

Arizona Habitat Partnership Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes of June 30, 2012 – 9:00 AM
Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) Region 1 Office in Pinetop, AZ

Present:

Commissioner J.W. Harris
Dave Laird, Arizona Antelope Foundation
Mike Godwin, AGFD
Reuben Teran, AGFD
Bonita Gibson, AGFD
Brian Wakeling, AGFD
Amber Munig, AGFD
Bob Birkeland, AGFD
Joe Currie, AGFD
Jeff Pebworth, AGFD
Stephen Williams, Forage Resource Study
Group and Arizona State Land Dept.
Steve Clark, Arizona Elk Society
Al Eiden, AGFD
Bill Masters, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Denis Humphrey, Forage Resource Study
Group and Arizona State Land Dept.
Glen Dickens, Arizona Antelope Foundation
and Tucson HPC

Terry Herndon, Mule Deer Foundation
Scott Lerich, National Wild Turkey Federation
Pete Cimellaro, Arizona Deer Association
Duane Aubuchon, AGFD
Tanner Henry, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep
Society
Tom Mackin, Williams-Flagstaff HPC
Clair Harris, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Shannon Lawrence, AGFD
Rusty Rogers, Rocky Mountain Elk
Foundation
Carl Lutch, AGFD
Beth Humphrey, Apache Sitgreaves Nat'l
Forest
Joe Sheehey, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep
Society
Anne Casey, USFS, Safford Ranger District
Mike Godwin, AGFD

Introductions and Commissioner's Roll Call of Local HPCs:

Springerville-Alpine – Bill Masters
Winslow – Bob Birkeland
Show Low – Bob Birkeland
Fredonia – no representative
Williams-Flagstaff – Tom Mackin
Forage Resource Study Group – Stephen
Williams, Denis Humphrey
Kingman – no representative

Prescott – Jeff Pebworth
Southwest – no representative
Tucson – Duane Aubuchon
Safford – Duane Aubuchon
Sierra Vista-Douglas – Glen Dickens
Payson Natural Resources Committee – no
representative

Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review:

Commissioner Harris welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Reuben Terán reviewed the agenda for today's meeting. There were no additions to the agenda.

Minutes from State HPC meeting of February 18, 2012:

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the February 18, 2012 meeting. The motion carried. Minutes will be posted on the HPC web page. http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/hpc_meetings.shtml

HPC Coordinator Updates – Reuben Terán:

- Reuben will be sending the web link to the Comprehensive Game Management Plan (CGMP) to the chairs of all the local HPCs when the site is up and available for public use.
- Reuben is in the process of developing a more complete database of HPC project proposals. The database will become an archive for whatever information we have about past HPC projects going back several years, with the desired condition being a complete administrative record. As part of this effort, Reuben contacted all AGFD regions by email requesting project information going back as far as 2002. So far, the compilation process is going well and the response from Department staff has been good. Reuben is working with an intern to get this database loaded into a Structured Query Language (SQL) database format. Components within the database will also allow the ability to draw/map project locations and convert them into Geographic Information System (GIS) shape files. The overall intent is to have spatial information that can be tied into HabiMap™ Arizona, CGMP, and its related Management Focus Areas (MFAs). Please contact Reuben if you require or can provide any information that is available from past years.
- Reuben introduced Ms. Rachel Williams (RWilliams@azgfd.gov) from Region I, and Mr. Tim Grosch (TGrosch@azgfd.gov) from Region VI as recently hired Landowner Relations Program staff. Along with Ms. Shannon Lawrence (SLawrence@azgfd.gov) from Region 5 (who was previously introduced as the February 2012 State HPC meeting) these Landowner Relations Program positions have been indentified to assist in the LHPC Resource Management Plan Coordinator role as stated in the HPC Charter, and could be used as a resource to assist the LHPCs in assimilating species and site specific information during project planning efforts and the development of project proposals.
- The AGFD Volunteer program is again up and running, with a new coordinator, Ms. Jamie Lyons (JLyons@azgfd.gov). Jamie can be a resource to help solicit volunteers for various wildlife related activities and projects, and can also being a resource for disseminating information on upcoming volunteer activities or programs. Reuben encouraged anyone who needs volunteers to contact her.
- The HPC project proposal form has been updated, and includes information that was suggested at the last HPC meeting, namely a section on the recreational access component of project proposals, and a volunteer labor worksheet with cost guidelines from the Arizona Department of Administration on the dollar value of volunteer labor.
- Reuben mentioned that the LHPCs in Region 5 have been providing their priority lists for the HPC projects they submit, and that it would be helpful if all LHPCs could do this as well to assist with identifying priorities within the LHPCs. Glen Dickens remarked that prioritizing projects has been invaluable to their planning efforts.
- The AGFD Research Branch asked if there would there be interest from the HPCs to provide special tag funding to hire an intern to start compiling camera data in a coordinated manner. If there is support, an HPC project proposal will be developed outlining how this would be undertaken. The Commissioner mentioned that there is a lot of camera data scattered around the state in the various

regions. The project would not be species specific, but the expense could be apportioned across all special tag accounts. Duane Aubuchon remarked how valuable it would be to have a centralized storage location for all photo data. The group agreed that this is a good idea. An intern costs about \$5,000, so a 2-year project would cost approximately \$10,000. Most important – what are the various sportsmen’s groups thoughts on this?

- Steve Clark from Arizona Elk Society (AES) said that this data is valuable if it’s used properly.
- Terry Herndon from the Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) said that camera data is a good way to benchmark for numbers and health conditions.
- Pete Cimellaro from Arizona Deer Association (ADA) mentioned that ADA has tens of thousands of images from Unit 13B, and can document that some tanks built for sheep have not been used by sheep. They also have many images of lions. Their images were gathered by ADA’s Steve Chevront who was coordinating with the Department’s Research Branch.
- Joe Sheehey from Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society (ADBSS) said that ADBSS has been looking at camera data for 3 years and Brian Wakeling mentioned that the AGFD is also using some of the data from the ADBSS’s images.
- Jeff Pebworth gave a brief summary of Region 3 camera data. The region hired interns the last 3 summers to monitor by photo, the Unit 16A sheep population, then started branching out to put cameras on all the region’s catchments in order to find out what species are using the waters. In some instances, Regions have recommended more permits by documenting that the minimum number of rams in a population was greater than what surveys may have indicated. The Commission recently made changes to lion hunts, based on lion birth pulse information provided by photo data from Borderlands Jaguar Detection Project.

Updates on 2 bighorn sheep projects funded during the 2011-2012 funding cycle:

During the last HPC funding cycle project proposal 11-507: Restoration of Sheep in the Catalina Mountains was funded for \$80,000. However, since the AGFD will not be ready to implement this project this year, an out-of-cycle funding request has been made by Region III to transfer \$60,000 of these funds to implement project proposal 11-305: Black Mountains Bighorn Sheep Translocation. Project 11-507 is still considered fully funded, but won’t take place until at least next year. Brian mentioned that these decisions are made in consensus with the Wildlife Conservation Organizations (WCOs) who raise the Special Tag money, in this case ADBSS, but after funding decisions are made the Department will ask the State HPC to ratify the decision. ADBSS is supportive. A motion and a 2nd was made to approve the out-of-cycle funding transfer request to implement project 11-305 this year, and the motion carried.

The second funded bighorn sheep project, 11-205: Little Springs Point Trick Tank won’t take place this year, and another out-of-cycle funding request has been made to transfer those funds to implement an emergency/immediate need for project proposal 11-516: AGFD #866 Silver Bell Peak Wildlife Water Redevelopment. ADBSS is supportive of this plan. There was a motion and a 2nd to approve this funding transfer, and the motion carried. Joe Sheehey mentioned that ADBSS was able to show AGFD how critical Silver Bell was with its camera data. Project 11-205 is still considered fully funded, and is planned to be implemented sometime within the next year.

Updates from Game Branch:

2012-2013 Special Big Game License Tag (SBGLT) Awards:

At their meeting on June 23, 2012, the Commission awarded the following SBGLT tags:

<i>Species</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Tags (No. - Auction or Raffle)</i>
1 of Each (antelope, bighorn sheep, black bear, buffalo, elk, javelina, mountain lion, mule deer, turkey, whitetail deer)	ABGSR	10 (1 per species) Raffle Arizona Big Game Super Raffle (ABGSR)
Antelope	AAF	1 – Auction
Antelope	AAF	1 – Auction
Bighorn Sheep	ADBSS	1 – Auction
Bighorn Sheep	ADBSS	1 – Auction
Black Bear	ABA	1 – Auction
Black Bear	SCI-PHX	1 – Auction
Buffalo	ABA	1 – Auction
Buffalo	AES	1 – Auction
Elk	AES	1 – Auction
Elk	RMEF	1 – Auction
Javelina	ABA	1 – Auction
Javelina	SCI-AZ	1 - Auction
Mountain Lion	ADA	1 – Auction
Mountain Lion	ADBSS	1 - Auction
Mule Deer	ADA	1 – Auction
Mule Deer	MDF	1 – Auction
Turkey	NWTF	1 – Auction
Turkey	NWTF	1 – Raffle

Whitetail Deer	MDF	1 – Auction
Whitetail Deer	SCI-AZ	1 - Auction

- AAF – Arizona Antelope Foundation - <http://www.azantelope.org/>
- ABA – Arizona Bowhunters Association - <http://www.arizonabowhunters.org/>
- ADA – Arizona Deer Association - <http://www.azdeer.org/>
- ADBSS – Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society - <http://www.adbss.org/>
- AES – Arizona Elk Society - <http://www.arizonaelksociety.org>
- MDF – Mule Deer Foundation – <http://muledeer.org>
- NWTF – National Wild Turkey Federation - <http://www.nwtf.org/>
- RMEF – Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation - <http://www.rmef.org/>
- SCI-AZ – Safari Club International, Arizona Chapter - <http://azsci.com>
- SCI-PHX – Safari Club International, Phoenix Chapter - <http://www.phxsci.org/>
- ABGSR website: www.arizonabiggamesuperraffle.com

ABOVE TAGS TO BE SOLD Spring-Summer 2013 for season of Aug. 15, 2013 – Aug. 14, 2014

Brian Wakeling suggested to the WCOs that they could assist the Commission in decision making if they could perhaps work out ahead of time which tags they will be asking for so as to reduce competition. Brian also encouraged everyone to try to make it to the WCOs’ banquets and buy tickets for the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle. One of the geospatial illustrations they would like to show is the success story of the \$20+ million dollars raised by WCOs through their auctions and raffles since the inception of the Special Big Game License Tag program.

Transaction Fees on the sale of Special Big Game License Tags (SBGLTs):

Brian Wakeling explained that credit card fees charged to WCOs by banks for sales of SBGLTs are typically a percentage of the sales price, which, given the amounts the tags are selling for, could be thousands of dollars. Since the special tag rule requires that all proceeds of the sales must be remitted to the AGFD, WCOs are not allowed under current rules to hold back any of the sales amount to cover these fee expenses. The Commission recently took action allowing the WCOs various options on how to address these concerns. The agreement that the WCOs who are awarded tags enter into clarifies these options:

The Awardee may assess special big game tag purchasers or purchasers of raffle tickets the estimated credit or debit card transaction fees associated with the raffle or auction of special big game tags provided:

- a. The Awardee offers alternate methods of payment for the raffle or auction that incur no transaction fees (e.g., check, cash, or money order),
- b. The Awardee provides prior notice through advertising that estimated credit or debit card transaction fees will be added to the purchase price of a raffle ticket or winning auction bid, and the Awardee discloses the amount of the estimated fee or percentage of the purchase price that will be charged for the transaction fee,
- c. The purchaser pays the estimated cost of credit or debit card transaction fees in addition to the price of the raffle ticket or special big game tag. The Awardee is

- prohibited from reducing the winning bid amount or the price of a raffle ticket by any amount to offset the transaction fees,
- d. The amount charged the purchaser for debit or credit card transaction fees cannot exceed the estimated transaction fees charged by the credit or debit card financial institution,
 - e. The Awardee must submit to the Department transaction and discount fee records and a reconciliation of all debit and credit card transaction or discount fees compared to actual collections, and
 - f. If actual transaction and discount fees collected exceed the actual debit and credit card fees assessed, the Awardee shall remit the difference to the Department.

Administrative Process Overview for Projects Funded with SBGLT Funds:

Ruth Gregory provided a handout outlining the proper administrative steps for implementing funded HPC projects. There has been confusion in the past and it's very important that all administrative requirements be fulfilled prior to project implementation. It is hoped that this handout will clarify the process. The take-home message is: When a project proponent receives notification that a project has been funded, call the Game Branch for instructions on how to proceed. It is never too early to begin the process. The handout can be found here: http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/documents/SoyourHPCprojectwasfunded-2012.pdf

Presentation: External Grant Funding Opportunities – Bonita Gibson:

Bonita is the Department's grant writer and gave a presentation on available grants. She asked everyone to notify her of any grant opportunities they are aware of so she may add them to her spreadsheet. She is currently in the process of developing a calendar for her web page, which should be up in the next couple of months. The site will also have a summary sheet outlining proposal formats.

Bonita invited our external partners to contact her for assistance in locating grant opportunities. You can email her with as much information as you can on what your need is and she will conduct a search and notify if she finds anything. The hard work of working with grants is the paperwork requirements once the grant is awarded. Bonita is also available to proof, edit and mentor NGO grant proposals. Bonita emphasized that if the grant application is written correctly, the paperwork and reporting are much easier. This past week, 3 awards came in to AGFD.

Reporting is hugely important in the grant world, as is making sure you can spend the money you are awarded. Grant awards vary in size and how they are awarded. Sometimes the funds come in 100%, and often with some kind of amendment. When writing a grant, prepare to be only partially funded, and be able to demonstrate how you will make up the deficiency. Grantors usually want to know how this will be covered.

Sometimes awards are more than you asked for. Bonita cited an example of requesting a grant of \$52,000 and receiving \$97,000, based on what follow-up was projected.

Grant writing often involves relationship building, asking questions and making phone calls to grantors to ask what was done correctly and incorrectly in grant writing. An unsuccessful grant application can become a learning opportunity.

AGFD recently learned that they are among the finalists for the “Bright Ideas in Innovations in Government” from Harvard University for the wildlife overpasses program. We will not know for a year if we will win the grant competition, but this would offer national recognition of the type that then makes it easier to get other awards.

Bonita urged persistence when going after grants. If unsuccessful: 1) ask for feedback. If unsuccessful a second time: 2) ask for feedback. Apply for grants for the same project at least 3 times, improving your grant application in each cycle.

Reuben has posted Bonita’s list of over 100 other fund granting opportunities on the HPC webpage. Since the HPC proposals fare better for funding with a good match, grant monies will make a project more likely to be funded.

Bonita has a form for requesting assistance with grants. If you contact her, she will provide the form for you to complete. It does not have to be perfect or complete; just give her what you have.

Presentation: Region III Comprehensive Game Management Plan - Unit 10 Management Focus Area – Jeff Pebworth:

The initiative started as an HPC predation management project in Unit 10 that included considerations about pronghorn predation by coyotes and mountain lions, but also potential for competitive interactions with elk. Comprehensive game management planning is an important priority for Director Larry Voyles, and Unit 10, which encompasses hunts of many game species and thousands of tags, seemed like a natural first step in the management focus area planning aspect of this effort.

The plan uses GIS extensively, with the resulting visual references to make management decisions. Layers that can be analyzed include zoning and land ownership, wind farms, fire distribution, water sources and other details that make it easier to analyze for landscape level planning. Region III implemented a grassland analysis that started with the Ecological Site data used by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Forest Service. Most of Unit 10 was classed as grassland or savannah historically, but there has been a great deal of juniper encroachment. Focusing management actions to reduce juniper density within areas where the ecological site analysis predicts the greatest probability for success provides a planning trajectory with the least wasted effort.

This analysis allows for the creation of a criteria matrix around which projects can be planned and prioritized.

Stephen Williams applauded that the Unit 10 MFA is based on ecological sites. It was asked when it will be expanded. For now, Region III is still working to gather all the background work in coordination with the Region’s Habitat Program.

Brian Wakeling explained that this web-based planning is where we’re headed as an agency. The AGFD is currently working with the Commission on the Strategic Plan, which will also be web-based. Today’s presentation addresses implementation portion of the 3-tierd planning process. CGMP is the operational portion. All these plans (CGMP, hunt guidelines, species management plans) will be web-based. The HPC is the first to see this presentation; the HPC can provide valuable input to improve this Plan. What Region III has accomplished broke a lot of ground in making CGMP and the Management Focus Areas a reality. MFAs are a key component of CGMP. At least one MFA is being initiated in each region; each region is in the process of determining which unit or units will make up the MFA.

Jeff remarked that this all ties back to the HPC Program. Reuben is working with the Region 3 intern to get HPC info into this tool. Pete Cimellaro said this is great and asked where the political aspects will fit in, because this will be vitally important in planning. Jeff said that the plan will have objectives for the various units including access. Amber said that this tool will allow for more open comment on goals, and adapting to new things that will appear as part of long-term change. Jeff remarked that the tool places all the information on the table, thus illustrating why decisions are being made. Pete suggested that this is where the agency and Commission need to develop the relationships with landowners by providing incentives. Commissioner Harris remarked that these are things that will allow us to develop partnerships and it is a high priority for the Commission. Al Eiden stated that he has a similar program on private lands to be released in about 2 weeks.

Tom Mackin asked about updates to the tool. He used the example of the Forest Service's 4 FRI and asked if this information will be updated on a regular basis? Jeff said yes, as long as the data is in the correct format. There are specific data collection and data storage standards that must be met. Once people see the utility of the tool, it will be an added incentive to make sure it is kept current.

Tanner Henry from ADBSS said this type of planning is really effective because it can illustrate fact from fiction. It's imperative to be kept up to date. Jeff stated that it's a matter of building the process so that the data is automatically updated across the layers as new info is input.

Brian asked for feedback from the field on how it's going to work, because it will influence the WMs and their recommendations. Mike Godwin remarked that Region 1 has data for Unit 27, collected for 10 years and will need support from the Department to make this happen in a region. Brian stated that this is why we need a standardized way of collecting and storing data, and we are only beginning to build the framework. Jeff advised beginning with HabiMap, urging everyone to play with it and learn how to use it. Jeff mentioned that Region III started with a brainstorm of what layers are valuable. We can use it to illustrate everything the AGFD does. Pete Cimellaro supported Mike's request for assistance for the field staff, and stated that the WCOs should also consider this a priority.

Clair Harris said that ADOT has been using these types of planning tools for years and suggested that AGFD get information from them. Jeff said that not all information will be available to everyone. There will be some information that's sensitive, so for those, they're looking at a series of permissions.

Amber clarified that MFAs may include areas that cross multiple units. The regions will decide on what defines a complete MFA.

HPC Recognition Awards:

Commissioner Harris presented certificates recognizing the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle (ABGSR) as the HPCs WCO partner of the year for 2012, as well as the Safford HPC as the local HPC of the year. Pete Cimellaro accepted on behalf of the ABGSR and Duane Aubuchon accepted the plaque for the Safford HPC.

Local HPC and Wildlife Conservation Organizations' Reports and Success Stories:

Sierra Vista-Douglas HPC and Arizona Antelope Foundation (AAF) – Glen Dickens:

The HPC has supportive landowners and appreciates Region V's aggressive engagement in getting people from the WCOs out into the field. John Millican is working for AAF funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant. They hired a person to work on a geodatabase and are putting \$30,000 for Region V attributes and layers for pronghorn. It is about a 27-month long project and the results will be given to

AGFD. It will include a layer for Chiracahua Leopard Frogs, as many of the waters for pronghorn are also leopard frog habitat. They funded predator management along with the deer folks and are seeing huge fawn success. The Arizona Chapter of Safari Club International is also supporting this effort.

Arizona Elk Society (AES) - Steve Clark:

Funding from the Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation license plate funds, and in cooperation with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation were used for a tank project on the Ohaco Ranch. The Ida Grassland, project is completed, taking out 35,000 trees on 250 acres. AES volunteers cut the little trees. They also removed 50 miles of fence from Burro Creek allotment.

Springerville-Alpine HPC - Mike Godwin

Mike reported that they are finishing the winter range PJ removal and burning in Unit 1 and that the burn area of the Unit 27 Wallow fire has a lot of potential for the future.

Show Low and Winslow HPCs - Bob Birkeland:

The Show Low HPC has more people participating. Their focus is the Unit 3C deer herd. They will be working on the Railroad Allotment PJ treatment and will be submitting project proposals for the Rodeo-Chediski reburning, Thanks to the Forest Service for completing NEPA for the burns. This is a top priority for the Show Low HPC. Show Low has 10 volunteers and in the last 2 weeks they hauled water and rolled wire from fence removals. The Winslow HPC is having more participation as well. Two catchments were rebuilt, thanks to Joe Currie and the AGFD Development crew. The focus for Unit 4B focus will be waters.

Forage Resource Study Group - Stephen Williams and Denis Humphrey:

The group has tremendous landowner support from Raymond Wildlife Area, The Flying M, Bar T Bar and Hopi 3 Canyons ranches. The group monitors weather; this past year was a tough year, with only 1.5 inches of precipitation from March to June, 1.5 inches from July to October, and 1.6 inches from November to February. The average for the period July to October is usually 7". The group has been meeting the last few years at Raymond Wildlife Area. The Raymond buffalo are often an issue for the nearby ranches. Brian and Carl Lutch make recommendations to address the issues, including a change in the OHV rule. As for projects, one Forest Service catchment was upgraded from a 600 gallon unit to 20,000 gallons. Also, 10 dirt tanks were renovated to help get elk out of the riparian area of the Buckhorn Allotment. The ranches have also been getting other funding from NRCS for fence improvements, pipelines and solar pumps for year round water.

AGFD Development Branch – Joe Currie:

Joe thanked everyone for the amount of volunteer help they had on several catchments projects. Their program is minimally staffed at the moment, so the help is much appreciated.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, White Mountains Chapter – Rusty Rogers:

This is his first HPC meeting and he is finding it very informative. Their local chapter (White Mountains) has been involved in several fence removal projects and water hauling. Their chapter banquet will take place on August 18, 2012.

Prescott HPC – Jeff Pebworth:

The Tank Car and 16 Pipeline projects on the Boquillas ranch have been completed. The Boquillas dirt tank project proposed last year was only partially funded. The Wildlife Manager is working with the ranch on other waters. They would like to redevelop some of the tanks with the old concrete style aprons. Many are still functioning, but their capacity is too small. They will be attempting another pronghorn capture in January, and have received permission from the Deep Well Ranch to construct semi-permanent wings for the trap at the capture location to get animals acclimated. They have a backup plan to use net gunning if need be, but the issue with that is a probable higher mortality rate. They will be proposing a project for Big Black

Mesa. The Units 17 and 17B Smith Mesa juniper project is under way. They received a Yavapai Park County Parks and Recreation grant for \$48,000 as part of the funding for it. They will be proposing work on 7 dirt tanks, requesting HPC funds. For the Kingman HPC, there will be proposals for redevelopments in the Music Mountains. They will most likely be expensive, but they will be putting cameras in Music Mountains to document use. Two catchments, Powerline Catchment and Sugarloaf Catchment, will be proposed. Joe Currie remarked that he will have some BLM funding to use as match.

The Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) – Terry Herndon:

MDF has a new chapter in Springerville. Terry accompanied Bob Birkeland water hauling in Unit 3C. The deer population in the burn area there is exploding, but a re-burn of the area is important. There will be an HPC proposal for Unit 22 for a rail fence to exclude cattle, and also for some other tank projects. In his new position as MDF's Regional Director for Arizona, he's been trying to meet Wildlife Managers around the state.

Arizona Deer Association - Pete Cimellaro:

The ADA is fast approaching their 30th anniversary. ADA is asking – 30 years later are we better off? For mule deer, the answer is no, but whitetail are holding steady. For all the tag money spent, as well as millions of private dollars, we're treading water. We need to get creative. Pete commended Bonita for her energy. The challenges are huge and sportsmen are getting tired of supporting the organizations. Where are we going to take this?

AGFD's Landowner Relations program – Al Eiden:

The AGFD is working with NRCS on the shared positions, like Shannon Lawrence's. The role and function of the position is for the improvement of relations with landowners and to act as liaison for projects funded by Farm Bill dollars. The WHIP and EQIP funds are combining, presenting both challenges and opportunities. Federal programs money is lessening. The Arizona Department of Agriculture has a program with funding of more than \$500,000. It will be important to develop tools to determine which projects on private lands improve wildlife habitat.

National Wild Turkey Federation – Scott Lerich:

Scott has been working with the Prescott National Forest and they've identified a lot of potential projects. In the Wallow Fire area they may use Arizona Water Protection fund dollars. They are working on large and long-term projects around Safford and have a work project coming up the first week of July in Flagstaff.

AGFD's Region 2 – Carl Lutch:

The region has been working for about 5 years working with Coconino National Forest to complete NEPA for water projects. They've identified 10 priority waters in Units 5BN and 6A, including a sheep water in Clear Creek. The AGFD archaeologist will be doing some of the compliance work. Next year's HPC proposals will include a project in coordination with House Rock Wildlife Area and the National Park Service. The NEPA for the buffalo issues will be completed this fall, and the buffalo problems with the NPS will probably involve some lethal removal. Sportsmen's groups will need to weigh in on the issue.

Tucson HPC – Duane Aubuchon on behalf of Ben Brochu:

Completed Projects:

- Mount Fagan in Unit 34A – This project had a tremendous volunteer turnout. Weather delays postponed the actual completion of the project a few weeks, but volunteers and AGFD personnel finally prevailed.
- Brady Wash in Unit 37B – This was completed in mid-March. The volunteer turnout was again excellent, with 25 people assisting with the project. They worked a total of 270 hours, had 61 hours of travel time, and drove 2,768 miles to assist on the project. People from Coueswhitetail.com,

RMEF Tucson, ADBSS, and Arizona Sportsman's Journal assisted. A special thanks to Chris McCotter (Arizona Sportsman's Journal.org) and Amanda Moors (Coueswhitetail.com) for soliciting volunteers using their websites and posting completion pictures and videos. For those of you who are interested, the development was captured on 4 digital trail cameras each taking a picture every 5 minutes. These were then stitched together into videos. Visit the respective websites below if you are interested in watching.

Brady Wash Videos:

<http://www.azsj.org/forums/showthread.php?p=167250#post167250>

Brady Wash Project Pictures and Thread:

<http://www.azsj.org/forums/showthread.php?t=20882>

Brady Wash Pictures from Coueswhitetail.com

<http://forums.coueswhitetail.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=31233>

Project Updates:

- Catalina Bighorn Sheep Restoration Project – The restoration is planned for November 2013. We had our first meeting with the Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection to develop an advisory committee, which will include sportsmen representation, to assist in guiding the project using an adaptive management approach with emphasis on predator management strategies. Also, an aggressive active and passive fundraising strategy is being developed which will focus on soliciting donations from the public and private sectors. Recently passed legislation will assist us in this endeavor. We will be submitting a funding request to the Wild Sheep Foundation by the end of August, as well as another HPC proposal this September. Additional funding sources will be solicited as well, as the opportunity presents itself. We anticipate initial project costs to be in the neighborhood of \$200,000 to \$250,000.
- Teacup-Tecolote Projects in Unit 37B – Permits and applications to place improvements are being finalized and work is expected to begin soon.
- Kile Family Water Development projects in Unit 37A – The 50,000 gallon tank is in and they are finishing up on the smaller tanks and water lines. The supplemental water pipe to Catchment 676 should be installed soon.
- A-Diamond Ranch Solar project in Unit 37B – A stewardship agreement is being finalized between the AGFD and Gregg Vinson. Once this is in place, Gregg is eager to proceed as fast as possible. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by the end of this year.

Safford HPC – Duane Aubuchon:

Two catchments in the Whitlock Mountains in Unit 28 were completed in May thanks to Development Branch and the Southeast Arizona Sportsmen's Association. Bonita Grasslands restoration was also completed - 20,000 acres for pronghorn using Farm Bill funding from NRCS (EQIP and WHIP), with Special Tag dollars as match. John Bacorn will be writing a proposal to treat more acres. Pronghorn are fawning there. Prescribed burns scheduled in the Galiuros will take place after the dry conditions are alleviated by monsoon rain. One upcoming project will be on the 76 Ranch in Pinalenos. The new owner has granted access to the adjoining Forest Service land. It will include extensive pipeline projects, costing about \$110,000 for the first phase. Another proposal will be for about \$20,000, working with a rancher in Eagle Creek Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep habitat. It will involve fencing livestock out of Eagle Creek,

restoring tanks and adding wildlife waters. The project is currently awaiting for NEPA completion. Another burn is proposed for the Stockton Pass area.

Coronado National Forest – Anne Casey:

They will be proposing to treat 3,500 acres on Mount Graham. It will have great value for T&E species, but will benefit turkeys and black bears as well. They will ask for 30-40 thousand dollars and will be entering into a stewardship agreement with National Wild Turkey Federation.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Flagstaff Chapter – Clair Harris:

Their banquet will take place on August 11, 2012. They will have a work project August 25-27, 2012 on a catchment in Unit 9. It's been super dry and members have hauled a lot of water in Unit 9 and Unit 7, including 5,000 gallons in one day. The good news is that it's not been necessary to haul water to the new catchments in Unit 9. Large storage capacity is the only way to go in elk country.

Coconino Sportsmen – Tom Mackin:

The group has hauled 20,000 gallons of water in the last week. Most places are bone dry. They installed a synthetic liner in a large earthen tank, with cooperation from Grand Canyon Trust and Kaibab National Forest. Pat Springs pipeline has provided approximately 160,000 gallons. Volunteers have made about 40 trips to conduct O&M on Region 2 waters in Units 9, 7E, and 11M. Tom urged everyone to contact the AGFD's new volunteer coordinator, Jamie Lyons, who is very interested in working with our groups. Clair mentioned that Coconino County bought Rogers Lake. Volunteers made a wildlife friendly fence for elk with jumps. The county is being very proactive improving the area around Rogers Lake. A few conservation groups, including Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation and Arizona Wildlife Federation, have applied for grants for various projects in the area, including fencing.

Reuben Terán on behalf of the Southwest Arizona HPC:

Region IV HPC Projects Completed 2012:

- Jane Hunt's - GMU 43B - pothole reseal w/ ADBSS.
- Cipriano - GMU 40B – redeveloped w/ new buried system w/ ADBSS.
- 950 - GMU 41 –redeveloped w/ new PVC buried system w/ YVRGC and a large excavator loaned by Wellton Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District .
- 738 - GMU 43A – redeveloped w/ new PVC buried system w/ YVRGC.
- 598 – GMU 42 – redeveloped w/ new PVC buried system w/ local sportsmen who loaned a backhoe to the project.

Non-HPC projects:

- Yuma Valley Rod & Gun Club assisted with the installation of three new buried systems for Sonoran pronghorn and which will also benefit deer
- New Halliwell Tank – on USAF Barry Goldwater Range in GMU 40B
- Neversweat Tank– Kofa NWR in GMU 45B
- Dogleg Tank– Kofa NWR in GMU 45B.
- SW Deer volunteers provided a backhoe and assisted with repairs to Tank 442 in GMU 44A.

Miscellaneous:

Commissioner Harris congratulated everyone for the 20 years of HPC program. He stated that he is optimistic about deer herds recover due to wildfires.

Bob Birkeland thanked the Arizona Deer Association for purchasing PVC pipe for fencing projects that keep their volunteers busy. Funding and process need to be creative on major changes to how we allocate funds.

Clair commented that the state's been in drought for the last 20 years, and asked where we'd be if the HPCs hadn't accomplished the work they've undertaken over the past two decades.

Al Eiden announced that AGFD has nominated Jim Ohaco for the national steward of the year recognition from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA).

Tom Mackin reminded the group about the grand opening of the Northern Arizona shooting range on July 7, 2012. The event will take place on Saturday and Sunday. Northern Arizona Law Enforcement agencies have already been using the range and as long as the Forest remains open, the range will be open. The first hunter education campout at the range will take place the weekend of July 20-22, 2012.

Next meetings:

- **Saturday, January 12, 2013** – Project funding meeting between AGFD and the WCOs. Meet the Commission is that same weekend.
- **Saturday, February 9, 2013** – State HPC meeting

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.