

Certification: Minutes approved at the
May 7, 2005 HPAC Meeting, Sierra
Suites Hotel, Sierra Vista, AZ. Motion by
Jim Jett, second by Clair Harris, approved
as presented by unanimous vote.

Heritage Fund Public Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2005
Sheraton Crescent Hotel
Phoenix, Arizona

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Committee Members:

Hays Gilstrap, Phoenix (Chairman) - Present
Greg Butler, Show Low – Absent
Blaine Bickford, Springerville - Present
Frank Ronco, Jr., Flagstaff - Present
Maggie Sacher, Marble Canyon - Present
Jim Jett, Kingman – Absent
Annette Morgan, Peach Springs - Present
Roberta McDermott, Yuma - Present

Valerie Morrill, Yuma - Present
Cindy Cartwright, Bisbee – Absent
Dennis Ward, Willcox - Absent
Phil Smith, Mesa - Absent
Jerry Nelson, Scottsdale - Present
Diane Drobka, Safford - Absent
Brian Pinney, Chandler - Present
Margaret Bohannon, Scottsdale - Present

1. **Call to Order and Opening Remarks:** Commissioner Hays Gilstrap, Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
2. **Introductions**
 - a. **Committee Members:** Chairman Gilstrap asked Committee members to introduce themselves.
 - b. **Department Representatives:** Deputy Director Steve Ferrell, Heritage Fund Administrator Ty Gray, and other present department staff introduced themselves.
3. **Approval of Minutes from January 17, 2004:** Upon motion by Margaret Bohannon and second by Brian Pinney, the minutes were unanimously approved.
4. **Call to the Public:** George Reiners, of the Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club.

Mr. Reiners asked for clarification on which lottery games resulted in funds to the department and suggested that sportsman need to be better informed of this.

5. **Presenters:** Marty Macurak, Information and Education Assistant Director and Debbie Freeman, Heritage Public Information Officer delivered a summary of the Arizona Game and Fish Department's public information efforts throughout the year 2004. Several accomplishments were achieved over the past 12 months. These included: A public awareness campaign was held to mark the milestone of \$10 million in Heritage grants awarded to Arizonans. The campaign included six events statewide and involvement from Arizona legislators and other top government officials, as well as the media, the Heritage Alliance, HPAC members, and the public. As a result, more than two-dozen media outlets ran stories praising the work of the Heritage Fund. The Heritage Public Information Officer attended various community events, including an environmental expo, the state fair, and an event to teach lottery retailers about the benefits of the Heritage Fund. An incredible amount of press coverage was garnered through news releases on a variety of Heritage-funded Game and Fish programs. This international, national, and statewide coverage included stories in Russia, Hungary, Japan, and Great Britain, as well as in "The New York Times," "USA Today," "The Washington Times," "The Miami Herald," National Public Radio, Rush Limbaugh's radio

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show, and many other venues. News releases were also sent via the department's electronic newsletters to thousands of constituents. A new Heritage brochure to educate lawmakers and the public has been written and is currently in the design stage. The Heritage Public Information Officer is also working closely with the department's legislative liaison to monitor any bills that might affect the Heritage Fund.

- 6. Presenter:** Bill Van Pelt, Nongame Mammals Program Manager updated the committee on the status of the Mexican wolf reintroduction project. The Mexican wolf project was initiated with releases into the wild in 1998. The collared population consisted of 22 wolves, in 10 packs, one group, and three lone wolves. Based on other field data (sightings, tracks, howling etc.), there could be at least 25-30 additional wolves, including pups and un-collared wolves, distributed among the packs and groups. The current population estimate is 47-52 wolves in the wild. The Mexican wolf project is currently going through a five-year review and the 1982 Recovery Plan is being redrafted. Establishment of the Adaptive Management Over-site Committee allows for the sharing of resources. Project funding is a blend of Federal and nonfederal dollars.

Committee recommendation to the Commission: Upon motion by Margaret Bohannon, second by Maggie Sacher, the committee recommends that the Commission expand the Mexican Wolf release area to include the "secondary recovery zone", which would include the Gila Wilderness Area of New Mexico, the White Mountain Apache Reservation and the area within Arizona that surrounds the existing release site. Motion passed by majority vote.

- 7. Presenter:** Bill Van Pelt, Nongame Mammals Program Manager updated the committee on the status of the Black-footed ferret project. The black-footed ferret project was initiated with releases in the wild in 1996. The current population estimate is between 24-32 individuals. This is based off of spotlight surveys. This project has had numerous volunteers donating more than 1000 hours a year for the last two years. Spring releases, which is a new release strategy implemented by Arizona, has increased survival and reproduction in the wild. Second generation young have been born in the wild. Arizona has moved forward with evaluating other potential reintroduction sites in Arizona by contracting with NAU.
- 8. Presenter:** Tony Guiles, Legislative Liaison provided the committee an update of current legislation including House Bill 2440, which is related to the Arizona Lottery. In the Bill's current form the Heritage Fund is listed third in order of priority funding, which the department supports. An issue would arise if the Heritage Fund slipped back in priority.
- 9. Presenter:** Bob Brosheid, Habitat Branch Chief updated the committee on the Department's recent purchases in the land acquisition program. Completed acquisitions included the Coal Mine Springs Phase I, which consists of 2,628 acres in Coal Mine Canyon in Santa Cruz County. This property was purchased to protect a Gila topminnow population at Coal Mine Spring (Recovery Land Acquisition Grant from USFWS). The department worked cooperatively with the Trust for Public Land during purchase. The department provided \$1,500,000 in cash and in-kind services, the Trust for Public Land provided \$30,000 in in-kind services, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service provided \$750,000 in a cash grant. Pending acquisitions include the Coal Mine Springs

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Phase II, which is 1,900 acres in upper Coal Mine Canyon and George Wise Spring and the EC Bar Conservation Easement, a 225-acre CE along Nutrioso Creek, Apache County. The Commission-approved Improvements to Land Acquisition Process include: Ability to approach landowners regarding the sale of real property, Working cooperatively with other conservation groups, such as TPL and TNC, Using IIPAM match for federal granting processes, such as the USFWS' Recovery Land Acquisition Grant and AGFD is focusing on acquisition of wildlife habitats instead of a single-species focus.

The Department is currently developing long-term strategies regarding the proactive identification of high-priority private lands for potential sale and/or lease. These strategies are being developed on a Departmental Regional scale, and will allow the Department to focus our efforts on wildlife habitats of greatest conservation need.

The HPAC was also briefed on the Commission obligations under the Zuni Settlement Agreement. Over the next 15 years, the Commission will work cooperatively with the Zuni Tribe to acquire 1,000 acre/feet of water as in-stream flow to the Lower Colorado River watershed in an effort to restore wetland habitats know as "Zuni Heaven."

10. Open Committee discussion

- a. **Future Meetings.** A list of suggested meeting and field event locales for the spring and fall HPAC meetings was distributed to the Committee. The Chairman opened discussion and called for motion on time and place for the late spring and early fall meetings. It was suggested and approved that the Committee tentatively schedule the spring meeting in the Bisbee/Douglas area on May 6 and 7, 2005. It was then suggested and approved by the Committee to schedule a site visit to the Aubrey Valley black-footed ferret reintroduction site on September 16 and convene the fall meeting in Kingman on September 17, 2005.
- b. **Open Committee Discussion.** It was suggested that there be two HPAC members on each of the Grant prioritization scoring committees, a senior and junior member so one could help the other. It was revealed that there were not enough volunteers, six for five vacancies, during the last scoring committee sign-up to consider this.
- c. **Future Agenda Items.** The Chairman opened discussion on agenda topics. The following agenda topics were raised by the Committee: May agenda to include 1) Jaguar project updates, 2) Water issues in that region, 3) a discussion on the Grant Prioritization Scoring Committee process, and 4) department Heritage projects in the area. September agenda to include an update of the Black-footed ferret information in accordance to site visit. Other September agenda topics will be raised at the May HPAC meeting.

11. Adjournment: Committee adjourned at 11:45 a.m.