



PRONGHORN

2nd Quarter 2022
Volume 28 Number 2



Amber
Amber A. Munig

Arizona Antelope Foundation
Amber Munig
Upon your pending 30-year retirement



Please accept our sincere appreciation for your personal & professional support for our National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant "Southeastern Arizona Grasslands Pronghorn Initiative" 2010-19




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Successful Horvath

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| Bobbie Emerson | 2011-12 |
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10/22/21 15:00 2021
15:00 2021

ARIZONA ANTELOPE FOUNDATION, INC.

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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

Amber Munig, about to retire from a 30 year AZGFD career, receives an AAF Special Recognition award presented by Glen Dickens, honoring her support. Her amazing story is on page 5.

Photo credit Betty Dickens

Pronghorn is a quarterly magazine 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

Welcome to the latest Pronghorn issue. As I write this, we are getting ready for our 9th annual saturation survey on the Sonoita Plains and San Rafael Valley in southeastern Arizona and our August 6th project South of Ash Fork on HW 89. While I am currently out of town on some family matters, I got the word that our July 16th survey netted: 64 Bucks 143 Does 113 Fawns (wow) 325 total. That gives us a ratio of 43 bucks per 100 does and 76 fawns per 100 does, great results.

You will find in this issue yet another tribute to one of our AAF original's, Dave Laird. He was one of our Past Presidents, Life Member and long-time contributor. Dave always attended AAF board meetings and projects, he will be sorely missed.

Looks like we have some good monsoons hitting the state this year, so hopefully we should see some good green up through the rest of the summer. Speaking of which it looks like our release site of Sonoran Antelope in Vekol Valley were recipients of some of this early monsoon June rain.

Finally we held a successful live banquet and a pronghorn hunter clinic on June 6th. For all who attended the banquet I hope you enjoyed the evening events and for the clinic attendees I hope it



helps out on your hunt. Looks like we were able to net \$17,000 or so for wildlife pronghorn projects and be assured it will be put to good use. I was unable to attend the banquet this year as I attended a Commission awards dinner as the Antelope Foundation Representative for one of our own, Al Sue. Al, a long-time past board and Life Member, was awarded the Arizona Game and Fish Department's *Volunteer of the Year*: along with Al's volunteer Antelope projects you can throw in Sheep, Deer, Elk and other various volunteer efforts. Congratulations Al! This is all I have for now. Enjoy the magazine.

Ken

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

Staff Photographer Betty Dickens presented this Greyhound bus to Al at a field project, a memento for a retired top executive of the company.

SPECIAL AAF RECOGNITION AWARD AND *Thank You* FOR MS. AMBER MUNIG!

Per our front cover photo AAF's banquet evening included special recognition for Amber Munig, current Big Game Supervisor and soon to be smiling retiree for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The plaque we presented reads;

"In recognition of your pending 30-year retirement, please accept our sincere appreciation for your personal and professional support for our 2010-19 National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant "Southeastern Arizona Grasslands Pronghorn Initiative".

Ms. Amber Munig, Big Game Supervisor."



**Amber and two dogs
Monk Release, January 25, 2019**

In addition to Amber's AAF recognition on June 11th she received a *Special Recognition* award from the *Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies* (WAFWA) at their summer meeting held in Oklahoma City the second week of July. Amber's award write up read in pertinent part;



**Amber involved with Prescott
Valley fence construction**

Amber Munig is the Big Game Program Manager for the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), she has served in this position for the last 12 years of her 30-year career with the AZGFD. Amber's approach to her job throughout her career has been anchored in protecting the credibility of the AZGFD and its 5-member Commission through her leadership, study and implementation of science based big game management techniques. During Amber's career she has assisted on or supervised the translocation of over 1,400 bighorn sheep, 1,100 pronghorn, 100 elk as well as overseeing the successful return of the extirpated Gould's turkey. Some of Amber's major accomplishments include the creation of a unique Game Data Management System allowing for the automation of hunt recommendation for 10 big game species in Arizona. Amber continues to support the AZGFD Fair Chase and Limited Entry Hunt Teams, as well as WAFWA's technical working groups for Wild Sheep, Cougar and Mule Deer. Throughout her career Amber has worked tirelessly to improve the knowledge and science of multiple species, the public process, and game management information systems.

Amber, the Arizona Antelope Foundation will miss working with you and wish you and spouse Troy all the benefits of a happy and healthy retirement.

You have certainly earned it!

RECAP OF THE 2022 ARIZONA ANTELOPE FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING AND RECOGNITION BANQUET

BY DAVE CAGLE, AAF BOARD MEMBER

After canceling the 2020 and 2021 fundraising banquets due to COVID concerns, your Arizona Antelope Foundation conducted a Fundraising and Recognition Banquet on June 11, 2022 at the Tempe Embassy Suites.

Even though there were a couple of local conflicts that evening with the Arizona Game and Fish Commission Awards Dinner and a Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation chapter dinner, we had close to a packed house. The Arizona Wildlife Federation also presented their Big Game Awards to the 2019 and 2020 recipients. It was a great evening to catch up with old friends and meet new people who also support the AAF wildlife enhancement mission. There was something for everyone with many firearms, wildlife-oriented artwork, premium liquor, baskets filled with lady's accessories, local and international hunts, etc. going home with happy and generous dinner goers! This year there were 36 raffle items, 20 silent auction items and 12 live auction items to choose from.

Highlights of the evening's items included a weekend Southeast Arizona Wine Adventure, a 7 day South Africa safari for 3 hunters, an Arizona lion hunt, 3 separate blitz events for 2 guns and a Traeger grill, the \$500 David Hussey raffle, and 9 firearms going to lucky bucket raffle winners.

On a more somber note, Richard Ockenfels who was a dedicated pronghorn antelope researcher and a long-time AAF board member recently passed away. His family generously donated several quality wildlife oriented paintings to the dinner, which were popular in the silent auction section.

A Very Special Thank You to the Banquet Donors!

We would like to acknowledge those who helped make this annual event a memorable gathering:

Gary Boyer, Art & Susan Boswell, Ken Meadors, Eddy Corona, Joe-Bill Pickrell, Terry Schupp, Canyon Coolers, Rancho Rossa Winery, Dave and Cheryl Cagle, Glen & Betty Dickens, Lightening Ridge Cellars, Bill Keebler, Johnny Johnson, Cliff Nystrom, Embassy Suites, AZ Wildlife Federation-Trophy Book, Darrell Tersey, Kenneth Morris, Mike Ebright, Steve Lasky, Debra Seiloff, Estate of Richard Ockenfels, Jim McCasland, Jamie Watkins, Outdoorsman, Andries van Zyl with Mount Carmel Safaris, Al and Marsha Sue, Dale Maas, and Leonard and Jane Ordway.

Watch for more current fundraising information from our online raffle program by email, and through the website at azantelope.org. For more information on the Arizona Record Book awards program, please visit azwildlife.org. For information about being a donor, contact info@azantelope.org.



Left—Drawing a winning blitz ticket

Right—here's a happy bucket winner



PRONGHORN HUNTER CLINIC

In the afternoon preceding the banquet we held our first face to face Pronghorn Hunter Clinic since 2019. In the Covid years of 2020 and 2021 we relied on two Zoom clinics and a professionally recorded version made available for just a \$10 fee and both were well received. We had 60 enthusiastic attendees who received tips from experts on, photography, trophy judging, taxidermy, optics, archery and rifle hunting techniques. The 3-hour workshop included an hour breakout for hunters to interact with personnel from the Arizona Game and Fish Department to gain specific information on their respective assigned hunt units. Our thanks to all of our presenters and the AGFD personnel who helped make this year's clinic a smashing success!

SUCCESSFUL PRONGHORN HUNTER CERTIFICATES

Beginning back in 2017 we began giving successful pronghorn hunters recognition that had attended that year's clinic and here they are for 2019, 2020, and 2021.

William Perez Unit 19 2019
Bonnie Evenson Unit 2A 2020
Gary Evenson Unit 2A 2020
Sig Hall IV Unit 4B 2021

ARIZONA WILDLIFE FEDERATION RECORD BOOK AWARDS 2019 & 2020

For the last several years we have partnered with the Arizona Wildlife Federation with whom the AAF is a valued affiliate to give out their Big Game Record Book Awards. Due to covid, this year both the 2019 and 2020 awards were presented.

2019 AWF Big Game Record Book Awards

| | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Bill Drake | Desert Sheep | Score 183 | Maricopa County | 1 st Place |
| Stephen McCreary | Desert Sheep | Score 179 3/8 | 44B | Honorable Mention |
| Randy Weems | Rocky Mtn. Sheep | Score 194 1/8 | Gila County | 1 st Place |
| James R. Wendt | Rocky Mtn. Sheep | Score 168 5/8 | Unit 6A | Honorable Mention |
| William D. Perez | Pronghorn | Score 83 4/8 | Yavapai County | 1 st Place |
| Doug Jones | Pronghorn | Score 82 2/8 | Mojave County | Honorable Mention |
| David G Mattausch | Coues Typ. | Score 110 2/8 | Pima County | 1 st Place |
| David J. Montoya | Typ. Mule Deer | Score 197 6/8 | Mojave County | 1 st Place |
| Mark Guerena | Non-Typ. Coues | Score 122 | Cochise County | 1 st Place |
| Aaron Hulburd | Typ. Elk | Score 392 2/8 | Coconino County | 1 st Place |
| Parker Colburn | Typ. Elk | Score 378 6/8 | Coconino County | Honorable Mention |
| Gary C. Heckler | Non-Typ. Elk | Score 369 3/8 | Coconino County | 1 st Place |
| Brian F. Dolan | Bison | Score 115 4/8 | Coconino County | 1 st Place |
| Benny Van Pelt | Javelina | Score 14 2/16 | Cochise County | 1 st Place |
| Benny Aja | Cougar | Score 15 | Coconino County | 1 st Place |
| Steven E. Hopkins | Merriam's Turkey | Score 13 11/16 | Navajo County | 1 st Place |
| James R. Wendt | Merriam's Turkey | Score 12 14/16 | San Carlos Res. | Honorable Mention |
| Roger Cook | Gould's Turkey | Score 10 1/16 | Santa Cruz County | 1 st Place |

2020 AWF Big Game Record Book Awards

| | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| William A. Keebler | Turkey | Score 11 14/16 | Cochise County | 1 st Place |
| Bethany Bunger | Cougar | Score 14 11/16 | Cochise County | 1 st Place |
| Cameron Lickfeldt | Cougar | Score 14 5/16 | Coconino County | Honorable Mention |
| Kevin Hemmersbach | Black Bear | Score 21 | Gila County | 1 st Place |
| Tessa Lynch | Black Bear | Score 20 8/16 | Greenlee County | Honorable Mention |
| Joshua R. Budka | Desert Sheep | Score 183 4/8 | Mojave County | 1 st Place |
| Gary W. Edwards | Desert Sheep | Score 179 6/8 | Maricopa County | Honorable Mention |
| David J. Mattausch | Desert Sheep | Score 175 4/8 | Pima County | Honorable Mention |
| James Robert Wendt | Javelina | Score 14 3/16 | San Carlos Res. | Honorable Mention |
| Kylee M. Hall | Javelina | Score 14 2/16 | Gila County | Honorable Mention |
| Glenn Hall | NT Mule Deer | Score 227 | Coconino County | 1 st Place |
| Mike Golightly | Rocky BH Sheep | Score 170 5/8 | Graham County | 1 st Place |
| Jason Bond | Typ.Mule Deer Velvet | Score 202 3/8 | Mojave County | 1 st Place |
| Tanner W. Barcom | Typ. Coues Deer | Score 109 2/8 | Yavapai County | 1 st Place |
| Marvin N. Zieser | NT Mule Deer Velvet | Score 217 3/8 | Mojave County | 1 st Place |

ARIZONA BIG GAME HEADS & HORNS

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---------|------|
| James Robert Wendt | Antelope | 75 | 1991 |
| | Javelina | 14 2/16 | 1979 |
| | Mountain Lion | 12 5/16 | 1997 |
| | Rocky Mtn Bighorn | 173 4/8 | 2015 |

ARIZONA BIG GAME AWARD

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|------|
| Steven Jess Stayner | Antelope | 73 6/8 | 1987 |
| | Black Bear | 22 | 1991 |
| | Buffalo | 115 2/8 | 2003 |
| | Coues Typ | 117 4/8 | 1993 |
| | Coues Non-Typ | 106 | 1992 |
| | Desert Bighorn | 172 6/8 | 2010 |
| | Elk Typ | 345 6/8 | 1992 |
| | Javelina | 14 4/16 | 1992 |
| | Mountain Lion1 | 4 14/16 | 1993 |
| | Mule Deer Typ | 180 2/8 | 1995 |
| | Mule Deer Non-Typ | 221 4/8 | 1997 |
| | Rocky Mtn Bighorn | 181 3/8 | 2017 |
| | Turkey | 10 10/16 | 2014 |

ARIZONA TROPHY HUNTER

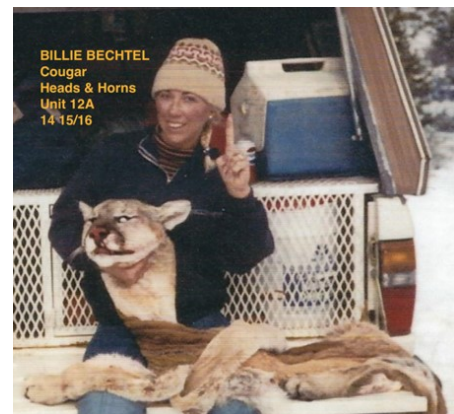
Steven Jess Stayner

| | | |
|-------------------|----------|------|
| Antelope | 73 6/8 | 1987 |
| Black Bear | 22 | 1991 |
| Buffalo | 115 2/8 | 2003 |
| Coues Typ | 117 4/8 | 1993 |
| Coues Non-Typ | 106 | 1992 |
| Desert Bighorn | 172 6/8 | 2010 |
| Elk Typ | 345 6/8 | 1992 |
| Javelina | 14 4/16 | 1992 |
| Mountain Lion | 14 14/16 | 1993 |
| Mule Deer Typ | 183 6/8 | 1987 |
| Mule Deer Non-Typ | 221 4/8 | 1997 |
| Rocky Mtn Bighorn | 181 3/8 | 2017 |
| Turkey | 10 10/16 | 2014 |



Billie Faye Bechtel

| | | |
|----------------|----------|------|
| Antelope | 83 | 1988 |
| Coues Typ | 110 3/8 | 2006 |
| Coues Non-Typ | 127 1/8 | 1977 |
| Desert Bighorn | 162 7/8 | 2004 |
| Elk, Typ | 360 2/8 | 1984 |
| Elk, Non-Typ | 347 2/8 | 2000 |
| Javelina | 14 1/16 | 2004 |
| Mountain Lion | 14 15/16 | 1987 |
| Mule Deer Typ | 183 2/8 | 2001 |
| Turkey | 13 4/16 | 2006 |

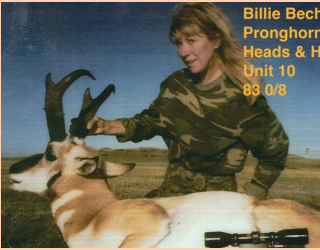




BENNY VAN PELT
JAVELINA
COCHISE COUNTY
SCORE 14 2/16



JASON BOND
TYPICAL MULE DEER
VELVET
MOJAVE COUNTY
SCORE 202 3/8



Billie Bech
Pronghorn
Heads & H
Unit 10
89 0/8



TANNER W. BARCOM
TYPICAL COUES DEER
YAVAPAI COUNTY
SCORE 109 2/8



BRIAN E. DOLAN
BISON
COCONINO COUNTY
SCORE 115 4/8



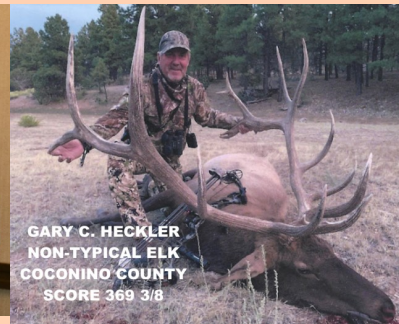
TESSA LYNCH
BLACK BEAR
GREENLEE COUNTY
SCORE 20 8/16



CAMERON LICKFELDT
COUGAR
COCONINO COUNTY
SCORE 14 5/16



WILLIAM A. KEEBLER
GOULD'S TURKEY
COCHISE COUNTY
SCORE 11 14/16



GARY C. HECKLER
NON-TYPICAL ELK
COCONINO COUNTY
SCORE 369 3/8



**AAF BANQUET CHAIR—
DAVE CAGLE AND CHERYL CAGLE**



**BETTY DICKENS
AAF PHOTOGRAPHER RECOGNITION**



**RALPH STAYNER FOR
STEVEN JESS STAYNER**



**TERRY SCHUPP, AAF TREASURER
& LARRY ADAMS, VIP TABLE**



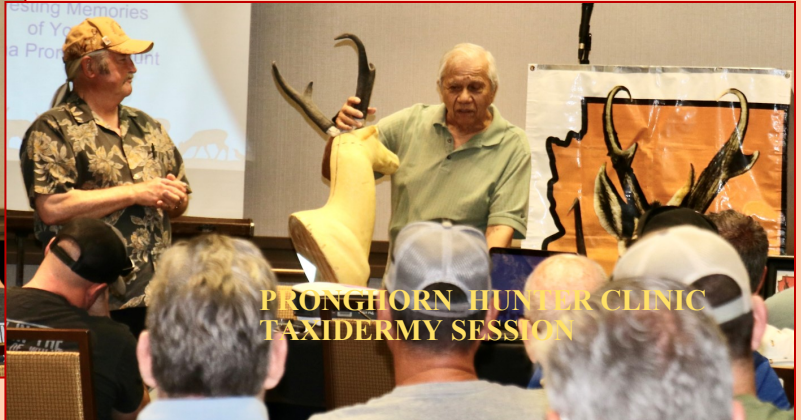
**RANDY WEEMS
ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHEEP
GILA COUNTY
SCORE 194 1/8**



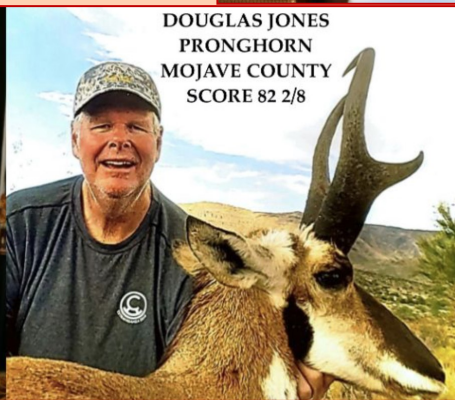
HUNTER CLINIC 50-50 WINNER



HUNTER CLINIC
ETHICS SESSION



PRONGHORN HUNTER CLINIC
TAXIDERMY SESSION



DOUGLAS JONES
PRONGHORN
MOJAVE COUNTY
SCORE 82 2/8

**SUCCESSFUL
PRONGHORN HUNTER
CERTIFICATES**

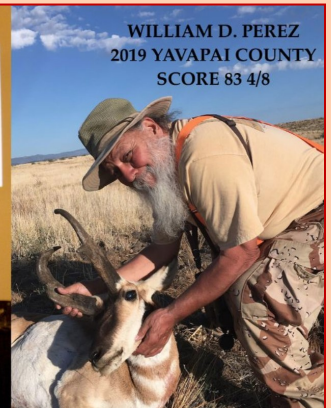


Gary Evenson
Unit 2A 2020

Bonnie Evenson
Unit 2A 2020



Sig Hall IV
Unit 4B 2021



WILLIAM D. PEREZ
2019 YAVAPAI COUNTY
SCORE 83 4/8

UNIT 18 A DOUBLE O RANCH FENCE REMOVAL APRIL 9, 2022

BY GARY BOYER AAF BOD

On Friday April 9, 2022 the Arizona Antelope Foundation (AAF) once again had the privilege of working on one of Arizona's largest and historic cattle ranches. The Double O covers 30,625 deeded acres and with leased land totals 169,884 acres with a carrying capacity of 2,650 head of adult cattle plus 1,000 feeder cattle.

This project is located in the heart of pronghorn habitat about five miles south of I-40 and Seligman, AZ. The long term plans are to remove an excess of 20 miles of mesh wire fence and replace portions of it with pronghorn/wildlife friendly 4 strand wire and modifying existing barbed-wire fencing to current standards. The AZGFD (Arizona Game and Fish Department) employees will be doing the page wire removal work. There are hundreds of miles of additional barbed-wire fence which needs to be modified to pronghorn friendly standards. These fencing efforts are in conjunction with fawn enhancement, improvements to water distribution and habitat treatments. AAF has planned 2 work projects per year over the next 5 years in the zone west of Seligman. This is an integral part of the GMU (Game Management Unit) 18A fence, water and habitat improvement project headed by the AZGFD Region 3 office in Kingman, AZ. AZGFD has partnered with local ranchers/lessees and the Mule Deer Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Arizona Deer and Elk Associations and the Arizona Mule Deer Organization and AAF. Currently there are 20 radio-collared pronghorn that are providing information on the barriers that the current fencing is posing for the resident pronghorn. Using the data gathered from these collared pronghorn we can determine which areas need to be modified to create corridors to open up more range for forage, fawning and access to water sources plus allowing herds to intermingle for the all-important genetic mixing.

On Friday, the volunteers began arriving at one of the Double O's corral sites and began setting up camp. Pulled pork, beans and slaw were served by our fabulous cooks, Bill and Mary Keebler to the early arrivals. If you have ever attended one of our work projects you know the meals are the best camp chow around. Saturday night features top grade steaks with all the sides. Continental breakfasts include pastries, bagels, fruit, hot and cold cereals, boiled eggs and more. Mary's breakfast burritos are added on Sunday mornings while breaking camp.

Saturday morning, after coffee and breakfast everyone gathered for a pre-work planning talk with AAF staff and an introduction to the AZGFD Region 3 staff. The day's work plan was laid out by the rancher Tom Liversedge and the AZGFD folks. We would be working a north to south fence line consisting of 5 strand barbed-wire. One crew working south while the other crew working north planning to meet in the middle. This was a very old fence that required a lot of repair work.

Each hand crew removed the bottom wire and laid it out 10' from the fence. It was then rolled using our ATV mounted wire roller by my crew who by the way, are the best guys and gals to work with. Meanwhile another crew led by Troy Christenson, AZGFD, would string and stretch the new smooth wire along the fence. These actions were done in ¼ mile increments, from brace post to brace post. This particular Double O fence consists of a majority of juniper posts for brace posting with steel T-posts every 20' with 3 wood stays between each T-post.

As the hand crews move along the fence line, they remove the clips and wire ties as another crew member marks the height for the new wire on each t-post and wood stay with chalk usually at 18" above grade. Stays on this fence were native wood. Stays are wood or wire used to separate, stabilize and hold the wires between posts at a uniform distance apart. This work is very labor intensive with a lot of up and down motion to disconnect the old bottom wire then re-tie the new smooth wire to posts and stays every six feet or so. Crews had an inordinate amount of repair work, due to the age of the fence reconnecting broken strands, replacing

missing sections, repairing fence undermined by gullies and reattaching dead man anchors through washes. Also we picked up all scraps of wire and anything else that can cause hoof problems for cattle, deer, elk and pronghorn. Our goal was to complete 1 mile of fence. Due to the efforts of our excellent crews, AZGFD, the rancher Tom Liversedge and the AAF volunteers we completed 1.63 miles. Tom and AZGFD personnel cut and replaced numerous juniper stays along the fence. Working alongside ranchers like Tom on their home ranges is a real honor and privilege for this city born wannabe cowboy.

As always, we thank our dedicated regular volunteers and our very welcome newbies. AAF couldn't do it without the efforts of each and every one. One reason I have been with AAF for over 12 years was the welcoming attitude of everybody at my first project. We welcome any and all who are interested to come out and join us regardless of age, ability or experience. It's a great way to give back to our wildlife community.

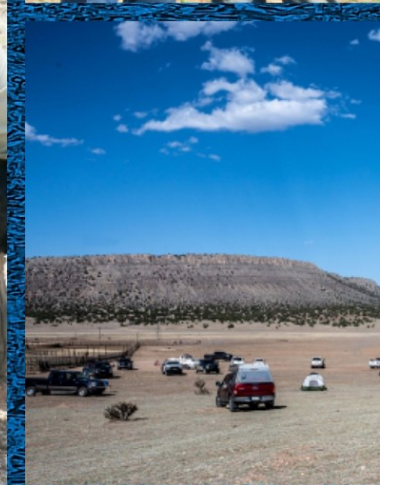
Thanks to all who attended!

Volunteers: Bo Boulter, Kathy and Ken Cook, Dave Cruce, Mike Ebright, Marsha Halcrow, Aiden Haugen, Zackary Haugen, Lee Jaeckel, Johnny Johnson, Bill and Mary Keebler (Chefs), Richard Roller, Al and Marsha Sue, Darrell Tersey, David Wolf, Darrel Wood, Michelle Kiffer-Boulter, Albert Kreutz, Thomas Lauderback, Sharon Lauderback, Dale Maas, Patrick Mannion, Kenneth Morris, Christine Murdock, John O'Brien, Courtney Pavlich, and Paul Pavlich.

AZGFD: Erin Butler, Troy Christenson, Cody Johnston, Jesse Baker, Troy Moody, Brendon Foley.
AAF Board: Ken Meadors, Glen Dickens, Betty Dickens (Photographer), Dave Cagel, JoeBill Pickerel, Jamie Watkins and Gary Boyer.



Additional photos of the volunteers for this project are located on page 14. Photo credit courtesy of Betty Dickens.



UTAH SUPPLEMENTAL PRONGHORN RELEASES
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS 18A-SELIGMAN & 21-DUGAS
BY THE ARIZONA GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT
FEBRUARY 26-27, 2022
BY JAMIE WATKINS, AAF COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Just after 7:00am on Saturday, February 26, a small caravan led by AZ Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) trucks hauling trailers full of recently captured antelope from northeastern Utah began a procession south of the I-40 just west of Seligman, Arizona.

The capture took place as an effort by Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources to reduce the herd size in the zone of northeastern Utah. It benefits both Utah and Arizona from a management perspective by decreasing an overabundance of pronghorn for them and providing a population boost with an influx of new genetics for us.

After traveling several miles south, we arrive at an open field clear of juniper where the caravan stops and parks. The two trucks hauling the trailers continue forward about a hundred yards, swing around and park side by side with the rear of the trailers pointing southward, the direction they hope the pronghorn will travel. This area was selected as one of the two pronghorn release sites due to the large habitat enhancement project underway in unit 18A. As part of the capture, 14 of the antelope for this release site were fitted with GPS collars to help supply AZGFD with much needed telemetry data over the next 2-years.

We quietly line up behind the edge of one of the trailers so we would not be visible to the pronghorn when the doors swing open. Being out of view and remaining quiet allows the pronghorn to be more comfortable to exit the trailer. With cameras at the ready, the doors are unlocked and opened. It does not take long before a doe and two bucks bolt out of the trailer, the white rump hairs on their rears raised up, and bound away into the distance.



Less than a minute later, a buck followed by five doe jump free and away from their enclosure. The last doe, sporting a GPS collar, stops just outside the rear of the trailer and spins around for a quick look. As she stops to stare at us and get her wits about her, the other four also spin around for a second as if wondering why she stopped. They all suddenly turn away from the trailer and bound away, their collars bouncing low around their necks.

As this bunch begins to trot away, another buck jumps from the trailer. He stops after a few steps and spins around in our direction for a quick look. He catches a glimpse of the five that exited just before and as he spins back around to catch up with the others, he is followed by another doe. This continues for the next several minutes, a couple of antelope decide they've had enough of being cooped up in the trailer, jump out, quickly create some distance, and suddenly stop to get a quick measure of their whereabouts before heading southward.

A short 10 minutes later it is done, 33 healthy pronghorn headed out to establish a new home. It was an amazing experience to witness and I know that another two trailers are currently on their way from NE Utah to Flagstaff after another day of successful capturing.

Page 14-16 AAF photographers Jamie & Thomas Watkins and Dale Maas

Sunday morning we arrive at a dirt lot east of the I-17, just a few miles north of highway 69. As folks start to gather, I take the opportunity to ask questions about the capture experience and the habitat around this release site. There are 13 bucks and 35 does on their way, each with an orange ear tag to identify them as the Utah transplants. I learned about the Central Arizona Grasslands Strategy Project completed several years ago to improve habitat for both pronghorn and mule deer to open up the grasslands corridor to the central part of unit 21.

No collars are on this group of antelope as there is already collar data from pronghorn movement in unit 21 from past research. As such, releasing both trailers of pronghorn at this single location will allow AZGFD to know if the corridor is open and being used if they start to see pronghorn with orange ear tags in the southern part of the unit during their next surveys. I also learned the drought has taken its toll over the past several years on this subpopulation so this infusion of pronghorn will be incredibly beneficial for the resident herds to bump up the population and provide a fresh mix of genetics.

Two trailers and several visitors were now at the meeting location and we gathered round for instruction and background information on the resident herds and habitat. One of the trailers has a door at the rear. The other is a long side-loading trailer with four boxes on each side, each box holding three or four pronghorn.

It's time to move out and we begin the caravan up a dirt road with the pronghorn-laden trailers in the lead. The terrain is quite different here than where we were yesterday morning. There are rolling hills with tall grass, sparse catclaw, and quite a few prickly pear cacti. When we arrive at our destination, all vehicles stop to park while the two trailers continue on another hundred yards or so and get situated. The truck with the side-loading trailer pulls around so the left side of the trailer is facing northeast. The truck hauling the rear-opening trailer parks perpendicular behind the other trailer so the rear door also faces northeast.

We quietly wing out in front of the truck carrying side-loading trailer to build our "human wall" to help encourage the antelope to continue in the northeastern direction rather than sneak around behind us. A few gather in the bed of the pickup truck for a great vantage point. Four others climb up on top of the side-loading trailer and prepare to lift their metal panel covering the front of each box.

With everyone in place, the doors are unlocked. A signal is given and the panels are lifted to release the animals inside while the rear-facing trailer is opened. A doe immediately leaps out from one of the boxes ungracefully, but she quickly regains her footing, stops for half a second, and begins to bolt. Another doe quickly joins her and they begin to trot off, away from us and the trailer. Suddenly, several others emerge from the boxes and trailer and head northeast with the other two.



Over the next few minutes, a couple here and a few there exit, the majority of them heading northeast. A couple ended up behind us before circling back to follow the others. Once all of the pronghorn vacated the open trailer and boxes, the panels were slid back into place and we moved away so the truck could be turned around in preparation to release the animals on the right side.

In the same fashion, we winged behind the trailer this time while four others climbed on top of the trailer. The boxes were unlocked and each of the four panels were lifted up at the same time. In just a few short minutes, the remaining pronghorn made their way out and faded off into the distance.

This was an incredible personal experience to be up close to so many beautiful pronghorn and I feel privileged to have been present during both of these amazing releases.



18A ANTELOPE RELEASE AZGFD TEAM



**18A RELEASE TWO DOES,
ONE COLLARED**



18A RELEASE BUCK



18A ANTELOPE RELEASE SUNRISE



18A RELEASE—JAMIE



18A RELEASED DOES RUNNING



21 RELEASE DOE



UNIT 21 RELEASE—READY, SET, GO



21 RELEASE—GEORGE



**21 RELEASE AAF OBSERVERS AND
PHOTOGRAPHERS**



21 ANTELOPE RELEASE AZGFD TEAM

In Memoriam, Life Member 72

David Laird

David Laird passed away peacefully, surrounded by his wife Sue and family, at his home in Buckeye January 24th, 2022. David was an Arizona Antelope Foundation board member for a number of years, president during 2006 and a life member. He attended many, many work projects over the years and assisted at the Antelope banquets. David was born October 22, 1947 in Marion, Ohio. He entered the Army in 1970 and spent a year in Vietnam. David was retired from the State of Arizona and was enjoying his retirement.

Testimonials

Bill Keebler

Dave was an avid hunter and always a pleasure to hunt with. We hunted black bears in Alaska, deer, hogs and aoudad in Texas and Bison in New Mexico. Unfortunately, he was still trying to draw his Arizona desert sheep tag. Dave will be greatly missed.

Kathy Fletcher

My thoughts, love, and prayers go to Sue and her family.

Connie Taylor

Dave was a very good friend we were very involved in Volunteer work with Arizona Antelope Foundation lots of projects together! We talked about family and hunting and just enjoyed being outdoors! He will be missed!

Larry Bowling

We've known Dave for about 60 years, we hunted fished and swapped war stories together with each other. He is in a much better place now. We will miss him.

Dave McCasland

I worked alongside Dave on numerous Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society and Arizona Antelope Foundation projects over the years. It is a sad loss to all of us.

Charlie Kelly

Dave was a strong supporter of wildlife conservation and served as an Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society board member for many years. He also was a frequent volunteer at their waterhole projects and a Sheep Society Life Member. He will be missed by his wildlife family.

Jerry Guevin

Dave has long been a friend of mine in the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep society and the Arizona Antelope Foundation. He worked at many projects and became involved in their leadership. Sorry to hear of his passing.

Gary Boyer

Dave will be missed by all that knew him. He was a valuable member of the Citizen Conservationist community. We shared many campouts and work projects with the Arizona Antelope Foundation. Happy hunting Dave.



Ken Meadors

I always depended on Dave for a story around the campfire.

Paul Bylbie

Dave, a brother a Hunting partner an extra special friend for over 50 years my family! Rest in peace brother You will be missed dearly.

Dave Miners

I worked with Dave at the City of Phoenix for quite a few years. Our work areas were right next to each other for a dozen years, maybe? Dave was a great guy, good at his job, and very helpful. We had many a laugh over the years. I have to say that Dave was the only person ever to offer me a bite of mountain lion. Tasted like chicken. My condolences to his family and friends.

Brian George

Dave could ALWAYS Be Counted on to Help for anything – Projects, Fundraisers, Board Meetings, etc.!! His concern was always for the organizations and the animals they support and never anything for himself. He was always a Gentleman and never complained about any problems that he may have, just a Gem of a Person!

Al Sue

Sorry for Dave's passing. We worked on a number of Antelope and Sheep conservation projects together. He will be missed.

Dave Cagle

Over the past 20 years, Dave was one of the most reliable Arizona Antelope Foundation meeting and project participants. He was always there willing to contribute where he could. Even when he was not able to do the physical work required on the ground, he was in camp telling stories and supporting our cause. He will be greatly missed.

Kathy & Ken Everson

Dave will be missed. Ken and I will always remember the fun we had with Dave and Sue going to breakfast at Darbies! Dave always had a quick smile, a joke or story to share. As neighbors we shared many visits and always enjoyed just with hanging out and swapping stories with Dave (and Sue too) He was a great guy, we will miss him but always remember him when we see an Antelope! Thoughts and prayers to Sue and family.

Gary and Janet Drake

Gary and I worked many years on the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society waterholes together with Dave and Sue. Dave will be missed by many conservation organizations.

Glen Dickens

I first met Dave after joining the AAF Board in 2010. He was a frequent presence at our field projects and I believe he attended many more projects than he missed, even in the last year when his health was beginning to fail. To that point, he made the long drive solo from Phoenix to the San Bernardino Valley in unit 30A for our fence project held on November 20, 2021. I drove him back to his truck at the project site and we talked antelope and rancher relations. Little did I know it would be our final conversation, Vaya Con Dios Dave!





SONORAN PRONGHORN UPDATE



FIGURES AND PHOTOS BY JILL BRIGHT, AZ GAME & FISH

MID APRIL-JUNE 2022

Captive Breeding **Cabeza Pen**

Things are going along well at the Cabeza pen. There was some good monsoon rain at the end of June which should green up the pen and luckily did not cause any damage. There was a coyote in the pen for a period of time before the biologist were able to get him out; they suspect it may have killed 3 fawns in the north half. Nothing was ever found of the fawns but they disappeared during the time the coyote was in the pen. There is a mountain lion coming uncomfortably close to the pen, even getting in between the two rows of electric fence somehow. The biologists are attempting to add more power to the fences with more energizers, and adding some electric lines where it has been getting in. Hopefully they can deter the lion before it gets into the pen. There have been three mortalities in the pen. A 2-year old doe was found dead on April 18, cause is unknown, but likely due to complications with fawning. On June 21, two mortalities were found. A yearling doe in south herd, and the buck brought in to the pen from the wild in December 2021 in the north herd were both found dead. There was no predation on either, and cause is unknown.

After the December release:

| NORTH HALF | | SOUTH HALF | |
|---|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Adult Females | 9 | Adult Females | 11 |
| Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2021) | 5 | Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2021) | 8 |
| Adult Males | 5 | Adult Males | 5 |
| Yearling Males (<i>b</i> 2021) | 7 | Yearling Males (<i>b</i> 2021) | 3 |
| Fawns (<i>b</i> 2022, 2 M, 3 F, 2 unk) | 7 | Fawns (<i>b</i> 2022, 6 M, 7 F) | 13 |
| | | | |
| TOTAL | 33 | TOTAL | 47 |
| | | | |
| Total Pen | 73 | | |

Kofa Pen

Unfortunately, Kofa pen did not receive any substantial monsoon rains yet, although washes to the south and west of the pen ran. We have had issues with predators at Kofa pen for the past several months; both a coyote and a bobcat have been getting in and out of the pen. Trapping has been unsuccessful. Fortunately, we have not lost any pronghorn to these incursions. There was one mortality of a 3-year old buck on June 10. There was no predation, cause is unknown, but it did occur during an excessive heat wave.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Adult Females | 10 |
| Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2021) | 8 |
| Adult Males | 3 |
| Yearling Males (<i>b</i> 2021) | 4 |
| Fawns (<i>b</i> 2022, 6 M, 4 F) | 10 |
| TOTAL | 35 |

Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR Herd: One buck released in January 2022 from the Marine holding pen has moved west of the Gila Mountains and has been observed on the Foothills Golf Course and surrounding desert. One doe was found dead April 11 near the Point of the Pintas from coyote predation. Most of the other collared pronghorn are in their normal areas, unfortunately we do not have too many collars in this herd anymore. Two unmarked pronghorn were found dead near the Knucklehead drinker in Child’s Valley from mountain lion predation. One buck from the Vekol release has moved over to the area south of Wellton, and a buck from a previous Saucedo release has moved to the Uken tank area.

Wild Pronghorn Kofa Subunit: Most of this herd are being found in King Valley, south into YPG and on the Palomas Plains. We believe there are at least 3 and possibly 4 fawns with the herd in the Palomas Plains. Numerous pronghorn (mostly unmarked) including at least 7 fawns have been photo-documented at a water leak near the agricultural pivots east of YPG.

Wild Pronghorn Saucedo Subunit: This herd has been using ETAC as well as the areas south of the Saucedo mountains. On a recent telemetry flight four fawns were observed in this herd. Three pronghorn from the Vekol release (2 does and 1 buck) moved into the Saucedo area. Unfortunately, they have all died. One 2-year old buck repeatedly crossed Highway 85 and a canal to feed in agricultural fields just southwest of Gila Bend and then moved back into the desert near the Gila Bend Aux Field. He was killed on Highway 85 on June 16. A 3-year old doe was using the Gila Bend sewer pond area, then moved west toward Highway 85 where she was killed by coyotes on June 18. A two-year old doe moved into the east end of ETAC and was found dead on June 25; cause is unknown but not predation. Likely dehydration, starvation, disease or some combination of these factors contributed to her death. There was also an 8-year old doe on mortality on the June 12 telemetry flight. She had been released in the Saucedo subunit. in December 2016. Too much time had passed to determine a cause of death in her case; she was last seen on an April telemetry flight.

Wild Pronghorn Vekol Valley Herd: These pronghorn seem to have coalesced into two groups, one near the holding pen and one northwest of the holding pen near Interstate 8 in a area with a nice cholla forest, with some movement between the two areas. On the last telemetry flight, four fawns were seen with four different groups. There were two mortalities in the Vekol Valley, both from mountain lion predation. Two 2-year old bucks were killed; one near the holding pen and one about 0.6 miles south of the holding pen.

Water Projects: The spring and early summer was very dry and water had to be hauled to several waters. Helicopter hauling took place to Sierra Pinta 2 and Agua Dulce on Cabeza NWR. Water was also hauled by vehicle to a water on Palomas Plains, and Point of the Pintas on the Marine Range and Uken tank on the Air Force.

Forage Enhancements: Pronghorn are using many of our forage plots as the desert dries out and heats up. At least 17 pronghorn are using the Uken tank area, at least 30 pronghorn are using Point of the Pintas, and at least 11 are using Devil’s Hills. All these groups have several fawns surviving in them. Hopefully the recent rains at the end of June will promote native forage growth and relieve the need for pronghorn to use the forage enhancements, particularly in the eastern areas of the range where rain seems to have been more abundant

Other Projects: nothing new to report.

Written June 29, 2022
 Sans maps for space

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SAVE THE DATES FOR THE 2022 PROJECTS!

August 6 William Fence Modification
September 24 Seligman Fence Removal

UNIT 18A FENCE PROJECT - AAF & AZGFD VOLUNTEER OVERVIEW

Photo credit Betty Dickens



