

Minutes of the Meeting of the
Arizona Game and Fish Commission
Friday, December 7, 2007
Saturday, December 8, 2007
Holiday Inn Casa Grande
777 N. Pinal Avenue
Casa Grande, Arizona 85222.

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 10:00 a.m. The Commission introduced themselves and Chairman Golightly introduced the Director and the Director's staff. This meeting followed an agenda revision #1 dated December 3, 2007.

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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 Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.

Vote: Unanimous

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Meeting recessed for lunch at 12:10 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 1:26 p.m.

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1. Options for improving buffalo hunt success for the House Rock herd and options for relief for Hunt 7020 tag holders

Presenter: Ron Sieg, Flagstaff Regional Supervisor

The Commission was petitioned by five hunters from the spring 2007 House Rock Wildlife Area buffalo season 7020 for relief due to buffalo not being available during their season dates. A hearing regarding this issue was held by the Commission at their October meeting and tabled until the December meeting when additional information could be provided.

Mr. Sieg provided a Power Point presentation on buffalo hunt issues at House Rock, which included historical data, adaptive management attempts by the Department to increase hunt

success, the disclaimer in the regulations noticing that buffalo might move onto the Park, and current buffalo population estimates. A map showing collared buffalo movement during the spring 2007 House Rock buffalo season 7020 was also included. Mr. Sieg further offered options for improving future season hunt success and for addressing the relief request for the five tag holders for season 7020. A summary of those options were as follows:

Modification Options to Increase/Improve Harvest

- Spring 2008 seasons already approved for 1/1 to 5/31 - Could still have issue with animals not moving off park until after 5/31
 - Option: Reopen Commission Order 8 and extend 2008 “spring” season longer
- Rolling Population management hunts
 - Establish a maximum number of harvested animals (Commission authorizes numbers) - Tomorrow’s Order 26 proposal: 150
 - Select an appropriate number of hunters at one time (Administrative process)
 - Each time an animal is killed, field another hunter so there is year-round pressure
 - Allow tags for 365 days from issuance - Current rules only allow tags for remainder of calendar year
 - Concern of year-round pressure on Park boundary
- Over the counter bison tags for House Rock
 - Looking to implement for elk in 2008
 - Limited opportunity to regulate numbers issued
 - Concern that this could keep so much pressure on herd that they remain on the Park
- Have 2 fixed date spring seasons, but have cleanup season at end for unsuccessful hunters
 - Has been used in past hunts, but bison left before clean-up hunt dates started
- Change the lifetime limit of one bison to one male bison and allow multiple females/yearlings - May limit hunt opportunity

Options for Addressing Petition for Relief

- Refund of fees - not currently allowed under A.R.S.§ 17-332.E
- Return of bonus points - not currently allowed under Commission Rule R12-4-107.L
- Extension of season through end of calendar year (A.R.S.§ 17-234 requires 10 days between Commission action and start of season – leaving only several days in this case)
- Future tag priority - requires rule changes to Article 1 - Unclear until process completed if any modification could be made retroactive

Summary of Article 1 Options

- Revise how population management hunters are selected
 - 1st priority to unsuccessful general season tag holders
 - 1st priority to general season bonus point holders - consider deleting all general seasons and only using population management hunts but revise the rule so there is no loss of bonus points for these hunts
- Revise bonus point rule so unsuccessful House Rock general season tag holders can have points reinstated
- Revise draw process for general hunts to allow unsuccessful House Rock general season hunters to obtain a subsequent general season tag prior to normal draw

Public Comment

The following hunters from the spring 2007 House Rock Wildlife Area buffalo season 7020 were present and addressed the Commission to request relief for their unsuccessful hunt:

Dan Depugh
Mike McCracken
John Collins
Don Roberts

The Commission further discussed the Department using a helicopter to locate buffalo to replace collars towards the end of hunt 7020 and whether it had a negative impact on the hunt.

Public Comment

Brian Dolan, representing himself, asked the Commission to consider asking the National Park Service to allow hunting on the Park, and to seek out someone from the Arizona Congressional Delegation to accompany two other bills that are out there regarding national parks that other states are dealing with.

Motion: Martin moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO DENY THE REQUEST FROM TAG HOLDERS FOR SPRING HUNT 7020 TO EXTEND THE HUNT, TO REFUND FEES, OR REINSTATE BONUS POINTS ACCRUED PRIOR TO THE 2007 DRAW

Commissioner Martin stated that similar request for reinstated bonus points have been denied in the past and that she was not convinced that the Department's use of a helicopter and collaring activity had any negative impact on the hunt.

Vote: Unanimous

Director Shroufe stated that the Department has written both of the Congressional Delegates that are sponsoring the two bills mentioned by Mr. Dolan. In the letters the Department asked that the Grand Canyon National Park be put on that legislation because of the buffalo issue. Two meetings have also been held with the Secretary of Interior who indicated that he is trying to solve the problem.

Commissioner Hernbrode requested a future agenda item to be a presentation from the Department regarding coordination with the Grand Canyon National Park to have agents reduce the number of buffalo on the Park and to look into possible fencing to keep the buffalo off the Park.

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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.

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13. Rehearing Request Regarding Previous License Revocation/Civil Assessment.

Presenter: Samuel P. Barber, Law Enforcement Branch Chief

On the 27th Day of February 2007, Terry L. Deitz was convicted in the Snowflake Justice Court for: Take wrong sex (mule deer doe during buck season and fined \$250.00). On September 9, 2007 the Commission revoked Mr. Deitz hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses for a period of five (5) years, and further required him to complete a Hunter Education Course before obtaining any license(s) to take wildlife in the State of Arizona. Mr. Deitz has requested a rehearing of this matter and decision and has been notified by certified mail that the Commission will consider this request at the December 7, 2007, meeting, at 2:00 p.m. following any other scheduled hearings. The Commission was provided with the case summary and other pertinent information relating to this case prior to this meeting for review.

Public Comment

Mr. Deitz was present and addressed the Commission stating that he took the wrong sex mule deer accidentally and asked the Commission to reduce his hunt revocation to three years and to not revoke his license to fish. Further, Mr. Deitz had already paid the civil assessment and taken the Hunter Education course.

The Commission discussed and clarified that the reason for the rehearing request was based on "excessive penalty" (cause listed in Commission Rule R12-4-607 Section D), and not that there was any new information related to the case.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO GRANT THE REQUEST FOR A REHEARING.

Vote: Unanimous

Chairman Golightly asked Mr. Deitz if he would like to proceed at this time or to have the rehearing set for another date.

Mr. Deitz stated that he would like the Commission to consider this matter at this time.

Motion: Hernbrode moved THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO MODIFY ITS PREVIOUS DECISION AND ACTION TAKEN AT THE SEPTEMBER COMMISSION MEETING TO RECOVER CIVIL DAMAGE ONLY AND RETRACT THE LICENSE REVOCATION TO HUNT, FISH AND TRAP FOR FIVE YEARS.

Motion failed for lack of second.

Commissioner Martin stated that she did not second the motion because it was reported that Mr. Dietz, although he denied it, did not want to report the incident to the Department.

Officer Wagner recapped the incident for the Commission.

Motion: Martin moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO MODIFY ITS PREVIOUS DECISION AND ACTION TAKEN AT THE SEPTEMBER COMMISSION MEETING TO REVOKE MR. DEITZ'S LICENSE TO HUNT AND TRAP FOR FIVE YEARS, BUT NOT TO REVOKE HIS LICENSE TO FISH.

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

Motion: McLean moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO UPHOLD ITS ORIGINAL DECISION AND ACTION, WHICH WAS A LICENSE REVOCATION PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS TO HUNT, FISH AND TRAP.

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

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2. State and Federal Legislation

Presenter: Anthony Guiles, Legislative Liaison

Mr. Guiles reported to the Commission on the current status of selected state and federal legislation and current elective issues. The Commission was asked to take action or vote to direct the Department for coordination, action, or changes to any or all of the topics or legislation discussed.

Federal Legislation - Bills of Interest

S. 86 – Fossil Creek, Wild & Scenic: The Department has provided the Commission with additional information on this bill as requested. The Commission took a position to support this bill earlier this year.

S. 408 – Hunting Heritage: This bill has not moved since its introduction into Congress.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO SUPPORT SENATE BILL 408 AND THAT THE DEPARTMENT DRAFT A LETTER TO THE SPONSORS OF THE BILL AND THE ARIZONA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION FROM THE COMMISSION STATING THEIR SUPPORT; AND THAT A LETTER OF SUPPORT ALSO BE SENT REGARDING THE PARALLEL HOUSE BILL.

Mr. Guiles stated that the Department recommends that the Commission support this bill.

Vote: Unanimous

S. 2165 – ESA Drought Suspension: Introduced in October and has not yet received a hearing.

The Department recommended to monitor this bill and that the Department continue to provide the Commission with updates.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT TO MONITOR SENATE BILL 2165 AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE COMMISSION WITH UPDATES.

Vote: Unanimous

H.R. 767 – Refuge Ecology Protection: Passed through the House and is now in the Senate. It was assigned to committee in November.

The Department recommended that the Commission take a position to support this legislation.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO SUPPORT H.R. 767.

Vote: Unanimous

H.R. 1771 Crane Conservation Act: Provides for an appropriation for crane conservation; 20% to North American species and 80% to African and Asian species.

Commissioner Hernbrode recommended that the Commission take no action and remain silent on this bill.

H.R. 3287 Tumacacori Wilderness: The Department has made several attempts to schedule a meeting with Congressman Grijalva's office and have not received any response.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO DIRECT STAFF TO FORMALLY REACH OUT TO ALL OF THE ARIZONA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION AND ALL OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE STATING THE COMMISSION'S POSITION AND THE REASONS FOR THEIR POSITION IN THE HOPES TO END THE DEADLOCK.

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

Director Shroufe clarified with the Commission that they have not changed their position from the October Commission meeting or on their preferred language for the bill discussed at the November teleconference meeting.

Chairman Golightly stated that the Department did not keep the Commission updated as they were directed and now it's too late to approach the other Delegates; it will be viewed as a frustration move on the part of the Commission and would not be appreciated. They have intentionally turned down the Department while building their coalition. Further, Chairman Golightly requested that the Department provide daily or weekly updates on this issue.

Commissioner McLean expressed his frustration for being stonewalled by Congressman Grijalva's staff. Not only was there no response to requests to enter into any meaningful dialogue, but now it has been set for a hearing and Department requests to provide input at that hearing have been denied. Also, proponents of the Bill were invited to Washington where they provided input that was incorrect, stating that proponents of the bill were working with sportsmen's groups and the Arizona Game and Fish Department when that was not the case.

Motion: Woodhouse moved and Golightly seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO OPPOSE HOUSE BILL 3287.

Commissioner Martin suggested that since this bill is not moving at this point, that the Commission wait to see what happens before they take a position of opposition.

Amended Motion: Hernbrode moved THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO AMEND THE MOTION TO ADD THAT THE DEPARTMENT BE DIRECTED TO CONTINUE TO WORK DILIGENTLY TO GET THEIR MESSAGE IN FRONT OF THE DELEGATION.

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Meeting recessed for a break at 4:33 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 4:52 p.m.

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2. (Continued) State and Federal Legislation

Commissioner Hernbrode withdrew his amendment.

Chairman Golightly withdrew his second.

Commissioner Woodhouse withdrew his motion.

Public Comment

Brian Dolan, representing himself, stated that it is important for the Commission to take some action today and that the Department actively promote their position.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF THE PAJARITA AND TUMACACORI HIGHLANDS WILDERNESS; THE COMMISSION HAS CONCERNS ABOUT THE WILDERNESS BOUNDARIES AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE WILDERNESS BOUNDARIES, BUT CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THESE CONCERNS CAN BE EFFECTIVELY SOLVED BY WORKING TOGETHER; THAT THE COMMISSION OPPOSE THE LANGUAGE OF HR 3287 FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: 1) IT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE OR

ARTICULATE THE VALUE OF WILDLIFE TO WILDERNESS AND OF THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE; AND 2) IT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THE RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA OR THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT TO EFFECTIVELY PROTECT, MAINTAIN, AND ENHANCE WILDLIFE IN WILDERNESS; THE COMMISSION BELIEVES THAT THIS LANGUAGE MUST BE A PART OF THIS ACT AND IN ALL FUTURE PASSED WILDERNESS AREA LEGISLATION IN ARIZONA. IF CARRIED OUT THE COMMISSION BELIEVES IN GOOD FAITH THAT THIS LANGUAGE WILL BECOME THE STANDARD FOR POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ALL ENTITIES INTERESTED IN WILDLIFE AND WILDERNESS IN ARIZONA.

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

Chairman Golightly confirmed with Mr. Guiles that he understood the direction from the Commission from the previous motion that passed 3 to 2 regarding H.R. 3287.

H. R. 3301 Southeastern Arizona Land Exchange (Resolution Copper): New language is being drafted for this bill to address some concerns of the Commission and the Governor's Office.

H.R. 3663 Aerial Gunning: The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has contacted the Department and asked that the Commission oppose this bill and to further contact the Arizona Delegation to let them know the Commission's position.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO OPPOSE THIS LEGISLATION.

Vote: Aye - Golightly, McLean, Hernbrode, Woodhouse
Martin abstained
Passed 4 to 0

Shooting Range Legislation: This bill is in the Natural Resources Committee office. They are looking at the language. The Department is hoping this bill will be introduced in January.

State Legislation - Session Deadlines:

- Pre filing of Bills – November 15, 2007
- 48th Legislature Convenes – January 14, 2008
- Budget Released (first week of session)
- Budget Crisis (JLBC budget cuts – the new figures will be released on Monday)

Department Legislation:

- Hunter Recruitment & Retention: Rep. JP Weiers has agreed to sponsor the bill
- Guide Licenses: Revocation matter - included in Hunter Recruitment and Retention bill
- OUI/DUI Parity: Sponsor to be determined

Other Legislation:

- OHV legislation will be introduced again – may be some minor changes

- AZ Endangered Species Legislation – There are some concerns (Rep. Ableser may or may not introduce this bill)
- “Wildcat” Dumping – Rep. McGuire would like to discuss this bill with the Department
- Senior Sportsmen License – Rep. JP Weiers has suggested some changes to the Pioneer License and the Department is having discussions with him on that.

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8. 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 and the Department requested that the Commission approve these matters as presented, subject to approval or recommendations of the Office of the Attorney General. Director Shroufe presented all of these items to the Commission and none were deemed necessary for removal for further discussion.

a. Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the Town of Buckeye regarding hunting within Town limits.

Presenter: Rod Lucas, Mesa Regional Supervisor

This IGA is a culmination of efforts regarding the Commission action item from the September 2006 Commission meeting, whereby the Commission directed the Department to work with the Town of Buckeye to protect the Department’s interest in wildlife recreation in newly annexed lands, and to pursue the necessary agreements that would allow for the continuation of hunting or shooting within Buckeye, including the newly annexed lands or future lands to be annexed.

In September 2006, the Department initiated a joint meeting with officials from the Town of Buckeye, including the Mayor, to discuss Buckeye’s proposed annexations and the Department’s desire to pursue a formal agreement with Buckeye that would allow for hunting within Town limits. Buckeye annexed almost 108 square miles of mostly Bureau of Land Management lands located east of State Route 85 and south of the Gila River, and have future plans to annex certain lands west of SR85 as well. Regarding the issue of allowing the continuation of hunting or shooting in Buckeye, including the newly annexed lands or future lands to be annexed, Buckeye expressed its support of continuation of all present uses of these public lands. Further, they would like this agreement to not be specific to this annexation, but to apply in general to all lands previously annexed, and to be annexed in the future as well. This agreement would permit hunting in areas deemed safe to hunt as long as other laws were followed, such as no shooting within a quarter mile, misuse of firearms, etc.

The Department recommended THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF BUCKEYE TO ALLOW HUNTING IN TOWN LIMITS, INCLUDING NEWLY ANNEXED LANDS.

b. Intergovernmental Agreement between the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the City of Star Valley regarding hunting within City limits.

Presenter: Rod Lucas, Mesa Regional Supervisor

In May 2006, City of Star Valley Councilman Del Newland approached the Department about the possibility of pursuing an agreement to allow for hunting or shooting within the City of Star Valley, including their newly annexed lands. The City, located east of Payson on SR 260 in northern Gila County, incorporated and became a municipality. After its incorporation, the City annexed nearly 18 square miles of land. Much of that annexation was Tonto National Forest land. Some of the land that lies within the incorporated boundary of Star Valley is excellent elk habitat, as it is prized by Arizona hunters.

The Department immediately contacted the appropriate officials from the City of Star Valley to pursue a formal agreement with the City that would allow for hunting within City limits. The Department worked with the City of Star Valley to designate appropriate hunting areas within the town limits so that, where appropriate, lawful harvest by permitted elk hunters can still take place. The arrangement was determined to be most appropriate through an intergovernmental agreement between the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the City of Star Valley. City leadership unanimously approved the agreement at the August 7, 2007, Star Valley Council meeting. The agreement is has been finalized and signed, but still requires approval from the Commission.

The Department recommended THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF STAR VALLEY TO ALLOW HUNTING IN CITY LIMITS, INCLUDING NEWLY ANNEXED LANDS.

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 8A AND 8B AS PRESENTED.

Vote: Unanimous

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4. Information and Education Activities Briefing

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

The Commission was provided with an Information and Education Program Report 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 October 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 provided one additional update: The Department recently received a grant from the Arizona Friends of NRA in the amount of \$16,000. This will be used to purchase firearms for special programs such as SCTP, small game camps or sporting group events.

The Commission expressed their appreciation for this well written and comprehensive report.

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3. Statewide Shooting Range Briefing

Presenter: Jay Cook, Education Branch Chief

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 October 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. Cook 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.

Mr. Cook reported that the Department met with the Coconino National Forest to establish a timeline on moving forward with the proposed land exchange for the Northern Arizona Shooting Range. The Forest Service has estimated the timeline for the initiation of the process. First, the completion of a Feasibility Analysis Report will take nine months. At the conclusion of that, an Agreement of Initiation will be approved by the Regional Forester. Following that will be the start of NEPA which will take two years.

Commissioner McLean stated that the timeline is unreasonably long and unacceptable.

Director Shroufe stated that he will meet the new Regional Forester next week in Albuquerque and will discuss the situation and issues with him. If the Regional Forester cannot provide some relief then he will meet with the new Chief of the Forest Service. Director Shroufe will keep the Commission updated.

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5. 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 October 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 one additional update regarding the Sportsmen's Conservation Council (SCC) meeting that was held this week. The Department was invited to attend the meeting and had an opportunity to speak in regards to the access component and how that particular issue as well as many other issues may be addressed in the June Presidential Conference on the Executive

Order, and how the agencies may apply that Federal Order. There were five primary functions that came out of the SCC meeting: 1) The North American Wildlife Conservation Model, 2) The State and Federal Tribal Wildlife Management, 3) Habitat Conservation in Management, 4) Funding, and 5) Perpetuating the hunting traditions. Each one of these had a series of subsets. A finalized letter is coming out from the SCC and Mr. Avey will provide that to the Commission as soon as he gets a copy.

Commissioner McLean initiated discussion about an item he requested in the update; the current study and public input phase of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) route proposals for the Interstate 10 Bypass around the Tucson area. A map outlining the proposals was included in the Lands Update. One of the proposals would put a freeway between the Aravaipa Wilderness and the Galiuro Wilderness area. Another alternative goes through San Pedro and between Units 32 and 33. A third proposal would go near the Ironwood National Monument area. Commissioner McLean proposed that the Commission take an active public position to oppose these proposals and request that the ADOT Committee and Board, and the Governor, have these proposals taken off the drawing board early before maps are even drawn.

Motion: McLean moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION OPPOSE ALL FOUR PROPOSED ROUTES OR ALIGNMENTS OF THE INTERSTATE 10 TUCSON BYPASS.

Vote: Unanimous

Commissioner McLean also commented on Aravaipa Access in that the Tapia gate is now open thanks to a group of sportsmen and thanks to the hard work by Matt Walton in Region V for doing the research of records at the County Courthouse. Those records were provided to the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society who have become plaintiffs in a lawsuit against Ms. Tapia with the hope of getting the Tapia gate permanently unlocked.

Public Comment

David McCasland, Vice President, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, addressed the Commission regarding several items in the Lands Update. One was regarding the Long Tom Allotment. The Environmental Assessment (EA) was finalized November 27, 2007 and it appears that this area will not be an area for a potential transplant site due to domestic sheep and cattle grazing. Mr. McCasland requested that the Commission direct the Department to write a letter to the Regional Office of the U.S. Forest Service to find another allotment to move the domestic sheep onto.

Director Shroufe stated that the Department is currently looking into whether they want to appeal the EA decision.

Mr. McCasland also mentioned concerns regarding the NEPA process on the Heber-Reno Sheep Driveway and for the EA on the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. The EA for the Wilderness waters was put on hold by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Mr. McCasland asked the Commission if there was anything they could do about that.

Director Shroufe commented that he met with Benjamin Tugle, Regional Director for the USFWS, and there seems to be a disconnect between what Mr. Tugle says and what his field people are doing. Mr. Tugle has committed to making these two assessments a priority. Director Shroufe will be meeting with him next week along with the Regional Forester and will discuss this matter with them.

Brian Dolan, Director and Past President, ADBSS, requested an update on Tipperary Tank and why it was taking so long to get an EA.

Director Shroufe reported that BLM's reason for taking three years to do the EA is because it was in a Wilderness area and they wanted to make sure it was done right so they wouldn't be vulnerable for a technical lawsuit. The public comment period ends December 13, 2007 and to date there have been no protest. With no legal actions against them at the close of the comment period, they will write a decision that will be favorable for going ahead with that project.

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6. Request for Commission Approval of the Sale of the Deer Valley North Complex, Game and Fish Department Headquarters in Maricopa County, Arizona.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

The Department has been negotiating with the City of Phoenix Police Department on the sale of the Deer Valley North Complex, Game and Fish Headquarters. The Phoenix City Council has approved the acquisition by the City of Phoenix on October 3, 2007. The sale would include the entire Deer Valley North Complex. The sale is contingent on approval from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Coast Guard for the disposal of the improvements used with the respective funding sources.

Mr. Avey provided the Commission with copies of the original appraisal and the most current appraisal for review and discussion.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE SALE OF THE DEER VALLEY NORTH COMPLEX, GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS IN MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA, AND EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT AS RECOMMENDED AND APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Vote: Unanimous

Commissioner Martin asked about the Deer Valley South property.

Mr. Avey reported that the Commission has some advantages to retaining that property and the Department has been compiling information to provide to the Commission.

Director Shroufe stated that the Commission will be provided with that information on Monday and that this will be a future agenda item.

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7. Request for Commission Approval for the Department to Acquire the Alma Richardson Property in Maricopa County, Arizona.

Presenter: Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

Mr. Avey briefed the Commission using a Power Point presentation. The Alma Richardson Property is located in the Arlington Valley of Maricopa County. It comprises approximately 158 acres of abandoned farmland and riparian and aquatic river-bottom. The land is immediately adjacent to the Commission owned Arlington Wildlife Area and if acquired would be managed in conjunction with that property. The acquisition includes surface water rights through the Arlington Canal, Grandfathered Groundwater rights and a domestic well. The water rights are an extremely important component of the acquisition because they could provide additional water to the operation of Arlington Wildlife Area as well.

Region VI has reviewed and identified this property as a desired acquisition. Besides containing riparian and aquatic habitats, Yuma Clapper Rail has been documented on the site as recently as 2006 making it Heritage eligible. The asking price is \$2,600,000 although the actual purchase price will be fair market value based on appraisal.

Motion: McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE DEPARTMENT TO ACQUIRE THE ALMA RICHARDSON PROPERTY IN MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO ACQUIRE THIS PROPERTY AS RECOMMENDED OR APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

Vote: Unanimous

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9. Call to the Public

There were no requests from the public to speak.

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11. Litigation Report

The Commission did not have any questions or comments regarding the Litigation Report.

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Meeting recessed for the day at 6:11 p.m.

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Saturday, December 8, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.

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Chairman Golightly called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. The Commission introduced themselves and Chairman Golightly introduced the Director and the Director's staff. This meeting followed an agenda revision #1 dated December 3, 2007.

Awards and Commissioning of Officers

There were no awards or commissioning of officers at this time.

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1. Ben Avery Shooting Facility Master Plan

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

Mr. Gray presented the Commission with the Draft Final Ben Avery Shooting Facility Master Plan and provided a briefing using a Power Point presentation with pictures and maps. Over the course of the past year, the Department has been working with a consultant to develop a master plan for the Ben Avery Shooting Facility (BASF). The purpose of the Master Plan is to provide guidance for future improvements and developments on the BASF.

The Master Plan was developed by incorporating an extensive site analysis with user group and Department staff input. The site analysis included site reconnaissance, evaluations of biological resources, soils and topography, visual resources, a drainage overview, assessment of existing utilities, roadways, circulation, adjacent land use, existing structures and cultural resources on the facility. Public involvement included a BASF user group workshop in which attendees listed the values, issues and needs associated with the facility. Approximately 320 different user groups were invited to participate in this component. This was followed by a user group focus group that solicited specific input from user group representatives on the topics of parking and transportation, non-range facilities, existing range improvements and future range improvements. Finally, a public open house was conducted which provided user groups and the public an opportunity to view the Draft Master Plan, ask questions and provide comments. Public comment was also taken throughout the planning process via the Department's BASF webpage and several individual meetings with user group representatives.

Department staff input included a workshop to discuss and list the values, issues, needs, opportunities and constraints, and facility programming needs for BASF. Continuous staff reviews were conducted to modify and refine the Master Plan following each step in the public involvement process. Meeting the diverse needs of the different user groups and public that utilize the facility required the Master Plan to focus on multiple use concepts. While the Master Plan provides a guide for the future development of BASF it does not identify a timeline or dedicated funding sources for completing facility improvements. Prioritization of individual improvements and development components will be based on the criteria of safety, demand, opportunities and available budget. Opportunities may include partnerships with outside entities including BASF user groups that wish to provide funds or other resources for specific improvements or development components. Other funding sources include, but are not limited to, external grants, BASF Range Fund, revenues from user fees and eligible Department budgets as recommended by the Department and approved by the

Commission during the Biannual Budget Approval Process. Once approved, the Master Plan will be reviewed and updated by the Department every five years to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of facility users as they may change over time.

Public Comment

Landis Aden, Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association, addressed the Commission in support of the BASF Master Plan.

Chairman Golightly requested that Mr. Aden become more involved and be more politically active in other ranges around the State; specifically in regards to the Northern Arizona Shooting Range due to the issues there, and further requested that Mr. Aden contact the County Board of Supervisors regarding that range.

Mr. Aden committed to doing that and stated that his organization has been in discussions about northern range issues with the staff of Senator Kyl and Congressman Renzi's offices and requested that the Department keep him informed as needs arise.

Chairman Golightly requested that the Department provide the Commission with future Shooting Range Updates on Saturday when more of the public are able to attend.

Public Comment

Robert Morris, Cowboy Mounted Shooters Association, addressed the Commission in support of the BASF Master Plan and offered financial assistance by his organization for some of the improvements at BASF.

Chairman Golightly asked Mr. Morris about past shooting events held by his organization at Willard Springs and further asked Mr. Morris to look into it, particularly regarding permits, and to get back with him.

Mr. Morris stated that he would do that.

Public Comment

Bill Poole, Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association, addressed the Commission in support of the BASF Master Plan and briefed them on the activities and contributions of his organization at the BASF and other ranges around the State.

Motion: Martin moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE BEN AVERY SHOOTING FACILITY MASTER PLAN.

Vote: Unanimous

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1A. Hunt Permit-tag Application Schedule for Winter 2008 Hunts

Presenter: Harry Seck, Assistant Director, Special Services Division

Mr. Seck provided the Commission with a brief presentation on the "Hunt Permit-tag Application Schedule - Winter 2008" for antelope and elk 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, proposed dates are identified for when hunt permit-tags and refund warrants will be mailed, along with information relating to the first-come/first-serve process for any permits that may still be available.

Commissioner McLean pointed out that this application schedule was for paper applications and asked Mr. Seck about the selection of a new online vendor.

Mr. Seck stated that the Department is in the process of soliciting proposals for a new online vendor for an online process for license and applications. The RFP close date is December 13, 2007. The proposals will be reviewed in January 2008. If a qualified vendor is selected, the Department plans to have online license sales by June/July 2008.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION SCHEDULE FOR WINTER 2008 HUNTS FOR ELK AND ANTELOPE.

Vote: Unanimous

* * * * *

2. Consideration of Proposed Commission Orders 3, 4, and 26 for 2008 Hunting Season.

Presenter: Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

Mr. Ordway provided the Commission with a Power Point presentation, which included historical data and charts, and provided a briefing on Department recommendations for Commission Orders 3 (pronghorn antelope), 4 (elk), and 26 (population management), establishing seasons and season dates, bag and possession limits, permit numbers or authorized limits, and open areas for the respective 2008 hunting season. A detailed description of all proposals were made available for public review at all Department offices and were available at this meeting. Mr. Ordway introduced Department staff members who were present to answer any questions the Commission may have.

At the August 2007 meeting, the Commission approved a two-year hunt guideline package under which hunt structures and recommendations would be formulated. The Department sought public input on these guidelines between June and August 2007, and received input from about 172 meeting attendees and 98 written responses, which were shared with the Commission at the August 2007 meeting. Per Commission direction, these guidelines will be used through 2010 spring seasons.

Commission Order 3 – Pronghorn Antelope

The general season permits were recommended to increase by 32 from last year for a total recommendation of 503 permits. The archery recommendation was 390 permits, which is a decrease of 5 permits from last year. The muzzleloader seasons were recommended for 113 permits, an increase of 10 permits from last year.

The Commission was provided with a revised Pronghorn Management Plan. This plan was revised and reflected the specific management issues and planned activities for implementation within each unit. The plan tiers from Department operational plans previously shared with the Commission. The Department received no substantial feedback from the public regarding the pronghorn hunt structures since the last hunt guideline and recommendation process.

Public Comment

Randy Spray, Arizona Bowhunters Association, addressed the Commission with concerns for bowhunting opportunity, specifically he would like to see the 5 tags that are being taken away from archery put in Unit 7 where there are no archery tags. Further, Mr. Spray wanted to know why there have never been any archery tags in Unit 7.

Mr. Ordway stated that pronghorn hunt opportunity was allocated to the extent possible according to the weapons allocation formula, which attempts to provide harvest opportunity consistent with demand for that opportunity using 5-year average hunt success and application pressure. Currently, archery harvest opportunity exceeds demand. If an adjustment is necessary in 2009, the Department will be investigating a potential archery hunt in Unit 7. The Department is trying distribute archery pronghorn hunting opportunity across the State, but not all units have archery tags. The Department continues to work toward the direction provided by the Commission on the equitable allocation of harvest among weapon types.

The Commission discussed moving tags from one unit to another and whether that should be done by the Commission now or direction be given to the Department for next year. The Commission further discussed with the Department the rationale behind the pronghorn recommendation package.

Mr. Spray stated that he was looking to next year for a change and discussing it now was to make sure it did not go unnoticed.

Public Comment

Dick King, Arizona Bowhunters Association, addressed the Commission in support of Mr. Spray's comments.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE COMMISSION ORDER 3 – PRONGHORN ANTELOPE AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Aye - McLean, Hernbrode, Martin, Woodhouse

Nay - Golightly

Passed 4 to 1

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Meeting recessed for a break at 9:33 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 9:55 a.m.

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Commission Order 4 – Elk

Elk harvest was recommended at a level which would allow limited population growth in some areas in conjunction with the Elk Management Plan, otherwise populations will be held stable or allowed to increase slightly in relationship with current environmental conditions also in conjunction with the Elk Management Plan. Limited population management zones are still targeted for reduction. This recommendation package will continue to adjust bull to cow ratios to meet or move toward recently approved management guidelines. General season permits were recommended at 15,910 permits, an increase of 600 permits from last year (the change comprises an increase of 670 bull elk permits and a reduction of 70 antlerless elk permits from last year). Juniors antlerless elk permit opportunities were increased by 150 to 1,335 permits (5.5% of opportunity excluding limited opportunity hunts), and archery elk permits were recommended to increase by 710 to 5,574 (the change comprises an increase of 870 bull elk permits and a reduction of 160 antlerless elk permits from last year). Muzzleloader permit opportunities were recommended to increase by 210 permits to 1,373 (the change comprises an increase of 260 bull elk permits and a decrease of 50 antlerless elk permits from last year). And finally it was recommended that CHAMP hunters retain the 10 antlerless elk permits allocated to this season type, although the unit was changed in which the hunt was recommended.

The elk permit recommendations were developed in accordance with Commission direction. First, the Commission directed the Department to find opportunities to allow for elk population growth where consistent with habitat conditions. The Department recommended reductions in antlerless harvest to accommodate herd growth where possible. The Department recommended continued allocation of permits by weapon type using the Commission approved weapons allocation formula. Bull and antlerless elk harvests were allocated by gender and weapon type using five-year averages of first-choice application demand and five-year averages of hunt success by weapon type; limited opportunity hunts were excluded from this allocation determination as were the addition of 455 new archery hunts (400 additional archery bull permits in November and 55 in September) to explore new hunt structures. Finally, the Commission directed the Department to allocate at least 5% of the total available elk permits as antlerless elk permits to juniors-only seasons to address hunter recruitment goals. The permit allocation in this package for juniors-only antlerless elk permits represented 5.5% of the recommended elk permits excluding limited opportunity hunts, or 5.1% of the entire elk permit recommendation.

Not including limited opportunity or juniors-only hunts, the targeted and recommended allocations for bull and antlerless elk permits were as follows:

Bull Elk:	<u>Target</u>	<u>Recommended</u>
	68% general	66% general
	28% archery	28% archery
	4% muzzleloader	6% muzzleloader
Antlerless Elk:	<u>Target</u>	<u>Recommended</u>
	77% general	77% general

17% archery	17% archery
6% muzzleloader	6% muzzleloader

The recommended allocation for antlerless elk permits achieves the target. However, the recommended allocation for bull elk permits represents a slight deviation from target but is necessary due to increased distribution of muzzleloader opportunity. Projected harvest for both bull and antlerless seasons are expected to be within one percent of targeted allocation. The Department will continue to use the harvest allocation formula to closely approximate hunter demand.

Limited opportunity seasons were recommended for an increase of 275 permits for the general season and a decrease of 45 permits for the archery season, yielding 1,732 and 160 permits, respectively. No muzzleloader limited opportunity elk hunts were recommended. The Department also recommended that elk tags be offered for any elk that may be purchased over the counter for the following hunt areas: portions of northern Units 4A and 4B, the Verde Valley Hunt Area in Units 6A, 19A, and 21; Units 12A and 12B; and the Alamo Lake Hunt Area in Units 16A and 44A. Portions of northern Units 4A and 4B (Rincon Basin Hunt Area) and the Verde Valley Hunt Area were recommended for an archery season, whereas portions of Units 4A and 4B (Little Colorado Hunt Area). Units 12A and 12B and the Alamo Lake Hunt Area were recommended for general seasons. Recommended season dates were all or a portion of January 1 to March 31; August 1 to September 11; and December 1-31, 2008.

The hunt recommendation package was coordinated with land management agencies, local habitat partnership committees, and the Forage Resource Study Group in Region 2. The general, muzzleloader, archery, and juniors-only permit allocations were adjusted to address the allocation targets as noted above. Permits for bull and antlerless harvest were managed to meet management guidelines for bull to cow ratios and forage use as noted in the hunt guidelines and the Elk Management Plan.

The Commission was provided with the revised Elk Management Plan that reflects direction provided by the Commission at their August 2007 meeting, and the hunt recommendation package was in alignment with it. The plan tiers from Department operational plans previously shared with the Commission. The Department received no substantial feedback from the public regarding the elk hunt structures since the last hunt guideline and recommendation process.

Public Comment

Dick King, Arizona Bowhunters Association, addressed the Commission with general support for the elk recommendations, but with some concerns for archery opportunity. Mr. King also suggested that the Department use an online application form that does not allow a person to make errors. The form is then printed and mailed in.

The Commission further discussed with Mr. King a survey proposed by the Arizona Bowhunters Association. The ABA will work with the Department to develop that survey.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE COMMISSION ORDER 4 – ELK AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous

Commission Order 26 – Population Management Seasons

Population management seasons were recommended for implementation in generally the same units, seasons, and permit levels as last year. "Designated elk" is the legal wildlife in each of the elk population management seasons, so that the Director may designate the desired legal animal for harvest when the permits are issued. Although the Department recommended that the Commission authorize 1,815 elk (1,590 general, 25 HAM, and 280 archery-only), 675 javelina (310 general, 250 HAM, and 115 archery-only), 156 buffalo (all general), and 122 bear (68 general, 26 HAM, and 28 archery-only), these tags will not be issued unless approved by the Director following a determination from the population management hunt review and approval process. No substantive public comments were received regarding Population Management Seasons since the last public process for hunt guidelines and recommendations.

Motion: Mclean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE COMMISSION ORDER 26 – POPULATION MANAGEMENT SEASONS AS PROPOSED.

Vote: Unanimous

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3. Call to the Public

There were no requests from the public to speak.

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4. 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 Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.

Vote: Unanimous

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5. Hiring a New Director for the Arizona Game and Fish Department

Presenter: Shelley Cutts, Assistant Attorney General

Director Shroufe asked the Commission to let him out of his contract so that he can retire by March 31, 2008 instead of the contract date of January 26, 2009.

Motion: Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ALLOW DIRECTOR SHROUFE OUT OF HIS CONTRACT SO THAT HE CAN RETIRE ON MARCH 31, 2008 INSTEAD OF JANUARY 26, 2009.

Vote: Unanimous

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6. Selection of Commissioners to Represent Commission Interests in Legislative Matters During 2008 Legislative Session

Presenter: Duane Shroufe, Director

Director Shroufe asked the Commission to select two Commissioners to represent the Commission during the 2008 legislative session in emergency legislative matters that do not afford the time for deliberations by the entire body.

Motion: Hernbrode moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO SELECT COMMISSIONERS MCLEAN AND MARTIN TO REPRESENT THE COMMISSION DURING THE 2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION IN EMERGENCY LEGISLATIVE MATTERS THAT DO NOT AFFORD THE TIME FOR DELIBERATIONS BY THE ENTIRE BODY.

Vote: Unanimous

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7. Director's and Chairman's Report

Chairman Golightly reported that since the meeting he has been involved legislative matters; worked on issues with the Northern Arizona Shooting Range; and worked with the Department.

Director Shroufe reported that the Department has worked diligently and successfully over the years with the Department of Administration (DOA) Human Resources in getting Department employees considerable pay increases. However, because of circumstances happening in law enforcement and the field of biology, the Department is still losing employees to other agencies and states that offer significant benefits. So the Department recently met with DOA Human Resources and they are going to do several things. An economic assessment is being done right now and they are going to allow the Department to work with them on new hiring salaries for new employees in the wildlife series, and will allow us to do administrative adjustments so that the equity adjustment line stays in place. For the non-wildlife series, some new rules and regulations are coming that will take the many different classifications and grades and reduce them, but will extend the pay ranges. Also, all grades will be able to increase their salary through education and training.

Director Shroufe also reported that the Department is preparing to apply for the Governor's Award in 2009 (a step above the Governor's Pioneer Award that the Department received about

three years ago). Also, the Department has garnered two Showcase Awards for doing good business in the State. One was the Endangered Species Reintroduction Program highlighting the Sonoran pronghorn, the condors, and the black footed ferrets, and the other was the Urban Fishing Program.

* * * * *

8. Commissioner's Reports

Commissioner Hernbrode spent a considerable of time working with sportsmen on the Tumacacori issue and took a lot of personal time (put deer and elk in the freezer).

Commissioner McLean participated in parts of the October meeting telephonically (put antelope in his freezer); worked on legislative issues; attended the Pinal County Open Spaces Forum with Commissioner Hernbrode; worked on range issues; and spent time with Department staff on the I-10 alternative issues.

Commissioner Martin participated in the small mouth bass stocking at Apache Lake; participated in the November telephonic Commission Meeting with the other Commissioners; participated in the black footed ferret release on the Espee Ranch; met with the Governor's Natural Resources Advisor Lori Faeth; attended the Sierra Club Volunteer Awards Luncheon; met with Representative Ableser regarding the Endangered Species Act mentioned in the Legislative Update; attended a meeting of the Funding Initiative Group regarding protecting the Heritage Fund in the current budget crisis; attended a meeting regarding Resolution Copper; and met with Sandy Bahr at her request to discuss Tumacacori, Resolution Copper and other miscellaneous topics.

Commissioner Woodhouse participated in a KOFA tour; talked with representatives from Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club several times regarding their concerns about Tumacacori; participated in the November telephonic Commission meeting; attended a dedication at Imperial Refuge for the Imperial Ponds on the Multi-species Conservation Plan that was put on by the Bureau of Reclamation; met with Department staff regarding the Adair Range; met with Adair Range staff; and toured the Ben Avery Facility and the new headquarters.

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9. Approval of Minutes and Signing of Minutes

Motion: Martin moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 19-20, 2007 AND NOVEMBER 2, 2007.

Vote: Unanimous

Following approval, the Commission signed the minutes for October 19-20, 2007 and November 2, 2007.

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10. Future Agenda Items

Deputy Director Ferrell noted the following future agenda and action items:

- Regarding buffalo management on the House Rock Wildlife Area, pursue with the National Park Service the use of Department appointed agents to harvest buffalo at the Grand Canyon National Park and pursue fencing options that would restrict buffalo movements onto the Park, and provide a report on those items along with the history regarding this issue
- Draft a letter to the sponsors of Senate Bill 408 and the Arizona Congressional Delegation requesting support of that bill, which is the hunting heritage bill
- Express Commission concerns to the Arizona Congressional Delegation and members of the House Natural Resources Committee regarding House Bill 3287, Tumacacori Highlands Wilderness proposal and keep the Commission informed of every effort made by the Department or Congressman Grijalva as it occurs
- Send a letter to the Arizona Congressional Delegation expressing the Commission's opposition to House Bill 6336, which referenced aerial gunning
- Keep the Commission Chair and the two Commissioners who are the Legislative Representatives informed of developments regarding conversations about potential changes to the Pioneer License eligibility requirements
- Continue to coordinate with ADOT on the propose I-10 bypass of Tucson in support of the Commission's opposition to all four proposed alignments and inform ADOT and the Governor's Office of that opposition
- Draft a letter to the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest Supervisor asking the forest to accommodate the domestic sheep licensed for the Long Tom Allotment on another allotment within the Forest Service system that would not impact existing nor potential bighorn sheep range
- At the January Commission meeting, present options regarding the Deer Valley South property and forward background information to the Commission next week
- Coordinate with the Arizona State Rifle and Pistol Association to facilitate their support for statewide shooting range issues in general and specifically the Northern Arizona Shooting Range
- Move the shooting range updates to the Saturday agenda to facilitate better attendance by the shooting sports constituency
- Consider adding facilities that would allow the stabling of horses in future development of the range (Not an agenda item – suggested by Commissioner McLean only as a thought as the Master Plan moves forward from planning to implementation)

Commissioner Martin requested three additional items: 1) That the Quarterly Non-game Updates be on the agenda and presented at Commission meetings; 2) that the Department provide a briefing on Department coordination efforts with the State Mine Inspector's office regarding mine closures as they relate to bats; and 3) would like to talk about adding a new committee to the Commission committee assignments at the January Commission meeting.

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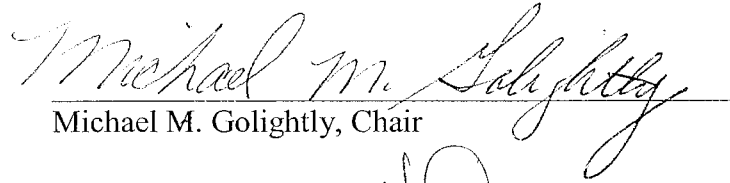
Motion: Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADJOURN THIS MEETING.

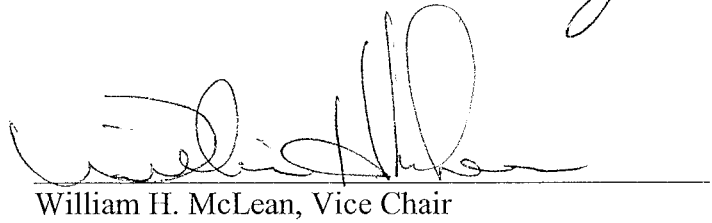
Vote: Unanimous

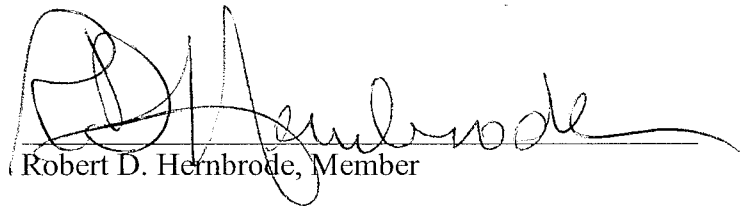
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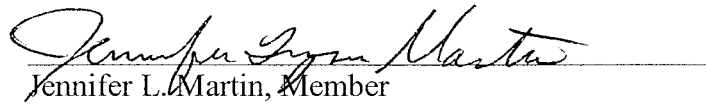
Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

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Michael M. Golightly, Chair


William H. McLean, Vice Chair


Robert D. Hembrode, 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
December 7, 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. *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.

On August 7, 2007, the State filed its Motion to Intervene. Plaintiffs, in response to the State's motion, did not object to the State's permissive intervention, so long as the court imposes restrictions on the State's participation, such as page limits, requiring the State to file joint briefs with the other intervenors, and prohibiting the State from duplicating arguments made by the federal defendants. On August 29, 2007, the State filed a reply in support of its Motion to Intervene and opposed any restrictions on the State's intervention.

On August 20, 2007, the State also filed a response to plaintiffs' Motion for Temporary Restraining Order.

On August 30, 2007, the federal defendants filed an answer to plaintiffs First Amended Complaint.

The court has issued a scheduling order for the parties to file motions for summary judgment. The plaintiffs' motion is due December 14, 2007; the defendants' cross-motion and response is due February 1, 2008; plaintiffs' response/reply is due February 29, 2008 and defendants' reply is due March 14, 2008.

Plaintiffs have withdrawn their motion for a temporary restraining order so the status quo will remain until the court rules on the motions for summary judgment.

As for the motions to intervene filed by the State of Arizona and various conservation organizations, the court has indicated it will not likely rule on these motions prior to the time

the parties file their motions for summary judgment. The court, however, granted permission to the applicants for intervention to file motions for summary judgment. Also, the plaintiffs stated on the record that they have no objection to the State of Arizona intervening in the case.

(10/15/07) (JFO/SDC)

Lands Update
For the Arizona Game and Fish Commission
November 30, 2007
Phoenix, Arizona

FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest

Department personnel held a planning meeting with the Forest managers and planners on October 30, 2007 to discuss Forest Plan Revision and Travel Management Plan commenting processes (specific to AGFD) and associated timelines. Department personnel are currently reviewing and preparing comments on the initial proposed action from the Forest regarding the proposed Travel Management Rule. The issues include proposed travel routes and dispersed/designated camping areas. In response to the comments collected during five public meetings across the Pinetop Region, the Forest will be revising the original proposed action to reflect initial concerns about low open road and O.H.V. trail densities. Department personnel will be providing comments to the Forest on the initial proposed action by December 12, 2007. These comments should be included in the new proposed action. The revised proposed actions (which address concerns raised by O.H.V. interests) should be available for comment beginning early in February 2008. Department personnel will again review and provide necessary comment at that time.

Coconino National Forest

Although the Forests are continuing to work toward revision of their Land Management Plans (LMP), the opportunity for the Department to be involved has not resumed. A public meeting scheduled for December 8, 2007 will begin the public and Department process for LMP involvement. In addition, several reports should be ready for review and comment in late 2007 or early 2008.

Coronado National Forest

The Forest held six southeastern Arizona public meetings in October and November on their Forest Plan revision. Department personnel attended all of the meetings. Forest evaluation of the current forest plan points to five major themes for the forest plan revision:

- Ecosystem Restoration
- Safety and Information
- Public Access and Travel Patterns
- Preservation of Open Space
- Collaboration and Partnerships

The public meetings encouraged workgroups to identify issues and goals under each of these major themes.

SB 1441 HABITAT RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT FUND

Anderson Mesa Grassland Restoration

The primary contractor has completed the contract with Diablo Trust for treating over 5,000 acres. Diablo Trust has started work on an additional 1700 acres. These acres will complete the Natural Resource Conservation Society contract.

Fencing of Camillo/Pine Lake by the Diablo Trust contractor is ongoing and will be completed soon. Arizona Wildlife Federation has contracted for fencing 4 lakes and that work has begun.

The burning, seeding and archaeology work is done and bills paid. To date more than \$500,000.00 has been spent on these restoration efforts.

The Region held a field trip to meet with contractors and to show the Forest Service what has been accomplished this year. The forest was appreciative of the accomplishments, and all of us were impressed with the work of the contractors.

Westside Habitat Improvement- North Kaibab Ranger District

During October and November the Department contracted with Revegetation Services, an AZ company, for its seeding and herbicide treatments on the Westside habitat project. This 30 –day contract brings the work on the Westside to a close this calendar year. In total, 500 acres of native shrub seed were seeded using a rangeland drill. The species seeded were cliffrose, Wyoming sagebrush, basin big sagebrush, winterfat, and 4-wing saltbush. If establishment is successful, these species will benefit wintering mule deer on the Kaibab. Due to the naturally slow establishment of shrubs and variability of seasonal precipitation, it may be several seasons before we can determine if seeding is truly successful. Of the 500 acres seeded, 250 of those were also sprayed with Plateau herbicide, which is an herbicide that is specific to annual grasses. The target weed that Plateau is aiming at reducing is cheatgrass, which is abundant and competing with native vegetation in many areas on the Westside. This is one of the first seeding efforts for wildlife in the state. The Department plans to continue seeding next fall if possible and continue to monitor efforts associated with seeding and herbicide.

In order to adaptively monitor the Westside area, the Department has been fortunate enough to have cooperation with the Grand Canyon Trust (GCT), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and the FS Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS). As part of a Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, NAU and RMRS have established research plots within an area on the Westside in order to evaluate the effectiveness of seeding with and without herbicide. In addition, GCT has established monitoring plots to look at seeding effectiveness within and in adjacent control plots.

Region I Mule Deer

Department personnel continue to coordinate with the Clifton Ranger District to implement large scale habitat improvement projects associated with the S.B. 1441 funding allocated to the Pinetop Region in 2006. Planning for the NO Bar Mesa and Mallet Projects, which are subsets of the Sheep Wash Ecosystem Restoration Project in Game Management Unit 27, continues to progress. The NEPA decision for NO Bar Mesa will be signed this month and project implementation is planned to begin in December. This project includes approximately 2000 acres

of PJ thinning and 8000 acres of prescribed fire activities. The NEPA planning for the Mallet Project is also ongoing, and the District is planning on completing a Categorical Exclusion Decision for the project as early as February of 2008. Project activities include 400 acres of thinning and 3000 acres of prescribed fire activities. The District is planning on beginning project implementation in the spring of 2008.

Department coordination on the implementation and completion of other S.B. 1441 projects on the Clifton Ranger District is progressing. Recent efforts by Department personnel to develop funding matches for these projects with the Natural Resource Conservation Service office in Safford were unsuccessful. The collection agreements for moving funds originally planned for the Pigeon and Chitty projects to the Sheep Wash and Sunset projects should be completed by January 2008. For the Chitty Restoration Project, the remaining two southern units (phase 2) that were not treated in the Chitty Wildland Fire Use event this past summer are on schedule to be treated with prescribed fire during the spring of 2008. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding potential phase 2 project effects is ongoing and expected to be completed as early as January 2008. Project implementation will begin this spring and the project should be completed by June of 2008.

The Clifton Ranger District is continuing with project planning and documentation on two S.B. 1441 related projects. The District has contracted with an outside entity to begin work on the Environmental Assessment for the 38,000 acre Sunset Ecosystem Restoration project. The completion report for the Pigeon Ecosystem Restoration project should be available next month. This project was completed during the spring of 2007 and included the application of prescribed fire to approximately 21,000 acres of grassland, PJ woodland and ponderosa pine forest.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

Department personnel conducted several days of gill netting surveys in Scott Reservoir in mid October to monitor and remove northern pike. A single illegally stocked northern pike was collected in routine fish population surveys in the spring of 2007. The fear is that more pike are present in the lake and would establish and impact sportfishing in the lake as was documented at Rainbow Lake and Fool Hollow Lake, also in Navajo County. No pike were collected during these surveys, and plans to conduct additional surveys next spring when pike would be spawning will ensure they do not exist or become established.

The Department completed maintenance on a fish barrier on the East Fork of Little Colorado River on October 8-10, 2007. Approximately 3.4 tons of gravel was horse packed to the remote barrier site to plug leaks in the barrier. The lower East Fork of Little Colorado River is tentatively scheduled to be renovated in 2008.

Department personnel reintroduced Apache trout into several recovery streams on the Forest. Hatchery raised fingerling Apache trout were stocked into Lee Valley Creek on October 5, 2007 to supplement trout stocked into that creek in 2004. Lee Valley Creek was renovated in 2003. Wild Apache trout were stocked into Fish Creek on October 19, 2007. Fish Creek had been

chemically treated in 2005 to remove non-native trout. The Apache trout were collected from the upper West Fork of Black River, a population established in 1997. Wild Apache trout were stocked into the upper East Fork of Little Colorado River on October 19, 2007. The upper East Fork was renovated in 2005. The wild trout were collected from Coleman Creek, a replicate population created in the 1960s, and Soldier Creek, one of the 13 original populations. Wild Apache trout were stocked into the West Fork of Little Colorado River on November 16, 2007. The West Fork was renovated in 2006. The Apache trout were collected from Thompson Creek and the upper West Fork of Black River, replicate populations established in 1997.

The Department conducted monitoring surveys on a number of Apache trout recovery streams on the Forest in October and November 2007 to monitor the effectiveness of man-made fish barriers in preventing non-native trout from reinvading recovery habitat. Lee Valley Creek, Conklin Creek, Fish Creek, and West Fork of Black River were electrofished without finding non-native trout upstream of the barrier, confirming the effectiveness of those barriers. However, non-native brown trout were found to have re-invaded several recovery streams, including Hayground Creek, Stinky Creek, and Snake Creek. The brown trout were all small individuals that likely traveled up through interstitial spaces in the rock gabion barriers. Biologists may attempt to remove the few brown trout with electrofishing gear in Hayground and Stinky creeks since they had been previously restocked with wild Apache trout in an effort to avoid re-treatment with chemicals and to maintain the current populations of Apache trout. Snake Creek had not been restocked yet with Apache trout and will likely be re-treated with antimycin.

The Department continues to work with local irrigation companies in an effort to improve aquatic habitat in several sportfish reservoirs. All but one of the lakes are irrigation reservoirs, requiring the support of the respective irrigation companies before structures can be installed. The Department is working to resolve the concerns of the irrigation companies.

The Department installed a boat dock on the Game and Fish property at Rainbow Lake. Also installation of a fishing pier on the same piece of property to benefit shoreline anglers has been proposed. Most of the shoreline at Rainbow Lake is private property, limiting shoreline anglers to the short sections along the dam and a small piece of Game and Fish property at the boat ramp. A fishing pier is expected to greatly facilitate increased angler use at the lake.

Coconino National Forest

The Department has completed its participation in the Greater Flagstaff Forest Partnership-collaborative Jack Smith/Schultz Fuels Reduction and Forest Health project. The Jack Smith/Schultz Project proposes fuels reduction and prescribed burning treatments on approximately 8500 acres on the southeast and east flanks of the San Francisco Peaks in northwest Flagstaff. The Department worked with the Forest with some success to incorporate forest thinning treatments that promote better structural heterogeneity for wildlife habitat in parts of the project area particularly important for large game, threatened species, and other important forest wildlife. However, we were unable to resolve our concerns for portions of the project area where treatments will most likely result in an overall 'open forest condition' that may not meet stand-level canopy cover requirements for the Northern Goshawk among other wildlife species. These concerns center on the Forest's recent shift in its interpretation of the Northern Goshawk Guidelines toward more open stands with small, even-aged groups of trees. The Department has

repeatedly requested the opportunity to vent our concerns with the Forest, but the Forest has yet to provide this opportunity. The Center for Biological Diversity has appealed the Jack Smith/Schultz Environmental Assessment for reasons including the new interpretation of the Northern Goshawk Guidelines and its inability to meet the Forest Plan, and the Center did cite statements from Department letters to the Forest in its appeal.

Department personnel attended a meeting hosted by Diablo Trust to discuss current levels of recreation including Hunting, ATV and OHV use, and camping. The Forest, recreation site contractors, and the State Land Department also attended the meeting. Initial reports on current knowledge and recreation data were presented and future goals were discussed. Diablo Trust expects to continue the discussion at their annual meeting in February 2008. There will be opportunities to discuss Department objectives of hunter recruitment and retention as well as watchable wildlife at this meeting.

Coronado National Forest

The Department continues to work with the Douglas Ranger District to expand native fish populations in Cave Creek in the Chiricahua Mountains. Efforts to stock both Sonoran suckers and desert suckers are currently being planned. The planned implementation date for this project is the spring of 2008.

The Department is working with the Douglas Ranger District to expand Yaqui chub populations currently found in West Turkey Creek and Rucker Canyon. Both locations are in the Chiricahua Mountains.

The Department continues to work on the environmental compliance documents for the re-establishment of Gila topminnows into Sabino Canyon. Planned implementation is still scheduled for the spring of 2008.

The Department has completed repairs to the boat ramp at Pena Blanca Lake and the ramp is open to the public once again.

The Department met with the Sierra Vista Ranger to view two sites in Canelo Hills for implementation of proposed water developments for wildlife. A late November meeting with the Forest and the Department has been planned to look at a third possible water development site within the Canelo Hills.

Kaibab National Forest

The Department attended a field trip with the Williams Ranger District looking at the impact of elk on aspen regeneration and at potential techniques for protecting aspen. Aspen regeneration is being browsed very hard and no young aspen are reaching maturity. Three potential techniques for protecting aspen were discussed including fencing, "jackstrawing" trees around aspen stands, and reducing elk numbers. No one technique was agreed upon.

Prescott National Forest

The Department commented on a scoping document for Drake Cement Company. The scoping document proposes to investigate 18 additional core holes looking for reserves. After a

discussion with the environmental planner, it was made clear to the Department that if reserves were found, a new Plan of Operations would begin, which requires full analysis under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). The Department plans to stay involved with this project as the drill hole area has the potential to significantly increase the size of the existing quarry.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)

Arizona Strip Field Office

The Department continues to coordinate closely with the Field Office (FO) in development of subsequent implementation-level plans, including Travel Management Plans and associated route networks.

The decision on the Upper Langs Project, which is the first Integrated Vegetation Management project on the AZ Strip, has been postponed. Evidently, several environmental groups such as the Grand Canyon Wildlands Council have some concerns over grazing associated with the project. The plan is estimated to be finalized in January. At that time, the restoration efforts that the Upper Lang's Run is focusing on will fall under a larger plan that has already gone through NEPA. In order to address comments from concerned groups, the BLM held a meeting in Flagstaff in early November.

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.

The Department participated in BLM's Travel Management Planning process for the Lake Havasu Field Office. Through this process, information was collected for each route and included biological, archeological, and other concerns, as well as the various uses and users associated with each route. These options will then go to BLM managers for review and the ultimate route management decision will be determined.

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 input during public meetings 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.

Kingman Field Office

The Department attended a Big Ranch "A" uplands monitoring event. Representatives from BLM, Francis Creek Ranch, and the Natural Resource Conservation Society (NRCS) were also in attendance. Big Ranch "A" management along with NRCS and BLM coordinated to drill a

new well north west of Senator Mountain in an effort to open up grazing lands. This effort should decrease current grazing impacts on the remaining portions of the allotment.

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.

Safford Field Office

The Draft Aravaipa Ecosystem Management plan is available for internal departmental review. The Department will be working with the Safford Field Office to ensure Department needs are met and concerns are addressed.

BLM NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument / Vermillion Cliffs National Monument

The proposed final RMP/EIS was released on March 2, 2007 for the Arizona Strip planning area including the Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermillion Cliffs National Monuments. 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 early 2008. The Department will be working closely with BLM to address submitted comments pertaining to wildlife and wildlife management.

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 Department remains engaged at both the Field Office and State Office levels to ensure consistency in regards to wildlife, wildlife management, and recreational opportunity. BLM is currently analyzing comments for incorporation into the Proposed RMP and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

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 the 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 Kofa bighorn survey was completed in early November and a population estimate should be calculated and reported by the end of December. Thirty bighorn sheep have been collared on the Kofa to collect information on nutrition, condition, movement, mortality, and predation.

An adult male lion was captured and collared on October 21st. Since collaring, only one mule deer has been documented as being killed by this lion. Efforts to collar additional lions are ongoing. The USFWS is exploring options to complete an EA for the management of lions on the Kofa.

Department and Kofa personnel continue to monitor wildlife waters on the Kofa. The USFWS and Department are currently maintaining existing waters, including hauling supplemental water, with appropriate documentation of those activities.

More complete information on Kofa bighorn sheep and lions can be found at the following web site www.azgfd.gov/w_c/bhsheep/index.shtml. This web site will be updated monthly.

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 comments and the Department of Defense (DOD) has signed a Record of Decision. The Department, DOD, and USFWS have signed the INRMP and implementation has begun. The Department continues to work with DOD to ensure public access, consistent with the INRMP.

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 internally 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 conservation partnership meeting, at the Flagstaff Naval Observatory, to review the Navy Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan. Performance on natural resource actions was evaluated, and the conservation team concluded that the primary shortcomings for management at the Naval Observatory were in the category of research and monitoring. After that meeting a second meeting was held addressing the need for acquiring conservation buffers to prevent encroachment around Camp Navajo and the Naval Observatory as they begin to ramp up their military mission. These buffers (comprised primarily of State Land) would be conserved through a partnership between the Department, the Army National Guard, the Navy, USFWS, Coconino County, and the City of Flagstaff. Despite the imminent threat to military mission and conservation values, the desire to solve existing problems crumbled around the inability to purchase land from the State Land Department.

GENERAL UPDATES

Aravaipa Access

The Arizona State Land Department found a copy a deed transmitting land in the Aravaipa area (Kathy Sargent's ranch) which has a stipulation that the ranch was to record an easement for public access to BLM land beyond the ranch. The Department sent a copy of that document to the BLM Safford office. The ranch has been denying access to hunters who get past Norma Tapia's gate. It appears that the ranch may not have a right to deny public access.

Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)

ADOT unveiled the results of a study to the public examining new routes for Interstate 10 to bypass both Phoenix and Tucson (see map included). Four routes remain on the table for consideration: two of these would bisect the lower end of Unit 32's pronghorn habitat and then run up the San Pedro River Valley. Another route would run up the Sulphur Springs and Aravaipa Valleys, then cut west, between the Aravaipa and Galiuro Wildernesses. A fourth route bypasses Tucson to the southwest, then heads north between Saguaro National Park West and Ironwood Forest National Monument.

The Department is extremely concerned with the potential impact each of these proposed routes would have on wildlife habitat, especially the San Pedro River and Aravaipa routes, and is working to raise interest among sportsmen and conservationists about the effects of the new freeways. ADOT's own data show that these routes will not relieve congestion on I-10 in Tucson. However, these routes will make large portions of Unit 32 pronghorn habitat and 37B quail, mule deer, and javelina habitat viable for large-scale urban development; will further fragment bighorn habitat and other wildlife connectivity between the Aravaipa, Galiuro, Winchester, Catalina, and Rincon ranges; and will have innumerable effects on sensitive habitats of many species of concern in the San Pedro and Aravaipa Valleys.

The proposed routes are primarily through state and private land and would almost certainly be a catalyst for new development and urbanization of now rural and wild lands used mainly for agricultural purposes or for wildlife.

The following are the dates and locations of the next round of ADOT feasibility study public meetings. ADOT may be trying to get these meetings all done before the end of the year so that the ADOT Board can announce a decision at the January meeting. All meetings will be from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. with a presentation at 6 p.m.

Monday, November 26 - Marana
Town Hall Conference Center
11555 West Civic Center Drive

Tuesday, December 4 - Casa Grande
City of Casa Grande Council Chambers
510 East Florence Blvd.

Wednesday, December 5 - Buckeye
Buckeye Community Center
201 East Centre

Thursday, December 6 - Willcox
Willcox Community Center
312 West Stewart Street

Black Canyon City Heritage Park

An open house for the Black Canyon City Heritage Park will be held Saturday, Nov. 10th. Consultants hired by the Black Canyon City citizens committee have developed an excellent plan for habitat development on the land adjacent to New River. This property was originally offered to the Department.

Buckeye and Star Valley Annexation Agreements

The Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) regarding hunting within Buckeye town limits and new annexations was approved by the Buckeye Town Council. The Star Valley Town Council also approved the IGA for hunting within their town limits. The Department is working with both the Forest Service and BLM to address concerns surrounding annexation of large tracts of federal public lands.

Canelo Hills Coalition

The Department and various land management agencies met with the Canelo Hills Coalition, a group of 4 ranches, to provide an overview of watershed issues and projects that have been completed surrounding the Red Rock Canyon drainage. At the November 16 meeting, updates were provided on activities being implemented to assist with the enhancement of habitat and native wildlife ecosystems, along with methods to improve the process.

City of Flagstaff

The City of Flagstaff is beginning a planning process to revise the Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan, a joint document that is used by both the City and Coconino County. The Department was recently invited to participate in an early meeting to discuss this planning process, which will begin early 2008 and will be completed by 2011. The City invited

the Department to participate in working groups that will tackle open space, recreation, urban trails, transportation, and land use. The City also invited the Department to present its data on long-range planning for wildlife at a City Council work session scheduled for sometime in early 2008. There will be opportunities to discuss future growth as well as the possibility of avoiding some potential problems for and with wildlife.

Coconino County

The Department is assisting the Coconino County Parks and Recreation Department in the development of their 10-year Master Plan. In this effort, the Department has provided the Parks Dept with long-range planning maps of wildlife connectivity to help guide County objectives for future open space acquisition. The Department has also provided the county with a strategic vision for developing Watchable Wildlife programs in parks and open space, which will also be included in the plan. The county has also agreed to include information about the Department's Areas of Conservation Priority (ACP) mapping project in their plan.

Ecological Restoration Institute/BLM

November 6th and 7th, Habitat personnel met with the BLM and Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) to discuss Mount Trumbull research and monitoring. Several projects associated with the Department's Research Branch are winding down, as are several associated with the ERI. The meeting was to discuss the future of projects in the Mt. Trumbull area and how future coordination needed or not needed to change. Because there will likely be less emphasis from the Research Branch, Regional Habitat staff will likely be providing more comment on management in the Mt. Trumbull area. There were discussions that future meetings will be handled annually instead of biannually. There was some discussion of the Upper Langs Run project at this Trumbull meeting and both Habitat staff and Research staff strongly suggested that the research based projects (Trumbull) and management-based projects (Integrated Vegetation Management) be handled separately primarily due to the landscape scale differences.

Flagstaff Fire Department

The Department visited the Flagstaff Fire Department's City Well Field forest treatment with several agency personnel such as BLM Strip district, NAU, Forest Service, and the State Land Department. The main purpose of these field trips has been to illustrate and discuss a habitat description jointly developed by the Department and the USFWS. It differs from many prescriptions currently being applied on the landscape in that there is much more variability in the treatment, especially with respect to sizes of both openings and groups of trees. We are very pleased and appreciative of the Flagstaff Fire Department's work in implementing the concept.

Heber-Reno Sheep Driveway

The Department is going to be conducting a collaborative Disease Assessment for the alternatives of the Heber-Reno Sheep Driveway that are being developed under the NEPA process. Key partners will be the Tonto National Forest, the Apache-Sitreaves National Forest and the Dobson and Auza sheep companies.

Pinal County

The Department attended the Pinal Outdoors Summit on November 8th at the Harrah's Ak Chin Casino. The theme of the Summit was identifying where and how to protect, preserve, and

acquire areas for parks, trails and open space. This summit was an opportunity for stakeholders to network and share information that can be used in shaping the outdoor vision for Pinal County. Over 200 elected officials, senior management, parks and recreation and planning staff representing over 20 agencies including local, tribal, county, regional, state and federal governments participated.

Pinal Partnership

The Department continues to participate in the Pinal Partnership and has been meeting specifically with the Pinal Partnership Open Space and Trails subcommittee. The subcommittee is working on a presentation of the county's open space values for the January Partnership Breakfast.

Wood Supply Working Group (WSWG)

The Department continues to participate in the WSWG, which just recently held its 6th (of 7) meetings. The group is comprised of natural resource agencies and wood utilization private industries; an NAU Forest Ecosystem Restoration Analysis (ForestERA) grant funded by the Forest Service has facilitated the group. 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 in the southwest region. 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. The Department has been actively involved in 4 sub-committees of the WSWG: wildlife, WUI (wildland-urban interface) delineation, treatment development, and fire use. The Department feels comfortable that the wood supply estimate that comes out of this study will be a conservative estimate based on agreement among all working group partners, and will not overestimate supply in ways that might compromise wildlife habitat in the future. Forest ERA will submit a final product in December 2007. The Forest Service will use the results of this analysis to review future stewardship contracts for thinning across the southwestern Forests, but this study was not commissioned to evaluate any one particular contractor.

Hunt Permit-tag Application Schedule – Winter 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 and refund warrants mailed out by:
Antelope	(See note 1)	Jan. 25, 2008	Feb. 12, 2008	April 25, 2008
Elk	(See note 1)	Jan. 25, 2008	Feb. 12, 2008	April 25, 2008

First Come⁴	
	Applications accepted by mail only on or after:
HUNT	ACCEPTANCE DATES
Antelope	April 14, 2008
Elk	April 14, 2008

Notes:

- 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 (www.azgfd.gov), or from any Game and Fish Department office or license dealer, unless otherwise noted in the Hunt Permit-tag Application schedule.
- If a paper Hunt Permit-tag Application that is submitted contains an error and is received by Jan. 25, 2008, the Department will make three attempts within a 24-hour period to notify the applicant by telephone (if a phone number is provided).
- 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. Deadline dates may be extended in the event of a Department related system failure.
- 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 (623) 236-7702, or online at www.azgfd.gov.