

## Heritage Fund Public Advisory Committee Meeting

Approved September 17, 2005 at Grand Canyon Cavern Inn, Peachsprings, AZ. Motion by Brian Pinney and second by Jim Jett, approved as presented by unanimous vote.	Meeting Minutes May 7, 2005 Sierra Suites Hotel Sierra Vista, Arizona
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### Committee Members:

Hays Gilstrap, Phoenix (Chairman) – Present	Valerie Morrill, Yuma – Present
Region I Representative – Vacant	Ron Bemis, McNeal – Present
Ron Smith, Pinetop-Lakeside – Present	Dennis Ward, Willcox – Present
Clair Harris, Flagstaff – Present	Tony Nelssen, Scottsdale – Present
Maggie Sacher, Marble Canyon – Present	Jerry Nelson, Scottsdale – Absent
Jim Jett, Kingman – Present	Diane Drobka, Safford – Present
Randy Lamb, Prescott – Present	Brian Pinney, Chandler – Present
Nick Heatwole, Yuma – Present	Margaret Bohannon, Scottsdale – Present

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1. **Call to Order, Opening Remarks and Introductions:** Commissioner Hays Gilstrap, Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:00 am. Department staff, guest presenters and HPAC members made introductions.
2. **Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2005:** Upon motion by Jim Jett and second by Clair Harris, the minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **Call to the Public.** No one requested to be heard.
4. **Presenter:** Joan Scott, Region V Habitat Program Manager, gave a presentation on the acquisition of the Coal Mine Spring Property with Heritage acquisition funds. The 2628-acre property was purchased in December 2004. Four partners cooperated to accomplish this project: AGFD, Arizona State Parks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Trust for Public Lands. AGFD contributed \$1.5 million of Heritage funds, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awarded an Endangered Species Act Section 6 Recovery Land Acquisition Grant to AGFD for \$750,000 for a total purchase price of \$2.25 million. Arizona State Parks will manage the property as a part of the adjacent Sonoita Creek State Natural Area. The Trust for Public Lands negotiated the land purchase terms with the landowners, contracted and funded the appraisal and environmental assessment, and acquired the property and transferred final ownership to AGFD, for a total contribution of about \$40,000.

Coal Mine Spring has a population of the endangered Gila Topminnow. It was critical to protect this property, because the metapopulation is probably dependent on this one site. This acquisition is critical to the recovery of this species. Six other federally listed species and 16 sensitive species will also benefit from this

acquisition. AGFD is proceeding with Phase II, trying to protect the top of the Coal Mine watershed and provide a buffer on the east.

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Committee Recommendation to the Commission: Upon motion by Margaret Bohannon, second by Jim Jett, the committee recommends that the Commission use Acquisition funds to purchase the eastern protection buffer (Phase II) to the Coal Mine Springs watershed to protect sensitive, threatened and endangered habitats.

5. **Presenter:** Bill Van Pelt, Nongame Mammals Program Manager, updated the committee on the Department's participation in jaguar conservation including an overview of the conservation strategies identified in the Jaguar Conservation Agreement. Following the meeting, Bill led a field trip to Cinega Creek to view a historical jaguar site.
6. **Presenter:** Holly E. Richter, Ph.D. Upper San Pedro Program Manager for the Nature Conservancy delivered a presentation on the Upper San Pedro Partnership. The presentation emphasized the collaborative efforts of the Upper San Pedro Partnership and their efforts to integrate science with policy. A consortium of 21 agencies and organization that cooperate in the identification, prioritization and implementation of comprehensive policies and projects to assist in meeting the water needs of the Sierra Vista sub-watershed of the San Pedro River. The Partnership sponsors research needed for sound decision making, supports members conservation efforts and develops annual water management and conservation plans.
7. **Presenter:** Ron Bemis, Heritage Public Advisory Committee and Malpai Borderlands Group Advisor updated the committee on the Malpai Borderlands Group. The committee was given a description and history of this private not-for-profit group that resides in Arizona and New Mexico. The goal of the Malpai Borderlands Group is to sustain open spaces and traditional rural livelihood. Their work focuses sustaining ranching, open spaces, habitat for wildlife and preventing habitat fragmentation. The group originally started with a focus on fire issues and evolved into a planning group. Currently there are 33 ranches in the group with a planning aspect of over 1,000,000 acres of which 60% is privately owned. The group has made several monumental accomplishments including the establishment of coordinator positions in the US Forest Service and NRCS. Other accomplishments include the set up of conservation easements in perpetuity to

preclude habitat fragmentation and bringing back fire as a management tool.  
Malpai Borderlands Group projects include: Grass banking, Cost Share Programs  
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through philanthropic contributions, Heritage Grants for Schools, Jaguar Project, Desert Bighorn Sheep projects, listed plant species programs, Habitat recovery for the Chiricahua Leopard Frog and ecology monitoring programs on ranches. Projects on the horizon include developing partnerships to deal with access issues, wildlife management issues and undocumented immigrant issues.

8. **Presenter:** Steve Ferrel, Deputy Director updated the committee on House Bill 2440 – State Lottery Distribution and Senate Bill 1067 – Appropriation; Zuni Water Settlement. House Bill 2440 is dead in the legislative process. Senate Bill 1067 was recently vetoed by the Governor.

9. **Presenter:** Ty Gray, Heritage Fund Administrator, was to give an update report on the Budget Prioritization Scoring Process. This item was tabled to the Spetember Meeting.

**10. Committee business**

- a. **Future Meetings.** The Committee approved to schedule the next HPAC meeting for September 16-17, 2005 in Kingman, AZ. The field trip will be a site visit to the Aubrey Valley to view black-footed ferret reintroduction site, to be conducted on the evening of September 16. The HPAC public meeting will be held on September 17<sup>th</sup> at the Kingman Regional Office Conference Room.
- b. **Future Agenda Items.** The Chairman opened discussion on agenda topics. The following agenda topics were raised by the Committee for the Spetember meeting: 1) Black-footed project update in accordance with the site visit, 2) a discussion item on what the HPAC can do to protect the Heritage Fund, 3) Budget Prioritization Scoring Committee Process update, and 4) a presentation from the Trust for Public Lands.

11. **Adjournment.** Committee adjourned at 12:45 pm.