

**STATE HABITAT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF JULY 11, 2003  
LITTLE AMERICA HOTEL  
FLAGSTAFF, AZ**

**Present:**

Stephen Williams, Forage Resource Study Group	Scott Heap, SE Arizona Sportsmen's Club (SEASC)
Larry Taylor, Yuma Valley Rod/Gun Club	Clay Sarniugarte, SEASC
Josh Avey, AZ Game & Fish Dept. (AGFD)	Randall Lamb, Prescott HPC
Jim Hinkle, AGFD	Bob Pugh, Alpine HPC
Mike MacCauley, Williams HPC	Dan Pedersen, Prescott HPC
Cliff Hamilton, Wildlife For Tomorrow	Rich Leightner, Buckskin Chapter ADA
Glen Reed, Contractor	Eric Gardner, AGFD
Durward Reed, Contractor	Dan Hunter, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF)
Bill Keebler, AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society	Lyle Button, RMEF
Jerry Guevin, AZ Antelope Foundation (AAF)	Danny Button, ADA
Mark Zornes, AGFD	Benny Aja, Williams HPC
Brian Wakeling, AGFD	Roger Hoverman, ADA
Ron Christofferson, AGFD	Frank McNelly, Williams HPC
Carl Lutch, AGFD	Ron Sieg, AGFD
Ed Smith, The Nature Conservancy	Tice Supplee, AGFD
Liz Ridder, AGFD	Ruth Gregory, AGFD
Hays Gilstrap, AZ Game & Fish Commission	Craig McMullen, AGFD
Joe Carter, AZ Game & Fish Commission	Tom Finley, AGFD
Mark Adkins, Nat'l Wild Turkey Fed. (NWTF)	Shelly Shepherd, AGFD
Steve Chevront, Arizona Deer Assn. (ADA)	Blaine Bickford, Springerville HPC
Floyde Willett, Kingman HPC	Steve Rich, Fredonia HPC
Tom Schorr, Arizona Elk Society (AES)	Jeff Pebworth, AGFD
Gary Martin, Mohave Sportsmen's Club	Heather Reading, N. Kaibab Ranger District, Kaibab NF
Don Martin, Mohave Sportsmen's Club	C.B. Doc Lane, AZ Cattle Growers' Association
Pete Cimellaro, AZ Deer Assn.	Wayne Gunter, AGFD
Jim Jett, Mohave Sportsmen's Club	Bob Barsch, AGFD
Marsha Rute, NWTF, Mohave Sportsmen's Club	Rick Langley, AGFD
Ron Kester, Fredonia HPC	Gerry Perry, AGFD
Bob Vahle, AGFD	Mike Holloran, AGFD
Larry Boeschling	Fred Bloom, AGFD
Ron Eichelberger, Arizona Elk Society (AES)	

**Roll Call of Local HPC's (Voting members):**

Alpine: Bob Pugh	Williams: Mike MacCauley
Springerville: Blaine Bickford	Fredonia: Steve Rich
Show Low: Bob Vahle	Kingman: Floyde Willett
Winslow: Bob Vahle	Prescott: Randy Lamb
Flagstaff: Ed Smith	Southwest Arizona: Larry Taylor
Forage Resource Study Group: Stephen Williams	Payson NRC: Craig McMullen

Commissioner Hays Gilstrap opened the meeting and introduced Arizona Game and Fish Commission Chairman Joe Carter.

Commissioner Carter presented the challenges facing wildlife and the Arizona Game and Fish Department in the near future.

Commissioner Carter indicated that locked gates in the southeastern part of the state are becoming an increasing problem, leaving approximately 12,000 acres of public land in Units 30A and 30B inaccessible. This problem is created in part by border concerns and "non-traditional"/non-resident acquisition of ranches. Progress is being made with the ranching community and county governments in addressing these issues. Commissioner Carter challenged the HPC Committee to pursue recreational access as a part of the group's mission. He also suggested looking beyond sportsmen's groups to other recreational groups to better address these issues.

Part of the challenge is posed by the steady increase in Arizona's population. The group discussed challenges facing wildlife, wildlife managers, and sportsmen (less habitat and access, subdivisions, non-traditional user groups, etc).

Mr. Carter asked groups to generate discussion and dialogue regarding the following issues:

1. Access to public lands
2. Competition for ranches or private lands
3. New residents of the state need education about issues

The ranching community has made significant contributions on the ground through the implementation of wildlife waters and protection of sensitive species. However, they are faced with situations of selling cattle due to the current drought.

Doc Lane presented the results of the Northern Arizona Subdivision Survey sponsored by the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association. Due to increasing population and land development, ranchers are facing higher pressures including more regulations, taxes, overhead and maintenance, and other financial issues. This leads to increased pressures, causing the ranchers to sell to developers. He asked the group and the Commission/Department for aid in the fight against the loss of ranching and public access.

From statehood until 1975, there were 711,000 private acres and more than 1,300,000 acres of state land in Arizona. The state land belongs to the schools, but is losing its value due to fewer state leases, as the land cannot be ranched due to new ownership patterns in checkerboard areas (private/state lands).

The question was raised if there is political pressure for the state to sell off land to pay for schools. Landowners need an incentive to stay and not sell. Population increases mean higher demands for services.

Doc Lane illustrated (through Power Point slide) that our first impression is we can cure land partitioning by not allowing 40-acre tracts to be sold. This is not true; more regulation will not cure the current problems. He made the suggestion that the AGFD pursue an incentive program to keep ranchers solvent and in business.

Scott Heap introduced himself (Safford area representative) and the newly formed Safford/Thatcher HPC group. The group very interested and enthusiastic, immediately offering to help others.

MOTION: Approval of minutes from last meeting.  
Minutes accepted.

**Drought report:**

Mike MacCauley informed the group of a study on the last 12 years of drought. Since 1993 we have been below normal winter precipitation (except last year) according to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) snow surveys. NRCS does two surveys a month, measuring the depth of snow and its moisture content. The results indicated half the amount of moisture as the average. Mike MacCauley provided the web site for the NRCS snow surveys, as well as the local contact person. (<http://www.az.nrcs.usda.gov/snowsurg/>). Contact Larry Martinez, Water Supply Specialist, Phoenix, phone 602-280-8841.

Ron Christofferson reported on water hauling efforts from last year. Habitat conditions are poor, and precipitation is patchy. Wildlife water catchments are doing a good job. A proactive stance was taken and preventative water hauling was done in desert locations.

Tice Supplee added this year yielded the lowest number of deer permits since 1945, the last time we had similar drought. There are declines in mule deer, pronghorn and bighorn sheep populations due to drought and habitat loss. The elk appear to be more resilient, but reproductive rate is declining.

Commissioner Carter asked if there was data to help build a case documenting trees per acre in the past versus today, what is tree water usage, and how does this impact wildlife? Noted this would be a great tool.

A discussion occurred regarding aspiration rates of woody species, particularly pinyon-juniper, ponderosa, and tamarisk. This phenomenon has been well documented in the literature. The HPC was very interested in pursuing increased watershed health and stream flow improvement (reduction of woody species densities, etc) as a means of offsetting water developments. This effort will require the cooperation of other agencies (state and federal) and environmental groups. It will require large-scale removals of woody species.

**Discussion:**

Flagstaff Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) may have data on the number of trees that are encroaching. Ed Smith mentioned work completed on one watershed at Hart Prairie to indicate impacts to ground water and transpiration. Wally Covington (1994) worked on Roosevelt Lake noting the decrease in water levels since the construction of the dam (not related to environmental conditions, i.e. drought). Also, 1950's Beaver Creek study indicated that removal of trees temporarily increased water flow. Bob Vahle indicated that the USFS has done studies in all habitat types relating to water.

Mike MacCauley mentioned a University of Oregon study on juniper tree water use (25 gal per day). New Mexico completed a similar study on tamarisk, which aspirates 200 gallons a day. Treating has increased water flow in Rio Grande.

Commissioner Gilstrap agreed this is good information for the HPC's.

Perhaps the HPC's should look at projects that may increase stream flow. Steve Rich informed the group that early residents of Payson remember (living memory) over 200 miles of trout streams, which have since dried up and now only flow during storm events.

Don Martin informed the group of a study the BLM conducted in the Hualapai Mountains. The study indicates natural springs are reduced due to manzanita. They used an aggressive fire policy to manipulate the ecosystem

to increase water. It's working well on watershed and spring recharge. The BLM is a model and the information is available from them.

Fred Bloom discussed the impacts of the Rodeo-Chedeski fire on Black Canyon Lake. The Department's Development Branch must evaluate and possibly modify the dam, due to 3 to 5 times the flow since the fire's occurrence.

Commissioner Carter mentioned supporting the Governor and the state in pursuing federal money for watershed health and needs related to drought conditions.

Other agencies need to be involved, as well as sportsmen's groups. A summit of groups for watershed improvement was proposed. Commissioner Gilstrap suggested local HPC's could do pilot projects, as all the needs are different.

Frank McNelly suggested project proposals which increase forage capacity, which is as important as water.

Mike MacCauley mentioned the liability issues associated with fire and no burn situations. Controlled burns cannot be done on ranches because of restrictions. Liability issues are related to developments and subdivisions. There is a need for feedback through the State Land Department. It is important to work with volunteer fire departments, as they can do controlled burns as part of their training program.

Steven Rich noted that every project their HPC submitted was drought crisis related.

Ed Smith mentioned he was glad to hear connection between forest thinning and water issues.

Lyle Button reported that the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is working on long-range drought projects in Unit 9, including the Tusayan pipeline project.

Steven Rich highlighted the access program in Utah, making the public aware of the necessity of cooperation from landowners. They use a "Habitat Heroes" campaign to promote the connection between landowners and wildlife management. This program spotlights cooperators and has the power to affect court decisions.

Commissioner Gilstrap added that this connects to Commissioner Carter's comments on I&E.

**HPC project proposal acceptance/funding issues. (Over 130 proposals in 2003).**

Tice Supplee explained HPC proposals for tag funding. The first step is the submission of proposals through the local HPC's and the second step is the approval process (Department and NGO evaluations). Land agencies (USFS and BLM) have also partnered. Private land partners may also bring eligible grant money for match on project proposals. Some watershed, drought, and fire proposals may not be the best fit for big game projects, as other funding sources are available for these types of projects. Heritage grants and Landowner Incentive Programs (LIP) are other funding sources administered by the Department.

Tice explained internal scoring team's process. Match labor or money is an important component; those with better matches will receive better internal scores. The NGO partners wanted proposals with multiple big game species funded proportionally by the non-profit groups. These groups have other things to offer, not the least of which is volunteer labor. Our non-profit partners spent many, many volunteer hours reading and evaluating these projects.

Jim Hinkle asked about the Kettles (03-1-003) and PS ranch (03-1-004) phases of the West Fork Prescribed Fire; NEPA had been completed. Black River Prescribed Fire (03-1-002) does not have any work completed. The Department's Habitat Branch will be involved in doing NEPA on Black River. The NEPA work represents another \$40K match.

Bill Keebler of ADBSS indicated that their \$20K commitment is for the 1<sup>st</sup> year of a three-year project, they intend to fund 100% over the life span of the project.

Per Bill Keebler, the Redevelopment of AGFD Catchment #880 (West Silverbell Mts. #3), 03-7-007 is fully funded with \$5,000 from SCI banquet money.

Ed Smith notified the group the Winona Area Wildlife Enhancement Project (03-2-026) will be funded by AES with cooperation from Coconino Sportsmen.

According to Carl Lutch, project 03-2-025 (Padre/Mormon Canyon Water Enhancement), all of the catchments are outside of the burn area, but within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of the area. It was asked why project scored poorly. The response indicated there was a poor match and non-profits had concerns about dirt tanks. Carl Lutch believes that for now tanks are the only option in the area. This project could remain on the table for big game donation funding. It is also possible to coordinate with the Development Branch on other design (redevelopment). The burn also went right through the area where Padre Catchment #644 is located, (Renovation 03-2-022), but there is no damage to the catchment.

Steven Rich inquired about 03-2-046 (Horse Springs Trick Tank Construction). Pete Cimillaro, ADA, said they were still evaluating the project. Ron Christofferson deferred the project for more planning with the ADA's Buckskin Chapter and will still go forward. When Buckskin Chapter and Development Branch finish coordination, the ADA will reconsider.

Jim Hinkle asked about project 03-1-017, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep surveys in Region I. At this time, the non-profit groups are not interested in funding projects other than true enhancement. Tice explained the surveys will have to be funded internally.

The Masters Spring project (03-3-004) was funded for more than amount requested because the ADBSS wants to implement a new tank design.

Project #03-3-003, Cone Mountain Project. Bill Keebler would like the ADBSS to do a site visit before funding. He asked for project to be resubmitted next year, and it will be funded. (UPDATE: The ADBSS agreed to fund the project and it will be renamed Carl Scriven.)

Fred Bloom indicated that ADBSS approved another \$48,300 in funding at their board meeting. Bill Keebler will e-mail Ruth Gregory the updated project list.

Mike MacCauley asked why Joe Tank was not funded, as it was the top priority of the Williams HPC. AES funded 03-2-008, Joe Tank, with their banquet money rather than using Special Tag funds.

Mike MacCauley asked about project 03-2-012, K-4 Railroad Seep Development. AES agreed to do a site visit, and if project can be completed, will use banquet money and work on as a volunteer project.

Craig McMullen asked why only partial funding given to 03-6-001 (Unit 21 Pronghorn Fawn Hiding Cover Project). This project is fully funded, the partial amount is for the 1<sup>st</sup> year of 3.

Project 03-1-006 (Coon Canyon Trick Tank) is now fully funded. Per Blaine Bickford, the USFS and permittee will add materials and labor. NWTF is also willing to add funding.

Project 03-2-034 (Tin Ranch Well Wildlife Water & Habitat Development) could be a landowner incentive agreement, as the project location may lie on private property. Lyle Button mentioned the importance of match, as this project did not appear to have an appropriate match. Carl Lutch and Steven Williams will coordinate with LIP to implement project.

Bob Vahle inquired about funding for project 03-1-015 (Carlisle Ranch dirt tank and bentonite). The \$400 will be funded by AES banquet money

Mike MacCauley was interesting in knowing why projects 03-2-001, 03-2-002 (Region 2 interns) and 03-2-030 (Maintenance of Wildlife Improvements) were not funded. The non-profit groups are reluctant to pay for personnel, especially when they (RMEF and AES) feel this is an excellent opportunity for volunteer coordination. Lyle Button mentioned this year not as bad drought wise, and monitoring with volunteers and WM's should be adequate.

Tice Supplee explained the importance of well-written grants that include maps, appropriate matches, project details, and benefit to species, as well of coordinating with the Department's Development Branch on water projects. Labor (in-kind, agency personnel, other labor), materials, or other on the ground items can be considered match items.

**On species to benefit in funding proposals:**

Projects 03-2-016 and 03-2-017 (Squaw and Olaf Catchments) were probably deferred until next year. ADBSS did the site visits on Wednesday, checking out the catchment design. They liked the project and Bill Keebler will meet with his committee to find out what the final decision is. (UPDATE: Both fully funded by ADBSS).

Pete Cimellaro explained ADA is looking for mainly modern, low maintenance projects. They may increase funding but reduce the number of projects of funded. They would like to see rebuilds that will provide maintenance-free catchments with adequate storage. All other groups echoed this sentiment.

Scott Heap asked for a form or application checklist to assist in the application process. Rick Langley indicated the internal scoring sheet is a good guide. Lyle Button asked if it would be possible for groups to get summary of internal committee's scoring sheet. The Game program will provide this information in next year's cycle.

Blaine Bickford added that the application is only a guideline. The proponent should thoroughly explain why a project is good, even if, on paper, it may not seem so. For example, a water project may be within two miles of another water, however, that water may be across a freeway, etc.; thus it still may be a very important project to implement.

Following the lunch break, Commissioner Gilstrap introduced Don Martin of the Wildlife Conservation Council (WCC). The WCC has started a license plate program where WCC gets \$17 of the \$27 plate fee. This money is then used as grant money for Habitat and Education projects. To apply for the grant money, a single form from the WCC must be completed. The WCC will have a decision within 60 days. Although they are just starting

and do not have large amounts of money available, they are anxious to help fund any projects which benefit game, non-game, small game and fish.

Questions were raised regarding projects 03-1-013 (Northeast 4 P-J Treatment) and 03-1-014 (East 71 P-J Treatment). Why is the project proposing the use of bulldozers instead of an agra-axe? It was suggested that from a biological perspective, the bulldozer assists in breaking up the ground, and that bulldozer work addresses the long term. Agra-axe treatments may allow the juniper to come back. Blaine Bickford asked if the archaeological clearance had been completed. Bob Vahle believes it may already be done.

ADBSS indicated they will fund project 03-7-013 (Rocky Mtn. Bighorn Sheep NM/Unit 27 Transplant Support) with private money.

Bob Pugh of the Alpine HPC told the group the Maness Trick Tank Renovation was ready to go, but shut down by fires. He thought they lost funding and that AES backed out because of wolf release. It was suggested that the money is still available from AES.

#### **Big Game Donation funds:**

Tice Supplee suggested the additional \$50,000 in Big Game Donations be used as the match for Federal Habitat Trust monies (Landowner Incentives/private lands). MOTION: Mike MacCauley. SECONDED and CARRIED unanimously. The Department will provide the sensitive species list eligible for these monies. Private monies from conservation groups also count as match for these federal grants.

As a process improvement, Craig McMullen suggested inviting members of the HPC's to the Conservation Group project committee meetings. Lyle Button agreed with this suggestion and will invite HPC members to the RMEF PAC meeting.

The question was raised about water development design standards. Fred Bloom informed the group that the Department's water program includes a standard design manual. This report is available on request.

#### **Final comments/suggestions on project proposals:**

Blaine Bickford suggested everyone submit soft copies of proposals if possible.

Frank McNelley asked the group if any of the non-profits would be interested in being the match (need 50%) for federal grant monies through the EQIP program.

Don Martin added that an access guarantee should be a consideration in project funding.

Commissioner Gilstrap suggested the need for proper terminology when referring to the NGO's.

Steve Rich asked about helicopter surveys, specifically projects 03-2-005 and 03-2-006 (Deer and Bighorn Surveys). Tice Supplee explained these projects are the Department's internal responsibility.

**HPC Updates and success stories:**

Alpine - Bob Pugh

- Completed trail cleaning and maintenance (6.5 – 7 miles) in Blue Ridge Primitive Area using 16 volunteers.
- Assisted Billy Marks, permittee at Glen Springs Cabin, with line shack construction.
- Proposed repair to fiberglass drinker on Deerhead Peak using volunteer labor.
- The Campbell Flat clearing was approved by the Forest Service, but they now need someone to cut the trees.

Flagstaff – Ed Smith

- Slate Mountain Pronghorn Project completed.
- Cedar Ridge Project ongoing through this year.
- Coconino Sportsmen are working on the Pat Springs Pipeline.
- Various trick tank repairs completed.
- Cleared 80 acres on Hart Prairie (private lands stewardship project).
- Prescribed burning and tree thinning on USFS lands near Hart Prairie completed.
- Refurbished Babbitt Lake and completed the spring improvements.

Fredonia - Steven Rich

- New HPC chapter formed.
- Identified good projects, many of which were funded.

FRSG - Steve Williams

- Range monitoring projects continuing (Winona to Clear Creek Ranch).
- Continue to work with Diablo/Hopi owned ranches.
- Monitoring showing success; loss of blue grama.
- Thanks given to groups who have contributed funding.

Kingman - Jeff Pebworth/Floyd Willett

- Windmill repairs completed.
- HPC has suffered member loss due to lack of funding in 2002.
- Thanks given to Floyd Willett for taking over the HPC.
- Currently working on mapping of all critical water sources within the HPC to build a GIS database.

Payson - Craig McMullen

- Currently do not have a chairman.
- Refurbished Crackerjack water catchment as a volunteer project. This is the only reliable water in this area of Unit 22.
- R Bar C meadow fence repair (1/2 mile) completed by volunteers (Unit 23).
- Spring Creek Agra-Axe projects completed. These were very successful due to timing of project and following precipitation.
- Funded a position to evaluate and repair over 80 guzzlers. This project nears completion.
- Thanks given to AES and other conservation groups for all of their work.

Show Low - Bob Vahle

- Mule Tank thin and pile completed.
- Town and Pasture tree shearing completed.
- Have conducted some P-J pushes. Pushes done instead of Agra-Axe since alligator juniper is such a vigorous re-sprouter.
- Installed and/or repaired two trick tanks (Black Mesa Ranger District).
- Bentonite applications to 10 tanks (Black Mesa Ranger District).
- Region I west side water analysis being conducted.

Springerville - Blaine Bickford

- Grassland project funded by AAF is complete.
- Bob Pugh, Scott Heap, and the Springerville HPC coordinated the completion of the Lampere project.
- Tank refurbishment done in 2002.
- On July 19, 2003 at 0800 hours there is a work project in Springerville HPC to remove old fencing near the Wyn campground.

Southwest - Larry Taylor

- Four projects completed this year: Cabeza Road project was completed with the help of ADBSS, AGFD, and USFWS. The Border Patrol donated the landing mats. Antelope Tank was built and filled by 20 club members. Catchments 542 & 543 were completed in Unit 41.
- Emergency drinkers for pronghorn were implemented on both the Cabeza Prieta and Organ Pipe National Monuments. USFWS flew volunteers onto the area so that work could be completed.

Prescott - Randy Lamb

- Helped AGFD install a new 6,000 gallon tank with apron and drinker for the Juniper wilderness relocation project to 7A road.

Williams - Mike MacCauley

- Thousands of acres of P-J treatments completed through the coordination of USFS and rancher, resulting in a seep development.
- Conducted browse treatments.
- Catchments in Tim Pender's district refurbished.
- Expressed the projects are showing large-scale environmental benefits with the increase in ground cover and reduction of soil erosion.

Winslow - Bob Vahle

- Black Canyon trick tank completed.
- Clear Creek tree shearing project initiated.

Dan Hunter of RMEF highlighted a volunteer project in Unit 9 where they installed a new apron. Mike MacCauley added that RMEF volunteers assisted in the installation of 1/2 mile of fence on his ranch. RMEF is always looking for volunteer projects.

Jerry Guevin of AAF informed the group about a Chevelon fence project. Two miles of fence will be restrung in 2 weeks south of Seligman. Also highlighted the P-J treatments on Anderson Mesa and Antelope tank on the Cabeza that have been very successful and well organized.

Bill Keebler, ADBSS, said most of their projects were completed in the spring. They completed 5 or 6 water projects consisting of tanks and/or drinkers. They would like to invite HPC's to projects in the future.

Pete Cimillaro from the Arizona Deer Association (ADA) updated the group on the name change (formerly Arizona Mule Deer Association). \$300,000 was given for funding of projects this year. The mule deer tags sold for record amounts. YVRGC is an affiliate, with good networking throughout the state. We all have a responsibility for stewardship of the land. ADA is a juniors hunt sponsor, and their juniors deer program will begin soon. The group is trying to be involved as possible.

Ron Eichelberger of AES reported that about 90 kids were signed up for a youth elk event in Unit 9. The elk tag was sold for a record amount at auction this year. AES still has funds available and are willing to look at emergency funding of projects if necessary.

Mark Atkins from NWTF highlighted projects they have recently supporting including Gould's turkey reintroduction (~\$300,000 for trapping and transfer to the Chiricahuas), ~\$11,000 in the Huachucas and Chiricahuas for Guzzlers for Gobblers, and the JAKES programs in Kingman and Sierra Vista.

Richard Leightner, Buckskin Chapter of ADA. The group is working with Rick Langley on several water refurbishment projects. They completed 2 tank clean-outs in Unit 12B and installed a new trough at Little Mountain in Unit 13B. They are also actively working on activities for their juniors education program.

Don Martin suggested a program to increase volunteerism in Arizona. He addressed the issue of getting more people to volunteer with Wildlife Conservation Council (WCC), possibly using a conservation bonus point. He would like a representative from each group to attend WCC meetings.

Fred Bloom said due to an opinion from the Attorney General's office, a liability waiver form for volunteers doing anything in conjunction with the Department will probably be implemented.

Ron Kester commended the ADA, Fredonia HPC, Buckskin Chapter, and permittees on their good coordination. John Sims worked with permittees to increase cost shares and their involvement. ADBSS was thanked for funding monitoring cameras. A USFS employee is a Buckskin Chapter member and interested in helping to implement projects.

Josh Avey is submitting the Babbitt Ranches for a National Stewardship Award. They have been super cooperators with the Department and this gives us a chance to say thanks to private landowners. Any letters of support by the Aug. 15 deadline would be appreciated. Update: Babbitt Ranches received this prestigious award and it will be formally presented to them at the Meet the Commission Awards Banquet on January 17, 2004.

For the next meeting, add the agenda item of learning how to write grant proposals. The group was asked to email any suggestions for the agenda to the Game program.