

**ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
HABITAT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL**

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| Game Branch / HPC Project Number: | 14-601 |
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PROJECT INFORMATION

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| Project Title: Unit 21 Coyote Control | |
| Region and Game Management Unit: Region VI, GMU 21 | |
| Local Habitat Partnership Committee (LHPC): • | Was the project presented to the LHPC? YES[] NO[X] |
| Has this project been submitted in previous years? YES[] NO[X] If Yes, was it funded? YES[] NO[] → Funded HPC Project #(s): | |
| Project Type: Aerial gunning of coyotes | |
| Brief Project Summary: This project is intended to increase pronghorn and mule deer fawn survival through the aerial gunning of coyotes prior-to and during peak fawning periods in the spring. | |
| Big Game Wildlife Species to Benefit: Pronghorn and Mule Deer | |

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| Implementation Schedule (Month/Day/Year): <u>Project Start Date:</u> March 2015 <u>Project End Date:</u> May 2018 | Environmental Compliance: NEPA Completed: Yes[X] No[] N/A[] Projected Completion Date: _____ State Historic Preservation Office - Archaeological Clearance: Yes[] No[] N/A[X] Projected Completion Date: _____ Arizona Game and Fish Department EA Checklist: N/A[] To be Completed by: <u>M. White, C. Boucher</u> Projected Completion Date: <u>December 2014</u> |
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PROJECT FUNDING

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|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Special Big Game License Tag Funds Requested: | \$ 15,000 Per Year x 4 Years |
| Cost Share or Matching Funds: | \$ |
| Total Project Costs: | \$ 60,000 |

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Applicant (please print): Micah White | Address: 7200 E. University Mesa, AZ 85207 | E-mail: mwhite@azgfd.gov |
| Telephone: 928-821-6057 | Date: August 27, 2014 | |

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| AGFD Contact and Phone No. (If applicant is not AGFD personnel): |
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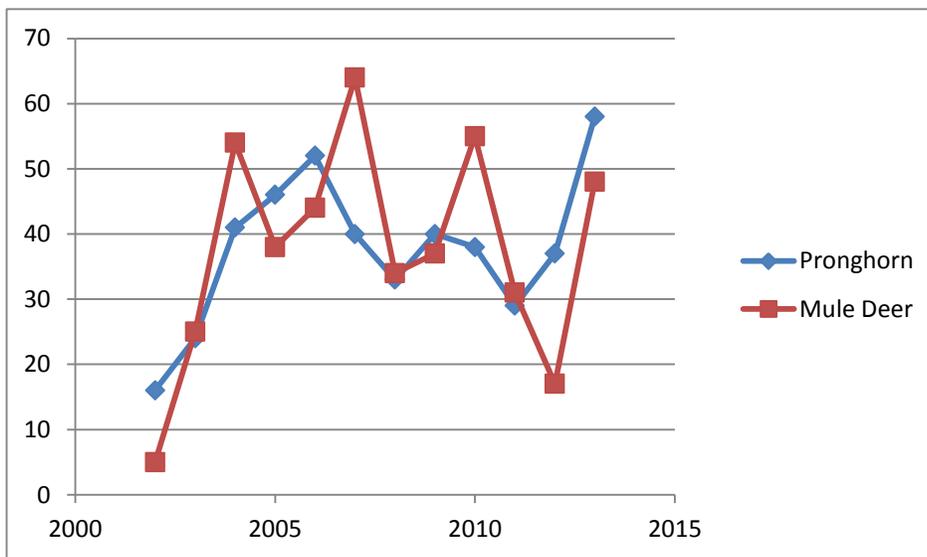
Project has been coordinated with:
Mule Deer Foundation

NEED STATEMENT – PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

Unit 21 contains approximately 220 square miles of semi-desert grassland habitat which supports approximately 280 pronghorn and 720 mule deer. Although mule deer can be found in every inch of unit 21, the largest concentrations of mule deer are found on these semi-desert grasslands.

Unit 21 is currently working under the Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Initiative (WHEI), in which a minimum of \$400K will be spent each year, for a minimum of three years to improve habitat for mule deer (This money comes from P.R. funds, which cannot be used for predator control). Under the WHEI, a large amount of funding has been earmarked for habitat improvement on Tule and Arnold Mesas, in which juniper encroached grasslands will be dramatically improved. Seven new water catchments are slated to be developed over the next two years as well. Unit 21 is also the current recipient of Central Arizona Grassland Strategy funds, in which more than 3,000 acres of grassland have been restored.

Although fawn survival has been relatively good for both species compared to other units (shown in the graph below), mortality remains high on pronghorn in unit 21, as evidenced by the need for a supplemental transplant of pronghorn from Colorado in 2008. The removal of predators has little to no effect on wildlife populations when they are at levels close to carrying capacity. It is however, thought that predators can keep wildlife populations suppressed for longer periods of time when they are reduced by severe climatic events such as drought.



The grassland habitat in unit 21 has been dramatically improved over the last ten years without a meaningful corresponding increase in the pronghorn and mule deer populations. Perry Mesa, which has the largest sub population of pronghorn in the unit, had more than a 7 year rest from grazing, and the habitat quality is currently excellent. Sycamore Mesa has had more than 3,000 acres of encroaching juniper removed, thus greatly improving the habitat for mule deer and pronghorn, especially through their movement corridors. Additional mesas will be treated over the next three years, which will also greatly improve habitat for mule deer primarily, and pronghorn secondarily.

Coyote predation has been documented on both pronghorn and mule deer. Based on a study done by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, it is thought that coyote predation can negatively impact mule deer populations after severe climatic events and can keep their populations suppressed. With the widespread habitat improvements that have taken, and will take place in unit 21, the timing is right for large-scale predator control in the unit. Predator control may be what it takes to give both pronghorn and mule deer a jump-start in the improved habitat.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Increase the pronghorn fawn to doe ratio to 50:100 for the last two years of the project.
- 2) Increase the pronghorn population to 350 adults.
- 3) Increase the mule deer population in the semi-desert grassland habitat types.
- 4) Reduce the coyote population in the grassland areas.

Standard summer pronghorn survey flights will be conducted to determine fawn to doe ratios, as well as the numbers to calculate the double count population estimate. Conversely, winter flights and ground surveys will be conducted for mule deer to determine fawn to doe ratios.

Unit 21 is the only pronghorn unit in Region 6, and due to elevation and habitat type cannot be compared to unit 19A, which is the closest unit containing pronghorn. Therefore no control can be used when measuring success.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGIES:

Aerial Gunning is currently the main form of coyote control used by the Department to increase antelope fawn survival. This method is very effective under the right circumstances. Wildlife Services will be contracted by the Department to conduct the aerial gunning of coyotes on the grasslands.

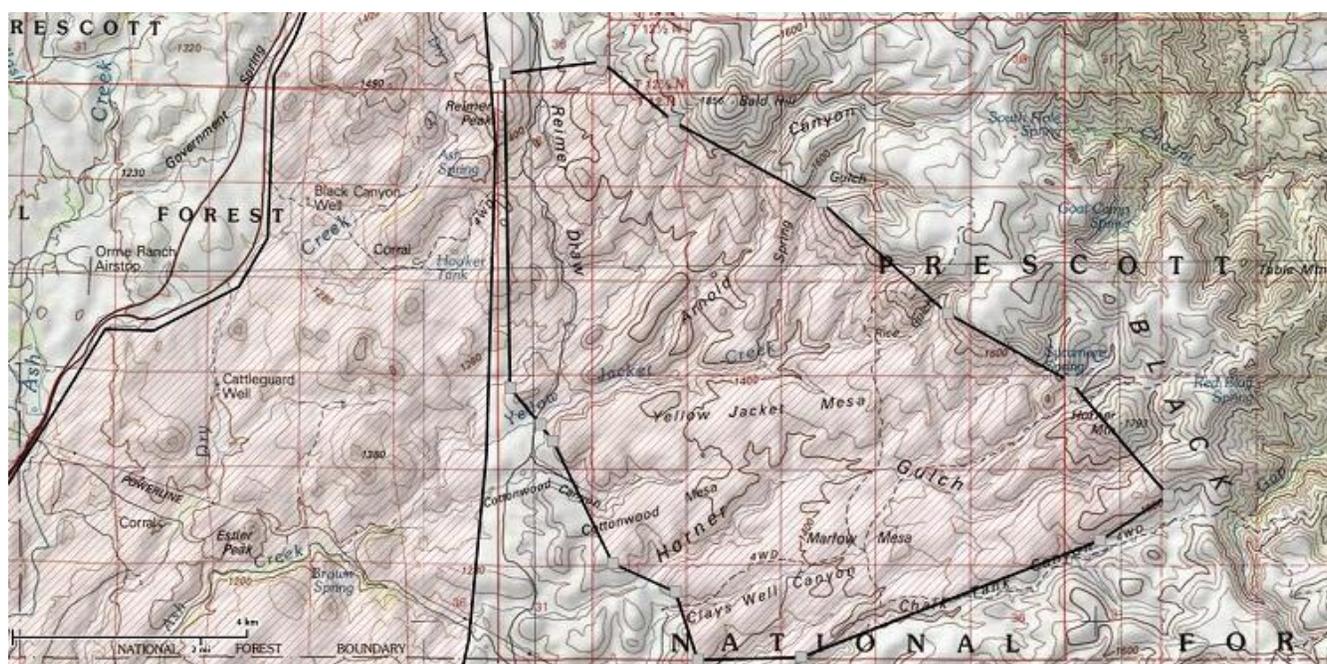
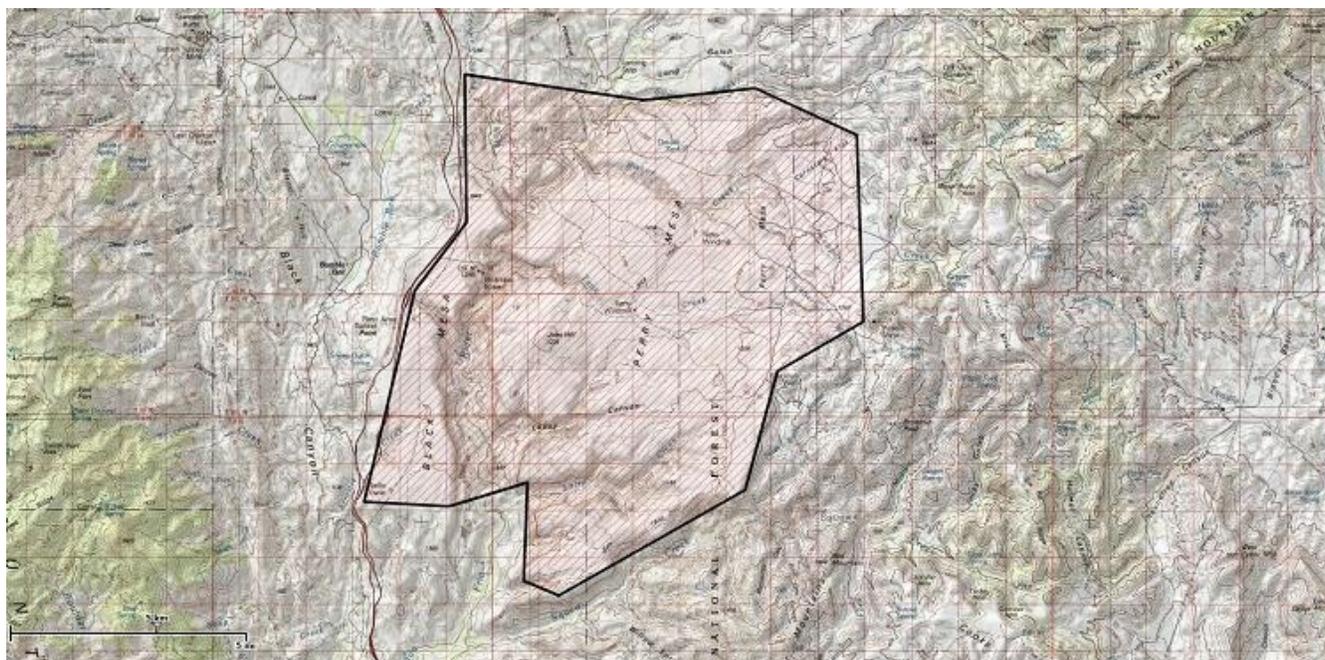
Game and Fish Department personnel will make up the “ground crew” and provide logistical support, as well as spotting for Wildlife Services.

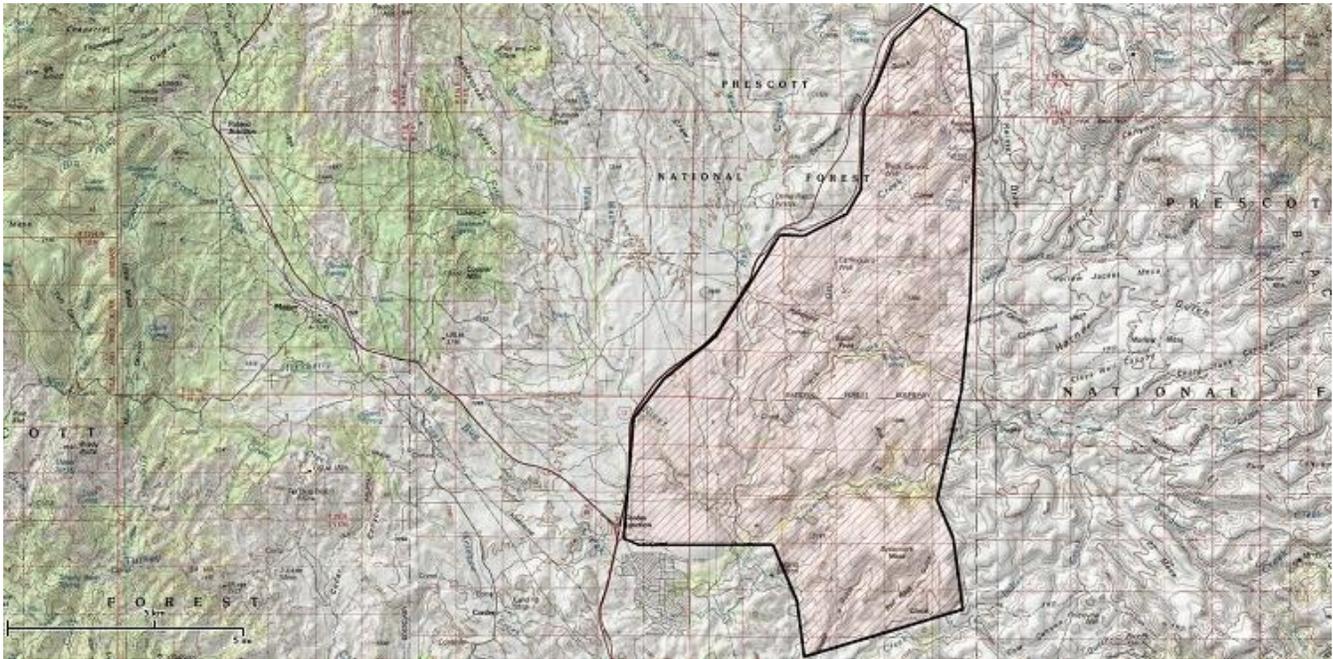
The Wildlife Manager will also seek to make unit 21 part of the “Daylong” hunting for coyotes as well as seek a multiple bag limit for mountain lions next year.

PROJECT LOCATION:

Perry Mesa (BLM, TNF), Black Mesa (BLM), Sycamore Mesa (PNF), Cordes Junction (State Trust, BLM), Reimer Draw – Hooker Basin (PNF), Marlow and Yellow Jacket Mesas (PNF).

See attached maps.





LAND OWNERSHIP AT THE PROJECT SITE(S):

(if the project area is private property, please state specifically and provide the landowner's name)

Perry Mesa (BLM, TNF), Black Mesa (BLM), Sycamore Mesa (PNF), Cordes Junction (State Trust, BLM), Reimer Draw – Hooker Basin (PNF), Marlow and Yellow Jacket Mesas (PNF).

IF PRIVATE PROPERTY, IS THERE A COOPERATIVE BIG GAME STEWARDSHIP or LANDOWNER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LANDOWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT?

YES[] NO[] N/A[X]

HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

Black Mesa, Perry Mesa, Marlow Mesa and Yellow Jacket Mesa area all relatively flat, open, semi-desert grasslands with large canyons. Sycamore Mesa and the Reimer Draw area are made up of rocky, broken hills, with grassy depressions and valleys.

ITEMIZED USE OF FUNDS:

Special Big Game License Tag Funds

Aerial Control - This effort will be conducted using approximately \$7,500 annually from Department HPC funds.

Cost Share or Matching Funds (for volunteer labor rates please refer to the worksheet below)

N/A

LIST COOPERATORS AND DESCRIBE POTENTIAL PARTICIPATION:

Terry Herndon, Jim Lawrence, North Valley Chapter of the Mule Deer Foundation, Arizona Antelope Foundation.

WOULD IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT ASSIST IN PROVIDING, MAINTAINING, OR FACILITATING RECREATIONAL ACCESS?

YES[] NO[X] N/A[]

PROJECT MONITORING PLAN:

Standard summer pronghorn survey flights will be conducted to determine fawn to doe ratios, as well as the numbers to calculate the double count population estimate. Winter helicopter, fixed-wing and ground surveys will be conducted to determine fawn to doe ratios for mule deer.

Unit 21 is the only pronghorn unit in Region 6, and due to elevation and habitat type cannot be compared to unit 19A, which is the closest unit containing pronghorn. Therefore no control can be used when measuring success.

PROJECT MAINTENANCE:

N/A

PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT TO BE FILED BY:

AZGFD Wildlife Manager Micah White

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (*please use the worksheet below*):

N/A

TREE CLEARING/REMOVAL PROJECTS (*please use the worksheet below*):

N/A

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT **WATER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET**

PROJECT TITLE: _____

- 1) **Is the water development listed as a priority in the most recent “Wildlife Water Development Annual Implementation Schedule?”** No
- 2) **Please list the Development Branch personnel and date coordinated with for this project.**
- 3) **What is the estimated annual inches of precipitation for the area? (mark one)**
2-4 4-6 6-8 8-10 10-12 12-14 14-16 >16
- 4) **Is there a perennial water source available to big game within four miles of this project?**

YES (please complete #5 below) NO (skip #5 below)
- 5) **For the accessible, perennial water source nearest this project:**
- 6) **Is the target wildlife species a result of transplant efforts?** YES NO
- 7) **Please list any special land management status for the project site (i.e. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument). If private land, list landowner.**
- 8) **Please provide the following information about access to the proposed site:**
Type of access (mark one): 2x4 vehicles 4x4 only foot only**

**If foot access only: Distance in miles: >1/4 mile Approximate hiking time: >5 min

-- Does access to this site require crossing private or tribal lands? YES NO

-- Please describe any restrictions to public access: Groups over 20 require a recreation permit from the forest. A large volunteer project may require a permit unless sponsored by the forest.
- 9) **Please list below (or on a separate sheet) the material type and dimensions of each component proposed to be added, modified, or repaired.**
- 10) **Was a site visit completed?** Yes No
If Yes, please list personnel that attended and date.

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT **TREE CLEARING/REMOVAL WORKSHEET**

PROJECT TITLE: _____

- 1) **What is the estimated acreage of the project?**

- 2) **How are the trees going to be cleared? (agra axe, chain saw, grubbing, push, chaining):**

- 3) **What is the estimated number of trees per acre?**

- 4) **Describe trees to be cleared (species, estimated diameter, single stem, multi-stem):**

- 5) **Describe terrain (slope, soil type, rocks)**

- 6) **Please list any special land management status for the project site (e.g. Wilderness, National Park, National Monument). If private land, list landowner.**

- 7) **Please provide the following information about access to the proposed site:**
Type of access (mark one): 2x4 vehicles 4x4 only Foot only**

 **If foot access only: Distance in miles: Approx. hiking time:

Does access to this site require crossing private or tribal lands? YES NO

Is the site relatively accessible for tree removal equipment? YES NO

Please describe any restrictions to public access:

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

VOLUNTEER HOURLY RATES AND CLASSIFICATIONS WORKSHEET

PROJECT TITLE: Larry Creek Trick Tank

The value of volunteer labor should be calculated at the hourly rate of an employee doing similar work, or using hourly rates from the Arizona Department of Administration's Human Resource web site, plus a standard ERE rate of 35%. http://www.hr.az.gov/HR_Professional/Class_Comp/PDF/alphacovered.pdf

\$0.445/mile should be the calculation used for mileage.

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|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Water Development | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$14.14 | |
| Habitat Restoration and Clean Up | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$14.14 | |
| Fisheries | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$14.14 | |
| Nongame Branch Project | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$14.14 | |
| Misc/office work | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | varies | |
| Community Services | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$7.44 | |
| Events and Other | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$14.14 | |
| Research Branch | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$14.14 | |
| Wildlife Area Hosts | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$17.44 | |
| Education Programs | Volunteer Hours | Volunteer Miles | Hourly Rate | Estimated Value |
| | | | \$16.07 | |
| Totals | | | | |

