

PRONGHORN

2nd Quarter 2021
Volume 27 Number 2



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AAF Mission Statement:

The Arizona Antelope Foundation is an organization dedicated to the welfare of pronghorn antelope. The Foundation's Mission is to actively seek to increase pronghorn populations in Arizona through habitat improvements, habitat acquisition, the translocation of animals to historic range, and public comment on activities affecting pronghorn and their habitat.



ON OUR COVER

MANPOWER AND METAL...TOP PHOTO SHOWS UNIT 18 AAF VOLUNTEERS IMPROVING THE PRONGHORNS' FREEDOM TO ROAM, WHILE THE NEW AES WATER TRAILERS, SHOWN BOTTOM PHOTO, PROVIDE ESSENTIAL WATER TO HELP KEEP THEM ALIVE THROUGH THE DROUGHT.

Pronghorn is a quarterly newsletter for the members of AAF. Letters, comments, news items, articles, pictures and stories are all welcome and will be considered for publication. Address all such items to: Lenée Landis, Pronghorn Editor, PO Box 1191, Mesa AZ 85211 or by email at info@azantelope.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi everyone welcome to Summer 2021 and drought in Arizona and other parts of the West. As I write this the monsoons opened up last week with enough rain up North to open a couple of the Forests. Now if we can just spread a little more rain to the Central and South in the State we can get out of the extreme fire danger.

As you will read in a couple of our articles we got back to doing projects this year. The first one was in unit 18A in concert with the Region 3 Landscape project. We will have a total of 5 years of activity in the unit when the project is complete.

Our second project was North of Big Lake in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. Between the two projects we were able to remove about 4.5 miles of sheep fence and run smooth wire on the bottom of another 4 to 5 miles.

We are currently in conversation with Region 4 on how we will use our funds raised from the Antelope hunt raffle. With the match, we have \$30,000.00 to use for Sonoran Antelope which will go towards water security in their historical habitat. With a good Monsoon we can hopefully complete the transplant in the Vekol Valley area this year.

As we move forward for the rest of the year we should be back in 18A one more time September 24-26.

You will find in the issue an article on some water trailers we have purchased for Game and Fish. One



of these was a combined purchase effort with the Elk and Deer groups and the other two were by AAF only. These should go a long way to enhance water hauling by Game and Fish.



We hope you enjoy the rest of your summer and have a good fall. If you have a hunt planned, enjoy as well and Good Luck.

Ken

*"LIBERTAS AD VAGOR"....
FREEDOM TO ROAM*

*Orientation at Big Lake
Photo courtesy Betty Dickens*

BIG LAKE GRASSLANDS FENCE MODIFICATION PROJECT #4 - JUNE 5, 2021

BY DAVE CAGLE, AAF SECRETARY

Finally, the restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic were downgraded to the extent that a general AAF membership field project could finally take place. What better place to conduct our inaugural post-Covid pronghorn habitat improvement activity but the scenic White Mountains of eastern Arizona! The Apache National Forest was under Stage 1 Restrictions during the project, which meant no open campfires. As I write this article, the forest is under Stage 3 Restrictions which equates to NO National Forest entry. Given this unprecedented dry winter and spring we were fortunate to get onto the forest and conduct our work in early June.

This fourth fence project was completed by 40 eager volunteers and was conveniently located immediately west of the Rudd Knoll campsite near Big Lake in Game Management Unit 1. We modified 2.75 miles of existing four and five strand livestock fence in two separate work parties. As usual, we removed the bottom strand(s) and replaced it with a smooth bottom strand set at 18 inches above the ground. Most of the pre-project fence had a bottom barbed wire nearer to nine inches above the ground.

This project was an integral part of what is known as the **Big Lake Pronghorn Initiative** lead by the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Pinetop Region in partnership with the AAF. This project began in the summer of 2013, with the collaring of eight doe pronghorn on the 9,000-foot elevation grasslands surrounding the Big Lake summer range. Two years of remote monitoring via satellite locations of these does identified the seasonal migration corridors, key summer and winter ranges. These pronghorn annually travel from the 9,000 foot elevation summer range down to the winter range located to the north and at an elevation of approximately 7,000 feet. Three prior AAF volunteer projects within the confirmed migration corridor and summer ranges removed or modified approximately nine miles of old livestock fences, which enhanced pronghorn movements across this important habitat.

This was the 4th of five planned annual prioritized volunteer summer fence modification projects focused to remove obstacles in the migration corridor and modify key fences on the Big Lake plains for summering pronghorn. All activities and coordination were supervised by District Wildlife Manager Jason Capps.

Meals fit for a king and/or queen were provided on Friday and Saturday nights and Saturday and Sunday mornings by Bill and Mary Keebler. Even though Mary had a prior commitment and could not make it out to camp she expertly prepared meals with the trimmings and even wrote a six page step by step instruction manual for Bill and others to follow. Apparently, Bill and his helpers read Mary's detailed instructions, as the results were impressive with great tasting food provided to the hungry volunteers from start to finish. Joe Bill Pickrell secured top quality New York strips, which topped off a great feast!

Project photos on page 5 were taken by Betty Dickens, thanks Betty!

Project highlights: 1) increasing the mobility of pronghorn by modifying almost three miles of fence; 2) observing numerous single doe pronghorn and cow elk scattered across the grasslands either awaiting or tending to newborns; and 3) especially getting the opportunity to finally fellowship with the great members of AAF who all give back to the resource to make things better for Arizona's wildlife.

Thanks as well go out to several groups of folks and the many individuals that contributed to the success of this project;

- Representing the AAF Board: Ken Meadors, Glen Dickens, Brian George, Joe Bill Pickrell, Dave Laird, Bill Keebler, Connie Taylor, Al Sue, Gary Boyer, Robert Velasco, Kara Jensen, Jamie Watkins, and Dave Cagle.
- Representing the AGFD: Dave Dorum, James (JD) Eddy, and Jason Capps
- Other AAF members and volunteers: John Millican, Cheryl Cagle, Ken and Kathy Cook, Betty Dickens, Johnny Johnson, Ed Marcarelli, Kurt Bahti, Glenn Bevin, Jim Boyd, Joelle Buffa, Jim and Cindy Dickert, Mike Foranzo, Patrick Frawley, Ross McCollum, Richard Meyer, John O'Brien, Jeffrey and Cathy Potter, Richard Roller, Marsha Sue, Lance Bemis, Roger Joos, Clyde Morris, and Marsha Halcrow.

Thanks everyone for your efforts! Please mark your calendar for June 4, 2022 for the next planned Big Lake Pronghorn Initiative fence improvement project.

Photos by Betty Dickens



BUILDING LANDSCAPE LEVEL PRONGHORN CONNECTIVITY/PERMEABILITY ON THE SONOITA PLAINS

GLEN DICKENS VP/AAF

We have exciting news to report regarding a permanent linkage for the pronghorn population on the 100,000 acre Sonoita Plains landscape. But first lets review common definitions that give this good news perspective.

Connectivity Permeability

Pronghorn habitat and grasslands within a common herd zone are considered connected and permeable if the dividing roadway right-of-way or the interior livestock pasture fences meet the prescribed pronghorn friendly fence standard.

Crossing Zone

A known and identified path or area that resident pronghorn prefer to use to cross paved or maintained roadways.

Fawning Zone

A preferred grassland use area occupied by pronghorn does during peak fawning/birthing season (April 15-June 30) within 1-mile of a water point.

Fence Modification

The act of organized volunteers, contractors, or landowners modifying or removing and rebuilding a 5-strand fence to a wildlife standard 4-strand fence with the smooth bottom wire located at 16", 18", or 20" from the ground.

Fence Standard

The spacing and type of wire that makes a highway right-of-way or grazing pasture fence wildlife friendly. For pronghorn, the bottom wire should be smooth wire set at a minimum of 16" from the ground, but preferably 18"-20".

Herd Zone

A geographically connected grassland habitat in which resident individual pronghorn can seasonally interact, reproduce, and recognized as part of a common gene pool.

Conservation Easement

A power invested in a qualified private land conservation organization or government to constrain, as to a specified land area, the exercise of rights otherwise held by a landowner so as to achieve certain conservation purposes.

In 2010 at the beginning of our National Fish and Wildlife grant entitled “Southeastern Arizona Grasslands Pronghorn Initiative” the Sonoita Plains had 3-separate sub-populations of pronghorn. Those north of state highway 82 east and west of highway 83, those south of highway 82 and those isolated south of Elgin on the Babacomri Ranch, Hart and West pastures. These three subpopulations were considered three independent genetically isolated herds.

Fast forward to 2019 and 55 miles of fence modifications and replacement later (note map) and the 250 resident pronghorn occupying the 100,000 acres are now in fact a single interacting herd. One of the final long-term assurances we needed include two key permanent landowner land conservation easements. The Rose Tree Ranch being one of those ranch properties fully described by Arizona Land and Water Trust Land and Protection Stewardship Manager Cameron Becker in the following article entitled “Arizona Land and Water Trust-Rose Tree Ranch Land Conservation Easement.” As you can see from this map this parcel was key in connecting the pronghorn herds both north and south of the property. Stay tuned for another future article update with a similar theme from the same landscape.

Last point, none of this permanent landscape level progress for the Sonoita Plains pronghorn population would have been accomplished without the full and unwavering support of the following ranches and individuals.

We thank each of them for their commitment to wildlife conservation on their respective land holdings.

- ◆ *Rose Tree Ranch-Al Wilcox, Bill & Linda Brake*
- ◆ *Babacomari Ranch-Ben Brophy, Ellen & Joe Lynn*
- ◆ *Vera Earl Ranch-Ian Tomlinson*
- ◆ *Smith Ranch-Rebecca Smith*
- ◆ *Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch/Audubon Arizona-Linda Kennedy*
- ◆ *Jelks Ranch-Corky Quiroga*
- ◆ *Jolly Pasture-Janet Thompson*



ARIZONA LAND AND WATER TRUST-ROSE TREE RANCH LAND CONSERVATION EASEMENT

**BY: CAMERON BECKER, LAND PROTECTION & STEWARDSHIP MANAGER,
ARIZONA LAND & WATER TRUST, TUCSON ARIZONA**

In March of 2021, the Arizona Land and Water Trust (Trust) partnered with the owners of the Rose Tree Ranch to permanently protect 1,150 acres of their private working lands near Elgin, Arizona. This landmark conservation transaction was the culmination of multiple years of work and highlights, the Ranch owner's perseverance, and long-term commitment to wildlife conservation in the region and demonstrates why Arizona Land and Water Trust has been a trusted partner to ranchers and farmers of Southern Arizona for over 40 years.

Located on the western slope of the Mustang Mountains in Santa Cruz County, the Rose Tree Ranch was originally part of a Spanish Land Grant in the early 1600's. Consisting of 10,000+ acres, the Ranch includes private lands as well as State and Federal grazing leases. The original homestead rock-house, built in the mid-1930's, is still in use and often serves as a campsite for Arizona Antelope Foundation volunteer projects/pronghorn surveys in the area. For the majority of the 20th century the properties primary use was for cattle and sheep grazing and also operated as the 'Whorton Guest Ranch' for a number of years prior to the 1960's. The current owners purchased the property in 2000 and have maintained it as a cow calf operation managed under a prescribed rest-rotation grazing system for the past twenty years. The newly implemented voluntary conservation easement limits new development on the Ranch's private property while allowing the operation to maintain its historic agricultural, wildlife habitat and open space uses.

The Ranch lands are characterized by its upland vegetation with rolling mesquite savanna grasslands crossed by several drainages and punctuated with large stands of soap tree yucca and agave which are important for bats, moths, and other pollinators. Like much of southeastern Arizona introduced Lehman's lovegrass is common in the area but the Ranch retains impressive stands of native grasses such as: giant sacaton, green sprangletop, arizona cottontop, cane beardgrass, bristlegrass, curly mesquite, tobosa, as well as gramma grasses including blue grama, hairy grama, black grama and sideoats grama. Yucca, agave and beargrass are common with occasional prickly pear, rainbow cactus and ocotillo. The property also contains numerous scattered alligator juniper and other tree species such as hackberry, emory oak, Arizona white oak and Arizona walnut in its drainages.

The Rose Tree Ranch is one of the few ranches in the Sonoita Valley that remains unfragmented and its protection connects the Rain Valley, Mustang and Babacomari ranches - all properties already protected by their landowners in partnership with the Trust, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program. These protected working lands provide an integral link in wildlife movement corridors between the Whetstone, Mustang, Huachuca, and Santa Rita mountain ranges. Numerous species of wildlife inhabit or utilize the rangelands and water sources on the ranch and surrounding area. The AZGFD Environmental Online Review Tool assessed Special Status Species documented and predicted within five miles of the project vicinity and indicated five US Fish and Wildlife Service designated listed endangered species, two listed threatened species as well as eighteen species of concern. Notable species in this assessment include: American Pronghorn, Baird's Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (listed threatened), Chiricahua Leopard Frog (listed threatened) and the recently de-listed Lesser Long-nosed Bat (US Fish and Wildlife Service).

The Rose Tree Ranch's working landscape is part of a large network of native grassland pastures in the Sonoita-Elgin area which have supported livestock grazing since the turn of the century. The Ranch's agricultural operation includes portions of the adjacent 45,000-acre Las Cienegas National Conservation Area

(NCA) which was designated in December of 2000. The NCA and neighboring areas were also used as sets of classic western films such as *Red River*, *Duel in the Sun*, *Hombre*, *Winchester 73*, and *The Big Country*.

In addition to operating a portion of the Bureau of Land Management's Las Cienegas NCA, the Ranch has partnered with multiple agencies and non-profits to conduct a wide variety of conservation and wildlife habitat improvement projects. A number of these organizations include the Arizona Antelope Foundation, Arizona Mule Deer and Arizona Deer Associations as well as the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), NRCS, and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. Over the last twenty years, the Ranch has worked diligently as a land steward to protect and improve the property's conservation values for present and future operations. Key examples of these projects include:

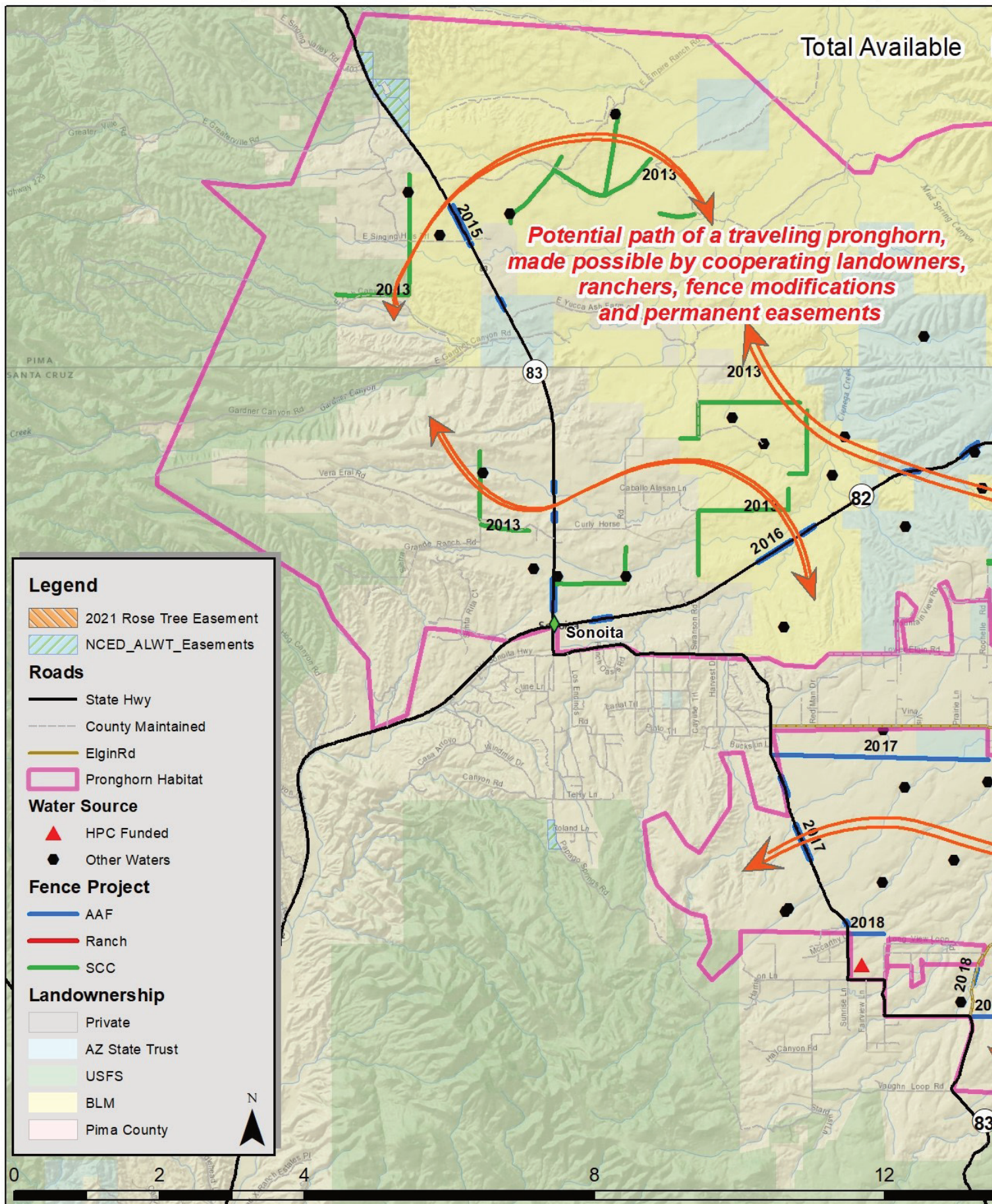
- Installation of 11.5 miles of water pipeline both above ground and below ground for cattle distribution and wildlife habitat improvement;
- Addition of 19 new cattle/wildlife water drinkers fed by the above pipelines that provide year-round water, left on for wildlife when cattle are not present;
- Installation of 10.5 miles of wildlife-friendly fence, dividing the original 12 pastures into 23 pastures for improved cattle management and forage utilization;
- Installation of 10 solar sites to transfer water, replace windmills/public power; and
- Completion of 300-acres of brush control to re-establish grasslands with plans to treat an additional 1,000 acres.

Conservation of the Rose Tree Ranch sustains a rich historical and cultural legacy, preserves habitat for wildlife, and provides permanence to the habitat conservation and improvement work completed both by the landowners and their partners, including the Arizona Antelope Foundation. "The Trust was pleased to have the opportunity to cooperate with the owners of Rose Tree Ranch to permanently protect this property, a landscape which plays an integral role in the local agricultural and wildlife community and the functioning watershed," states Liz Petterson, Arizona Land and Water Trust's Executive Director.



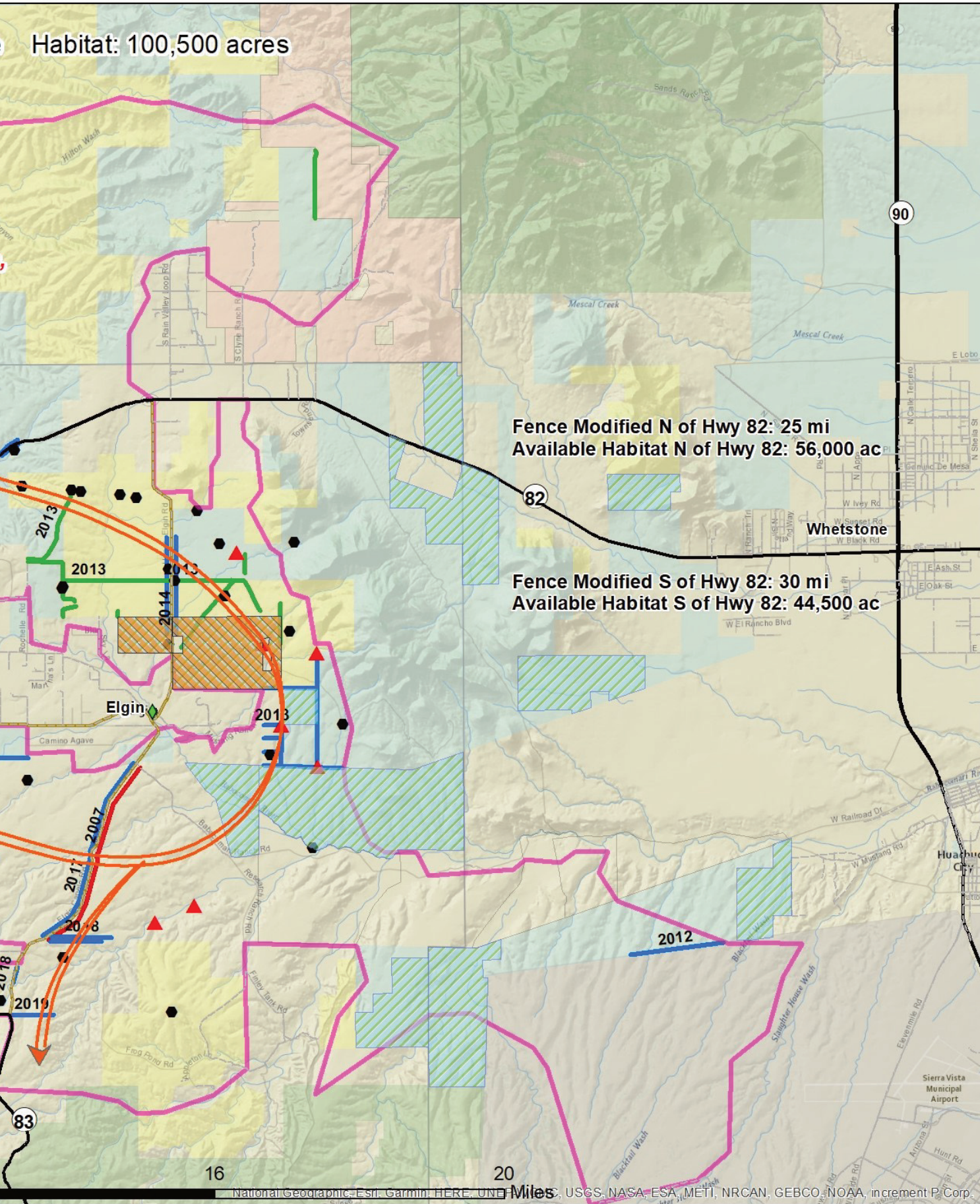
At Rose Tree Ranch, celebrating AAF's successful landmark of 100,000 acres of connectivity and permeability are Glen Dickens, AAF Vice President; Betty Dickens, resident Photographer; and John Millican, AAF SE AZ Field Manager.

Building Connectivity On the Sonoita Plains Through Fence Modification, Improved



Water Distribution, Landowner/manager Cooperation and Permanent Easements

Habitat: 100,500 acres



Fence Modified N of Hwy 82: 25 mi
Available Habitat N of Hwy 82: 56,000 ac

Fence Modified S of Hwy 82: 30 mi
Available Habitat S of Hwy 82: 44,500 ac

National Geographic, Esri, Garmin, HERE, UNEP, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment P, Corp.

AAF WORK PROJECT CROSS MOUNTAIN RANCH APRIL 9-11TH

BY GARY BOYER, AAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

After a long year of isolation, board meetings on Zoom, no work projects, only seeing masked faces everywhere AAF (Arizona Antelope Foundation) finally got together, in person, for a work project. To this writer it was long overdue and much anticipated. This was an invite only project as we were still dealing with Covid restrictions, attendance was limited to board members and our regular, dedicated core group of volunteers, following COVID guidelines. Everyone attending was so happy and excited to finally get out pitch tents, park RV's and sit around the campfire and just shoot the breeze and of course tell tall tales.

AAF's first work project in since September 2019 occurred on April 9th through 11th, 2021. The Cross Mountain Ranch project in AZGFD (Arizona Game and Fish Department) Region 3, GMU (game management unit) 18A was originally slated to begin the spring of 2020 with the second project in the fall. We all know what happened to 2020 and are still trying to forget it. Our liaisons from AZGFD are Erin Butler, Region 3 Terrestrial Wildlife Program Manager and Cody Johnson, Wildlife Manager Sector Supervisor. We are working directly with Cross Mountain Ranch LLC managers Eric Swanson and Cliff Echeverria. Cross Mountain Ranch consists of 26 sections of checker boarded land, some leased and some deeded. The family has owned it for several generations. The terrain ranges from rolling, juniper/pinon hills to wide open grassland. In the past the land was used for sheep grazing and is now being used for cattle. Elk, Mule deer and Pronghorn are found throughout the ranch.

The project located north of Interstate 40 between Kingman and Seligman Arizona is slated to run five years consisting of two projects a year. AAF and AZGF will be removing approximately 20 miles of woven wire sheep fence, with 7 miles already removed and replaced with 4 miles of standard wildlife friendly fence. According to Erin Butler, "There are hundreds of miles of livestock fence in 18A, this summer interns will be mapping those portions that are within the Pronghorn movement corridor based on our (AZGFD) collar data. There are currently 12 miles of fence identified for modification, which could increase".

This will effectively open up thousands of acres of grassland Pronghorn habitat. Opening up these travel corridors help the Pronghorn in many ways by increasing connectivity and permeability to water sources, forage, fawning areas and herd intermingling. The latter being very important for genetic diversity. Hundreds of years of boundary and pasture fences have locked herds into smaller and smaller habitat, decreasing the gene pool which can cause numerous health issues with the Pronghorn. Pronghorn were in North America when the first humans entered its native habitat 20,000 to 15,000 years ago. Their defenses are incredible eyesight and speed. Nature developed their bone and muscle structures for running, not jumping. Generally, they prefer to not try to jump fences but will go under them. Modifying fences by raising the bottom wire 16"-18" and replacing it with smooth wire enables the critters to duck under fencing barely breaking stride. It is marvelous to see.



Also being planned are improvements at two existing wells. These pumps were put in place in the 1950s and still function being converted to propane. Existing wells storage tanks and sheep troughs will be converted for wildlife and cattle uses.

According to Wade Zarlingo, Cross Mountain Ranch has also cleaned 5 dirt tanks and are considering adding pipeline to improve water distribution for wildlife. A note about lactating does, during the fawning season, tending does must have a water source within one mile of her fawn. She visits her fawn(s) twice a day for feeding and cleaning, lasting only 5 minutes. The Neonates spend the first few weeks of life hiding in the open grasses.

Other habitat improvements include Juniper removal by AZGFD contractors. According to Erin Butler, AZGFD, “There are just over 500,000 acres in GMU 18A, of that we’ve identified just over 137,000 acres we’d like to treat. Based on a 5-year time frame and average costs, we believe we will be able to treat 50,000 acres; as this fiscal year wraps up, we’ll be at 15,000 acres treated.”

Thanks to our early bird gang that arrived Friday, that crew took down and rolled up almost 1 mile of fence. Saturday morning after our continental breakfast (“Continental breakfast” doesn’t really do the feast justice, coffee, juices, bagels, fruit, hot cereal, boiled eggs, etc.) volunteers organized into three groups. A small team set out to complete Friday’s work. The other two teams set out on a 1 ½ mile section working in two directions, one south the other north. This being our first experience with sheep fence, crews quickly got the hang of it and before noon we had completed our objective of 1 ½ miles. Eager to do more crews proceeded to keep moving west and added an additional mile to our total, completing a total of over 3 ½ miles for the weekend.



Our volunteers have really developed into a finely tuned fence team. Whether modifying fences by removing the bottom strands of barbed wire and replacing it with a smooth wire 18 inches above grade or removing and rolling sheep fence, teams easily opened up almost 4 miles on this project for habitat connectivity and wildlife enhancement. The elimination of all fencing and posts opened up a wide swath of open grassland. Thanks to all who contributed their time and talents.

It is said a crew runs on their stomachs and it was great to have our camp cooks, Bill and Mary Keebler, ably assisted by Connie Leadabrand, providing us with two great dinners and two breakfasts. Friday night we had pulled pork, coleslaw and Bill’s special barbecue sauce. Saturday night appetizers were quesadillas, Bill’s trips, Mary’s scalloped potatoes, a great green salad, and of course Mary’s secret beans. The rancher, Cliff Echeverria and a neighboring rancher joined us for Saturday night dinner. Those who help break camp Sunday morning are treated to Mary’s breakfast burritos, definitely worth sticking around for. By 9:30 AM Sunday everything was cleaned up and packed away for the next project on June 4-6 at Big Lake, Arizona in the cool, alpine White Mountains at 9,000 feet.

A special thanks goes out to our buddy, Troy Christensen AZGF, who came out Monday morning to roll up the barbed wire we took down. Our Arctic Cat with our wire roller hadn’t been out since our last project in September 2019. A dead battery and fuel issues prevented us from using it for this project. The lesson learned here is to drain the gas tank, and run the carb dry before storing. Normally, not necessary due to frequent use, but let’s face it there was nothing normal about 2020. Thanks goes out to our board member, Robert Velasco, who recently went through the Arctic Cat, removing, draining and cleaning the fuel tank, and replacing fuel lines. He rebuilt the carburetor and got it back running, ready for the next project.

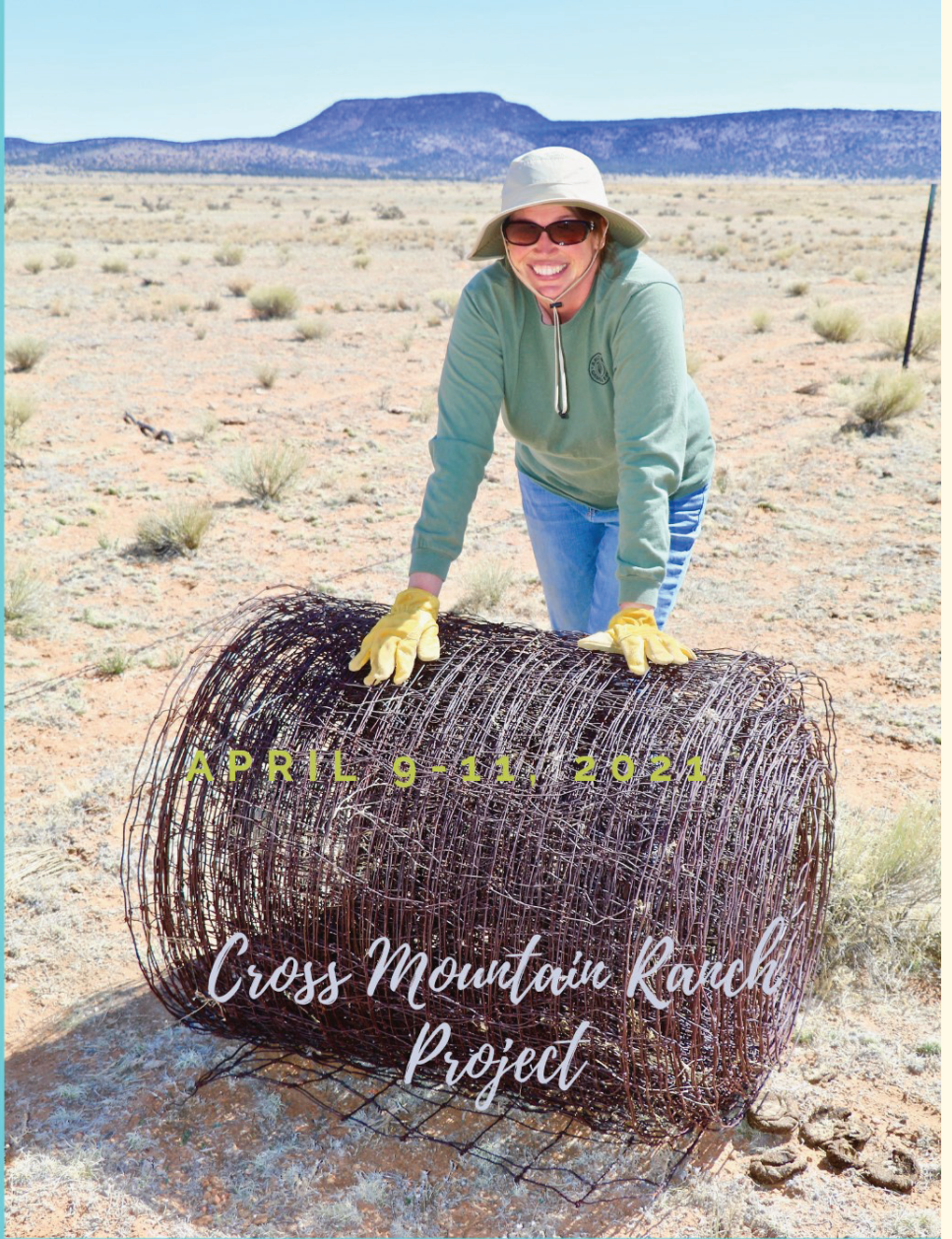
Thanks to all of our loyal volunteers without whom these projects would not be possible. AAF thanks each and every one, and the pronghorn are very grateful also.

- Representing AZGFD; Erin Butler, Cody Johnston.

- AAF past and present Board members; Terry Schupp, Al Sue, Robert Velasco, Joe Bill Pickrell, Jamie Watkins, Kara Jensen, Bill and Mary Keebler, Dave Laird, Ken Meadors, Gary Boyer, Dave Cagle, Dave Cruce, Glen Dickens

- Volunteers: Darrel Wood, Marsha Halcrow, Deanna Watkins, Sadie Lee Johnson, Johnny Johnson, Jay and Connie Leadabrand, Earl Polvent, Dale Maas, Ken and Kathy Cook, Roger Joos, Mike Ebright, David Breeden, Betty Dickens.

*Additional project photos on page 14
Photos courtesy Betty Dickens*



APRIL 9-11, 2021

*Cross Mountain Ranch
Project*



Hunter Success—by Jordan Reid

A 2020 AAF Hunter Clinic attendee provides inspiration for this year's attendees

With 23 bonus points I decided to ignore logic & put in to chase the big boys in a great unit w/ my bow. I knew the odds, I knew I was crazy, but the challenge of spot & stalking these amazing animals in a trophy unit appealed to me. Then in typical 2020 fashion, I ruptured my bicep tendon on a scouting trip. With surgery planned 2 weeks before the hunt, everything was put on hold. I'd already used point guard for back surgery, and I was not going to miss the opportunity to fill my tag.

Everything started to turn around when @azgfd granted me a crossbow permit. The good luck continued with help from my long time friend @bobbyvargas and the great people @psearchery. They helped set me up with an absolute tack driver, The Warhammer Crossbow. Everything's good so far... then 2020 said "hold my beer" and things went south again.

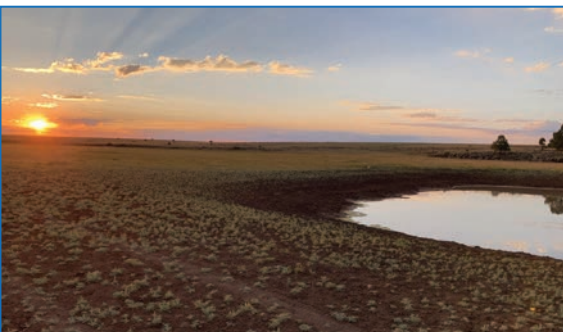
Two days before the hunt, on the lava rocked, rough roads of 5B, I aggravated a pulled/strained oblique muscle that sidelined me for the first week of the hunt. This too was the same week my friends had taken off work to literally "give me a hand". Now with one week left, one armed, and by myself, I gave it another shot, what else could go wrong? My hinged arm brace broke. To avoid re-tearing my recently, surgically repaired tendon I thought it best to head home to get a new brace.

With 3 days left in the hunt, I continued working towards my goal of harvesting an Arizona Pronghorn. 13 hour days in a sauna-like blind were uneventful and a morning of spot & stalk in my condition was laughable.

The final day, I decided to give a waterhole I had been eyeing on OnX maps a shot. I got up a 1/2 hour earlier that day to trek to this hidden honey hole. After never being closer than 120 yds of a buck on this hunt, I had nothing to lose. As I approached the tank, a small buck and two does were leaving. This gave me some hope. I tucked myself up under a large juniper tree & brushed myself in



for the day.



Within two hours my dreams were becoming reality when a high 70's buck appeared. He quickly realized something was up, causing me to ignore the advice I always give my son... I rushed the shot. The bolt slammed into the red dirt of the dyke and he was gone. Within 20 minutes the wise buck returned to a spot where I couldn't get a shot, and the last light of the last day was almost gone. Things turned around quickly however, and after letting a young buck walk, a respectable buck approached the water. Never being the guy to let a good thing go, I took the first shot he gave me

at 80 yards. Practicing that shot over and over, and knowing that at 400 FPS the PSE Warhammer would live up to it's name, I took the shot. To my relief, this warrior of a buck, with a broken prong expired in 30 seconds. I'm not saying I teared up, but words were hard to come by when I called my wife, the woman that held the fort down through this drama. I couldn't be happier with this buck. I'm happy I never let the obstacles I encountered stand in my way.

Special thanks to the Arizona Antelope Foundation's Hunter Clinic, the information covered in the archery session helped especially!



SONORAN PRONGHORN UPDATE



FIGURES AND PHOTOS BY JILL BRIGHT, AZ GAME & FISH
APRIL- MAY- JUNE 2021

Captive Breeding: Cabeza Pen

There was no rain at the pen since March until late June, and there have been several weeks of unseasonably hot temperatures in May and June. One 13-year old doe (Tan in north) died during fawning along with her fawn on May 27. During a week of excessive heat in mid-June at least 4 fawns died in the pen; there was no predation and cause was likely heat stress. Numerous wild pronghorn have returned to the pen vicinity where there is food and water available. The dry conditions on Cabeza continue, however there was 0.3 inches of rain documented at the pen on June 23.

Pen biologists spent the majority of their time taking care of the pen, with alfalfa feeding taking up a large part of their time since the pen is so dry. They also spent time feeding and maintaining waters at various recovery sites in Child’s Valley, on the Air Force range, and in the Saucedo subunit. They also spent time investigating numerous mortalities in the Saucedo subunit and Child’s Valley and writing mortality reports.

NORTH HALF		SOUTH HALF	
Adult Females	10	Adult Females	11
Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2020)	8	Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2020)	9
Adult Males	3	Adult Males	6
Yearling Males (<i>b</i> 2020)	7	Yearling Males (<i>b</i> 2020)	8
Fawns (<i>b</i> 2021)	12	Fawns (<i>b</i> 2021, 3M, 9F)	12
TOTAL	40	TOTAL	46
Total Pen	86		

Kofa Pen

Kofa pen has also had no rain in April, May or June, and unfortunately did not get any in late June when Ajo did. There is one doe we believe gave birth very late in June, but we have been unable to see her with any fawns; we expect with the excessive heat in late June, her fawn(s) would have a difficult time, but we have not found any dead fawns either. We have been unable to fill our vacant pen technician position, so our remaining technician has been very busy with keeping up with feeding, maintaining the waters in the pen, and in the King Valley, and routine maintenance at the pen. USFWS Kofa personnel have been very helpful in assisting at the pen, and in hauling water to various pronghorn waters in King Valley. Numerous wild pronghorn have returned to the pen area where we provide forage and water outside the pen.

Adult Females	11
Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2020)	8
Adult Males	5
Yearling Males (<i>b</i> 2020)	7
Fawns (<i>b</i> 2021, 4M, 7F)	12
TOTAL	43

Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR Herd: There have been 3 mortalities in this herd. Two bucks were killed by mountain lions in Child’s Valley, and one doe was heard on mortality in the Mohawk Valley. One buck, released on ORPI in January has moved onto the Tohono O’odham Reservation east of ORPI. Range conditions are poor throughout most of the range, although some areas may have received rain in the last couple of weeks.

Wild Pronghorn Kofa Herd: The Kofa range is in fair to poor condition. There have been 7 mortalities in this herd, all in the Palomas Plains area. Two bucks and a doe were killed by coyotes, with another buck most likely coyote predation. One buck drowned in the Wellton-Mohawk canal. Two does died of unknown causes, but were not predated. Both were by themselves; one near Hyder, and the other even further east near the Gila Bend Mountains. A doe was pulled alive from the Wellton-Mohawk canal the same day the buck was found drowned. Of the 14 pronghorn released on the Palomas Plains in January 2021, only 6 remain alive, and 3 of those have moved south onto Kofa or YPG. At least 77 pronghorn have been observed in or near the alfalfa pivots east of YPG.

Wild Pronghorn Saucedá Herd: The Saucedá sub-unit is also in poor habitat condition, although some areas have received rain the last weeks of June. There were 13 mortalities in this herd. Two bucks and a doe were killed by mountain lions; and additional 3 males were likely killed by lions. Five does died of unknown causes; there was not enough found to determine anything. Two bucks drowned in the Palomas canal. This has been a bad year for the Saucedá sub-unit. Of the 21 animals released in December 2020, only 5 remain alive.

Water Projects: Water was hauled by helicopter to the Agua Dulce pronghorn drinker on Cabeza. Water has been hauled by water buffalo to numerous pronghorn waters throughout pronghorn range during this on-going drought.

Forage Enhancements: Pronghorn use is high at all our forage enhancements during this drought. Personnel have been busy keeping alfalfa supplied and maintaining the waters at all these sites.

Written June 29, 2021

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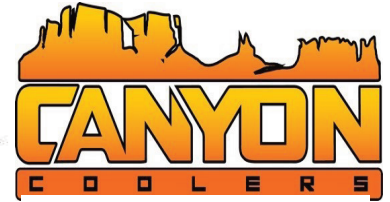
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WILDLIFE WATERS UPDATE

Glen Dickens, AAF/VP

Sonoran Pronghorn:

In April we put online a fully guided New Mexico antelope hunt for \$100 per chance with just 150 tickets sold. We offered to match the entire amount collected or \$15,000 for a total of \$30,000 slated exclusively for Endangered Sonoran Pronghorn water projects. The hunt sold out within a week and in May we began dialog with both the Arizona Game and Fish Yuma Regional office and the Phoenix District of the Bureau of Land Management. Both of these offices wildlife biologists are collaborating to discuss the expenditure of the funds likely to benefit at least two separate Sonoran Pronghorn water sources. Stay tuned for a follow-up article speaking to the water improvements funded.

Arizona Game and Fish Department Pinetop Region:

At the January 9, 2021 Arizona Habitat Partnership Committee (HPC) sponsored by the AGFD, the Pinetop Region of the AGFD mentioned that their three aging 500 gallon water hauling trailers were in a constant state of repair. In a follow-up conversation with Pinetop Field Supervisor Bob Birkland and a subsequent call to Steve Clark, Executive Director of the Arizona Elk Society (AES), we discovered that for \$40,000,000 all three trailers could be replaced by new 1,000 gallon units. Two trailers utilizing your AAF raffle funds have paid in full for two of the trailers, please note the photos. The third was a cost share between the AAF (\$2K), AES (\$2K) and Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife (\$6K). As this goes to press Dykstra Machinery in Casa Grande has finished two



and is working on the third of the trailers with vastly improved suspension systems. The same improved suspension systems are scheduled to be added to the older fleet of 500 gallon trailers to extend their half-life through this unprecedented ongoing drought period.

These are just two concrete examples of your AAF membership dues and donated raffle dollars directly benefiting our Arizona Pronghorn herds. Each time you purchase an online opportunity in one of our multiple prize raffles you



are providing the very funds that make these donations a reality.

THANK YOU!

Mac Trailers customized by Dykstra Machinery, Casa Grande. 1000 Gallons.

