on June 19 in preparation for a chemical treatment. The Department's Fish Health Specialist is analyzing the trout samples for fish pathogens. The salvaged speckled dace were released outside of the planned treatment area.

The Department salvaged threatened Little Colorado spinedace from drying pools in Nutrioso Creek, Apache County, on July 10. A number of spinedace were captured from areas of the stream that were almost completely dry, with only shallow isolated pools remaining. The spinedace, speckled dace, and bluehead sucker were moved to other pools in Nutrioso Creek that were deep enough to hold water through the summer.

The Department transplanted ninety-five threatened Little Colorado spinedace from lower Chevelon Creek to West Chevelon Creek. The Chevelon Creek population is one of four important relict populations. West Chevelon Creek does not contain any non-native fish or crayfish. This project was a cooperative effort with the Black Mesa Ranger District.

The Department began internal discussions and coordination to attend and support the 2007 Arizona ATV Outlaw Trail Jamboree, sponsored by the Apache County ATV Roughriders, to be held in Eagar September 5-8. The first three days of the event consist of a series of trail rides through the Alpine and Springerville Ranger Districts that participants can opt to take. The cumulative trail length totals over 1,200 miles. The Department provides several wildlife viewing programs and tours at the Sipe Wildlife Area, and provides OHV outreach and contacts using the Department OHV trailer as a booth prop at the Eagar rodeo grounds.

Coordination and planning continued for the 2007 Woodland Wild Country Expo, a wildlife and nature festival event to be held Oct. 6 and 7 in Pinetop-Lakeside. The lead for this event is the Pinetop-Lakeside Chamber of Commerce, with several local businesses partnering with the Department to ensure a successful program. Last year's inaugural expo drew over 400 attendees. These types of events help the Department in meeting its mission by making new contacts with non-traditional constituents – those people who have an interest in wildlife natural history, yet do not hunt or fish – and by developing an awareness of the State's wildlife resources with them, as well as serving to enhance local economies through increased tourism and visitors attending the event.

Coconino National Forest

The Department continues to participate in the Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP) on two primary projects: 1. Completion of the Jack Smith/Schultz Fuels Reduction Project NEPA planning, and 2. Ensuring that the Forest's and GFFP's commitment to assisting with Research Branch's wildlife research in the wildland-urban interface of GFFP projects is honored. While the scope and future activities of GFFP are still uncertain at this time, the Department will continue to follow GFFP activities and gauge the benefit of our continued participation.

Coronado National Forest

The Department continues to work with the Forest on the ID team for the Pinaleño Ecosystem Restoration Project. The notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement is expected to be published in the federal register in the near future. The Forest intends to thin dense forests, remove standing dead trees and down woody debris, and use prescribed fire on approximately 3705 acres in the Pinaleño Mountains. These treatments would be carried out over a 10-year period for the purposes of restoring a fire-adapted ecosystem and aiding in the recovery of the Mount Graham red squirrel population and habitat. The Department worked closely with the Forest to include provisions to protect the Mount Graham red squirrel and other listed and sensitive species during implementation of this project.

In a cooperative effort with the Forest, USFWS, and a private landowner, the Department established a second population of Mexican stonerollers in West Turkey Creek in the Chiricahua Mountains. One hundred and fifty-four fish were captured from existing populations in Rucker Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains, treated for Asian tapeworms, and released onto seven sites in West Turkey Creek. Four release sites are located on private land and three on Forest Service lands.

Kaibab National Forest

Westside Habitat Improvement/Slide Fire

On July 5, 2007 at 2:30 pm lightning ignited a fire within the Westside project area. This fire burned about 6,000 acres and burned sections of the treatment area defined as pinyon/juniper push areas, pinyon juniper woodlands, upland areas, and valley bottoms. The fire burned in a mosaic pattern and a majority of the fire was low to moderate intensity. A significant portion of the fire burned over the acreage burned in the 1996 Bridger fire. A Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team was formed and several rehabilitation treatments for the areas that burned at a moderate to high intensity are planned for implementation. As stated in the draft BAER report, the goal for the treatment is for the control of cheatgrass not for erosion control.

At the present time, the fire has not slowed plans for implementation on the Westside. There may be slight modifications in timing of seeding and herbicide treatments. However, the Department still plans on seeding 500 acres of desirable browse species in the fall of 2007. The Department has been working with Truax Drills, Inc. who has been developing an interseeding tool that will seed shrubs into existing vegetation. A site visit was conducted to the Westside treatment area to further develop specifications for the tool as well as look at current conditions within the fire footprint and beyond.

Currently, pinyon and juniper habitat treatments are expected to resume on the Westside next week. Forest closures due to dry conditions as well as the wildfire halted implementation for several weeks. The contractor continues to do an excellent job removing juniper from historic push treatments. This type of treatment will continue throughout the summer.

Prescott National Forest

The Department is currently planning a juniper thinning on the Forest as part of the Game Management Unit (GMU) 21 Pronghorn Habitat Improvement Project. The proposed area is adjacent to treatment areas accomplished on BLM land between 2005 and 2007 within the Agua Fria National Monument. Plans are to extend our work on juniper thinning across jurisdictional boundaries. The overall goal is to reestablish and maintain habitat connectivity between the northern and southern medium and high quality pronghorn habitat in GMU 21. Work in recent years has been easier to implement on BLM land because of preexisting environmental compliance documentation (NEPA/ESA). The Forest has committed to completing the environmental assessment process so that the Department can implement habitat improvement work funded for the next two years. Members of the GMU 21 Workgroup are leading the planning effort and interested publics are invited to future meetings. In conjunction with this work, the Department is constructing wildlife escape ramps for livestock water troughs within the Agua Fria Grasslands. Approximately 31 troughs need escape ramps (Department inventory 2006/2007) within the limited area of the grasslands. The Department will be working collaboratively with the Forest and the BLM to install the improvements in the next few months.

Tonto National Forest

The Department and Pleasant Valley Ranger District wildlife and range staff removed and repaired 2 of 3 elk-livestock exclosures that were constructed along Mule Creek, a tributary to Canyon Creek. The exclosures were originally built just prior to the Rodeo-Chediski fire and have required maintenance since. One exclosure was irreparably damaged from dead tree fall and flooding. The remaining 2 exclosures are in good conditions and required reconstruction of the water gaps (fence crossings upstream and downstream). Project objectives are part of the overall objectives for the Canyon Creek Riparian Restoration project to protect and enhance riparian habitats and improve stream channel functions and stability. A volunteer from the Desert Flycasters helped to get the work done. Another workday will be planned early this fall to complete work on the 3rd exclosure. Various fishing organizations that have supported the Canyon Creek project will be contacted for volunteer help.

The Department provided comment on 2 mining proposals to conduct exploratory drilling on the Globe District of the Forest. Buckeye/Apache Mountain Mining proposes to sample bedrock for economic deposits of silver in the Apache Mountains north of Globe. American Copper Nevada, Inc. proposes to explore for economic copper deposits southwest of Miami in the Pinto Creek watershed south of Hwy 60. Both operations will involve approximately 12-14 drill pads, maintenance of Forest roads and unclassified two-tracks. Both operations will have a limited impact on Forest land, approximately 1 acre each, and will not use surface or groundwater resources in the area.

The Department is reviewing the *Environmental Assessment for Integrated Treatment of Noxious or Invasive Plants on the Tonto National Forest* (EA). The Forest proposes to conduct control treatments using manual, mechanical, burning/flaming, cultural, biological and herbicide control and eradication methods. Forest monitoring has identified approximately 65 invasive species on the Forest to date. Aerial application of herbicides is not being considered within the proposed action. An adaptive management strategy will be employed to target infestations when and where they occur. Species specific treatment methods are detailed in the EA. The Forest's management strategy is to use prevention/detection, treatment of known populations, monitoring, restoration and collaboration/outreach/education to deal with the expanding issue. Although the Forest states that it has fewer acres of weeds than other Arizona Forests, the problem is expected to increase exponentially. The Department supports the Proposed Action.

The Cave Creek Ranger District initiated the development of a Categorical Exclusion (CE) to allow for continuing current management (non-use) on the Sears-Chalk Allotment. Most of the allotment is located within the Mazatal Wilderness and is characterized by steep and rugged terrain, with limited water resources and remote access. The Willow Fire in 2004 originated on this allotment, and the Cave Creek Complex fire in 2005 burned a portion of the allotment, in addition to several smaller fires. Because of fires and extended drought, livestock have been removed from the allotment since late 2002. In addition to resource concerns, the grazing permit expired in 2003 and a new permit has not been issued. The Department supports the non-use and remains highly concerned with resource conditions on this allotment.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Arizona Strip Field Office

The proposed final Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) was released on March 2, 2007 and includes route designations for the Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermillion Cliffs National Monuments within the Arizona Strip Field Office (FO) planning area. The Department continues to coordinate closely with the FO in development of subsequent implementation-level plans, including Travel Management Plans and associated route networks.

Upper Lang's Run Integrated Vegetation Management

The Department commented on a draft EA for a 9,000-acre watershed vegetation project near Mount Trumbull. The Strip District is beginning to look at planning at a watershed level, which will increase acreages associated with treatments. While the Department is in full support of this type of planning, it has become increasingly important to be involved with all stages of the project. At this point the BLM plans to thin some of the overstory, but has not fully explored methods to do so, as well as how to incorporate appropriate seeding techniques. The Department has plans for several field trips to this project area and is confident at this point that our issues will be heard and partially incorporated into project planning.

Kingman Field Office

Big Ranch "A" Update

The Department received a proposed livestock grazing decision on the Big Ranch "A" allotment on July 1. The decision addressed the original three points raised by the Department in November, 2003. The Department is satisfied with new stipulations in the proposed decision. The points outlined included:

1. **The evaluation was not adequately scoped.** The proposed decision chronicled extensive coordination among stakeholders over the past three months and adequately addresses this issue.
2. **The evaluation did not adequately describe the new grazing system.** The evaluation recognizes this shortfall and details amendments to a cooperative agreement between the rancher and BLM. The amendment includes the following stipulations which the Department believes will assist in recovering land health in important bighorn sheep habitat: 1) bighorn sheep habitat will be deferred from grazing annually between April 15 and October 31; 2) utilization monitoring in the west pasture will occur each May and include all interested parties; 3) following future wildfires, immediate grazing deferment will occur for 2 subsequent years; 4) drought monitoring in the west pasture will occur each May and include interested parties. The Department believes these amendments, if implemented, will address resource conflicts on the allotment.
3. **Forage Allocation estimates based on a "1976 ocular reconnaissance inventory" are not appropriate.** Here, BLM disagreed with the Department and contended that this inventory method was used on all allotments in the

Cerbat/Black Mountain Grazing EIS (1982). Further, existing litigation has prevented BLM from making adjustments to permitted grazing use based solely on “one point in time surveys”. To make an adjustment here, monitoring data in combination with inventory data is required to adjust livestock forage allocations. The Department intends to address this issue in the Black Mountain Ecosystem Plan evaluation, which is the more appropriate BLM planning level.

The Department met several times during the past month with Clay Overson, Permittee on 4 BLM grazing permits in Mohave County. Mr. Overson has expressed interest in working with the Department and the Natural Resources Conservation Society (NRCS) to develop formal cooperative management plans for the Francis Creek and Crozier allotments. Both ranches contain important grassland habitat for pronghorn and other wildlife, and are popular hunting areas for mule deer. The Francis Creek Allotment also is popular among quail and javelina hunters. The cooperative plans will make both ranches eligible for substantial NRCS funding sources, which can be matched with a variety of Department funding sources. More than 17,000 acres of juniper treatment and extensive riparian protection measures are being incorporated into the Crozier Allotment cooperative plan, and prescribed fire on Goodwin Mesa grasslands is being planned for in the Francis Creek Allotment cooperative plan. The Francis Creek plan is expected to be near completion by the end of August, the Crozier Plan will be completed shortly after that.

Havasu Field Office

The Lake Havasu Field Office Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan were released on July 9, 2007. The Department continues to coordinate closely with the Field Office in the development of subsequent implementation-level plans, including Travel Management Plans and associated route designations.

Hassayampa Field Office

The Hassayampa Field Office is developing a comprehensive Travel Management Plan for Central Arizona public lands, and is seeking public input to help determine where to provide connectivity for increased recreational value while minimizing impacts to the land and other resources. The Department provided comments regarding road and trail designations in the Bumble Bee, Table Mesa, Lake Pleasant, and San Domingo Wash areas and will continue to participate throughout the route designation process.

Tucson Field Office

The Tucson Field Office has just completed the draft preferred alternative for the Travel Management Plan for the Middle Gila Canyons area on the north end of Unit 37b. This document is still in internal review within the Tucson Field Office. The Department has not been provided with the document for review and comment.

Yuma Field Office

The public comment period for the Yuma draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) ended on March 14, 2007. The Department provided a formal comment letter regarding the draft RMP and remains engaged at both

the Field Office and State Office levels to ensure consistency in regards to wildlife and wildlife management. The Department continues to meet with the BLM Yuma FO to review and discuss comments on the draft's preferred alternatives for biological resources, recreation, transportation, and public access.

BLM NATIONAL MONUMENTS

The Department remains involved as a Cooperating Agency in planning efforts for five national monuments and adjacent BLM landscapes. The Department and the BLM State Office have finalized a draft statewide Master MOU and will present this draft to the Commission for approval.

Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument

The proposed final RMP/EIS was released on March 2, 2007 for the Arizona Strip planning area including the Grand Canyon-Parashant NM. The proposed final plan includes a series of unique route networks and designations.

Vermillion Cliffs National Monument

The proposed final RMP/EIS was released on March 2, 2007 for the Arizona Strip planning area including the Vermillion Cliffs NM. The proposed final plan includes a series of unique route networks and designations.

Agua Fria National Monument

The draft RMP/EIS public review period ended on April 5, 2006 and the proposed final plan is expected to be released in the fall of 2007. The Department will be working closely with BLM to address submitted comments pertaining to wildlife and wildlife management. In spite of Department opposition, the preferred alternative restricts recreational shooting on the national monument portion of the management area.

Sonoran Desert National Monument

The BLM Phoenix Field Office is working to develop a preliminary preferred alternative, and the Department continues to participate in cooperative meetings and proactively develops comments throughout the planning process.

Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM)

BLM released the draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) on March 2, 2007. The draft RMP/EIS generated a large public response, particularly regarding closing public lands to target shooting within the IFNM. The Department reviewed the draft RMP/EIS and sent a formal comment letter to the BLM Tucson Field Office which included a resolution signed by the Commission regarding recreational shooting. The open comment period concluded with a final public meeting held in Tucson on May 30th. The Department remains engaged at both the Field Office and State Office levels to ensure consistency in regards to wildlife and wildlife management.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge

The final Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Refuge has been released to the public. The Department is currently reviewing the final plan.

Kofa National Wildlife Refuge

The Department continues to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to plan, fund, and implement actions to aid recovery of the bighorn sheep population on Kofa. The Department finalized a predation management plan for the Kofa Mountains complex in May and along with the USFWS, completed a report in June entitled *“Investigative Report and Recommendations for the Kofa Bighorn Sheep Herd.”*

The USFWS is currently allowing water hauling and maintenance of existing waters with appropriate documentation of those activities. They are planning on completing an environmental assessment for future management of waters on Kofa. Both Yaqui Tank and McPherson Tank have been redeveloped and filled with water through a combination of water hauling and recent rain (up to 4 inches of rain has fallen on parts of Kofa). Sheep use was documented at Yaqui Tank within a week of project completion. The Department conducted three flights in July to check wildlife waters on Kofa. Department and Kofa personnel have hauled water to Hidden Valley Tank, High Tank 6, and Charlie Died Tank. The effort required at Hidden Valley Tank included laying 4000 feet of hose to pump 11,200 gallons of water from the wilderness boundary to the tank.

Using GPS data collected from the collar of the lion that was removed it has been confirmed that he killed 5 bighorn sheep, 2 mule deer, and 2 unidentified ungulates in a 3-month period. The collar that was placed on a second lion prematurely fell off on July 26th. Efforts are currently underway to re-collar that lion. Prior to the collar falling off, it was confirmed this lion killed 1 bighorn sheep and 4 mule deer in 52 days. Shortly after being collared this lion moved off Kofa and spent a considerable amount of time in mule deer habitat. This lion's confirmed bighorn sheep kill was outside of the predation management plan area so the kill will not count as an “offending” kill as outlined in the predation management plan. After originally considering doing an immediate EA for the management of lions on Kofa, the FWS has decided to address this issue in a Comprehensive Conservation Plan to be completed for the Kofa, Imperial and Cibola NWR Complex. This plan could take several years to complete and we are working with the USFWS on other alternatives that will provide for more immediate actions.

The Department met with representatives from Kofa and Dr. Bender from New Mexico State University to discuss a proposed research project being funded by FWS to look at the effect of nutrition on sheep population dynamics. This proposed project would include the collaring of approximately 40 bighorn sheep on Kofa. The collaring of these sheep could also lead to information related to lion predation on sheep. The Department

is planning on conducting bighorn sheep surveys in October and Dr. Bender will be collaring sheep in November.

The Department spent several hundred man hours responding to an open records request from Sandy Bahr representing the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club. Region 4 also drafted a response to a letter received from the Cougar Fund criticizing our management of lions and bighorn sheep on Kofa. Organizations that have expressed an interest in intervening in the lawsuit against the FWS related to NEPA adequacy on the redevelopment of Yaqui and McPherson Tanks include the U.S. Sportsman's Alliance, Safari Club International, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, and the Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club (more complete information on this may be obtained from Department Counsel). There has been no additional Arizona media coverage regarding lions or bighorn sheep on Kofa since Mr. Kearns' letter to the editor of the Yuma Daily Sun on July 9th.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Barry M. Goldwater Range

Release of the final Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (INRMP/EIS) for the Range did not result in any formal public comments and a Record of Decision was subsequently signed by the Department of Defense. The stand-alone INRMP has been signed by the Department, USFWS, and Department of Defense and implementation will now commence. The Department is actively working with Range staff to ensure maximum amounts of access to the Range for recreational purposes.

Yuma Proving Ground

The U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is considering expanding up to 500,000 acres into Game Management Unit 41 through a withdrawal of BLM land. YPG is currently evaluating the possible expansion and has not developed or presented a formal proposal or application to further define the purpose, need, location, and details of the proposed expansion. The Department will be actively involved in this process and will provide the Commission with more information as it becomes available.

Flagstaff Naval Observatory

The Department attended a meeting and reviewed a draft plan for the management of natural resources on the Naval Observatory

GENERAL UPDATES

Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)

The Department was recently awarded \$390,000 from ADOT's Transportation Research Center to quantify impacts to desert tortoise expected from proposed highway construction from Bullhead City, south to Interstate 40. The 44 mile project would

traverse pristine Mohave Desert habitat in an area identified as one of 6 Key Habitat Areas for desert tortoise. Most of the project would occur on public lands. Additional monitoring will evaluate current tortoise mitigation features in place on U.S. 93 south of Kingman, near the town of Wikieup.

Border Fencing Near Douglas

The Department recently learned of new fencing and road construction associated with border protection activities being implemented east of Douglas Arizona to the New Mexico border. Approximately 15 miles of large, metal impermeable fencing is being installed, along with a newly constructed road, lighting infrastructure, and replacement of portions of currently existing vehicle barriers. Based on initial conversations with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (overseeing the projects in association with Border Patrol) that portions of this action were originally scoped and analyzed through the NEPA process in 2000, with an amendment to include additional fencing infrastructure in 2003 of an Environmental Assessment written by the Border Patrol for infrastructure within the Naco-Douglas Corridor (Supplemental Environmental Assessment for Infrastructure Within U.S. Border Patrol Naco-Douglas Corridor Cochise County, Arizona). In addition to actions analyzed through the NEPA process in 2000 and 2003, the current fencing actions fall under the guidance of the Secure Fence Act of 2006, signed by President Bush. Concerns have arisen from local residents in the Douglas area of the impermeability of the fencing in terms of wildlife movement and conservation, new roads in pristine habitats, increased illegal vehicle traffic in an area relatively untouched, cost of the project to the public, impacts to current conservation easements, and more.

Coconino County

We are actively engaged in the Coconino County Parks and Recreation effort to sell a conservation easement on Pumphouse Greenway to NRCS through the Farm Bill's Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). The Department is currently working with Coconino County and NRCS to develop a conservation plan for the easement that will restore and enhance the wetlands of Pumphouse Greenway, reduce wildlife disturbances and control human/domestic dog access within the wetland, and provide substantially more Watchable Wildlife developments for the area. Planning is almost complete, and the easement purchase is scheduled to occur in November 2007. The Department recently participated in a public meeting on the Pumphouse WRP, where we presented information on wildlife habitat in the wetlands as well as Watchable Wildlife opportunities.

Colorado Plateau Native Plant Initiative (CPNPI) and the Northern Arizona Native Seed Association (NANSA)

During the week of June 11th, the Department attended the Colorado Plateau Native Plant Initiative Meeting in Moab, Utah. For several years, state, federal, and non-profit groups in Utah have been engaged with the development of native plant materials on the northern part of the Colorado Plateau. Working with these groups over the last 2 years the Department has learned how to use these native plant materials on the landscape, specifically related to the Westside Project on the North Kaibab Ranger District. With increasing habitat degradation due to fire, drought, and excessive grazing, important AZ

wildlife habitat continues to be at risk. To date, the limiting factor for habitat restoration is adequate native plant materials.

Until recently, the scale of Utah's native plant program did not include the southern part of the Colorado Plateau in Northern Arizona. This status is changing and the main reason for this meeting was to work toward joining the existing groups into one Colorado Plateau Native Plant Initiative, and the expansion of efforts Plateau wide. At this time, Arizona groups and agencies are welcomed, invited, and encouraged to participate. The group is not asking for money at this time, but more importantly ideas and needs for the program. Because this group is just starting, there is an opportunity to be in an active, leadership role from the states perspective. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has had a successful habitat restoration program for years.

Gila River Sand and Gravel Project

The Assistant Attorney General's Office provided the Department with guidance on an approach to this project. The Department is working on a land exchange with Gila River Lake, LLC which will include a reversionary clause allowing for the property to revert back to the Commission upon termination of the pre-determined sand and gravel mining period. When in final form, all associated agreements will be presented to the Commission for approval, and the proposal will be published in a local newspaper per ARS 37-803. Currently, the Department is developing a "Letter of Intent" that will describe intentions, expectations, processes, timelines and anticipated agreements that will be necessary to accomplish this project. This document will be non-binding, but will be signed by both parties and act as a roadmap for implementing the project. Anticipated agreements that will be brought to the Commission in the near future may include, but are not limited to, a Purchase Agreement that explains how the replacement property will be transferred to the Department (appraisals, escrow etc.), and a Land Exchange Agreement that will discuss the details of how, and under what conditions, the Commission property will be conveyed to the Gilas River Lake, LLC and back to the Department. Tiered to the Land Exchange Agreement will be Mining and Restoration Plans that outline those processes as well. At this time, the Department is still interested in exploring the option of acquiring the State Trust land to the west of our property in order to expand the size and shape of the lake. However, Gila River Lake, LLC has rescinded their request to mine the PLO 1015 lands to the east of our deeded property, thus eliminating the federal component of this project.

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

The Department met with the Technical Advisory Council for U.S. 93 expansion below Hoover Dam. The Department received several renditions of highway overpass crossings for bighorn sheep from ADOT engineers. ADOT provided general design specifications and cost sheets for overpasses at three locations along the highway corridor. ADOT ensured the Department that funding for the three overpasses is included in the project design, and is now proceeding toward the 30% design completion stage. The three overpasses will be the first such structures constructed for wildlife in Arizona. Construction is scheduled to begin in October, 2008.

The Department was copied a letter from ADOT addressed to the National Park Service at Lake Mead. The letter documented ADOT's initiation of a highway Right-of-Way transfer to the Park for interim U.S. 93 south of Hoover Dam. Transfer of this Right-of-Way is consistent with the Department's desire to have the interim highway closed to the public to better facilitate bighorn sheep crossing.

Pinal County

Pinal County's Open Space and Trails plan has been submitted as an amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan. The County will be accepting feedback until July 30th. The Department has written a letter of support for the Plan.

Pinal County commissioned a report by the Morrison Institute to guide the redevelopment of the County's comprehensive plan. The report from the Morrison Institute found high support for 6 "placemaking" goals. These goals included such conservation-minded ideas as "greenprinting" the state trust land in Pinal, a uniform county-wide impact fee to buy open space, an outdoor education program for children, adoption of a uniform "green" building code, prohibition of landscape plants harmful to the native biota, and implementation of smart growth principles in all development and redevelopment. The Department is very encouraged by this new direction for Pinal County.

Town of Marana

The Department continues to participate on Technical Biology Team and the Stakeholder Working Group for the Town of Marana's Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) under a Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund habitat conservation planning assistance grant. Three public scoping meetings were held in mid-July to discuss the HCP development. The Technical Biology Team is close to finalizing the recommendations for Conservation Measures for covered species. A finalized HCP should be available June 2009.

Wood Supply Working Group (WSWG)

The Department is participating in the Wood Supply Working Group, which just recently held its second (of 7) meetings. The WSWG is comprised of natural resource agencies and wood utilization private industries; the group is facilitated through a Forest ERA (NAU – Tom Sisk's Lab) grant; and the grant is funded by the Forest Service. The group is tasked with estimating the amount of small-diameter ponderosa pine wood that would be available from forest restoration projects, for the purpose of establishing a small-diameter wood industry. As per the Governor's Forest Health Strategy, and other regional economic assessments, landscape-scale restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems is unaffordable under current contracting processes. The only way to see landscape scale treatments be implemented would be to allow small diameter wood industries to pay for the restoration treatments. Wood industries, however, are only willing to pay for these treatments if they know the wood supply will be adequate to cover the costs and generate profit.

The Department supports this effort, as long as the analysis is driven by goals of forest restoration, wildlife habitat, and restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems (as opposed to designing treatments that maximize industry gain and encourage long-term extraction of trees beyond the goals of forest restoration). The analysis uses a GIS approach, and the Department has worked successfully to ensure that threatened and endangered species habitat, riparian habitat, and wildlife movement corridors are considered during the analysis. A product from this WSWG is expected in fall 2007.

Hunt Permit-tag Application Schedule – Spring 2008

Hunt permit-tag applications will be accepted and processed in accordance with R12-4-104 and R12-4-114 and this schedule.

Drawing					
	ACCEPTANCE DATES¹	CORRECTION PERIOD²	DEADLINE DATES³		
HUNT	Applications accepted on or after:	Deadline 5 p.m. (MST) in Department offices	Deadline 7 p.m. (MST) in Department offices on:	Hunt permit-tags mailed out by:	Refund warrants mailed out by:
Spring Turkey	(See note 1)	Sept. 25, 2007	Oct. 9, 2007	Nov. 16, 2007	Nov. 30, 2007
Spring Javelina	(See note 1)	Sept. 25, 2007	Oct. 9, 2007	Nov. 16, 2007	Nov. 30, 2007
Spring Buffalo	(See note 1)	Sept. 25, 2007	Oct. 9, 2007	Nov. 16, 2007	Nov. 30, 2007
Spring Bear	(See note 1)	Sept. 25, 2007	Oct. 9, 2007	Nov. 16, 2007	Nov. 30, 2007

First Come ⁴	
	Applications accepted by mail only at azgfd.gov on or after 8:00 a.m. (MST):
HUNT	ACCEPTANCE DATES
Spring Turkey	Nov. 19, 2007 ⁵
Spring Javelina	Nov. 19, 2007 ⁵
Spring Buffalo	Nov. 19, 2007 ⁵
Spring Bear	Nov. 19, 2007 ⁵

Notes:

1. The Department will accept Hunt Permit-tag Applications for big game listed above as soon as the applicable year hunt information is available on the Department's Web site (azgfd.gov), or from any Game and Fish Department office or license dealer, unless otherwise noted in the Hunt Permit-tag Application schedule.
2. If a paper Hunt Permit-tag Application that is submitted contains an

error and is received by Sept. 25, 2007, the Department will make three attempts within a 24-hour period to notify the applicant by telephone (if a phone number is provided).

3. Department offices at Flagstaff, Kingman, Mesa, Phoenix, Pinetop, Tucson and Yuma will close for business at 5:00 p.m. (MST); completed applications will be accepted at these locations until 7:00 p.m. (MST) on deadline days. No applications will be accepted after this time regardless of the postmark. Applications for hunts on military installations may not be submitted online. Deadline dates may be extended in the event of a Department related system failure.
4. First come permits are issued if available and will sell very quickly. Applicants are advised to check with the Department before submitting an application for leftover permits. A listing of leftover permits is available by telephone at (602) 789-3702, or online at azgfd.gov.
5. Applications for first come permits, if available for hunts on Camp Navajo or Fort Huachuca, must be submitted by U.S. mail only to, P.O. Box 52002, Phoenix, AZ 85072-2002.