

LANDOWNER-LESSEE/SPORTSMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Minutes of Regular Meeting

Saturday, January 17, 2009

Arizona Game and Fish Department - Phoenix Office

Committee Members Present

Sanford Cohen, OHV-Sportsmen Group

Julie Decker, Bureau of Land Management

Darcy Ely, Livestock Grower

James O'Haco, Livestock Grower

Jennifer Martin, Arizona Game and Fish Commission

David Hoyle, Sportsmen Group

Nick Heatwole, Sportsmen Group (proxy for Jon Fugate)

Tami Emmett, Coronado National Forest

Stephen Williams, Arizona State Land Department

Joe King, Livestock Grower

Dennis Moroney, Livestock Grower

Committee Members Absent

Joe Underwood, Sportsmen Group

Scott Heap, Sportsmen Group

Duane Coleman, Livestock Grower

Others Present

Mark Weise, Development Branch Chief, AGFD

Sal Palazzolo, Landowner Relations Program Manager, AGFD

Troy Christensen, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD

Al Eiden, Landowner Relations Program, AGFD

Meeting Notes

The Landowner-Lessee/Sportsman Relations Committee (Committee) meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. An introduction of those present was initiated.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Since a quorum was not present at the May 31, 2008 meeting, the Committee accepted the meeting minutes for January 20, 2008.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Jennifer Martin announced that, at the previous day's Commission meeting, Commissioner Robert Woodhouse had been appointed as liaison to the Committee and that this would be the last Committee meeting with her in that role. Commissioner Martin stated that although he was unable to attend this meeting due to a conflict with another meeting, Commissioner Woodhouse had expressed much interest in this committee. She added that Commissioner Woodhouse's agricultural background should be beneficial to our meetings.

To fulfill an action item from a previous Committee meeting, the Landowner Relations Program (LRP) had provided information to the Commission showing the amount of funding that the road maintenance program could realistically put on the ground. Commissioner Martin informed the Committee that the Commission strongly supported this program to improve public access and they had increased the original budget for the road maintenance program by \$150,000. However, since then the State's budget crisis had led to that additional funding being removed. Commissioner Martin was confident that the program would get more funding, when the State's financial situation eventually improves.

Updates from Land Management Agencies

Julie Decker gave an update from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). She informed the Committee of the progress on a number of Resource Management Plans (RMP) for the state. Information on the RMP's can be viewed at www.blm.gov. Ms. Decker also talked about new BLM personnel and the budget situation that the agency is dealing with.

Tami Emmett from the Coronado National Forest was next. She updated the Committee on the progress of the Travel Management Plans and new United States Forest Service personnel. Ms. Emmett informed the Committee of a new citizens' group, Arizona Public Lands Access Committee, which is forming with the idea of exchanging information related to public access in Region V.

Stephen Williams gave an update from the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). ASLD is having internal discussions to determine exactly how the new OHV law, new policies, and other recent developments affect their protocols/actions. ASLD also has a meeting planned with AGFD to discuss some issues.

Landowner Relations Program Updates/Current Issues

Sal Palazzolo updated the Committee on the Farm Bill and how some of its new rules will affect LRP and landowner/lessees. He told the Committee that LRP had completed 32 new habitat improvement and access agreements since the last meeting, including a 50-year easement for John Long Canyon in southeast Arizona. Mr. Palazzolo informed the Committee of another public effort being made to pass Senate Bill 1264, which was vetoed last year; the Committee discussed a similar law which was passed in Utah.

New Off-Highway Vehicle Legislation

Joe Sacco gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the new OHV regulations that went into effect on January 1, 2009. Although the State's budget crisis could delay revenues going to the proper places, the new legislation is expected to substantially increase OHV enforcement. OHV education will also increase with violator and mainstream courses in both internet and classroom formats. Details on the new registration and equipment requirements can be viewed at www.azgfd.gov/ohv.

Identification of Current Issues and Possible Solutions

Committee members brought up some current issues to make sure the Department was aware of them. Joe King mentioned vacant wildlife manager positions in southern

Arizona; Joe Sacco replied that five cadets are currently going through post-academy training to fill vacant positions. Dennis Moroney expressed the ranchers' position regarding black-tailed prairie dogs – they would like to support state efforts to help the species while opposing having them federally listed as endangered.

Next Meeting

The Committee decided that this summer's meeting should be scheduled in conjunction with the Arizona Cattle Growers Association Convention, which will be held in Tucson in late July. Committee members will be informed of the date and time of that meeting once it has been determined.

Action Items:

1. Schedule the summer LLSRC meeting in conjunction with the Arizona Cattle Grower Association Convention. (LRP Staff)
2. Meeting minutes distributed. (LRP Staff)

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