



Habitat Partnership Committee Connection

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FROM YOUR NEW (and former) STATEWIDE HPC CHAIRMAN, Commissioner J. W. HARRIS

I'm back! At the June Commission meeting, the Commission redistributed the work load among Commission-chaired Committees. Since I completed my term as Commission Chair, I am now eager to return as the HPC Chairman! My thanks to Commissioner Davis for his term of service and his leadership in improving wildlife and wildlife habitat through the HPC.

It is an exciting time to be involved in anything to do with the conservation and improvement of wildlife habitat in Arizona. The Department is implementing mule deer and quail habitat initiatives with funding through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Project this next year, which was recently approved by the Commission through the budget process. The objectives of these initiatives should dovetail with the work of the HPC. Local engagement will be vital to the success of all habitat initiatives, and it's my hope that local HPCs will take the lead in enlisting the cooperation of key stakeholders and interested parties.

Wildlife management is challenging, engaging, and often controversial. The beauty of the Habitat Partnership Committee is its focus on taking down barriers and building partnerships to overcome differences while completing work on the ground. This is especially important in the face of habitat fragmentation, drought, human population expansion, and conflicting agendas that could be disastrous for wildlife, for hunting and fishing, and for other types of outdoor recreation that we all hold so dear. A good example is the reintroduction of desert bighorn sheep into historical habitat in the Santa Catalina Mountains. While it may be too early to declare the project a rousing success, the work accomplished thus far is truly amazing. And like all things in life that are the most valuable and essential, it takes tremendous hard work, dedication, and passion to achieve. The Advisory Committee that has worked on this restoration effort is another excellent example of the power of teams that can set aside differences and seek common solutions.

I would like to take a moment to thank all the wildlife conservation organizations who work so tirelessly to raise money from the sale of Special Big Game License Tags, the funding that makes the work of the Habitat Partnership Committee possible. Kudos to you all - \$1.9 million raised last year is truly astounding! Please know that all of you are playing a huge role as partners in the AGFD's mission, leaving a legacy of "safe, compatible outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future generations."

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the next State HPC meeting will be held on Saturday, August 9, 2014 at the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Region 2 office in Flagstaff. The meeting agenda will be available on the [HPC website](#), as well as the draft meeting minutes from the February 2014 State HPC meeting. Thank you for your continued support of the HPC program.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER



Departure of Reuben Terán

Most of you already know that the Arizona Game and Fish Department suffered a huge loss when our HPC Coordinator Reuben Terán moved out of state. In his short tenure of 3 years, Reuben elevated the HPC program to a new level of excellence and provided outstanding leadership and valuable advice and support to project proponents, cooperating agencies, local HPCs, WCO funding partners, and his fellow AGFD employees. He is sorely missed and left some very big shoes to fill. Thank you very much, Reuben, and best wishes to you in your future endeavors.

Reuben's job has been posted and it is anticipated that his replacement will be hired in the very near future. In the meantime, please direct any inquiries or questions to Ruth Gregory, Administrative Coordinator in the Department's Game Branch. She can be reached at (623) 236-7349 or by email at rgregory@azgfd.gov.

2014-2015 HPC Funding Cycle Is Just Around the Corner

The annual deadline to submit project proposals for the upcoming HPC funding cycle is September 1st, however, **since the first of September is Labor Day this year, the deadline will be extended one day to September 2, 2014.** Until the new HPC Coordinator is hired, please submit your proposals electronically to Ruth Gregory. After all proposals are received and logged in, they will be posted to the [HPC website](#). An internal AGFD committee will review and evaluate the proposals during October and our Wildlife Conservation Organization (WCO) funding partners will also be evaluating them during the October-December timeframe. AGFD and the WCO partners will then meet in January to coordinate on final funding recommendations and the following month, February 2015, project funding will receive final approval from the State HPC. Information about how to apply and all the necessary forms and instructions can also be found on the HPC web page.

Last Call for HPC Charter Comments

The [Arizona HPC Charter](#) is currently open for review and comment. As of the date of the February 1, 2014 State HPC meeting, no comments or suggestions for changes were received. So the group decided to table the document until the upcoming meeting in August. This document is currently available on the home page of the [HPC website](#), or can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlink above. Please forward any comments or suggestions to rgregory@azgfd.gov.

Game Program Updates

In addition to the departure of Reuben, our Game Branch administrative assistant Connie Weise has also accepted another position within the Department. We cultivate talent in our program, but it is always with mixed feelings that we see them promote to other positions.

As noted in the Chairman's column, the Commission recently authorized budgetary expenditures to benefit mule deer and scaled quail, which will augment the Special Big Game Tag Funds for wildlife habitat enhancement. Money will be spent to enhance mule deer habitat in Units 16A and 21 (\$400,000 in each unit), whereas an additional \$200,000 will be spent in Units 28, 31, and 32 to enhance scaled quail habitat. We do not intend to ignore these species in other units, but we do want to target habitat enhancements that should provide population-level improvements in these areas. The wildlife habitat enhancement initiatives are designed to commit to project funding for the next three fiscal years.

With the added project spending, we intend to improve our ability to compile and report on projects undertaken to benefit wildlife. As such, the Wildlife Program Managers in each Region will now be more involved in tracking and recording the implementation of projects through all sources of funding, not only the Habitat Partnership Committee. Please feel free to report your successes through these important regional liaisons!

THE ARIZONA BIG GAME SUPER RAFFLE ON TARGET TO SURPASS 4 MILLION DOLLAR MARK

By Charlie Kelly, 2014 ABGSR President



Claude Warren, Jr. from Saco, Maine
Desert Bighorn Sheep Ram, Unit 15D
Photo courtesy of Colburn and Scott Outfitters

The 9th annual drawing for the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle (ABGSR) is scheduled for July 9th this year and will feature, for the first time, a live webcast drawing held prior to the Sportsmen’s Open Forum at the Arizona Game and Fish headquarters on Carefree Highway. Based on realistic projections, this year’s ABGSR Special Tag sales will push the total raised since the raffle’s inception in 2006 to over 4 million dollars!

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission and Department have faithfully supported the ABGSR ever since the Special Tags were increased from 2 to 3 tags per big game species with special legislation passed just prior to the 2006 raffle. Each year since 2006,

the Commission has awarded 10 tags (1 per species) to the Super Raffle, giving the ordinary sportsman an opportunity to win one of these very coveted Special Tags. ABGSR tickets are priced from \$5 to \$25, depending on the species.

The ABGSR was founded by 4 of Arizona’s leading wildlife organizations, the Arizona Antelope Foundation, the Arizona Deer Association, the Arizona Elk Society and the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society. Volunteers from each organization serve each year on the AZBGRS board and help out with the administration, marketing, auditing and annual drawing.

Like all of the other groups that participate in the Special Tag program, the ABGSR returns 100% of all tag sale proceeds to the Department to be used for wildlife projects funded through the HPC process. In order to accomplish this, the ABGSR conducts a Swarovski Optics Raffle each year, as well as an Incentive Hunt Raffle, which generate the income required to operate the raffle. The 2013 raffle expenses alone were in excess of \$93,000. Swarovski Optiks, North America has donated high quality optics equipment every year since 2006, and help make a lot of what happens possible.



Bill Karnes, from Sonora, Texas
White Mountains Bull Elk
Photo courtesy of Mossback Outfitters

Here are the proceeds from 8 years of ABGSR Special Tag sales:



| | | | |
|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 2006 | \$513,795 | 2010 | \$369,465 |
| 2007 | \$557,320 | 2011 | \$415,685 |
| 2008 | \$478,860 | 2012 | \$447,935 |
| 2009 | \$541,795 | 2013 | \$445,970 |

Total: \$3,770,825

Each year the lucky winners harvest several record-class trophies due to the yearlong season and access to nearly all of the state’s best units. Claude Warren Jr. from Saco, Maine was the 2013 winner of the Desert Bighorn Sheep tag, and harvested a magnificent ram scoring over 180 inches, taken in Unit 15D.

The ABGSR committee receives a lot of great help each year from several Arizona Game and Fish Department employees. Our committee wants to send a special thanks out to Brian Wakeling, Ruth Gregory, and Rosie Bernal, who have been a pleasure to work with the last couple of years!

WATER FOR WILDLIFE

2014 Region 4 HPC Project Season

By Richard Myers, Scott Fischer, Dan Urquidez and Mike Sumner

Trigo Pothole

The Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club (YVRGC) assisted Region 4 personnel in completing four HPC projects in early 2014. In mid-March, a 2,500 gallon backup system was installed next to Trigo Pothole located in Unit 43B on the U.S.

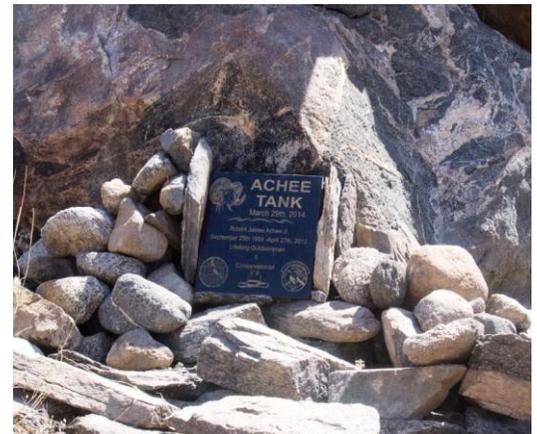


Trigo Tank backup system in Unit 43B

Army’s Yuma Proving Grounds. The system was installed to reduce the need for costly helicopter water hauling. Water in the poly tank is protected from evaporation and the system is sheltered from the elements and camouflaged by a wood and stucco covering. It’s plumbed into an existing water collection point and will be turned "on" when the pothole becomes critically low.

Achee Tank

In late March, Achee tank was constructed with the purpose of eliminating the need for costly aerial water hauls to the nearby



Sheep Mountain catchment in the Gila Mountains of Unit 40B on the Barry M. Goldwater military range. Achee tank is a 12,000-gallon, 24-inch PVC system, with a single collection point, and no moving parts requiring maintenance. A large excavator was provided for this project at no cost by the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District. AGFD employees from around the state and approximately 30 volunteers came out to assist and pay respects to the late Robert "Bob" Achee, Region 4 Wildlife Area Manager, for whom the catchment is named and to whom it is dedicated. Bob was a life-long sportsman and a dedicated employee with a passion for wildlife. He was universally respected for his ingenuity, good nature, and can-do attitude.

Achee Tank in Unit 40B with dedication plaque and "Achee Ram" photographed 25 days after construction



Catchment 876



In early April a new 11,000-gallon underground PVC system was constructed at catchment #876 in Unit 41. This project replaces a failed ring tank that was built decades ago in response to mule deer drownings in a nearby canal. Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District provided equipment and staff to fill the system with water following construction. It is expected that this re-development will also provide a water source for an experimental population of Sonoran pronghorn which were recently introduced into the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge and which have been documented within close proximity of this catchment.

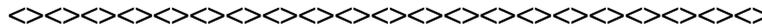
Mohawk #1 (Catchment 863)

In late April, Region IV personnel and a handful of volunteers were able to establish a more reliable collection point at Mohawk #1 catchment (#863) in the Mohawk Mountains of Unit 40B on the Barry M. Goldwater military range. Logistics for this project were somewhat complex as multiple military airspace clearances were required for the use of a helicopter to move personnel and equipment. The more reliable collection point



Mohawk #1 in Unit 40B

should eliminate, or drastically reduce, the need for costly aerial water-hauls to this catchment. The previous set-up was only a small tin apron and an inefficient collection point with a large dam that was chronically silted in and required continual removal of large amounts of sediment. The project was completed in five hours using mostly existing, on-site materials from the old collection point.



PROJECT FUNDING UPDATE

Ruth Gregory, Game Program Administrative Coordinator

Don't we all wish we had more time? Aren't we always playing "Beat the Clock" trying to get our goals accomplished? Personally, I believe the HPC program (and life in general!) would run smoother if we just had 13 months in the year instead of 12. So, with this in mind, I thought I'd address the annual cycle for HPC and some of the administrative controls we must comply with, so that work on the ground can begin in a timely fashion. It's probably best to think of it in terms of the calendar. Our HPC calendar starts in the month of September.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| • September | ~HPC project proposals due to Game Branch ~Game Branch assigns project numbers; posts proposals to web page |
| • October–December | ~AGFD Committee and WCO funding partners evaluate proposals |
| • January | ~AGFD and WCOs meet to recommend project funding |
| • February | ~Winter HPC meeting – Final project funding approval ~Game Branch notifies project proponents of funding status |

OK, now the real fun begins – the paperwork! Oh, joy! ☺ Upon receipt of a letter in February from Game Branch stating that a project was funded, the project proponent should begin the administrative process, which is:

- | |
|--|
| ✓ Secure any necessary agreements |
| ✓ Make sure the person(s) or company(ies) who will be paid for project work are registered as a vendor with the State of Arizona (Procure.az); when the agreements are signed and vendor(s) registered.... |
| ✓ Funds for the project can then be requisitioned; when the requisition of funds is complete.... |
| ✓ Procurement can then issue a purchase order, which is the vendor's notice to proceed. |
| ✓ Work can then take place |
| ✓ The vendor bills AGFD by sending us an invoice |
| ✓ AGFD pays the bill |

A good rule of thumb would be to begin the administrative process about 90 days before the date work is to start. The earlier we have the agreements, vendor registrations and purchase orders in place, the better. This is especially important for work that will take place during the latter part of the fiscal year (February-June). Project funds cannot be requisitioned after early May due to our end-of-the-fiscal-year deadlines (fiscal year ends June 30). Delay in completing the paperwork can mean delay in getting work started until the next fiscal year. So please call the Game Branch for assistance as early as possible, and we'll get it done! Thank you!!



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



| | |
|---|------------------|
| Project Title: Turtle Mountain Wildlife Enhancement Project | |
| Project Proponent: Noland Ranch, Cash and Crystal Noland, Morenci, AZ | |
| Region and Game Management Unit: Region 5 – GMU 28 | |
| Local Habitat Partnership Committee: Safford HPC | |
| Special Big Game Tag Funds (over 2 years): | \$62,624 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$26,500 Special Bighorn Sheep Tag Funds • \$18,062 Special Whitetail Deer Tag Funds • \$18,062 Special Mule Deer Tag Funds | |
| Cost Share Funds: | \$128,401 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$35,000 Bureau of Land Management • \$33,554 Noland Ranch • \$59,847 Farm Service Agency Emergency Drought Assistance | |
| Total Project Costs: | \$191,025 |



The Noland Ranch would like to thank the Safford Habitat Partnership Committee, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for their efforts to fund this wonderful project that has been completed. We finalized the project on May 23, 2014, installing a total of 41,000 feet of HDPE black poly pipe, 10 black 2,600-gallon storage tanks, a 30,000-gallon storage tank liner, 12 drinkers, and 2 solar systems. In order to meet the 45-day deadline we had attached to the FSA emergency drought assistance money, we flew all the pipe, tanks, drinkers, and miscellaneous supplies in by helicopter.

This project took place in some of the most rugged and remote terrain in Greenlee County. The project is located north of the confluence of Eagle Creek and the Gila River, east of the San Carlos Reservation line, west of Morenci, and south of Lower Eagle Creek Road at the pump house.

We would like to thank the Southeastern Arizona Sportsmen Club for their volunteer efforts to install the 30,000-gallon storage tank liner, 2 black 2,600-gallon storage tanks, and a 750-gallon drinker. There were 9 men who came from the club, led by Daniel Ward. They stayed all day until everything was installed. We would also like to thank the NRCS for their help with the engineered plans for installation and their sacrifice to inspect the entire project; it took them 3 full days to inspect every site.

The Turtle Mountain Wildlife Enhancement Project was installed to help water distribution within the allotment. We believe 10,000 acres will benefit from this new and improved water system. Turtle Mountain is home to a healthy population of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in Unit 28. The rams spend most of their time running together on the mountain and will greatly benefit from the increase of water. We also expect to

see higher numbers of mule deer and whitetail, as fawns are born with an increased chance of survival. Predation numbers are down thanks to government-supervised depredation hunting.

Five pastures were opened up due to the availability of water: North Virden, Upper Trujillo, Skeena Abajo, White Mesa and Windy. They have been rested for over 10 years and ready to run cattle. Concentrated cattle numbers will disperse, allowing for needed rest in overly used areas of the ranch.

Again we are very grateful for all the efforts that made this project possible.

Sincerely,
Cash and Crystal Noland



*WHAT HPC PROJECTS WERE FUNDED THIS YEAR?
For the complete list, click:*

2013-2014 FUNDED HPC PROJECTS

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT NEWS

What would you think of an online club for hunters?

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission is proposing the creation of a new fee-based online club that would provide exclusive and unique services for hunters. The public is invited to join the conversation, offer input and ask questions at public meetings in June and July. Department staff will open each meeting with a presentation describing the proposal currently under consideration. An open-forum discussion and question/answer period will follow. Your thoughts and ideas are important, and the Department and Commission are eager to hear from our constituents.

Membership benefits currently being considered for members of the proposed online hunters club include:

- The ability to return your unused tag and get back your bonus points
- Priority opportunities for surrendered tag
- Early access to draw results
- AZGFD apparel available for purchase by members online

Other topics likely to be discussed are the proposed cost of membership, other benefits or services to consider including, and membership requirements. If you are unable to attend any of the scheduled public meetings listed [here](#), consider emailing your thoughts and ideas about an online club for hunters to portal@azgfd.gov. We value your opinion, so please join the conversation.

Visit www.azgfd.gov to keep up on the latest news and information. You can also sign up for AZGFD e-news at www.azgfd.gov/signup or [follow AZGFD on Twitter](#) or on [Facebook](#).

MEET YOUR LOCAL HPC CHAIRPERSONS

as of June 2014

| <i>HPC</i> | <i>Chairperson</i> | <i>Email</i> | <i>AGFD Contact</i> | <i>Email</i> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Forage Resource Study Group | Stephen Williams | swilliams@azland.gov | Larry Phoenix | lphoenix@azgfd.gov |
| Arizona Strip Habitat Working Group | Vacant | | Luke Thompson | lthompson@azgfd.gov |
| Kingman HPC | Vacant | | Velma Holt-Buhr | vholt-buhr@azgfd.gov |
| Payson Natural Resources Committee | Vacant | | David Daniels | ddaniels@azgfd.gov |
| Prescott HPC | Gail Steiger | gailsteiger@msn.com | Darren Tucker | dtucker@azgfd.gov |
| Show Low HPC | Vacant | | Bob Birkeland | bbirkeland@azgfd.gov |
| Safford HPC | Daniel Ward | wardsbuilders@q.com | 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@gmail.com | Mike Sumner | msumner@azgfd.gov |
| Springerville-Alpine HPC | Bill Masters | billy.masters@empire-cat.com | Michael Godwin | mgodwin@azgfd.gov |
| 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 |

Got questions about the HPC Program?**Contact:**

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

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MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **State HPC Meeting – August 9, 2014**
Arizona Game and Fish Department Region 2 Office
3500 S. Lake Mary Road
Flagstaff, AZ 86005
Meeting will begin at 9:00 AM and end by 1:00 PM
- **HPC Project Proposals for the 2014-2015 Funding Cycle – Due to AGFD by September 2, 2014.**
- Looking to get out into the field and assist with big game habitat improvement projects? Volunteer opportunities are currently available through some of our wildlife conservation partners. To see a list of upcoming habitat conservation projects please visit the [Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation](#) website.
- If you have an idea for an article, success story, announcement, project status update, or any HPC related news, please submit them to rgregory@azgfd.gov. Microsoft Word documents are preferred (please try to keep articles to between 500-700 words). Pictures of your projects and volunteers are always welcome!