

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Arizona Game and Fish Commission  
Friday, June 22, 2007 – 12:00 p.m.  
Saturday, June 23, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.  
Best Western Payson Inn  
801 N. Beeline Highway  
Payson, Arizona 85541

PRESENT: (Commission)

(Director's Staff)

Chairman Michael M. Golightly  
Commissioner William H. McLean  
Commissioner Robert D. Hernbrode  
Commissioner Jennifer L. Martin  
Commissioner Robert R. Woodhouse

Director Duane L. Shroufe  
Deputy Director Steve K. Ferrell  
Assistant Attorney General Jim Odenkirk  
Assistant Attorney General Shelley Cutts

Chairman Golightly called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. The Commissioners introduced themselves and Chairman Golightly introduced the Director and the Director's staff. This meeting followed an agenda revision #1 dated June 18, 2007.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 1. State and Federal Legislation

**Presenter:** Anthony Guiles, Legislative Liaison

The Commission was provided with a Legislative Update (also available to the public), which included both Federal and State legislation that may affect the Department. Mr. Guiles further noted that the Legislature went Sine die on Wednesday, June 20, 2007 and that the final vote on the OHV bill failed 15 to 10.

Commissioner Woodhouse asked if the Department would pursue OHV legislation again next year, to which Mr. Guiles stated that the Department would do that if so directed by the Commission.

Chairman Golightly suggested that the focus next year should again be to get all the interested parties together and committed to working together on the OHV legislation.

Mr. Guiles stated that he would coordinate a follow-up debriefing session with all of the interested parties and the Commission will be notified when that meeting is scheduled.

Mr. Guiles further briefed the Commission on the following:

- The House and the Senate came to agreement on the budget; none of the Department's items were changed since the January meetings with the Senate and House Appropriations Committee members
- Senate Bill 1003, which clarified the Senate's "advice and consent" process, was retained on the House COW calendar and died in the process

Chairman Golightly confirmed with Mr. Guiles that House Bill 2116, big game permit transfer to grandchildren, includes great-grandchildren and suggested that the Department may want to make that known to the public.

Mr. Guiles further reported on discussions the Department and members of the Commission have had at the Congressional level. An executive summary on Arizona recreational shooting and shooting range issues was provided to several members of the Congressional Delegation. The intent is to gain support for potential legislation.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 2. Statewide Shooting Range Briefing

**Presenter:** Mike Senn, Acting Assistant Director, Information and Education Division

The Commission was provided with a more detailed written-Statewide Shooting Range Update prior to this meeting of Department activities related to shooting range support and development statewide. The update (also available to the public), covered activities that occurred since the May 2007 Commission meeting. The statewide shooting range briefing is part of the Department's ongoing commitment to provide the Commission with updates on statewide shooting range development and shooting sports in general.

Mr. Senn further highlighted and provided a briefing on several ranges covered in the update using a Power Point presentation that included maps, pictures and aerial photos. The briefing included information from the baseline inventory recently completed on all Department owned ranges and what remedial action was needed at each range. Most remedial actions included raising lateral or impact berms to meet NRA standards and some needed perimeter fencing.

Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief, briefed the Commission on the Northern Arizona Shooting Range. The final Geo-technical survey was received and it was determined that the site is viable for a range. The Department followed up with the Coconino Forest regarding the use of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for the site. They were non-committal and encouraged the Department to look at a land exchange. The Department will be meeting with Logan Simpson on Monday to begin developing a proposal to the Forest Service for a land exchange, if so directed by the Commission.

**Motion:** McLean moved and Golightly seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO RETRACT FORMER DIRECTION TO THE DEPARTMENT TO MOVE FORWARD ON THREE APPROACHES (LAND GRANT, SPECIAL USE PERMIT, AND LAND EXCHANGE) AND NOW DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT TO WORK ON THE LAND EXCHANGE ONLY.

Commissioner Hernbrode raised concerns regarding maintaining wildlife values on exchanged lands.

The Commission discussed those concerns and concluded that those issues would be addressed in the appraisal regarding the use of the land.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Chairman Golightly requested that the Department keep the Commission informed during the appraisal process and develop an outline on Commission criteria for the appraisal.

Anthony Chavez, Acting Education Branch Chief, provided the Commission with an additional update and answered question regarding the Prescott Shooting Range. Discussions continue with the Prescott Rifle Club and the Prescott Trap and Skeet Club in regards to relocating to a site on the Prescott National Forest north of the current range. Projections are that they may need to relocate in approximately five years and so they are currently exploring all the options.

Bob Posey, Kingman Regional Supervisor, briefed the Commission on the Tri-State Shooting Range. The Department is moving forward with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM is currently involved in the consultation process for the Historic Preservation Act. BLM intends to move forward once they complete this process, which should be by early fall.

#### Public Comment

Alan Dapp, Wickenburg Sportsman Club, addressed the Commission urging them to direct the Department to seek a patent on BLM land close to Wickenburg. Urban encroachment will soon force the closure of the Wickenburg Shooting Range at its current location.

Mr. Senn stated that the Department's intent is to continue to work with Mr. Dapp and to provide the Commission with an update at the next Commission meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 2A. Statewide Shooting Range Grant Requests for FY 2008

**Presenter:** Mike Senn, Acting Assistant Director, Information and Education Division

The Department's Shooting Range Grants Program received no viable grant applications for fiscal year 2008. The Department asked the Commission to vote to suspend the distribution of Shooting Range Grants in FY08 and reallocate the funds to be used for needed improvements on Commission owned shooting range properties including: 1) Rio Salado Shooting Range, Mesa; 2) Seven Mile Shooting Range, Kingman; 3) Sierra Vista Shooting Range, Sierra Vista; and 4) Three Points Shooting Range, Tucson. The Department intends to leverage this money with external grants where possible to increase the amount of work that can be completed.

The following is a summary of the projects needed for the safe operations at Commission owned shooting facilities that is based upon the recently completed baseline inventory. Projects are listed in order of priority for each range:

##### Rio Salado Shooting Range, Mesa

- Impact berms need to be raised to 20 feet on the main public range, pistol bays 1-4, and the high power range.
- Lateral berms need to be raised on pistol bays 1-4, high power, and the small bore range.
- Lead detention basins need to be constructed.

##### Seven-Mile Shooting Range, Kingman

- The lateral berm needs to be raised between the pistol bays and the main 200 yard rifle range.

- Impact berms need to be increased to 20 feet on pistol bays, 200 yard rifle range, 1000 yard range, and the law enforcement range.
- Lateral berms need to be raised on the 200 yard main rifle range, pistol bays, and the 1000 yard range.

#### Sierra Vista Shooting Range, Sierra Vista

- The shooting range property needs to be fenced.
- Impact berms need to be raised to 20 feet on the main public range, pistol bays, silhouette range, and the law enforcement and military range.
- Lateral berms need to be constructed and raised on the main public range, pistol bays, silhouette range, and the law enforcement and military range.
- Drainage issues need to be addressed throughout the range.

#### Three-Points Shooting Range, Tucson

- Construct west lateral berm on the 500 meter rifle silhouette range.
- Raise impact berms to 20 feet on the action pistol range, silhouette ranges, 1000 yard range, and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) range.
- Raise lateral berms on the action pistol, rifle and pistol silhouette, 500 meter silhouette east berm, and the DPS range.
- Construct lateral berm on the 1000 yard range.
- Raise the elevation of the floor on the main 100 yard range.

**Motion:** Martin moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO SUSPEND THE DISTRIBUTION OF SHOOTING RANGE GRANTS AND REALLOCATE \$90,000 OF THE FUNDS TO BE USED FOR NEEDED SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS ON COMMISSION OWNED SHOOTING RANGE PROPERTIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008.

**Vote:** Unanimous

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 2B. Request to Expend Remaining Ben Avery Shooting Facility Right-of-Way Funds on the Clay Target Center Renovation.

**Presenter:** Mike Senn, Acting Assistant Director, Information and Education Division

The Department requested the authority to expend the remaining Ben Avery Shooting Facility Right-of-Way Funds on the Clay Target Center renovation so the planned renovation of this facility can be completed in a timely manner.

**Motion:** Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF THE REMAINING BEN AVERY SHOOTING FACILITY RIGHT-OF-WAY FUNDS ON THE CLAY TARGET CENTER RENOVATION.

**Vote:** Unanimous

\* \* \* \* \*

### 3. Information and Education Activities Briefing

**Presenter:** Mike Senn, Acting Assistant Director, Information and Education Division

The Commission was previously provided with a written Program Report dated June 2007 (also provided to the public), which presented new information as well as progress toward ongoing issues and concerns related to Information and Education programs. The update covered activities and events that occurred during May 2007 and was provided in fulfillment of the Department's commitment to brief the Commission on a regular basis regarding the Department's Information and Education programs.

Commissioner Hernbrode stated that he liked the new more abbreviated format better and would like to see more formal educational activities in the report. Commissioner Hernbrode will discuss with Department staff what he would like to see in that regard.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 4. Update on the Department's Operational Planning Process

**Presenter:** Bob Broscheid, Assistant Director, Wildlife Management Division

Mr. Broscheid briefed the Commission using a Power Point presentation on the Department's Strategic Plan, Wildlife 2012. Upon approval of the Plan in December 2006, the Department undertook the development of Operational Plans for the Programs, Subprograms and major Support Projects that direct Department operations. This is the middle tier of the Department's three-tiered planning process. Draft Operational Plans were completed in April and made available to the public for review and comment. The plans were posted on the Department's web page, and the Department embarked on 16 public meetings, including meetings with partnering agencies. Comments were received from the meetings, from an on-line survey available on the Department's web page, e-mail, and surface mail. The comments were reviewed and incorporated where needed. The Operational Plans are now complete and have been finalized. The plans will drive implementation plans and work plans for the upcoming two-year period.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 5. An Update on Current Issues, Planning Efforts, and Proposed Projects on All Lands in Arizona and Other Matters Related Thereto

**Presenter:** Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

A copy of the Lands Update report was provided to the Commission prior to this meeting and is included as part of these minutes. The update addressed decisions or activities since the May 2007 Commission meeting. This update is in fulfillment of the Department's commitment to brief the Commission on a regular basis regarding decisions and actions on all state and federal lands in Arizona.

Mr. Avey further briefed the Commission on the Resource Advisory Committee meeting hosted by BLM that the Department attended. Discussion included the day fees for parking at Hagler

Creek, which were not approved at this meeting, but were deferred to the September meeting. Also, the Committee received assessments of uranium mining proposed throughout the State. Although the total number of claims have jumped significantly, BLM does not believe this will have large scale impacts at this point. BLM has offered to brief the Commission at their request on this subject.

The Commission discussed with Mr. Avey their concerns regarding roads that would be carved out during the exploration phase of proposed mining sites.

Mr. Avey continued with the following briefings:

- The Department is continuing efforts to educate the public on the Federal Land Management Process. The Department's website is being modified to better describe the status of all current planning efforts.
- The BLM Phoenix Office will be producing the final Proposed Decision on the Agua Fria Bradshaw-Harquahala Plan by the end of the summer. This plan will be the first to preclude recreational shooting on a National Monument. Although precedent setting, the closure of the 79,000 acre National Monument is the only closure of recreational shooting in the 1.2 million acre area covered in the Plan.

Director Shroufe suggested that the Department draft a letter from the Commission to BLM and to the Forest Service, and bring to light some of the general issues from the wildlife perspective. The Commission was in consensus to send the letters and that the letters be signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Commission. The Director will share this issue at next months Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Conference.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meeting recessed for a break at 1:08 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 1:39 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 2. (Continued) Statewide Shooting Range Briefing

**Presenter:** Mike Senn, Acting Assistant Director, Information and Education Division

Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief, addressed the Commission regarding a letter and proposition received from Mr. Gary Shuster to purchase a 62.5 acre parcel from him for the Northern Arizona Shooting Range site. Mr. Avey provided the Commission with a map showing the location of the property, which was located approximately three miles north of Flagstaff off Highway 180.

The Commission discussed the size of the parcel and whether it would be feasible. Also discussed was the surrounding area, the topography of the location, and where the funds would come from considering that the Commission is currently looking at a land exchange to acquire property for the site.

The Commission was in consensus to not pursue Mr. Shuster's property as an alternative location for the Northern Arizona Shooting Range.

\* \* \* \* \*

6. Commission Briefing on Status of New Headquarters Facility**Presenter:** Mark Weise, Development Branch Chief

Using a Power Point presentation, Mr. Weise provided the Commission with an update on the development of the Department's new headquarters. The project is entering its sixth month of construction. The update included pictures of construction progress, budget status, and other current issues related to the project. The completion date is still scheduled for late September and the tentative Department move-is slated for early October. In regards to the move, the Director recently approved the Creative Solutions Transition Team Report and the Department will begin implementing the recommendations from the team. Employees will be apprised of components that will make the move and transition easier. Also, there are plans in the works for a grand opening ceremony in which the Governor will be invited as well as the public and all employees and their families.

\* \* \* \* \*

7. Call to the Public

There were no request from the public to speak.

\* \* \* \* \*

9. Hearings on License Revocations for Violation of Game and Fish Codes and Civil Assessments for the Illegal Taking and/or Possession of Wildlife**Presenter:** Pat Barber, Law Enforcement Branch Chief

Record of these proceedings is maintained in a separate minutes book in the Director's Office.

\* \* \* \* \*

8. Executive Session

The Commission voted to meet in Executive Session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (A)(3) and (4) for the purpose of discussion and consultation with legal counsel.

**Motion:** Martin moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION.

**Vote:** Unanimous

\* \* \* \* \*

9. (Continued) Hearings on License Revocations for Violation of Game and Fish Codes and Civil Assessments for the Illegal Taking and/or Possession of Wildlife

**Presenter:** Pat Barber, Law Enforcement Branch Chief

Record of these proceedings is maintained in a separate minutes book in the Director's Office.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meeting recessed for a break at 3:38 p.m.

Meeting reconvened at 4:06 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 10. Espee Ranch Conservation Easement/Option Purchase Agreement

**Presenter:** James F. Odenkirk, Assistant Attorney General

Babbitt Ranches has proposed to convey a public access and open space easement on Espee Ranch. The easement will protect the ranch from most commercial and residential development and will insure permanent public access for wildlife related activities. An option purchase agreement gives the Commission an exclusive right to purchase the easement, and the Commission may exercise the option if sufficient funds are available. If the Commission exercises the option to purchase the easement, Babbitt Ranches will convey the easement to Coconino County, but the deed will reserve for the Commission third-party rights to enforce the easement, and public access will be subject to Commission rules and orders.

This item was on the agenda for the Commission to approve an option and deed agreement with Espee Ranch; however, some additional items need to be resolved, so the Commission was not asked to approve the agreements at this meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 11. Issues Related to Sportsmen's Access Concerns in Southeast Arizona

**Presenter:** Gerald L. Perry, Tucson Regional Supervisor

At the March 2007 Commission meeting, the Commission was briefed regarding public access issues resulting from road closures in the Aravaipa Canyon area as well as Skeleton Canyon in GMU 30A. At the conclusion of that briefing, the Commission directed the Department and the Attorney General's Office to investigate whether these roads may be public roads pursuant to Arizona or federal law and provide an update to the Commission at the June 2007 Commission meeting. The Attorney General's Office provided legal advice to the Commission on this item in Executive Session. There were no questions or comments on this item in the Public Session.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 12. Current Status of Draw Applications for the Fall Draw

**Presenter:** Harry Seck, Assistant Director, Special Services Division

Mr. Seck provided a Power Point presentation that included a summary of the current status of the application process for the fall big game draw and the total number of applications received

by the Department. The Department received 12,884 online applications prior to canceling the contract with ALS and currently the Department has received 36,715 manual applications. Forty to Fifty percent of the applications will be received in the last week of the draw. Mr. Seck further provided the Commission with the following important dates:

- The correction period ended June 6
- the application deadline is June 26
- tags will be mailed August 10
- refunds will be mailed August 17
- First Come-First Serve is August 20.

Draw results will be posted on the Department's website. Applicants who are drawn that applied online will be notified by mail and will be provided with the amount that they owe. Personal checks will not be accepted; only money orders or cashiers checks. Tags of those who do not pay will be re-issued to the next person in line to be drawn.

\* \* \* \* \*

13. Request for the Commission to Approve a Memorandum of Understanding with Mexico's Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT).

**Presenter:** Eric Gardner, Nongame Branch Chief

The Department has a long history of international collaborations with Mexico that has allowed for the exchange of wildlife genetic material and expansion of knowledge of species common to the border area. The information collected has assisted the Department and other state and federal agencies in the resource decision-making process, and has helped develop an effective management program for those species in both countries. The Governor of Arizona has placed high importance to collaborations with Mexico through the Arizona-Mexico Commission (AZMC). The Department is currently participating at the AZMC's Wildlife Subcommittee, the Wildlife Working Group under the Border Governors Conference and the Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) have agreed to execute an MOU that will allow for a cooperative program that coordinates mutually beneficial efforts between Mexico and Arizona regarding the conservation and management of wildlife and their habitats. This MOU represents the first time that SEMARNAT has developed a comprehensive agreement with a state wildlife agency in the United States. Areas of collaboration covered under this MOU are: a) wildlife conservation, management and health; b) research; c) environmental education; d) professional training; e) animal exchange; and f) habitat analysis and improvement. In addition, this MOU will facilitate obtaining necessary permits for the capture, transportation, importation and exportation of live wildlife currently under jurisdiction of the Mexican Federal Government.

The Commission was provided with an informational memo regarding the MOU prior to this meeting for consideration.

**Motion:** Martin moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH MEXICO'S SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO ALLOW FOR A COOPERATIVE

PROGRAM THAT BENEFITS EFFORTS BETWEEN MEXICO AND ARIZONA REGARDING THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE SPECIES OF MUTUAL INTEREST, AND EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT AS ATTACHED.

**Vote:** Unanimous

\* \* \* \* \*

14. Request for Commission Approval on a Commission Policy for the Reintroduction of Federally Listed Wildlife; as Modified from the 1997 Commission Guidelines for Reintroduction of Federally Listed Aquatic Wildlife

**Presenter:** Eric Gardner, Nongame Branch Chief

The Commission provided the Department with guidelines for the reintroduction of federally listed aquatic wildlife at the August 8, 1997 Commission meeting. The guidelines provide specific authority to the Director on making reintroduction decisions and reserves decision-making authority for the Commission under certain situations. The Department presented recommended modifications to the 1997 guidelines at the May 18, 2007 Commission meeting and received input from the Commission. The Commission's recommendations were incorporated into the Draft Policy (see below) and were presented for final approval.

Commission Policy on Reintroduction of Federally Listed Wildlife - Established: June 22, 2007

Note: This Policy operates outside of the Department's 12-Step process for reestablishment <sup>1</sup> of nongame wildlife and endangered species.

1. The Director may approve reintroductions <sup>2</sup> under full protection of the Endangered Species Act provided that:
  - a. Appropriate NEPA documents have been prepared that identify the proposed action and anticipated impacts and has been publicly reviewed; or the Department has coordinated with the appropriate State or Federal land management agency and permittees, USFWS, and/or private landowners. Coordination may occur through formal or informal meetings or written correspondence and shall include a complete project description and summary of known or anticipated impacts. All comments and significant issues identified during coordination shall be considered and addressed, where appropriate and feasible, with accompanying responses and conclusions documented in the project file prior to the reintroduction; and
  - b. there are no significant conflicts with other wildlife management activities.
2. For reintroductions in which there are significant conflicts with other wildlife management activities or land manager/owner/permittees, the Director will present a recommendation to the Commission via an action memo for their decision on the proposed reintroduction.

Definitions

1. Reestablishment – stocking or transplanting an organism into Arizona which was formerly documented from the state but has since been extirpated and is no longer known from within the state.
2. Reintroduction – stocking or transplanting an organism into historic range within Arizona that is currently known from other areas within Arizona.

**Motion:** Martin moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE POLICY ON THE REINTRODUCTION OF FEDERALLY LISTED WILDLIFE NOT OTHERWISE COVERED BY THE 12-STEP PROCESS FOR REESTABLISHMENT OF NONGAME WILDLIFE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES.

**Vote:** Unanimous

\* \* \* \* \*

15. Proposed Dates and Locations of Arizona Game and Fish Commission Meetings for 2008 and January 2009

**Presenter:** Marty Fabritz, Executive Staff Assistant

Mr. Fabritz presented the Commission with proposed dates for the calendar year 2008 and January 2009 Arizona Game and Fish Commission meetings. The Commission discussed and modified the June and October dates (June 20-21 to June 27-28 and October 17-18 to October 10-11). The following is the final schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
January 18	Phoenix - Commission Meeting
January 19	Phoenix - Meet the Commission
February 5	Phoenix - Legislative Day
February 8-9	Yuma
March 7-8	Tucson
April 18-19	Phoenix (Hunt Orders)
May 16-17	Prescott
June 27-28	Phoenix (budget)
August 8-9	Flagstaff
September 5-6	Pinetop
October 10-11	Phoenix (Fish Orders)
December 5-6	Casa Grande
January/February 2009	DATE OPEN/ Phoenix-Legislator Day
January 16, 2009	Phoenix - Commission Meeting
January 17, 2009	Phoenix - Meet the Commission

Commissioner Hernbrode requested a list of items for each meeting that are regularly scheduled to be addressed in a certain month.

Director Shroufe suggested that this could be done in conjunction with the selection of dates and locations at June meetings, to which Commissioner Hernbrode agreed.

**Motion:** Martin moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT THE SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED WITH THE TWO CHANGES MADE AT THIS MEETING AND SUBJECT TO CHANGES IN THE FUTURE ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION CHAIR.

**Vote:** Unanimous

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 16. Call to the Public

There were no request from the public to speak.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 17. Litigation Report

There were no comments or questions on the Litigation Report.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meeting recessed for the day at 4:39 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Saturday, June 23, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 1. Proposed Amendment to Commission Order 4 – Elk

**Presenter:** Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

At the December 9, 2006 Commission meeting, the Commission approved Commission Order 4 – Elk. The Commission Order included a 320-permit hunt in Unit 22 North for bull elk with season dates that were incorrectly listed (hunt 3028). Those dates approved by the Commission were December 8-14, 2007.

Because December 8 falls on a Saturday, some hunters may inadvertently begin hunting on the traditional Friday opener of December 7, 2007. Other elk hunts scheduled for this timeframe run December 7-13, 2007. The Department proposes that the Commission amend season dates for hunt 3028 to run December 7-14, 2007. This amendment will allow hunters to pursue elk for 8 days. No other changes to the Commission Order are proposed. If approved by the Commission, all successful applicants will be notified of the extended season dates by letter.

The proposed amendment to Commission order 4 is as follows:

<u>Season Dates</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Open Areas</u>	<u>Legal Wildlife</u>
Dec 7-14, 2007	(22)	Unit 22 North	Bull elk

**Motion:** Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO AMEND COMMISSION ORDER 4 – ELK SEASONS, AS PROPOSED.

**Vote:** Unanimous

\* \* \* \* \*

2. Consideration of Applications for Special Big Game Hunt License-Tags for Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Antelope, Elk, Turkey, Javelina, Bighorn Sheep, Buffalo, and Black Bear for 2008-2009

**Presenter:** Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

Mr. Ordway briefed the Commission using a Power Point presentation on the Commission's authority on the Special Tag Program, the history of the program, and the Special License-Tag Applications. ARS 17-346 Special big game license-tags, authorizes the Commission to provide up to 3 license-tags per applicable big game species for Special big game license-tags. AAC R12-4-120 provides for the process in the issuance, sale, and transfer of Special big game license-tags. The Special big game license tags program started in 1984 with two bighorn sheep license-tags (1-Auction, 1-Raffle), which generated \$146,350 income. For 2007, 27 license-tags were authorized (3 per each applicable species; 18-Auction or Raffle, 9-Super Raffle). To date, \$731,811 in income has been generated from 16 Auction tags since June 2006. The Super Raffle (9 species license-tags) and 2 Auctions (antelope-Arizona Antelope Foundation, buffalo-Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation) are pending. The total income since this program started in 1984 is \$13,474,395. The Species Project Proposal Determination and Fund Use is a State HPC Process for use of the funds which involves the respective groups with individual project-activity coordination. The funds are currently consolidated into and administered from nine species accounts as directed by the Commission.

The Department recommended that the Commission award the 2008 sponsorship of Special License-tags prioritized upon (1) the organization being specific to the big game species, (2) past participation and performance by the organization, and (3) if the tag will be raffled or auctioned, providing equitable public opportunity for acquisition.

The Department received applications for Special Big Game License-Tags 2008-2009 from the following nonprofit organizations in accordance with A.R.S. 17-346 and Commission Rule R12-4-120:

Arizona Antelope Foundation (AAF): Requested three (3) Special Antelope License-Tags. One tag will be auctioned at the AAF's banquet, one tag will be auctioned at the Arizona Elk Society fundraising banquet. One tag will be included in the third annual Arizona Big Game Super Raffle.

Arizona Bowhunters Association (ABA): Requested one (1) Special Javelina License-Tag, one (1) Special Black Bear License-Tag and one (1) Special Buffalo License-Tag. All three tags will be auctioned at the ABA's annual banquet being held in March of 2008.

Arizona Deer Association (ADA): Requested two (2) Special Mule Deer License-Tags (one auction or two auction if Super Raffle is not approved); and, three (3) Special Coues' Whitetail Deer License-Tags (two auction or three if Super Raffle is not approved). The ADA would also appreciate being considered for any tags that are not specifically requested or awarded to other conservation groups.

Arizona Deer Association (ADA) on behalf of Arizona Big Game Super Raffle (AZBGSR): Requested one (1) Special Big Game License-Tag per big game species (9 tags total). The Arizona Big Game Super Raffle (AZBGSR) sponsoring organizations request to continue to build and promote an AZBGSR. All sponsoring organizations will agree to contribute collectively in the promotion and execution of the raffle. The 2008 AZBGSR sponsors are: Arizona Antelope Foundation, Arizona Bowhunters Association, Arizona Chapter of Safari Club International, Arizona Deer Association, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Arizona Elk Society, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Mule Deer Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation and the Arizona chapters of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society (ADBSS): Requested three (3) Special Bighorn Sheep License-Tags. One tag will be raffled for a *Nelsoni* desert bighorn sheep in the Northern GMUs, with the drawing to be held as part of the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle to be conducted in approximately June-July 2008. One tag will be auctioned for a *Mexicana* desert bighorn sheep in the southern GMUs with the auction occurring at the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep convention in Salt Lake City, Utah on February 6-9, 2008. One tag will be auctioned for a Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the eastern GMUs with the auction occurring at the ADBSS fundraiser banquet on March 1, 2008. The ADBSS is willing to auction any other Special big game tags that the Commission would like to issue at their fundraiser banquet on March 1, 2008.

Arizona Elk Society (AES): Requested two (2) Special Elk License-Tags and one (1) Special Buffalo License-Tag. One Special Elk License-Tag and the Buffalo Special License-Tag will be auctioned at the AES annual banquet. The second Special Elk License-Tag will be included in next year's Arizona Big Game Super Raffle.

Arizona Wildlife Federation (AWF): Requested one (1) Special Javelina License-Tag and one (1) Special Black Bear License-Tag. Both tags will be auctioned at the AWF's annual Trophy Banquet in 2008.

Mule Deer Foundation (MDF): Requested one (1) Special Mule Deer License-Tag, one (1) Special Buffalo License-Tag, one (1) Special Whitetail Deer License-Tag, one (1) Special Black Bear License-Tag, and one (1) Special Javelina License-Tag. The Special Mule Deer License-Tag, the Special Buffalo License-Tag and the Special Whitetail Deer License-Tag will be auctioned at the MDF 2008 National Convention Salt Lake City, Utah, February 6-8; 2008, in conjunction with the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS) National Convention and Sportsmen for Habitat. The MDF would auction or raffle the Special Black Bear License-Tag and the Special Javelina License-Tag through a MDF Arizona chapter fundraiser and banquet.

National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF): Requested three (3) Special Turkey License-Tags. One tag will be sold to the highest bidder at auction during their 2008 Annual Convention in

Atlanta, GA. The second tag will be raffled or auctioned by the Arizona Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, and the third tag will be sold in conjunction with the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle, if the program is continued next year.

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF): Requested one (1) Special Elk License-Tag and one (1) Special Buffalo License-Tag. The Special Elk License-Tag will be auctioned at the 2008 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation International Elk Camp in Reno, Nevada, February 21-24, 2008. The Special Buffalo License-Tag will be auctioned by one of the Arizona RMEF chapters at its annual Big Game banquet. Any additional Arizona permits RMEF is awarded will be auctioned at one of the RMEF's successful Arizona chapter banquets.

Safari Club International – Arizona Chapter (SCI-AZ): Requested one (1) Coues' Whitetail Deer Special License-Tag, one (1) Special Buffalo License-Tag, one (1) Special Black Bear License-Tag, and one (1) Special Javelina License-Tag. All tags will be auctioned at SCI-AZ's annual fundraising auction in Spring 2008.

Safari Club International – Phoenix Chapter (PCSCI): Requested one (1) Special Mule Deer License-Tag, one (1) Special Antelope License-Tag, one (1) Special Whitetail Deer License-Tag, and one (1) Special Buffalo License-Tag. All tags will be sold at PCSCI's annual fundraiser in March 2008 via live auction.

Commissioner McLean asked how a person could know that the ticket they purchased for the Super Raffle was actually placed in the barrel and could be drawn, and further asked about Super Raffle audit controls.

Pete Cimellaro, Co-Chair for the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle, explained to the Commission the processes in place to ensure that all tickets are accounted for and can be tracked. Additionally, a process developed by an Audit Committee is in place for audit control, which is done at three stages. The accountant reconciles the bank statements, the ticket orders, and then everything that is processed in the final step.

Commissioner McLean requested that at the end of the Super Raffle, a copy of the audit report be submitted to the Department.

Chairman Golightly confirmed with Mr. Cimellaro that the money generated from the Super Raffle is deposited into an interest bearing account and that the interest is also submitted to the Department.

#### Public Comment

The following were present and addressed the Commission in support of their respective organization's request for Special big game tags:

Gary Barcom, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society  
Miles Moretti, Mule Deer Foundation  
Brad Freitag, Safari Club International - Phoenix Chapter  
Chris Denham, Arizona Deer Association and Arizona Wildlife Foundation  
Steve Hopkins, Tucson Chapter - Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Dick King, Arizona Bowhunters Association  
Steve Clark, Arizona Elk Society

\* \* \* \* \*

Meeting recessed for a break at 8:52 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 9:10 a.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

2. (Continued) Consideration of Applications for Special Big Game Hunt License-Tags for Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Antelope, Elk, Turkey, Javelina, Bighorn Sheep, Buffalo, and Black Bear for 2008-2009

**Presenter:** Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

Commissioner Martin asked about the Department's roll in the audit process.

Mr. Ordway stated that the Department is formally recognized within the organization's incorporation paperwork and is recognized as a formal member on the Audit Committee.

**Motion:** Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO SET ASIDE ONE TAG FOR EACH OF THE NINE BIG GAME SPECIES TO THE ARIZONA DEER ASSOCIATION SPECIFICALLY FOR THE SUPER RAFFLE.

Commissioner McLean offered an amendment to the motion, which was accepted by Commissioner Hernbrode.

**Amended Motion:** McLean moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO SET ASIDE ONE TAG FOR EACH OF THE NINE BIG GAME SPECIES TO THE ARIZONA DEER ASSOCIATION SPECIFICALLY FOR THE SUPER RAFFLE; AND THAT 1) IF THE ARIZONA BIG GAME SUPER RAFFLE NON-PROFIT CORPORATION RECEIVES ITS 501C EXEMPT STATUS, THAT THOSE TAGS THEN BE TRANSFERRED TO THAT QUALIFYING ENTITY, AND 2) THAT UPON COMPLETION OF THE 2007-2008 ARIZONA BIG GAME SUPER RAFFLE, THAT THE DEPARTMENT RECEIVE NOT ONLY THE LETTER OUTLINING THE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS, BUT ALSO AN AUDIT REPORT (NOT A FULL COMPLETE AUDIT, BUT AT LEAST A FIRST LEVEL INTERNAL AUDIT) ACCOMPANYING THAT DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Motion:** McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THAT EACH OF THE REMAINING TWO TAGS FOR EACH OF THE NINE SPECIES BE ADDRESSED SEPARATELY, BY WRITTEN BALLOT, SPECIES BY SPECIES, AND THAT EACH COMMISSIONER VOTE FOR AN ORGANIZATION TO RECEIVE THAT TAG.

Commissioner McLean clarified that this was not a secret ballot, but was an effort to expedite the selection process.

**Vote:** Unanimous

The Commission went through each species and wrote on ballots their choice of organization to receive each tag. Each of the two tags for each species was noted as tag A and tag B for the purpose of the ballot. Mr. Ordway coordinated this effort and compiled the ballots as follows:

	<u>Hernbrode</u>	<u>McLean</u>	<u>Golightly</u>	<u>Martin</u>	<u>Woodhouse</u>
Antelope A	AAF	AAF	AAF	AAF	AAF
Antelope B	PSCI	AAF	AAF	AAF	AAF
BH Sheep A	ADBSS	ADBSS	ADBSS	ADBSS	ADBSS
BH Sheep B	ADBSS	ADBSS	ADBSS	ADBSS	ADBSS
Elk A	AES	AES	RMEF	AES	RMEF
Elk B	RMEF	RMEF	AES	RMEF	AES
Mule Deer A	ADA	ADA	MDF	ADA	ADA
Mule Deer B	MDF	MDF	ADA	MDF	MDF
Turkey A	NWTF	NWTF	NWTF	NWTF	NWTF
Turkey A	NWTF	NWTF	NWTF	NWTF	NWTF
White Tail A	ADA	SCI AZ	SCI PHX	ADA	ADA
White Tail B	SCI PHX	SCI PHX	MDF	MDF	SCI AZ
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vote on B	SCI PHX	SCI PHX	MDF	MDF	SCI PHX
Bear A	ABA	ABA	ABA	AWF	ABA
Bear B	AWF	AWF	SCI AZ	SCI AZ	AWF
Buffalo A	ABA	ABA	ABA	ABA	SCI
Buffalo B	MDF	AES	SCI PHX	SCI PHX	AES
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vote on B	SCI PHX	AES	SCI PHX	SCI PHX	SCI PHX
Javelina A	ABA	ABA	AWF	ABA	ABA
Javelina B	AWF	AWF	SCI AZ	AWF	MDF

The Commission voted on the organizations to receive each of the Special tags as follows:

#### Pronghorn Antelope

**Motion:** Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR PRONGHORN ANTELOPE BOTH BE AWARDED TO THE ARIZONA ANTELOPE FOUNDATION.

**Vote:** Unanimous

#### Black Bear

**Motion:** McLean moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR BLACK BEAR BE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS: ONE TAG TO THE ARIZONA BOWHUNTERS ASSOCIATION AND ONE TAG TO THE ARIZONA WILDLIFE FEDERATION.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Bighorn Sheep

**Motion:** Hernbrode moved and Martin seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR BIGHORN SHEEP BOTH BE AWARDED TO THE ARIZONA DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP SOCIETY.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Buffalo

(The ballots were tied for tag B on the buffalo tags so the Commission re-voted by ballot before the final vote on buffalo).

**Motion:** Martin moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR BUFFALO BE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS: ONE TAG TO THE ARIZONA BOWHUNTERS ASSOCIATION AND ONE TAG TO THE SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL - PHOENIX CHAPTER.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Elk

**Motion:** Woodhouse moved and Martin seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR ELK BE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS: ONE TAG TO THE ARIZONA ELK SOCIETY AND ONE TAG TO THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Javelina

**Motion:** Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR JAVELINA BE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS: ONE TAG TO THE ARIZONA BOWHUNTERS ASSOCIATION AND ONE TAG TO THE ARIZONA WILDLIFE FEDERATION.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Mule Deer

**Motion:** Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR MULE DEER BE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS: ONE TAG TO THE ARIZONA DEER ASSOCIATION AND ONE TAG TO THE MULE DEER FOUNDATION.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Turkey

**Motion:** Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR TURKEY BOTH BE AWARDED TO THE NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION.

**Vote:** Unanimous

#### White Tail

(The ballots were tied for tag B of the white tail tags so the Commission re-voted by ballot before the final vote.)

**Motion:** McLean moved and Hernbrode seconded THAT THE TWO TAGS FOR WHITE TAIL BE AWARDED AS FOLLOWS: ONE TAG TO THE ARIZONA DEER ASSOCIATION AND ONE TAG TO THE SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL – PHOENIX CHAPTER.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Subsequent to awarding of Special big game license-tags by the Commission, the Department will enact new agreements with the respective organizations to define and facilitate Special license-tag sales by the organizations. These agreements will also define how the Department will coordinate with the various organizations relative to the use of license-tag proceeds for future species related management projects.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 3. Consideration of Proposed Commission Order 29 for Special Big Game License-Tag Seasons for Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Antelope, Elk, Turkey, Javelina, Bighorn Sheep, Buffalo, and Black Bear for the 2008-2009 Special Tag Hunting Seasons

**Presenter:** Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

Using a Power Point presentation, Mr. Ordway briefed the Commission on Commission Order 29 for the 2008-2009 Special big game license tag hunting seasons for Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Antelope, Elk, Turkey, Javelina, Bighorn Sheep, Bear, and Buffalo. A.R.S. 17-346 authorizes the Commission to set seasons for up to three Special license tags for each species.

The Department recommended that all Special big game license tag hunt seasons be open year round, with the season for each species commencing on August 1, 2008 and ending on July 31, 2009. The recommended open areas for the Special license-tag hunts were as follows:

Mule Deer: Special license-tags will be valid statewide (except Camp Navajo in Unit 6B, Mohave County Park Lands in Unit 16A, and Fort Huachuca in Unit 35A).

White-tailed Deer: Special license-tags will be valid statewide (except Camp Navajo in Unit 6B, Mohave County Park Lands in Unit 16A, and Fort Huachuca in Unit 35A).

Antelope: Special license-tags will be valid for Units 1-10 (except Camp Navajo), 11M, 12A, 12B, 13A, 13B, 15A, 15B, 17A, 17B, 18A, 18B, portions of 19A, 19B, 21, 30A, 31, 32, 34B, 35A (except Fort Huachuca), and 35B.

Elk: Special license-tags will be valid statewide (except Camp Navajo in Unit 6B, Mohave County Park Lands in Unit 16A, and Fort Huachuca in Unit 35A).

Javelina: Special license-tags will be valid statewide (except Camp Navajo in Unit 6B, Mohave County Park Lands in Unit 16A, and Fort Huachuca in Unit 35A).

Turkey: Special license-tags will be valid for Units 1, 3B-10 (except Camp Navajo), 11M, 12A, 13A, 13BS, 17A, 17B, 20A, 22, 23, 27, and 35A (except Fort Huachuca).

Bighorn Sheep: One Special license-tag will be valid for Units 9, 10, 12A, 12B, 13A, 13B, 15A, 15B, 15C, 15D, and 16A (except Mohave County Park Lands). A second Special license-tag will be valid for Units 16B (north of Lake Havasu City), 22, 24B, 31, 32, 39, 40A, 40B, 41, 43A, 43B, 44A (west of the Swansea Road and south of Bill Williams River Rd.), 44B, 45A, 45B, 45C (including the Kofa NWR), 46A, and 46B (including the Cabeza Prieta NWR). A third Special license-tag will be valid for Units 23, 24A, Black River Hunt Area in Units 1 and 27, Bear Canyon Hunt Area in Unit 27, Foote Creek Hunt Area in Unit 27 North, Unit 27 (south of FR 217 and west of US Hwy 191) and Unit 28 (north of US Hwy 70).

Buffalo: Special license-tags will be valid for Units 12A, 12B, and 13A.

Black Bear: Special license-tags will be valid statewide (except Camp Navajo in Unit 6B, Mohave County Park Lands in Unit 16A, and Fort Huachuca in Unit 35A).

#### Public Comment

John McClendon, representing AES and RMEF, requested that the Commission change the dates for all of the Special tags to start August 1 to August 15 to allow more time for raffle tag winners to prepare for the hunt. In discussions with several other organizations, Mr. McClendon did not receive any negative feedback. It would also allow for full antler growth on bull elk.

The Commission discussed whether to change the dates for all species or just for elk. The Department did not see any biological reason not to change the dates and keeping them all the same may cause less confusion.

**Motion:** Hernbrode moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT COMMISSION ORDER 29: SPECIAL HUNTS AS PRESENTED.

**Amended Motion:** Martin moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT COMMISSION ORDER 29: SPECIAL HUNTS AS PRESENTED; AND THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO CHANGE THE HUNT DATES FOR ALL SPECIES FROM AUGUST 15 THROUGH AUGUST 14.

**Vote:** Unanimous

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 4. Consideration of Proposed Commission Orders 19, 20 and 24 for the 2007-2008 Hunting Season.

**Presenter:** Leonard L. Ordway, Game Branch Chief

Mr. Ordway turned this presentation over to Mike Rabe, Small Game Program Supervisor. Using a Power Point presentation, Mr. Rabe briefed the Commission on Commission Order 19 (dove), Commission Order 20 (band-tailed pigeons), and Commission Order 24 (sandhill cranes) establishing seasons and season dates, bag and possession limits, and open-closed areas. Detailed descriptions of all proposals were provided to the Commission prior to this meeting for review and were available for public review at all Department offices.

##### Commission Order 19 – Dove

The Commission was provided with a harvest data comparison of mourning doves and white-winged doves from 1984-2006 using charts and graphs as part of the Power Point presentation. The Department instituted a new small game survey questionnaire in 2004 that asked hunters to identify game management unit in their harvest reports. In both 2004 and 2005, the new questionnaire was sent out along with the old survey form so that the results of the two questionnaires could be compared. In 2006, only the new survey form was mailed to hunters.

Eurasian collared doves are a non-indigenous species that are specifically excluded from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Last year, the Commission opened a formal season on Eurasian collared doves to run concurrent with the mourning dove seasons with a liberal bag limit of 25 birds. This year, the Department recommended extending the Eurasian collared dove season to run year-long with unlimited bag. By removing the season date and bag limit restrictions, the Department hopes to create more hunting opportunity without affecting native dove species. There is a small risk that hunters could mistake white-winged and mourning doves for collared doves and therefore take native doves out of season as a result of this change. The Department will track all dove species violations carefully and include that data in subsequent dove season recommendations. Should the Department find that white-winged or mourning dove take outside of the season appears to increase, more restrictive seasons will be recommended on Eurasian collared doves in the future. The Department received several request from the public to expand the Eurasian collared dove season to year long.

##### Season Structure Recommendation:

The Department recommended that there be no change to the season structure for mourning doves and white-winged doves. The 2007 recommendation is for a September season of 15 days from September 1-15 as per Federal Frameworks; the North Zone will be open to all-day shooting. South Zone shooting hours will be ½-hour before sunrise to noon for adults, and all-day shooting hours for juniors. The late season recommendation is for the season to be open from November 23, 2007 to January 6, 2008 for mourning doves only and allow all-day shooting statewide. This recommendation is the maximum number of days allowed under Federal Frameworks.

For the early season there will be an aggregate bag to be 10 mourning doves and white-winged doves, no more than 6 of which can be white-winged doves, as per Federal Frameworks. Possession limit shall be 20 mourning doves after opening day and 12 white-winged doves in the early season. For the late season, bag is 10 mourning doves per day and 20 in possession.

In 1991, the Commission initiated a juniors-only dove hunt at the Powers Butte Wildlife Area. This year the hunt opportunity is recommended for the Robbins Butte Wildlife Area rather than the Powers Butte Wildlife Area. The dates are September 8-9, 2007. Within the area, shooting stations will be established to accommodate 2 junior hunters each. Should demand exceed supply, shooting stations will be assigned by a drawing at 4:45 a.m. at the Robbins Butte Wildlife Area headquarters. To facilitate hunt operation, hunters will be required to check in and out. Bag limits and shooting hours will be the same as for the general season. Personnel from the Hunter Education Program and Region VI will conduct the hunt.

The Department recommended continuation of the extended falconry-only dove season initiated in 1991. Recommended falconry-only season dates are September 17 through November 2. This season recommendation includes the maximum number of hunt days available for falconry (47). Falconry is also a legal method of take during both the regular early and late dove seasons.

The Department recommended that Eurasian collared dove season to be open yearlong beginning September 1 with unlimited bag limit. Half day restrictions for mourning dove (half day in early season) will not apply. Therefore, hunters could take Eurasian collared doves all day. Under this recommendation, shooting hour restrictions for Eurasian collared doves will be the same as for mourning doves. Falconry will be an accepted method of take and also open year round.

Commissioner Hernbrode stated that he believed setting season dates with a high bag limit for Eurasian Collared doves would create more interest and a stronger harvest than a year-round season with an unlimited bag limit.

**Motion:** McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT, SUBJECT TO FINAL FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS, COMMISSION ORDER 19: DOVE, AS PRESENTED.

**Vote:** Unanimous

#### Commission Order 20 – Band-tailed Pigeon

In 1997, the Harvest Information Program (HIP) replaced Arizona's harvest survey protocol for band-tailed pigeon. Band-tails have always been difficult to survey for both harvest and population information. The principle management difficulty with these birds is that few hunters hunt them, so harvest information is difficult to estimate since traditional surveys often miss the majority of band-tail hunters. In addition, band-tailed pigeon distribution is spotty and changes from year to year. Birds typically congregate where mast and other food sources are abundant, but those areas differ from year to year and may even change mid-summer.

Harvest information obtained from band-tailed pigeon hunters between 1997-2003 indicated Arizona has, on average, about 715 active pigeon hunters; 800 hunters were estimated in 2003. Wings examined from Arizona during the 2004 season (23 wings) showed that 35% of harvested

band-tailed pigeons were juveniles. This was a slight increase over past years, which averaged 30% juveniles in the bag. HIP harvest estimates indicate increasing harvest of band-tails over 2001-2003 (500, 1,200, and 1,400 respectively). Data from 2004 is not yet available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Department received two public comments indicating that the new band-tailed hunt structure, introduced in 2006, was an improvement and should be continued.

Because of the wide variety of habitat in Arizona, the timing of band-tailed pigeon reproduction varies from north to south. In the northern areas, birds breed and disperse earlier than in southern areas. Using zones to allow hunters access to northern birds after their breeding cycle is concluded and opening southern zones later to protect breeding pairs is an approach many states have taken. The current proposal addresses this concern.

#### Season Structure Recommendation:

The Federal Frameworks for band-tailed pigeons within the four-corner states allow for seasons of not more than 30 consecutive days between September 1 and November 30 with a bag and possession limit of 5 and 10, respectively.

The Department recommended that the season in the North Zone be September 14-October 7. This allows for 3 weekends of hunting opportunity. In the South Zone, where band-tailed pigeons reproduce later, the Department recommended that the band-tailed pigeon season open on September 21 and run through October 7, 2007. This provides 2 weekends of hunting opportunity. Bag and possession limits of 5 and 10, respectively, were recommended statewide.

The advantage of this structure is that it protects breeding birds in both the northern and southern portions of Arizona and offers a relatively simple hunt structure using the existing dove zones many hunters are already familiar with.

**Motion:** Woodhouse moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT, SUBJECT TO FINAL FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS, COMMISSION ORDER 20: BAND-TAILED PIGEON, AS PRESENTED.

**Vote:** Unanimous

#### Commission Order 24 – Sandhill Crane

The sandhill cranes traditionally hunted in Arizona include cranes from both the Mid-Continent Population (M-CP) and Rocky Mountain Population (RMP). The RMP is comprised entirely of greater sandhills. M-CP cranes are primarily the lesser subspecies with some Canadian subspecies. The population of RMP cranes is smaller than the M-CP and can tolerate only light harvest; hence, the number of RMP cranes harvested drives the number of permits in Arizona and other Pacific Flyway states.

Because of consistently high survey numbers and high recruitment, and in accordance with survey information and the RMP management plan, Arizona's allocation of RMP cranes was

increased to 69 birds for 2006. Arizona's allocation for 2007 is 88 RMP cranes. This increase in allocation is a reflection that RMP crane populations continue to increase in the Pacific Flyway.

The Pacific Flyway Council approved an updated RMP plan in March 2007. The RMP Cooperative Flyway Management plan established population objectives, a survey to monitor recruitment, and harvest levels that are designed to maintain a stable abundance between 17,000-21,000 birds. The plan contains a formula for calculating allowable annual harvests to achieve population objectives. All sandhill crane hunters in the range of the RMP must obtain a state permit to hunt cranes. This provides the sampling frame for independent state harvest estimates and allows for assignment of harvest quotas by state. In many areas, harvest estimates are supplemented by mandatory check station reporting. The Federal Frameworks cite the management plans approved by both the Central and Pacific Flyway Councils.

In 2006, the Department ran a check station for sandhill cranes. The check station last year was out of cycle, and was used to sample cranes for avian influenza virus. This year, there will not be a check station for sandhill cranes. Of those birds checked in 2006, 10 were determined to be RMP cranes. Arizona's allocation of RMP cranes for 2004 was 69 so Arizona remained well within the allocation. Arizona's estimated harvest of RMP cranes in 2006 was 50 birds. In 2006, Arizona's allocation has increased to 69 RMP cranes due to record population indices. Since the inception of the hunt in 1981, Arizona has never exceeded its allocation for RMP cranes.

Because the reproductive potential of sandhills is limited (they do not nest until 4-5 years of age and typically raise only one chick per year), harvest regulations are necessarily conservative. Nesting success varies with wetland conditions. Even in good years the proportion of young in the fall RMP is rarely greater than 10%. In 2006, recruitment for the RMP was estimated at 10.8%; this was higher than the 2005 estimate of 9.4%. The most recent (2006) population index for RMP cranes was a record high 20,865 birds. Higher recruitment and increasing population size characterize the present RMP crane population.

Sandhill cranes have been hunted in Arizona since 1981. Prior to 1999, the Department required all successful crane hunters to check out and present their birds for inspection in accordance with R12-4-308. This check station provided harvest data that was used to determine subspecies composition of the cranes harvested. This harvest data is necessary because it determines how many permits Arizona can maintain. Due to the consistency of past check station data, in 1999 the Department proposed to use the hunter check station every third year. The Pacific Flyway Council and the Commission approved the 1999 recommendation.

The Department provided the Commission with sandhill crane data using charts and graphs as part of the Power Point presentation.

Arizona has conducted its own January survey of M-CP and RMP sandhill cranes since 1978 and that survey shows a steady increase in the numbers of cranes wintering in the state. In 1978, 4,264 wintering cranes were counted in Arizona. In the 2006 survey, 30,570 cranes were counted. In 2007, 28,156 cranes were counted. The decrease in counts between 2006 and 2007 is not significant and most likely due to less corn grown in the Sulfur Springs Valley in 2006. Because the price of corn has increased significantly since then, corn production is expected to increase in 2007.

The increasing numbers of wintering sandhill cranes in Arizona are a direct result of active management undertaken by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. In 1996, the Department acquired a major sandhill crane roost near McNeil (Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area). The Department also pumps water into Wilcox Playa (Wilcox Playa Wildlife Area) to maintain the crane roost when the playa is dry. The Department has an agreement with Arizona Electric Power Cooperative near Wilcox to maintain another important crane roost.

Since 1987, the Department has offered similar hunt packages of 4 3-day hunts in November. An archery hunt preceded the shotgun hunts. The reason for breaking the hunt into multiple segments was to minimize hunter density and hunter-landowner conflict. The timing of the hunts are designed to stay within Federal Frameworks and to minimize harvest of RMP cranes. The annual proportion of RMP cranes in the bag has ranged from 11% to 35%.

*Lower Colorado River Valley Cranes*—Arizona has long hosted another population of sandhill cranes along the lower Colorado River and along the Gila River near Buckeye, the Lower Colorado River Valley (LCRV) population. This population consists entirely of the greater subspecies and has been considered a separate population of cranes by the Pacific Flyway. These birds have a short migration; the bulk of the birds breed in the Elko and White Pine counties of Nevada. The Pacific Flyway plan for LCRV cranes had a goal of growing the population to 2,400-2,600 by the year 2000. This goal has been achieved as the most recent census in 2007 counted 2,667 LCRV cranes, the highest count since the census has been run. Cranes are very likely underrepresented in these counts because staff time and budget constraints have constrained surveys on the refuges and Colorado Indian Tribal Lands in recent years. A more ambitious survey effort could very likely reveal higher numbers than current surveys indicate. Results of summer surveys on LCRV cranes in Nevada (conducted every 6 years since 1993) also show upward trends in production. Recruitment surveys of LCRV were conducted in Arizona from 1989-1994 on Colorado River Indian Lands and Cibola Refuge. Mean percentage of young observed during those surveys was 4%.

History shows that instituting a hunt can contribute to increased habitat protection and result in increased crane numbers. When Arizona instituted a sandhill crane hunt in 1981 (Mid-continent and Rocky Mountain populations), there were approximately 5,000 cranes from those populations overwintering in the Sulfur Springs Valley in south-central Arizona. Interest in the hunt and the cranes contributed to habitat improvements and that has allowed Arizona's Mid-continent and Rocky Mountain winter populations to increase to over 30,500 in 2006. These increases are largely attributed to Department dollars spent on habitat projects for the birds. Therefore an additional benefit to instituting a hunt could be increased interest in habitat projects to benefit this population of cranes.

In 2006, the Pacific Flyway Council passed a recommendation to hold a limited, permit only, 10-bird hunt on LCRV cranes. The reason for the small number of permits was to acknowledge that this population of cranes remains small, and the harvest is therefore very conservative. The Pacific Flyway recommendation still must pass the Service Migratory Bird Regulation Committee Meeting in the third week of June. Results of that meeting will probably not be available until after the June Arizona Game and Fish Commission meeting.

The hunt recommendation from the Pacific Flyway Council was not accepted by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The reason given for not granting the Arizona hunt was the lack of an allocation plan for harvest (between the states and the Tribes) and no formal biological foundation.

To address those claims, Arizona Game and Fish worked with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Colorado Indian Tribe to develop a hunt allocation structure and a biological monitoring program to establish an allowable take. This was presented in a draft Environmental Assessment (EA). That EA was published in the Federal Register. Following the results of the EA, the Department intends to continue pursuing a limited hunt for Lower Colorado River Valley Cranes. Because of the Federal and Flyway processes, the earliest such a hunt could occur would be 2008.

The Department received one public comment indicating that sandhill should not be killed because many factors affect their population size that is beyond management control. The Department responded that the management of sandhill cranes is one of the great success stories of migratory game bird management. Under careful management and habitat enhancement programs throughout the States within the Pacific Flyway, crane populations have increased. The success of this management has brought cranes to the attention of many since crane populations are doing so well. This is particularly true in Arizona where crane populations have been steadily increasing for over 20 years. The Department recommends that the sandhill crane hunt should be continued in Arizona. Sandhill cranes are spectacular birds and are admired by both hunters and non-hunters. The high numbers of sandhill cranes that occur in the Sulphur Springs Valley in Arizona are a direct result of habitat management for cranes that the Department has accomplished with sportsmen's dollars. A very small percentage (less than 1%) of the Arizona wintering population is taken by hunters.

#### Season Structure Recommendation:

*Mid-Continent and Rocky Mountain populations*—The allowed Federal season dates and bag limits for the Mid-Continent and Rocky Mountain Populations of cranes in Arizona are as follows: The outside dates of the season must fall between September 1 and January 31 and not exceed 30 days. The bag limit may not exceed 3 per day or 9 per season.

The Department recommended four general 3-day hunts beginning on November 2, with 85 permits in each hunt. Each hunt will have a non-hunt day between hunts. All hunters that successfully draw for cranes receive 2 tags. With the recommended season structure, we estimate total harvest will be between 160 to 220 cranes. The predicted removal of RMP birds is estimated at 35-60 birds.

Despite an increased allocation of RMP cranes, the Department recommended keeping this year's permits the same as last year. The reason for this conservatism is because of land access issues among farmers and ranchers in Region V. In addition to these issues, 16 permits were not issued from last year's hunt. Hunter access to private lands is the reason for the Department not allocating increased permits for cranes. The Department continues to work on these access issues to improve opportunity for hunters in the Sulfur Springs Valley.

Harvest in 2007 will be estimated using questionnaires for all hunts. Through the Federal Frameworks, the Department is obligated to estimate harvest for the numbers of Rocky Mountain Cranes taken each year, and to run a check station once every three years. Since the Department ran a check station in 2006, there will be no check station in 2007.

The Department recommended a 3-day archery-only hunt November 23–25, 2007 with 25 permits. Since this hunt typically results in the harvest of 0-2 cranes, so the likelihood of archery harvest impacting the RMP allocation is minimal.

**Motion:** McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADOPT, SUBJECT TO FINAL FEDERAL FRAMEWORKS, COMMISSION ORDER 24: SANDHILL CRANE, AS PRESENTED.

**Vote:** Aye - Golightly, McLean, Martin, Woodhouse  
Nay - Hernbrode  
Passed 4 to 1

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 5. Call to the Public

John Koleszar, representing himself and various organizations that support a Conservation Bonus Point Program, addressed the Commission requesting that the Commission reconsider implementing this type of a program and that it be a future agenda item for discussion.

Blaine Bickford, representing himself, provided the Commission with a document containing his personal opinions, thoughts, comments, beliefs and recommendations as they apply to the current proposals for the guidelines for game management. Mr. Bickford's main concern was increased opportunity to the degree that it would negatively impact wildlife resources. Mr. Bickford also provided the Commission with a letter to the Arizona Game and Fish from a 14-year old boy expressing his concerns that turkey populations will be depleted from over-the-counter youth turkey hunts.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 6. Director's and Chairman's Reports

Chairman Golightly reported on his activities since the last Commission meeting. He has been busy spending time with visiting members of the Congressional Delegation with respect to proposed legislation that would give direction to federal agencies in support of shooting sports in Arizona; spent a lot of time working on the Commissioners Guide Book for WAFWA; attended the Conservation Workshop; and spent time in Kingman with Commissioner Woodhouse working with BLM in reference to the Big Ranch A allotment.

Director Shroufe reported that he spent a lot of time on Kofa sheep and lion issues; worked on the Bald Eagle delisting issues; attended the Conservation Workshop; met with Babbitt Ranches and their Board of Directors regarding the Espee Ranch and the possible reintroduction of Black Footed ferrets; worked with Department personnel in implementing the Governor's Executive

Order on the Invasive Species Council; worked with DEQ and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Interior and NERDA on natural resources assessment claims potentially against ASRCO for damage caused by spills in Mineral Creek; worked with the BLM, Shreveport and the Bureau of Reclamation on Planet Ranch negotiations; met with the Range Commander for Barry M. Goldwater Range on access issues on the range; and interviewed for the new Information and Education Assistant Director.

Chairman Golightly requested that the Director coordinate setting up the quarterly Commissioners meeting with the Governor now that the legislative session is over.

Director Shroufe will try to arrange that meeting for within the next 2-3 weeks. The Director further asked the Commission to consider a date for a Commission Work Session to discuss the new funding initiative.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 7. Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner McLean spent a lot of time meeting with the Congressional Delegation with regard to shooting range issues and making Forest Service and/or BLM lands available; attended the Conservation Workshop; worked with Tony Guiles and Ben Alteneder on the OHV bill; and went to Raymond Ranch and participated in forage studies.

Commissioner Hernbrode attended a meeting with BLM and made a presentation on the Commission's position on the Ironwood National Monument dispersed shooting issues; took a trip to Yellowstone National Park; and attended the Conservation Workshop.

Commissioner Martin participated in a of bird banding program at the Boyce Thompson Arboretum as an aftermath activity of it's designation as an Important Bird Area; met with Congressman Shadegg on shooting range issues; spent a day with members of the Anglers Roundtable where she received a lot of positive feedback on the Department's Salt River lakes plan; met with the Governor's Natural Resources Advisor to discuss a variety of issues. The Advisor was very appreciative of the Department's input on uranium mining issues; participated in the Conservation Workshop; and attended an event hosted by Audubon Arizona.

Commissioner Woodhouse was out of the country on vacation for a couple of weeks; spent a day of orientation at the Department Headquarters in Phoenix; went to Kingman with Chairman Golightly and attended a meeting with BLM and the permittee of Big Ranch A; attended two of the hunt guidelines meetings, one in Yuma and one in Payson; and spent time on the Kofa sheep and lion issues.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 8. Approval of Minutes and Signing of Minutes

**Motion:** McLean moved and Martin seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR MAY 18, 2007.

**Vote:** Unanimous

Following approval, the Commission signed the minutes for May 18, 2007.

\* \* \* \* \*

23. Future Agenda Items

Mr. Ferrell captured the following future agenda items/action items:

- The Department will do a debriefing with the constituents on the OHV bill, and when those meetings are set, the Commission will be invited
- In regards to the Northern Arizona Shooting Range, keep the Commission informed throughout the appraisal process of Department lands and brief the Commission on wildlife values and use of those lands should they actually be traded in a potential exchange
- The Education Branch Chief and the new Information and Education Assistant Director will meet with Commissioner Hernbrode on his thoughts for formal education programs in the Department
- Draft a letter for the Commission Chairman’s signature to BLM and the Forest Service regarding the numerous planning processes that are involved and to alert them to the broad issues that are of critical issues to the Commission and do that by the Commissioner’s forum at WAFWA so that the Chairman might share that with fellow Commissioners in other states.
- Draft a letter to Mr. Shuster indicating the Commission’s lack of interest in the property that was offered as an alternative site for the Northern Arizona Shooting Range
- Provide a more comprehensive list of items that typically occur by month within the June Commission memo that sets next years Commission meeting calendar.

\* \* \* \* \*

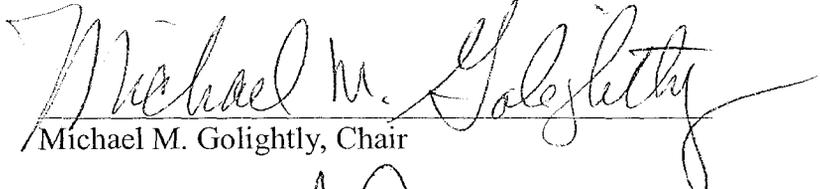
**Motion:** Martin moved and McLean seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO ADJOURN THIS MEETING.

**Vote:** Unanimous

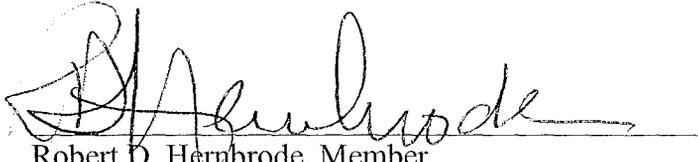
\* \* \* \* \*

Meeting adjourned at 10:51 p.m.

\* \* \* \* \*

  
Michael M. Golightly, Chair

  
William H. McLean, Vice Chair

  
Robert D. Hernbrode, Member

  
Jennifer L. Martin, Member

  
Robert R. Woodhouse, Member

ATTEST:

  
Duane L. Shroufe  
Secretary and Director

**Game and Fish Litigation Report**  
**Presented at the Commission Meeting**  
**June 22, 2007**

The Assistant Attorneys General for the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the Arizona Game and Fish Department are representing these agencies in the following matters in litigation. This report does not include claims and lawsuits for damages against these agencies in which the agencies are represented by Assistant Attorneys General in the Liability Defense Section of the Attorney General's Office.

**1. *State v. Johnson, CV2005-002692.*** On February 14, 2005, the State of Arizona ("State") filed a multi-count complaint against land developer George Johnson and related individuals and entities ("Defendants") alleging that Defendants: (1) bulldozed over 270 acres of State Trust Lands and 2,415 acres of other lands in and near the Ironwood Forest National Monument ("Monument") and the Los Robles Archeological District; (2) irreparably damaged protected archeological sites on State Trust Lands; (3) destroyed thousands of protected native plants; (4) discharged pollutants into waters of the State and altering and damaging watercourses of the State; (5) breached the terms of a State grazing lease; and (6) allowed diseased domestic goats to roam into the habitat of the Silver Bell desert bighorn sheep herd on the Monument, thereby infecting 47 desert bighorn sheep with keratoconjunctivitis and contagious ecthyma and causing the deaths of 21 members of the herd.

Along with the Complaint, the State filed a motion to place the case into Arizona Superior Court's Complex Litigation Pilot Program.

On March 18, 2005, the State filed an amended Complaint wherein the State Land Department added claims for waste and punitive damages.

On March 25, 2005, the Court issued an order designating the case as complex and assigning the matter to Judge Rebecca Albrecht. The parties held a case management conference before Judge Albrecht on May 11, 2005.

On May 23, 2005, Defendants filed motions to dismiss the Commission's negligence per se and unlawful killing of wildlife claims. Defendants did not move to dismiss the Commission's negligence claim. The Attorney General's Office filed responses to Defendants' motions on June 21, 2005. Defendants filed reply briefs in support of their motions to dismiss on July 6, 2005, and the Court heard oral argument on the motions on July 21, 2005.

On August 23, 2005, the Court issued a ruling denying both of Defendants' motions to dismiss. On September 15, 2005, the State filed a Second Amended Complaint at the Court's direction to more fully address the State's basis for asserting personal liability against George Johnson for certain of the State's claims related to trespass, destruction of native plants, damage to archeological sites, and violation of water quality and storm water discharge laws.

On October 13, 2005, Defendants filed a counterclaim for defamation against the Attorney General and the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality arising from statements made to the press about the case. On October 14, 2005, Defendants filed an answer to the State's Second Amended Complaint. As required by Rule 26.1 of the Arizona Rules of Civil Procedure, the parties

will exchange comprehensive disclosure statements regarding the factual and legal basis of the claims in the case on November 10, 2005.

The parties served initial disclosure statements on November 10, 2005, and are working on a proposed case management order. Due to the retirement of Judge Albrecht, the case was transferred to Judge Barton. The defendants filed a notice of change of judge with respect to Judge Barton, and the case has been reassigned to Judge Kenneth L. Fields. Judge Fields has scheduled a status conference for February 13, 2006 to discuss the proposed case management order. The parties held a status conference before the Court on February 27, 2006. The Court ordered the parties to prepare a Joint Case Management Order no later than noon on March 8, 2006. The parties have started the written discovery process, and depositions will commence the second week of May.

The parties held a status conference on June 5, 2006, and filed a Joint Alternative Dispute Resolution Statement with the Court. The parties agreed to mediate this dispute, and have Tom Toone of Beer & Toone to serve as mediator. On August 7, 2006, the parties filed their respective mediation statements. The mediation took place on August 18, 2006, but the parties were not able to resolve the dispute. Following the mediation, the defendants noticed the depositions of several Department employees. These depositions took place in the fall of 2006.

**The parties held a status conference in April and the court agreed with the request to extend discovery deadline from August to December.**

2. ***Charles M. Johnson v. Arizona Game and Fish Department, LC2006-000775.*** On November 13, 2006, Charles M. Johnson filed a Complaint in Arizona Superior Court appealing the Commission's orders revoking his license privileges for three (3) years, requiring him to complete a hunter education course before obtaining another license to hunt in Arizona, and denying his request for a rehearing. Mr. Johnson filed with his Complaint an Application for Order to Show Cause ("Application") asking the Court to stay his license suspension pending the outcome of the appeal. On November 17, 2006, Game and Fish filed an Opposition to Mr. Johnson's Application. On November 21, 2006, the Court issued a minute entry finding that Mr. Johnson's Application was "neither procedurally appropriate nor substantively adequate" and declining to issue a stay.

The parties held their first status conference before the Court on January 10, 2007. The Court set the briefing and oral argument schedule as follows: (1) Johnson's Opening Brief due March 5, 2007; (2) the State's Response Brief due April 16, 2007; (3) Johnson's Reply Brief due May 16, 2007; and (4) Oral Argument on May 30, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

**Oral argument was held on May 30, 2007, and the Court took the matter under advisement. The parties are awaiting the Court's ruling.**

(6/18/07) (JFO/SDC)

**Lands Update**  
For the Arizona Game and Fish Commission  
June 22, 2007  
Payson, Arizona

**FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

The Department hosted a series of public meetings to inform and engage our constituents in statewide federal land management planning affecting Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public lands. In April and May 2007, eight regional meetings were held in Mesa, Pinetop, Flagstaff, Sierra Vista, Tucson, Yuma, Prescott, and Kingman to ensure the public understands how the planning processes work, what resources and public uses are affected, how to effectively provide comment, and how to become engaged in planning. Public turnout at these meetings ranged from approximately 15-70 individuals. The Department has also established a website page dedicated to updating information about both BLM and FS federal planning processes. In addition, the Department has prepared draft letters to be signed by the Commission in regards to statewide efforts. This correspondence to the BLM State Director and FS Regional Forester reasserts the Department's interest in planning statewide, our authorities for management, and concerns related to wildlife management activities and wildlife-based recreation.

**SB 1441 HABITAT RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT FUND**

Anderson Mesa Grassland Restoration for Pronghorn

With assistance from the Department, the Diablo Trust received a \$450,000 Natural Resources Conservation Service grant to match SB1441 funds. To date, archaeological surveys have been completed for 15,000+ acres of federal land, 1,097 acres of juniper have been treated, native forage seeding has occurred on 320 acres, and contracts have been awarded to treat another 5,590 acres and fence one wetland. Bids are being solicited for additional juniper treatment and wetland fencing. All SB1441 funded work in the Anderson Mesa area is a continuation of projects on the Coconino National Forest, State, and private land complex, Flying M Ranch, and Bar T Bar Ranch (collectively, the Diablo Trust).

Kaibab Winter Range Habitat Improvement for Deer

Implementation continues on the SB1441 funded Westside winter range project. The contractor has been doing an excellent job removing juniper from historic push treatments. Juniper removal will continue through the summer followed by seeding of desirable browse species. A new interseeding tool developed by Truax Drills will seed shrubs into existing vegetation and is scheduled to be tested in July. This tool will be crucial for a 500-acre seeding treatment in fall 2007. Additional efforts will be made to implement subsequent seeding treatments planned over a 10-year period.

#### Yuma Wildlife Water Redevelopment

Water catchments in Region IV that were either in a state of disrepair, not functioning as designed, or were designed with inadequate water storage have been redeveloped to sustain use by wildlife between rainfall events. Two catchments on the Kofa Wildlife Refuge (Yaqui and McPherson tanks) were added to the Yuma SB1441 project due to exigent circumstances pertaining to a critical bighorn sheep population that arose after the original priority list was established. Funding from SB1441 supplemented Department state appropriated funds set aside for the Kofa Bighorn Sheep Restoration project. Various sportsmen clubs such as the Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club made significant contributions to project completion through resources and manpower.

#### Wildlife Water Redevelopment North of the Colorado River

Twenty-three catchments in Region II were identified as water-hauling liabilities (both monetary and manpower) by the Department and scheduled for redevelopment utilizing SB1441 funds. Four new water developments were also established as priorities based upon wildlife use/need and practicality of obtaining necessary environmental compliance documentation within established construction timelines. Remaining work on eight water redevelopments and the four new catchments is expected to be complete by July, 31 2007.

#### Region I Deer Habitat Restoration

Chitty Creek: The Strayhorse plan involving mostly pine burning has been added to the Chitty Creek SB1441 project. Originally, we had planned to exclude these 1,200 acres, but because treatment objectives are essentially identical for both areas, keeping fire out of the Strayhorse block was deemed unnecessary. Plans are still on schedule to commence Phase I prescribed burning October 2007.

Pigeon Creek: Approximately 20 miles of black line, equivalent to 1,200 acres of burned area, were completed during May 2007. Aerial ignition of the Pigeon project began June 5<sup>th</sup> and approximately 11,000 acres have been treated thus far. It is anticipated that burning will conclude August 2007.

Sheep Wash: Planning requirements for Four Bar Pasture have been completed as well as NO Bar scoping, watershed, and fisheries specialist reports. Mechanical thinning is scheduled to begin April 2008 after the Chitty ecosystem burn in October 2007.

### **U.S. FOREST SERVICE**

#### **Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests**

Allotment Management Planning activities associated with nine different grazing allotments on the Apache portion of the Forest have been temporarily suspended. The Forest recently received a finalized 2006-07 budget that did not include funds to continue allotment NEPA analysis. This decision may significantly limit efforts to complete grazing allotment plan revisions by December 2010 as required under the 1995 Rescissions Act. The current planning priority for range NEPA analyses only includes

the Heber Wild Horse Territory, Long Tom, Carlisle Complex, and Wild Bunch Allotments. These four are much farther along in the revision process than the nine allotments the Department has been involved with since late 2006. The Forest Leadership Team met on June 8<sup>th</sup> to provide direction for the immediate future of allotment planning efforts.

The Department is coordinating with the Springerville Ranger District and State Land Department to implement a pinyon juniper thinning project on state trust lands near Eagar. The Department holds the grazing lease for approximately 900 acres in Section 13 just south of the Town of Eagar along State Highway 261. This area contains important winter habitat for mule deer and turkey. The Springerville Ranger District has acquired approximately \$47,000 from an Apache County Resource Advisory Committee grant to implement Forest thinning projects and promote fire resiliency in woodlands adjacent to incorporated areas. The Department is working closely with the agencies to design appropriate thinning prescriptions that will meet fire objectives and also benefit wildlife. Treatments will tentatively include both State Land hand crews and private contractors utilizing mechanical equipment.

#### **Coconino National Forest**

Department comments on the Fossil Creek Allotment Management Plan (AMP) requested consideration of an alternative to lower grazing utilization and intensity rate to 20%, employ rest rotation grazing, and set an initial number of livestock. This allotment is along the Mogollon Rim near Fossil Creek. Primary non-wildlife concerns are poor soil condition and the need to improve vegetative diversity. Primary wildlife species of interest are mule deer and leopard frogs. The Forest's proposed AMP calls for 35% utilization and does not specify either a grazing scheme or an initial number of cattle. The Department alternative was accepted although the Forest requested additional justification.

The Department supports the proposed Hackberry – Pivot Rock AMP. Similar to Fossil Creek, concerns for the Hackberry Allotment include poor soil condition and improvements in vegetative diversity. However unlike Fossil Creek, there appears to be enough capacity on the Pivot Rock Allotment to transfer some grazing off the Hackberry summer range; the proposed action calls for reducing the Hackberry grazing season by two months with a corresponding two-month increase in use season for Pivot Rock.

The Hackberry-Pivot Rock AMP proposed action also defers livestock grazing in the Kehl Pasture based on over-utilization by elk. The Forest's position will be taken into account when the Department establishes future elk hunt permit numbers. In the meantime, a summer field trip is planned to assess Kehl pasture and nearby meadow condition.

The Department continues collaboration on the Jack Smith/Schultz Fuel Reduction and Forest Health Project Proposed Action. The Forest has changed plans to assess overall tree canopy cover reductions at the stand level and now favors measurement at the group level (defined as an aggregation of one or more clumps of trees of varying age and size

interspersed with openings). The Department believes this modification has the potential to significantly reduce the amount of forest cover to densities that will no longer meet minimum canopy cover requirements for project area wildlife per the 1996 Forest Plan Amendment. The Proposed Action (PA) goal is to decrease canopy cover at the group level by 30-60%; however, if measured across the stand, overall canopy cover could be reduced to as little as 10%.

Management recommendations for the northern goshawk in the Southwestern United States (GTR-RM-217) defined northern goshawk habitat through the structural habitat attributes of 14 prey species. This document measured canopy cover data for these prey species, and for the northern goshawk, at the stand level – in direct contrast to the Forest’s PA guidelines to evaluate canopy cover at the tree group level.

### **Kaibab National Forest**

On June 11 and 12<sup>th</sup>, the Department and Northern Arizona University researchers participated in a field trip to areas monitoring seeding treatments. Funding from the Grazing Land Conservation Initiative will assist the Department in adaptive monitoring of seeding treatments and herbicide effects.

A draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for recovery of the Warm Fire area is scheduled to be released to the public in July. The Proposed Action (PA) for the Warm Fire calls for a potential salvage operation on 9,990 acres and reforestation on approximately 14,690 acres. In addition, the PA recommends 4,050 acres of natural aspen regeneration.

In early June, the Department and Grand Canyon Trust visited the eastside of the fire within the pinyon-juniper vegetation type. Field trip objectives were to identify areas for possible native seeding treatments. The Trust is interested in working cooperatively with both the Department and Forest on several blocks of seeding treatments that will vary in area and species seeded. Browse will be an important seeding component as will be early successional native grasses to inhibit the establishment of cheatgrass. The goal of these seeding efforts will be the creation of native vegetation “islands” that should give the burned system a head start in recovery. Although the Forest supports this project, funding and staffing for archaeological surveys prior to treatments may be difficult to achieve.

### **Coronado National Forest**

The Department has completed internal documentation for the establishment of Mexican stonerollers in West Turkey Creek in the Chiricahua Mountains. Fish will be captured from existing populations in Rucker Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains, and treated for Asian tapeworms prior to release. Release sites are located on private and Forest Service lands. This project was completed June 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Prescott National Forest**

The Game Management Unit 21 Workgroup met to continue developing juniper thinning plans along a pronghorn travel corridor. A meeting between the Department, Forest,

and interested livestock permittees discussed future plans regarding landscape-level restoration across the Agua Fria Grasslands. As part of Department efforts to work with permittees and landowners in maximizing funding opportunities for grassland restoration, a representative from the Landowner Relations Program presented information on potential funding sources.

### **Tonto National Forest**

A recent contract was released to cut dead pine and cottonwood trees that threatened to fall onto the new elk-livestock enclosure at Canyon Creek. A contractor skillfully downed 50+ trees on either side of the enclosure. To enhance riparian restoration efforts, fallen trees were left onsite to provide habitat for small rodents, insects, and other wildlife. At least one large tree was felled across the stream and native fishes have already been observed using the cover. The Forest's fisheries biologist is interested in promoting the benefits of large woody debris in Canyon Creek and may plan to move additional large trees across the stream course. Natural dead falls have resulted in cover and stream bed scouring that has created new pool habitat and improved instream conditions, although over time many of these logs will likely be removed by flood events. The Department has also completed necessary paperwork to contract with Natural Channel Design for watershed and fish habitat assessment and enhancement.

About two years ago, Ashworth Mining proposed a plan to the Forest for uranium exploration in Workman Creek. Two existing roads on the north and south of Workman Creek would be utilized during test drilling. The Department reviewed this proposal, but work was never completed. Ashworth was subsequently sold to Rodinia Mining, a Canadian company, and a greatly expanded exploration plan was presented to the Forest. When informed of the NEPA and ESA environmental paperwork required to approve the revision, Rodinia withdrew their exploration plan and is apparently working on a scaled down version.

A review of Rodinia's June 2005 SEC filing indicates a high level of confidence in the value of Workman Creek uranium ore, with considerable potential for the discovery of additional deposits. Workman Creek and the Sierra Anchas have very high biological diversity. Uranium mining could have an extreme impact on wildlife resources in Workman Creek and downstream waters (e.g., the Salt River chain of lakes), and diminish biological, recreational, and scenic values for the area.

The previously mined Red Bluff Uranium Claim is located about seven miles due south of the Workman Creek Claim on the east side of SR-288 (Young Road) in the flat area above the cliffs east of Parker Creek Canyon. Rodinia Mining has also bought out the Red Bluff Claim, but the Department is not aware of any future plans at this point.

The Department has been informed that Rodinia Mining has bought out uranium claims in the Promontory Butte area, north of Christopher Creek. Here, Rodinia has partnered with Patriot Power and Maggie Mae Minerals. Another comprehensive plan for exploration was initially presented to the Forest, but this has since been scaled back to operate along existing roads only. SEC documentation filed in January 2007 for the

Mormon Lake project implies Patriot Power has not yet formed a good opinion of the quality of the ore and exploration is still in the early phases. Public scoping has yet to occur.

## **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)**

### **Arizona Strip Field Office**

The proposed final Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) was released on March 2, 2007 and includes route designations for the Grand Canyon-Parashant and Vermillion Cliffs National Monuments within the Arizona Strip Field Office (FO) planning area. The Department continues to coordinate closely with the FO in development of subsequent Travel Management Plans and associated route networks.

### **Flagstaff Field Office**

The Mt. Trumbull coordination meeting took place from May 22-23<sup>rd</sup> at the Nixon Administrative Site. The Nixon multiple agency fuels reduction project is a relatively small (62 acres) site within a wilderness-designated region. Current forest conditions include a multi-level herbaceous understory, good shrub component, and mature ponderosa pine trees. The Department focused discussion on concerns regarding a BLM proposal for fuels reduction via burn-only treatments. We advocated for removal of small diameter fuels prior to burning in order to meet reduction objectives and avoid tree and soil scorch. Alternatively, we asked BLM to demonstrate that a fire-only treatment would not consume a large percentage of trees on such a small site. BLM was open to mechanical thinning and also supported continued and better monitoring of hazardous fuels treatments. Additional Department recommendations to reduce heat and scorch damage entailed scheduling prescribed burns much earlier in the year.

### **Hassayampa Field Office**

The Hassayampa Field Office is developing a comprehensive Travel Management Plan for Central Arizona public lands, and is seeking public input to help determine where to provide connectivity for increased recreational value while minimizing impacts to the land and other resources. Comments regarding road and trail designations in the Bumble Bee, Table Mesa, Lake Pleasant, and San Domingo Wash areas will be accepted through June 30, 2007.

On April 25, 2007, the Department attended a BLM route designation meeting in Morristown. BLM briefly outlined the information gathering public process (including the most effective methods to comment on route planning), their route evaluation travel management process, as well as the general schedule leading to final route designations. Areas for desired public consideration were: route connectivity, current/desired access, motorized versus non-motorized, effects on cultural/environmental resources, etc. Several individuals in attendance complimented the Department for "informing the public via the AGFD webpage that meetings were taking place." Meeting attendees included hikers, wilderness advocates, hunters, fisherman, mining representatives, and local

citizens concerned by heavy off-highway vehicle use, trespassing, and littering. BLM advised that work on an Environmental Assessment would not commence until the beginning of 2008 and a decision affecting 1,000 miles of trails could be expected by June 2008. A draft map would be made available on the BLM website by October 2008.

The Department and the Bradshaw Foothills Coalition Group (BFC) invited user groups to a route designation workshop on June 16<sup>th</sup> to review maps and capture important information for inclusion into the Travel Management Plan. We expected excellent turnout with virtually every user group represented. BFC participants have been ground-truthing many of the routes in the Hassayampa Field Office project area in order to provide knowledgeable and insightful comments.

Lucky Boy uranium mining claims are located on private, BLM, and State Trust lands in the Dripping Springs area, southeast of Globe and northwest of Winkelman. The current owner, Rodinia Minerals, is conducting exploratory drilling and has not yet submitted a plan of operation.

#### **Havasu Field Office**

The proposed final Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) was released September 22, 2006 for the Havasu Field Office. The Record of Decision is expected to be released in early summer. The Department continues to coordinate closely with the Field Office in the development of subsequent Travel Management Plans and associated route designations.

#### **Kingman Field Office**

The Department participated in another round of Big Ranch "A" vegetation monitoring with BLM, the permittee, two rangeland management consultants, the Mohave Livestock Association, and a representative from Congressman Trent Franks' office. At two of the monitoring sites, nearly 80% of 200 sample plots were comprised of bare ground. No benchmark data was available onsite. All parties met again on June 19 to discuss results of vegetation monitoring. BLM is still on task to issue a decision by July 1. Also of note, the assistant field manager has retired and an acting assistant field manager has been assigned to this project.

The Department presented bighorn sheep monitoring results to the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Technical Advisory Council and participated in a field tour of five U.S. 93 locations below Hoover Dam identified for bighorn sheep crossings. ADOT engineers are developing cost estimates for wildlife crossings, including overpass structures. If designed and approved, this project would be the first overpass for wildlife constructed in Arizona. The next Council meeting is scheduled for early July.

The Department, ADOT, National Parks Service (NPS), and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) have all agreed that the interim U.S. 93 roadway just south of Hoover Dam will be closed to the public, except during bypass bridge emergencies. Closure of the road is significant for the Department as the area contains two underpasses designed for bighorn

sheep. ADOT will be initiating a process to relinquish part of the interim road to BOR and NPS.

Last month, the Department submitted an ADOT Research Council funding application to quantify expected impacts to desert tortoise from a proposed highway construction project. The planned 44-mile highway would stretch from Bullhead City south to Interstate 40, traversing pristine Mohave Desert habitat in a region identified as one of six key areas for desert tortoise. Although our research proposal is currently ranked number one in priority, another round of reviews is pending a second Department presentation to the ADOT executive panel.

#### **Safford Field Office**

The draft Aravaipa Ecosystem Management Plan is nearing completion and will soon be available for public review. The draft plan encompasses all aspects of public land management on BLM and Nature Conservancy lands throughout Aravaipa Canyon. The Department has been actively participating throughout the entire planning process.

#### **Tucson Field Office**

The Department submitted a designated road plan, identified as our preferred alternative, to the Tucson Field Office for the Middle Gila Canyons area (Game Management Unit 37B north of the Florence/Kelvin Highway). The BLM preferred alternative will be developed over the next few months. BLM has expressed the need for more data on the impacts of off-highway vehicle roads on Sonoran Desert wildlife, especially regarding density and fragmentation effects.

#### **Yuma Field Office**

The public comment period for the Yuma draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) ended on March 14, 2007. The Department provided a formal comment letter regarding the draft RMP and remains engaged at both the Field Office and State Office levels to ensure consistency in regards to wildlife and wildlife management. The Department will continue to meet with BLM to review and discuss comments on the draft's preferred alternatives for biological resources, recreation, transportation, and public access.

### **BLM NATIONAL MONUMENTS**

The Department remains involved as a Cooperating Agency in planning efforts for five national monuments and adjacent BLM landscapes. The Department and BLM State Office have finalized a draft statewide Master MOU and forwarded this document to the Solicitor's Office of both agencies for review.

#### **Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument**

The proposed final RMP/EIS was released on March 2, 2007 for the Arizona Strip planning area including the Grand Canyon-Parashant NM. The proposed final plan includes a series of unique route networks and designations.

### **Vermillion Cliffs National Monument**

The proposed final RMP/EIS was released on March 2, 2007 for the Arizona Strip planning area including the Vermillion Cliffs NM. The proposed final plan includes a series of unique route networks and designations.

### **Agua Fria National Monument**

The draft RMP/EIS public review period ended on April 5, 2006 and the proposed final plan is expected to be released in the fall of 2007. The Department will be working closely with BLM to address submitted comments pertaining to wildlife and wildlife management. In spite of Department opposition, the preferred alternative restricts recreational shooting on the national monument portion of the management area.

### **Sonoran Desert National Monument**

The BLM Phoenix Field Office is working to finalize the range of alternatives and develop a preliminary preferred alternative. The Department continues to participate in cooperative meetings and proactively develop comments throughout the planning process.

### **Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM)**

BLM released the draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) on March 2, 2007. The draft RMP/EIS generated a large public response, particularly regarding closing public lands to target shooting within the IFNM. The Department reviewed the draft RMP/EIS and sent a formal comment letter to the BLM Tucson Field Office which included a resolution signed by the Commission regarding recreational shooting. The open comment period concluded with a final public meeting held in Tucson on May 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

### **Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge**

The final Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Refuge has been released to the public. The Department is currently reviewing the final plan.

### **Kofa National Wildlife Refuge**

The Department continues to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to plan, fund, and implement actions to aid recovery of the bighorn sheep population on Kofa. The Department finalized a predator management plan for the Kofa Mountains complex in May and along with the USFWS, completed a report entitled; "*Investigative Report and Recommendations for the Kofa Bighorn Sheep Herd.*" A second young male lion was captured and fitted with a satellite/GPS collar. The previously collared lion was removed after monitoring indicated this individual had killed four bighorn sheep in less

than three months. Efforts to collar additional lions continues and monitoring activities are on-going. As part of a joint agency plan to manage Refuge waterholes, the Department completed an aerial water monitoring flight. More will be scheduled as needed and water deliveries will be arranged for those waterholes that threaten to go dry. Yaqui Tank has been redeveloped to make it more reliable and McPherson Tank will be redeveloped within a month.

## **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

### **Barry M. Goldwater Range**

Release of the final Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (INRMP/EIS) for the Range did not result in any formal public comments and a Record of Decision was subsequently signed by the Department of Defense. The stand-alone INRMP has been signed by the Department, USFWS, and Department of Defense and implementation will now commence.

### **Yuma Proving Ground**

The U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) is considering expanding up to 500,000 acres into Game Management Unit 41 through a withdrawal of BLM land. YPG is currently evaluating the possible expansion and has not developed or presented a formal proposal or application to further define the purpose, need, location, and details of the proposed expansion. The Department will be actively involved in this process and will provide the Commission with more information as it becomes available.

## **ARIZONA STATE LAND DEPARTMENT (ASLD)**

In conjunction with ASLD/Department planning for the Desert Wells off-highway vehicle (OHV) area, the Department suggested discussing closure of redundant wildcat roads negatively affecting wildlife habitat in Florence Junction on State Land within the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership (MGCP) planning area. ASLD is a founding member of the MGCP and in the past, has cooperated on road planning efforts with BLM, Forest Service, the Department, and other partners. Following a staff change in 2007, however, ASLD has declined to discuss road closures to protect habitat on State Land from illegal/under-regulated OHV use. The MGCP will be meeting in the near future to discuss this problem and potential solutions.

## **GENERAL UPDATES**

### **Coconino County**

County assistance has allowed the Department to overcome appraisal difficulties and move forward in the development of a Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetland Reserve application for Pumphouse wetlands.

### **Maricopa County**

In 1995, the Lake Pleasant Regional Park Master Plan (Master Plan) was completed. This plan designated a section of the Agua Fria River lying within Lake Pleasant Regional Park as a conservation area, allowing limited to no improvements, development, and motorized uses. Although generated with public and Department involvement, the Master Plan was never fully implemented. Agua Fria Conservation Area (AFCA) lands are currently owned by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and managed by Maricopa County Parks and Recreation (Parks) under a 50-year intergovernmental agreement. Due to recent concerns arising from illegal and unsafe target shooting, increasing and unlawful off-highway vehicle use, public safety issues, and habitat damage in the area, Parks and BOR assembled a multi-agency task force to evaluate potential short and long term uses and management of the AFCA, assess mitigation options for existing damage and to prevent future damage, and mechanisms to ensure visitor safety. Agencies actively participating in discussions include: Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department, Bureau of Reclamation, Maricopa County Sheriff's Department, Bureau of Land Management, and the Department. The Arizona State Land Department and U.S. Forest Service have also been invited to attend.

Department involvement began in March 2007 at which time preliminary plans had already been made to institute a motorized vehicle restriction. In ensuing meetings, the Department expressed concern that the AFCA closure would render the Agua Fria River inaccessible to anglers from the main lake during peak bass fishing months in late winter and spring due to the eagle closure (Dec. 15 – June 15 land and water access ban). Furthermore, access by hunters lawfully participating in waterfowl, small game, and big game hunting would be negatively impacted.

Despite these concerns, the task force has instituted a short term restriction starting July 1, 2007 prohibiting entrance by motorized vehicles. The closed gate will be 4.2 miles west of I-17 on Table Mesa Road. Non-motorized access, however, will still be allowed and individuals may enter the conservation area as pedestrians or by boat via the main or north entry stations of Lake Pleasant Regional Park. A series of public meetings and focus groups are planned to assist the multi-agency task force in determining the best long term solution. The motorized vehicle restriction will be lifted once a long term plan has been identified. Any significant amendments to the original Master Plan would require federal approval and probably trigger a NEPA evaluation, further delaying cancellation of the short term restriction. The task force is also considering reopening the area and conducting planning and management actions in stages.

The Park has a website ([http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/lake\\_pleasant/AguaFria.aspx](http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/lake_pleasant/AguaFria.aspx)) where users may take a survey or submit comments. Another task force meeting was scheduled for June 21<sup>st</sup>.

### Black Canyon

The Internal Revenue Service has approved the Black Canyon City Community Association for 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization status. As a result, work has begun to transfer title of the property from the Albins family to the Association. The

Department has been instrumental in developing and facilitating property planning and once the deed is in hand, the Association will commence the next phase to develop riparian habitat along the New River channel and adjacent irrigated fields for wildlife and recreational use. These lands contain valuable resources for future urban fishing and watchable wildlife opportunities.

### **Pima County**

In late May 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced the availability of \$68 million for the current Conservation Fund grant cycle. A habitat conservation planning assistance grant was awarded to a USFWS Region 2 project initiated in 1999. The grant consists of \$26,885 in federal funding for Department oversight with \$247,620 allocated to Pima County. These funds will enable the County to design a biological monitoring plan and develop protocols to ensure that biological monitoring required by the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan is scientifically valid and adequate for permit compliance. The Conservation Plan covers 36 species of concern, including lesser long-nosed bat, southwestern willow flycatcher, desert pupfish, Gila chub, Gila topminnow, Chiricahua leopard frog, Huachuca water umbel, and Pima pineapple cactus. The Department is working with the County to draft an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for administration of this grant and will present the final IGA for Commission approval in August 2007. This is the 7th grant the USFWS has awarded to the Department since 2003 for habitat conservation planning efforts in Region V, totaling over \$1.6 million in federal funding for projects affecting more than 50 species and almost a million acres.

### **Pinal County**

Pinal County's Open Space and Trails plan has been submitted as an amendment to the County Comprehensive Plan. The County will be accepting feedback until July 30<sup>th</sup>. The Department intends to reiterate our support for inclusion of open space and trails planning in the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan while suggesting strategies to improve these components for wildlife habitats and wildlife-based recreation.

### **City of Tucson**

The Department continues to partner with the City of Tucson on a second Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) habitat conservation planning assistance grant. Accepted in fall 2006, the Department is working to obligate funding for a third grant, or Segment 3, to provide \$31,579 in federal funding for Department oversight of the habitat conservation planning process with an additional \$221,250 to be allocated to the City of Tucson. Segment 3 will result in the completion of a habitat conservation plan and draft environmental impact statement for the Avra Valley planning area, and a revised draft of the habitat conservation plan for the Greater Southlands/Santa Cruz River planning area. The Department is coordinating with the City of Tucson to prepare an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for administration of the Segment 3 grant. This IGA will be presented to the Commission for approval in August or September 2007.

The Tucson Ecological Services Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has forwarded a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) to the USFWS Region 2 Office and USFWS Office of the Solicitor for review by staff. The Department is also scrutinizing a copy of these documents. The HCP and EA should be released for public review in early fall 2007.

#### **Town of Marana**

The Department continues to participate on technical and stakeholder workgroups for the Town of Marana's Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) under a Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund habitat conservation planning assistance grant. There will be three public scoping meetings to discuss the HCP environmental impact statement. Meetings will be held from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at the Town of Marana Operations Center on July 9<sup>th</sup>, and the Marana Municipal Center on July 11<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. A finalized HCP should be available June 2009.

#### **Wind Energy**

On May 31<sup>st</sup>, the Department met with Foresight Wind Energy, West, Inc., and private landowners to discuss an avian and bat study plan for the Grapevine Wind Projects, a new alternative energy venture southeast of Flagstaff. This location is south of the Sunshine Wind Energy project for which the Department has provided general, overall support. Due to potential use of the area by migrating birds and bats, Department comments on the Grapevine study plan included increasing the number of survey locations and adoption of an adaptive management approach employing more than one survey per year.

#### **Wood Supply Working Group**

The Department is a participating member of a working group formed by Northern Arizona University to estimate the current and future supply of wood available to industry.

#### **Northern Arizona Shooting Range**

The Department has awarded the contract to conduct a self-contained restricted appraisal on Commission-owned non-federal lands proposed to be exchanged for Forest land at the Willard Springs site, a potential location for the Northern Arizona Shooting Facility (NASF). The completed restricted appraisal will be delivered no later than September 30, 2007.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Department sent a letter to Nora Rasure, Forest Supervisor for the Coconino National Forest (CNF) informally requesting the Forest's position on the potential of issuing a Special Use Permit (SUP) to the Commission for the construction and operation of a regional shooting facility in northern Arizona. The letter was also copied to U.S. Forest Service Chief, Gail Kimbell in Washington DC. A 40-page response was received from CNF on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Despite liability concerns, the Forest continues to support a land exchange with the Department.

An executive summary letter was prepared for the Arizona Congressional Delegation delineating the chronology of events surrounding the exhausted Bellemont proposed land exchange with the CNF. The letter emphasized the Department's continued cooperation with the Forest to identify a suitable site for NASF construction while meeting the Department's commitment to provide significant recreational alternatives for area residents.

### **Cibola Valley Conservation Area**

The Department and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP) have been negotiating details of a land and water transfer from Mohave County Water Authority (MCWA) to the Commission. The parcels in question are located along the Lower Colorado River in the Cibola Valley Conservation Area, La Paz County, Arizona.

At the request of MCWA and BOR, the Conservation Fund (TCF) will prepare all due diligence documents necessary to complete the transaction. Additionally, TCF will draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the land and water transfer process. All subject documents and final transactions are contingent on Attorney General review and approval.