



Habitat Partnership Committee Connection

Individual Highlights:

Coordinator's Corner	2
In the Spotlight	2
Feature Story	3
Project Funding Update	4
Meetings and Announcements	7



From your Statewide HPC Chairman Bob Hernbrode Commission Chairman

After my first meeting as the Statewide HPC Chairman, I realized that the HPC process can be a complex mix of 12 NGO missions, 10 HPC committee priorities, the Department's need to consider wildlife needs along with funding opportunities, and the goals of partnering land management agencies. There is preparation work that goes into the auctioning or raffling of each tag and pre-project work involved in addressing NEPA requirements. The array of projects that are being funded with Special Big Game Tag Funds for wildlife conservation was astounding. Below are some bullets from the minutes of the meeting that I would like to reiterate:

- Project proponents want funding feedback.
- Commissioner Martin's Conservation Committee is looking into how non-hunting groups can contribute funding in habitat projects.
- Individual projects need to better identify if they can use partial funding to complete portions of ambitious projects.
- NGOs continue to raise funds and continue to improve relationships with landowners and other land management agencies as a result of the HPC program.
- Small project and large often have wide-ranging implications.
- We need to balance the funding of projects on a statewide basis so that local HPCs are not discouraged from submitting future projects.
- Research projects play an increasingly important role in management. We may need to discuss this further at a future meeting.
- NGOs have been working with the Department on the special big game tag program since 1984. The first priority has always been wildlife and wildlife habitat. The reality is that there isn't enough money currently to fund every project. The process could use more funding partners.
- Although special big game tag funds have been the main funding source for HPC projects, it was never the intention of the program that it be the only source of funding. And with the focus on landscape scale projects, priorities should be determined with everyone at the table.

From the meeting I came away with a couple of topics that are a top priority for me as your Chairman. I have requested that out-of-cycle projects be the exception to the rule for funding consideration. Additionally I have asked the Department to develop and present alternatives for leveraging HPC funds with other funds from outside and from within the Department. This report is now being drafted and I hope to be able to discuss it with you at the Summer Statewide HPC meeting at the Pinetop Regional Office on Saturday July 25, 2009, 9:00 am until 1:00 pm. I hope to see you all there. 📖

The Coordinator's Corner –

Ron Thompson, HPC Coordinator

Since the meeting to award funding for projects during the 2009–2010 HPC funding cycle and the Statewide HPC meeting, the Department has been busy processing payments of awards, developing collection agreements with land owners and land management agencies, reviewing project completion reports, and accepting funds from the auction of Special Big Game Tags. There is an entire chain of events that follows the award of tags by the Commission in June, not to mention the issuance of the tags themselves to the highest bidders or lucky raffle winners. These responsibilities fall on a variety of people within the Department, often people far from the acre of habitat that is improved or the fence modified. However, we are all connected to this desire and need to support wildlife conservation. In William Stolzenburg's book *Where the Wild Things Were* he refers to the "shifting-baseline syndrome where the world as first seen by a child becomes his lifelong standard of excellence, mindless of the fact he is admiring the ruins of his parents." If we continue to use the Special Big Game Tag Fund to leverage additional funds for wildlife conservation, we will hopefully be responsible for shifting the baseline towards a desirable state.

The challenges ahead of us in poor economic times will be in funding quality projects that meet the increasing demands on the habitats of Arizona's wildlife resources. It should be no surprise to the hard working sportsmen of this state that new conservation partnerships must be developed to maintain our current level of funding. With these will come new opportunities as well as new views of wildlife conservation. In an interview with Director Larry Voyles by Inside Tucson Business, Larry stated it was "time for all conservation interests to look for the opportunity to come together under a larger tent because the challenges we face in wildlife conservation in the future will require broader centers of support to solve them. We need to look for the common ground that will allow us to work together for the common good." I would like to think the HPC tent is large enough to allow a few more people under it, all for the good of wildlife conservation. 📖

In the Spotlight – Double U Ranch Brush Management Project #III



A 195 acre area of the Double U Ranch had become invaded with Mesquite and whitethorn acacia. By selectively grubbing this area it will help restore the natural plant community, protect soils, control erosion, reduce sedimentation, and improve water quality. In addition it will improve the habitat for scaled quail and mule deer while reducing invasive shrub species densities. Grazing will be deferred on the treatment area for 18 months and two growing seasons to allow for vegetative recovery. Key cooperators in this project included Art Mean, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Jack Telles, Ranch owner and NRCS cooperator, John Patton, Arizona State Land Department and Brad Fulk, Arizona Game and Fish Department. 📖

Building Fences & Relationships by Garrett Fabian, AZGFD WM III, GMU 5A

The northern part of Game Management Unit (GMU) 5A is a grassland habitat transitioning into a pinyon-juniper grassland along the East and West Sunset Mountains. This land is mostly checkerboard state and private land, which the private land is owned by the Hopi Tribe and managed by Duane Coleman of the Clear Creek Ranch. The Clear Creek Ranch is an operational cattle ranch, which grazes the area with a rest-rotation system. Besides the cattle, this area is home to pronghorn antelope, some of which belong to the famous Anderson Mesa pronghorn population. Other wildlife in the area includes elk, mule deer, and various non-game species.

This checkerboard ownership has made for some very challenging management of the natural resources, not to mention the historical conflict between cattle and wildlife. The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) along with AZ State Land Department and local ranchers came to form a group known as the Forage Resource Study Group, which works collaboratively to resolve these conflicts. Through the years, we have built a relationship of trust and understanding to manage the natural resources for the benefit of all. Programs such as the Habitat Partnership Committee (HPC) grants and AZGFD Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) have helped strengthen these relationships through providing grant dollars to improve habitat for wildlife, which also benefits rancher operations.

The Clear Creek Ranch has been a very active participant in improving wildlife habitat and allowing hunter access through participating in many of the AZGFD grant programs. This current year is a very good example. From Highway 87 at mile-post 322 to the base of East Sunset Mountain stood a woven wire fence about 2.8 miles in length. With a mountain on one side and the highway on the other, this fence was a significant barrier to pronghorn movement in the area, especially during the spotty monsoon green-up.



Current fencing posed significant barrier to pronghorn movement



Volunteers and AZGFD work over 106 man hours to remove old woven wire fence to make room for a new wildlife friendlier fence

In addition to being a woven wire fence, this fence was in poor condition, presenting a hazard to all wildlife that dare cross.

Through collaborative efforts with the Clear Creek Ranch, we successfully submitted a grant through the HPC process to fund the replacement of the fence in two stages over two years. We were able to get about half the materials donated, the State Land Department quickly surveyed the area and issued a replacement permit, the HPC grant funded the other half of materials, the Arizona Antelope Foundation agreed to tear down the existing fence through a volunteer day, and the rancher agreed to build a new wildlife friendly fence with the provided materials. On April 18, 2009, 11 volunteers from the Arizona Antelope Foundation and the local area showed up to tear down half the fence. In total the volunteers and AZGFD worked over 106 man hours to take down and remove 1.8 miles of the fence. This does not include the volunteers driving time or mileage. It was very rewarding to know and see the immediate benefits to wildlife this project will provide.

This fall, the Clear Creek Ranch will build a new wildlife friendly fence in the torn down fences' place. Next April, volunteers will again gather to finish the fence tear down. If you would like to volunteer in the completion of this project, please contact the AZGFD Region II office. Lastly, I would like to sincerely thank all the hard work of this year's volunteers, especially Bill Keebler for coordinating the volunteers. 📖

<i>Grant name</i>	<i>Antelope Tag</i>	<i>Bighorn Sheep Tag</i>	<i>Black Bear Tag</i>	<i>Buffalo Tag</i>	<i>Elk Tag</i>	<i>Javelina Tag</i>	<i>Mule Deer Tag</i>	<i>Turkey Tag</i>	<i>Whitetail Deer Tag</i>
<i>Long Lake Enclosure Repair & Maintenance</i>	\$5,000				\$11,000		\$2,000		
<i>Soap Creek Tank No2 - 2008</i>		\$2,000					\$2,500		
<i>Jarvis Camp Concrete Check Dam and Dirt Tank - 2008</i>							\$7,300		
<i>Powell's Monument Wildlife Catchment Redevelopment - 2008</i>		\$40,000							
<i>13B Cooperative Catchment Maintenance 2009</i>							\$25,000		
<i>Double A Browse Release #2</i>					\$70,000		\$20,000		
<i>S. Utah, N. Arizona Mule Deer Initiative "SUNAMI"</i>							\$100,000		
<i>Orme Ranch Wildlife Water Development</i>							\$3,000		
<i>Wright Creek Riparian Habitat Protection Project</i>							\$4,500		
<i>Capture and translocation of bighorn sheep from the Trigo Mountains of Unit 43B</i>		\$18,739							
<i>Digital Trail Cameras - Region 4</i>		\$740							
<i>Buckhorn Prescribed Burn</i>									\$40,000
<i>Double U Ranch Brush Management Project #III</i>						\$2,400			
<i>Redrock Canyon Water Development</i>									\$24,000
<i>East Tumacacori Water Development</i>							\$13,198		\$18,000
<i>Palo Alto #1 (Amado Catchment)</i>						\$2,000	\$22,647		
<i>Caviglia Well</i>						\$2,500	\$7,150		\$1,000
<i>Palo Alto #2 (Enriquez Catchment)</i>						\$2,000	\$22,467		
<i>Crittenden/Corral Canyon Water Enhancement Project</i>						\$1,000			\$5,521
<i>Catchment #106 Redevelopment - Owl's Head #8</i>							\$34,245		
<i>Teacup/Tecolote Water Development Project - Phase 1</i>							\$12,700		
<i>Redevelopment of Catchments 748 and 749</i>							\$29,000		\$10,000
<i>Hackberry Wash Water Development</i>						\$1,000	\$18,550		

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<i>Development of Wildlife Waters throughout the 96 Hills Mountain Range - Phase One</i>						\$3,000	\$34,537		
<i>Government Peak Slick Rock Catchment</i>							\$10,000		\$28,167
<i>North Ash & South Ash Creek Water System</i>							\$7,200	\$1,800	\$9,000
<i>Tex Canyon Habitat Improvement Project</i>							\$15,000		\$15,000
<i>Tripp Canyon and Wide Mouth Water System</i>			\$4,000				\$5,042	\$2,958	\$5,000
<i>Babacomari/Rose Tree Grassland Habitat Restoration</i>	\$21,600								
<i>Park Tank Juniper Maintenance</i>					\$3,500				\$3,500
<i>2Y Ranch Solar Project</i>	\$25,000								
<i>Horseshoe Ranch Aquisition</i>	\$135,000								
<i>Elk Stewardship Program</i>					\$25,000				
<i>AZBEARCAT</i>			\$4,341						
<i>Statewide Bighorn Sheep Survey Request</i>		\$91,520							
<i>Ryan & Pueblo Trick Tank Maintenance</i>					\$1,300		\$650		\$650
<i>Bighorn Sheep Disease Assessment GMU's 12A, 12BW, 13A</i>		\$14,850							
<i>Wild turkey response to forest restoration treatmenets in central Arizona</i>								\$10,000	
<i>Elk Movements Associated with I-40, Williams to Winona</i>					\$110,000				
<i>Statewide Bighorn Sheep water maintenance for emergency helicopter</i>		\$50,000							
<i>Buck Springs Base Property Acquisition</i>			\$2,500		\$91,564		\$5,000	\$2,500	\$10,000
<i>Turkey Transplant in R5</i>								\$4,973	
Total funding	\$206,600	\$217,849	\$10,841	\$0	\$369,364	\$13,900	\$448,045	\$17,258	\$169,838

It's not too early to submit projects for the next funding cycle! The deadline for project submission is September 1, 2009. The project proposal form can be found here: http://www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/w_c/hpc/HPC%20PROJECT%20PROPOSAL%20FORM.pdf
Email your proposals to rgregory@azgfd.gov.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
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Meetings & Announcements

- Formation of the Sierra Vista/Douglas HPC meeting – July 14, 2009 at the Sierra Vista Ranger District
- Summer Statewide HPC meeting – July 25, 2009 at the Arizona Game and Fish Pinetop office from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
- Hunt guideline comments and online hunt guidelines questionnaire due by July 15, 2009
- Spring hunt recommendations presented at August 8, 2009 Commission Meeting in Phoenix
- Spring hunt guidelines presented at September 12, 2009 Commission Meeting in Phoenix

A word from the editor –

Connie Giesie, Game Program Administrative Assistant

Greetings and Salutations!

I would like to extend a big thank you to Garrett Fabian for submitting his article on the Clear Creek Ranch project and Brad Fulk for the great before and after pictures of the Double U Ranch project! The HPC newsletter is a great way for you to showcase your project successes! If you have an idea for an article, success story, announcement, project status update, or any HPC related news, please submit them to either rothompson@azgfd.gov or myself at cgiesie@azgfd.gov.

Got questions on an HPC project???

Contact:

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