



Habitat Partnership Committee Connection

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From your Statewide HPC Chairman Commissioner John W. Harris

This has been a busy fall for many of us. Work responsibilities continue to interfere with my planned recreation, but I've managed to squeeze in a few memorable moments. It is my sincere hope that you have also had the opportunities to enjoy the many great natural resources that I know all of you work so hard to protect.

The summer State HPC meeting was well attended, and I would like to thank Commissioner Jack Husted for chairing the meeting in my absence. Please take the time to review the minutes from that meeting and provide any corrections to Ruth Gregory at rgregory@azgfd.gov. They can be found at: http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/documents/HPCmeetingminutesJuly302010.pdf.

Our next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2011 at the Tucson Regional Office. In preparation for that meeting, the Department has reviewed over 70 project submissions that will be considered for funding through several of the special big game license tag funds. The wildlife conservation organizations are similarly evaluating the project proposals, and jointly a funding recommendation will be presented at that meeting. Believe me when I say that I know a lot of hard work goes into the preparation and presentation of each project. I can also state with confidence that a lot of effort goes into the evaluation of these projects as well. The collaborative efforts of the project proponents, the wildlife conservation organizations, and the Department is what creates the true partnerships from which this committee and Arizona's wildlife truly benefits.

As part of the discussion at our next meeting, we will also need to address the new draft HPC Project Instructional Manual. That draft manual will be posted at http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/hpc.shtml. Similarly, necessary updates to the HPC Charter are also posted at the same location. There are 2 versions of the charter – one with tracked changes and the other with the changes accepted (for readability). Please review these in preparation for our next meeting.

In closing, let me say that I have always been impressed with the energy that volunteers commit to our wildlife resources. It is an honor to serve as the Chairman of the HPC. We need to share the successes of this program so that everyone can clearly see what a benefit our collective efforts produce. 📖

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Issue 6



Looking for project articles!
Please send articles and pictures
to cweise@azgfd.gov



The Coordinator's Corner – Where'd He Go?

Brian Wakeling – Game Branch Chief

Ron Thompson, who had already completed one career with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, left the agency on November 5, 2010 to pursue an advanced degree with Sul Ross University in Texas. It is unlikely that we have seen the last of him because he intends to remain involved in the study of large carnivores as part of his graduate research, and those studies are likely to involve species in Arizona. In his time as HPC Coordinator, Ron worked long hours to keep the wildlife conservation organizations involved with the project identification and improvement and challenged project proponents to think innovatively to increase the effect of the projects and get the most cost share dollars possible. Ron spent many days on the road, attending local HPC meetings to ensure that communication channels were open among the local groups, the State HPC, and the wildlife conservation organizations. His departure from this program will be missed and he leaves big shoes to fill by his successor.



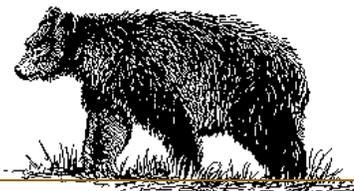
Ron Thompson examining mountain lion sign

Currently, the HPC coordinator position has been announced and the Department will be accepting applications through January 7, 2011. It is my hope that we will have a new coordinator named and in place by the State HPC meeting on February 18, 2011.

The Game Branch has chosen to make a fundamental shift in the responsibilities of several positions within our ranks. The HPC Coordinator role has had dual responsibility to also serve as the Large Carnivore Biologist, a responsibility that could at times create challenges for focusing on urgent HPC needs. For this reason, the large carnivore responsibilities have been shifted to the predator-furbearer biologist within the Branch, and the small game responsibilities have been shifted from the predator-furbearer biologist to the wildlife specialist. What this should allow is for more focused attention to the Habitat Partnership Committee business for the Game Branch and Department.

Even with Ron's departure, other activities have continued. At the summer meeting, a report was unveiled identifying opportunities for improvement. Since that time, a group, which included Al Eiden, Tom Mackin, Jim deVos, Ron Thompson, Ruth Gregory and me, has been working on developing an HPC Project Instructional Manual to provide guidance to project proponents, local HPCs, and wildlife conservation organizations for consideration. A copy of the draft that will be considered at the State HPC meeting in February is posted at http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/hpc.shtml.

I miss Ron Thompson's contributions to the HPC and Game Branch already. Being short on personnel presents challenges to any organization, but it presents unique challenges when someone like Ron leaves. Don't hesitate to contact us with your thoughts about this new manual or in other ways we might improve the HPC processes. 📖



~ To waste and destroy our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children, the very prosperity which we ought, by right, to hand down to them. ~

Theodore Roosevelt

In the Spotlight:**96 Hills Project Status Report****Where we are at, what we've learned, and where we are going*****by Ben Brochu, Wildlife Manager, Unit 37B***Background

Mule deer numbers and distribution have been declining throughout the West since the latter third of the 20th century. To address this concern, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), an organization represented by 17 states and four Canadian provinces, created a Mule Deer Working Group (MDWG). The MDWG set out to find "solutions to our common mule deer management problems" in seven different ecoregions in North America. Overall, loss and degradation of habitat was determined to be the single greatest factor that has caused declines in mule deer populations. In the Southwest Desert Ecoregion, precipitation is known to have a substantial influence on forage quality, and subsequently on recruitment. Water developments, while they do not influence forage conditions, do influence distribution of grazing ungulates. Habitat fragmentation and isolation may be mitigated to some degree by alterations to water availability.



Image from trail cam installed at drinker

Water is a critical component of mule deer habitat. Deer habitat, no matter how attractive, will not be used if it is not near a source of water. Research suggests that water sites should be no more than 2–3 miles apart and even closer in rough terrain. The MDWG Habitat Guidelines for Mule Deer support this, suggesting spacing of water sources no more than 3 miles apart so that all mule deer habitat is within 1.5 miles of a permanent water source. Water in the absence of forage and cover is not likely to create mule deer habitat, but forage and cover in the absence of water may provide deer habitat, at least seasonally. Thus, catchments might make forage resources, which

would otherwise be unavailable, available yearlong. Further, where deer might otherwise make seasonal movements between parts of their range with forage and parts with water, developments may reduce the need for seasonal movements, make a greater proportion of the range and its forage available to deer, reduce competition for forage in exploited range, decrease risks associated with long-distance movements and, thereby, increase deer abundance.

Where we are

The Arizona Deer Association (ADA) and Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) have wholeheartedly supported this proactive effort using Special Big Game License-Tag funds that they raised through aggressive sales and marketing. Many partnerships have been formed with volunteers from the ADA, MDF, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Arizona Chapter of Safari Club International, Coues Whitetail.com, Monster Muleys.com, Hayden Concrete, University of Arizona, Arizona State Land Department, Arizona Department of Water Resources, and several willing, hard working sportsmen dedicated to Arizona's wildlife. The amount of volunteer feedback and help has been tremendous. Thus far, Coyote Peak (March 2009), Rock Tank (April 2009), North 96 Hills (March 2010) and 96 Ranch #11 (November 2010) have been completed, the first three of which were built using volunteers, while the last was completed solely by Arizona Game and Fish Department Development crews.

"Water is a critical component of mule deer habitat. Deer habitat, no matter how attractive, will not be used if it is not near a source of water."

96 HILLS VOLUNTEERS MAKE IT HAPPEN!



Conservation volunteers placing the apron



That's what you call storage capacity!

Volunteers logged a total of 571.5 hours worked, 161.25 hours of travel time and 5,645 roundtrip miles driven for the completion of Coyote Peak, Rock Tank and North 96 Hills catchments. It's truly amazing what can be accomplished when people work together.



The Crew

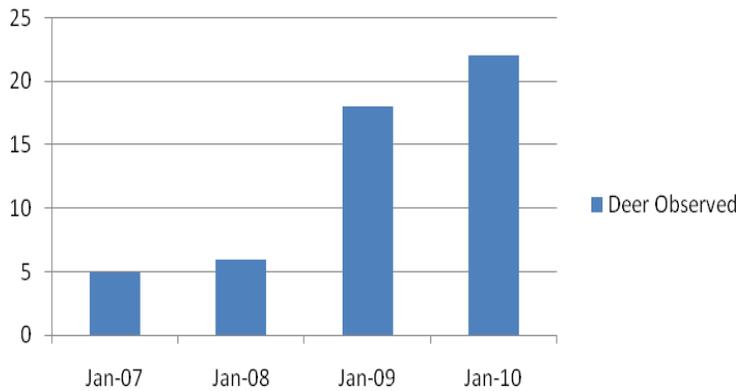


What we have learned

Digital monitoring cameras were built into the proposals and have been used to monitor wildlife use at the catchments. We've learned a great deal about wildlife behavior and use at water catchments, such as:

- Mule deer populations in the 96 Hills appear to be increasing; however it is too early to tell whether newly added water sources, improved precipitation, or a combination of the two is the cause. Continued monitoring is needed to answer these questions.
- As expected, mule deer rely heavily on water and use them during all months of the year, with peak use occurring during the summer months.
- Many species of wildlife, not just game species, benefit from newly added water.
- Javelina do not use water as frequently as expected.
- Catchments located in flatter terrain near large washes receive much more use by mule deer than those located in mountainous terrain. Because we have learned this, the Prospect Hill catchment will likely be relocated into flatter terrain.
- Mule deer-whitetail hybrids are not uncommon.
- Predator use is much lower than expected.

Deer Observed in 96 Hills Helicopter Surveys



Where we are going

Three catchments remain and await funding through the HPC process. We hope to complete them in the next two years using volunteers with oversight from the Department’s Development Branch. Investigations are currently underway regarding the ability to use camera trap data as a supplemental survey tool for wildlife populations. Computer programs have recently been developed and show real potential for field use at a

fraction of the cost of some other survey approaches. Information will be forthcoming as we learn more.

If you are interested in volunteering on a project in Unit 37B or in the Tucson area, contact Ben Brochu at bbrochu@azgfd.gov. Thanks again to those of you who are proactive and help make a difference for Arizona’s wildlife.

HPC Projects – We Really Are Workin’ For Wildlife, Aren’t We?!

The following projects, all submitted through the HPC process between 2007 and 2009 were either underway or completed in 2009 and 2010:

West Clear Creek Brush Management
 Carlisle Ranch Grassland Restoration
 Drug Capture Techniques RMBS
 Reg. 4 Sheep Pop. Decline Investigation
 Statewide Bighorn Sheep Surveys
 Castaneda Peak Catchment
 Sonoran Desert Natl Monument Cameras
 Fisher Point Catchment Redevelopment
 Statewide Maintenance of Sheep Waters
 Unit 24 Black Bear DNA Analysis
 Tripp Cyn and Widemouth Water System
 Nagel Prescribe Burn
 Tusayan Pipeline and Catchment
 Double A Browse Release
 Elk Stewardship
 W. Cottonwood Guzzler Redevelopment
 96 Hills – Phase 2 Developments
 Rodeo-Chediski Area-Earthen Tanks
 Graham Mtn Catchment #2
 Catchment 748 & 749 Developments
 Long Lake Enclosure Repair
 Cane Springs Habitat Restoration
 Overlook Springs
 Oracle Ridge Habitat Improvement
 Mountain Lion Mgmt in SW Arizona
 Region 4 Bighorn Sheep Translocation
 Buck Farm Water Development
 Ellinwood Grassland/Bosco Tank
 Sunset Restoration Project
 Mt. Dellenbaugh Catchment Redevelopment
 Hunter Canyon Habitat Improvement

East Sunset Fence Improvement
 Orme Ranch Water Development
 Highway 93 Bighorn Crossings Project
 Sheep Mineral Supplements – Reg. 1
 Cunningham Catchment
 Tipperary Tank
 Region 4 Cameras
 Units 20C, 42C, 44A&B Predator Mgmt
 High Tank #3 Re-seal
 AZ Bearcat and Project CAT
 Region 1 Black Bear Management
 East Clear Creek Meadow Enhancement
 Region 6 Catchment Maintenance
 I-40 Elk Research Project
 Boquillas Ranch – Tank Car Pipeline
 Ohaco Ranch-High Pt. and Ellsworth Well Fuel
 Palo Alto 1 – Amado Catchment
 N. Kaibab Winter Range
 AGFD Catchments 613-620
 Hackberry Wash Development
 Jarvis Creek Dam and Dirt Tank
 Pinetop Mtn Catchment Redevelopment
 Forest Restoration Turkey Study
 Buckhorn Prescribed Burn
 Bill Williams Catchment
 Bighorn Sheep Surveys on Kofa NWR
 Unit 1 Landscape Habitat Restoration
 Diamond Butte Catchment Maintenance
 East Tumacacori Water Developments
 544 Trough Replacement
 Sunnyside Canyon Development

Horseshoe Ranch Acquisition (escrow)
 Unit 10 Coyote Control
 Buckeye Hills Sheep Transplant
 Powell’s Mountain Catchment
 Black Mesa Catchment
 Mohave Mtns. Catchment #1
 Crotch Tank
 Silverbell Pipeline
 Apache Shovel Spgs Habitat
 Grayback Redevelopment
 Kettle Holes Prescribed Burn
 Pat Springs Pipeline O & M
 Atascacita Spring Grassland Restoration
 Peaks Trick Tank Upgrades
 Unit 9 Upper Basin Catchments
 Agua Caliente Prescribed Burn
 Palo Alto 2 – Enriquez Catchment
 3-Bar Mule Deer Study
 Catchment 106 Development
 FS164C Trick Tank Rebuild
 Body Condition Analysis of U12A Deer
 Elkhorn Water Enhancement
 Unit 3C Turkey Project
 Region 6 Bighorn Sheep Translocation
 Water Development 1000
 South Canyon Storage Tanks
 Ida Grassland Maintenance
 581 Catchment Redevelopment
 N & S Ash Creek Developments
 Johnson Peak Prescribed Burn
 Upper John’s Well

Meet your local HPC Chairpersons as of December 2010

HPC	Chairperson	Email	AGFD Contact	Email or phone
Forage Resource Study Group	Stephen Williams	swilliams@land.az.gov	Larry Phoenix	lphoenix@azgfd.gov
Fredonia HPC	The Fredonia HPC is no longer active.			
Kingman HPC	The Kingman HPC is no longer active.			
Payson Natural Resources Committee	Vacant		Natalie Robb	nrobb@azgfd.gov
Prescott HPC	Randy Lamb	Ranmad53@aol.com	Tom Finley	tfinley@azgfd.gov
Show Low HPC	Vacant		Bob Birkeland	bbirkeland@azgfd.gov
Safford HPC	Chuck Brooks	mjbrooks@aznexus.net	Duane Aubuchon	daubuchon@azgfd.gov
Sierra Vista/Douglas HPC	John Millican	j2dbmill@msn.com	Brad Fulk	bfulk@azgfd.gov
Southwest Arizona HPC	Jean Wilson	jeanrenegade@q.com	Mike Sumner	msumner@azgfd.gov
Springerville/Alpine HPC	Rex Brown	brownrm@frontier.net	Michael Godwin	mikegodwin@frontier.net
Tucson HPC	Brian Dolan	bfd@dakotacom.net	Joe Sacco	jsacco@azgfd.gov
Williams Flagstaff HPC	Tom Mackin	tmmackin@q.com	Larry Phoenix	lphoenix@azgfd.gov
Winslow HPC	Vacant		Bob Birkeland	bbirkeland@azgfd.gov

Project Funding Update – 71 Project Proposals Received for 2010–2011!

Ruth Gregory, Game Program Coordinator

Projects, projects, projects!! The HPC project funding cycle is in full swing this time of year. Seventy-one project proposals have been submitted, and the quality of the proposals continues to improve from year to year. People are definitely thinking landscape level!

The internal AGFD committee has read the proposals and prepared recommendations. All proposals are posted to the HPC web page at http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/2010HPCProjectProposals.shtml. As this newsletter goes to press our wildlife conservation organization funding partners are reading them and coming up with their recommendations in advance of the **project funding meeting, which will take place on January 22, 2011**. Final funding decisions will be made at this meeting and proponents will be notified shortly thereafter.

We expect to see great things accomplished for wildlife once again this year, as in past years. The tremendous success of this program is all a result of the valuable partnerships that have arisen through the HPC process. I've said it so many times before and I'll say it again – a huge THANK YOU to all of you who work so tirelessly to raise the Special Tag funds, the primary source of funds for HPC projects. The HPC has become one of the Department's premier enhancement programs for the benefit of Arizona's wildlife.

Next State HPC Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Friday February 18, 2011 at the Department's Region 5 office in Tucson. More details will be forthcoming as the date approaches. Please contact Ruth Gregory at rgregory@azgfd.gov if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

Congratulations, once again! Our conservation funding partners worked tirelessly to accomplish yet another year of successful fundraising for Arizona's wildlife.

~~ SUMMARY of SPECIAL BIG GAME TAG FUNDS RAISED IN 2010 ~~

Tag	Organization	Amount of Sale
Antelope	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$29,300
Antelope	Arizona Antelope Foundation	\$32,000
Antelope	Arizona Antelope Foundation	\$30,000
Total Antelope Tags		\$91,300

<i>Tag</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Amount of Sale</i>
Bighorn Sheep	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$101,075
Bighorn Sheep	Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society	\$120,000
Bighorn Sheep	Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society	\$90,000
Total Bighorn Sheep Tags		\$311,075
Black Bear	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$6,215
Black Bear	Arizona Antelope Foundation	\$3,750
Black Bear	Arizona Bowhunters Association	\$3,200
Total Black Bear Tags		\$13,165
Buffalo	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$27,720
Buffalo	Arizona Elk Society	\$14,000
Buffalo	Arizona Bowhunters Association	\$10,250
Total Buffalo Tags		\$51,970
Elk	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$97,375
Elk	Arizona Elk Society	\$100,000
Elk	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	\$95,000
Total Elk Tags		\$292,375
Javelina	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$6,035
Javelina	Mule Deer Foundation	\$1,380
Javelina	Arizona Bowhunters Association	\$920
Total Javelina Tags		\$8,335
Mountain Lion	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$4,900
Mountain Lion	Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society	\$4,500
Mountain Lion	Arizona Deer Association	\$2,900
Total Mountain Lion Tags		\$12,300
Mule Deer	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$68,080
Mule Deer	Arizona Deer Association	\$205,000
Mule Deer	Mule Deer Foundation	\$177,000
Total Mule Deer Tags		\$450,080
Turkey	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$8,905
Turkey	National Wild Turkey Federation	\$9,280
Turkey	National Wild Turkey Federation	\$5,000
Total Turkey Tags		\$23,185
Whitetail Deer	Arizona Big Game Super Raffle	\$19,860
Whitetail Deer	Mule Deer Foundation	\$23,000
Whitetail Deer	Arizona Deer Association	\$15,420
Total Whitetail Deer Tags		\$58,280

Big Game Special Tag Funds Raised in 2010 - \$1,312,065

Arizona Game and Fish Department

5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086

PHONE:
(602) 942-3000

FAX:
(623) 236-7929

E-MAIL:
rgregory@azgfd.gov



We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.azgfd.gov

Meetings & Announcements

- **HPC Project Funding Meeting** – Saturday, January 22, 2011
- **State HPC Meeting** - Friday, February 18, 2011 at the Department's Region 5 office, 555 N. Greasewood Road in Tucson.

A word from the editor –

Connie Weise, Game Program Administrative Assistant

It's hard to believe another year has come and gone! And within that year, many great projects have been accomplished to benefit the wildlife of Arizona! As your Statewide HPC Chairman John Harris mentioned in his update, it is so important to share our project successes with one another. This not only gives insight to what projects are going on around the state, but illustrates what can be achieved when groups work together collectively. It is yet another example of the benefits of sportsmen's dollars. So if you have an ongoing project or one that has reached its completion please take a moment and send in a project article or success story (and pictures if available) to either Ruth Gregory at rgregory@azgfd.gov or me at cweise@azgfd.gov.

In closing I'd like to share a quote I recently came upon that pretty much defined what the Habitat Partnership Committee is all about. It read....

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." ~Margaret Meade

Got questions on an HPC project???

Contact:

Ruth Gregory, Game Program Coordinator at 623-236-7349 or by email at rgregory@azgfd.gov



ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086



COMPANY NAME
STREET ADDRESS
CITY, STATE ZIP CODE