



# PRONGHORN

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New AAF member and Southeast AZ Sportsman's Club member Stephanie Poor drew this scene on a thank you card and sent it to the AAF this past summer. Inside, she thanked the AAF for their persistence and help for "fixing" the Fort Grant Fence. Thanks for helping us Stephanie and long may the 31/32 pronghorn herd prosper and roam!

You can see a color version of Stephanie's drawing on our website, [www.azantelope.org](http://www.azantelope.org). Click on the Newsletter Tab.



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## **MEETINGS**

**Board meetings are held at 6:30 P.M on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at the Phoenix Zoo. Visitors welcome!**



*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:

Jim Unmacht, at Pronghorn Editor, PO Drawer 15501, Phoenix, AZ 85060, or by email at [azantelope@cox.net](mailto:azantelope@cox.net).

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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2005 has been a busy year for the AAF...and if you're not sure about that, here's what you've missed so far...

-Five work projects, from the Cabeza to Anderson Mesa, to Dugas, to Buenos Aries to Fort Grant, with another coming up in Unit 21 on November 5<sup>th</sup>.

-HPC meetings, Sportsman's Expo and the Kingman Wildlife Fair.

-Our 2nd Annual Fundraising Banquet and our 13th Annual Hunters Clinic!

Throw all those together in 9 months time, limit the number of volunteers contributing, and it's a major undertaking and time commitment! As an old work associate of mine once said..."for the good of the organization", and in a broader sense, the AAF's Mission.

We have made a difference!

-Not alone by any stretch, as we have continued to develop and enhance partnerships (like the SE AZ Sportsman Club & Mohave Sportsman Club) and tried to resurrect old ones (like our original Adopt-A-Ranch partner in Unit 21).

-We are vigilant in our efforts to expand our membership at all levels. Life members are up, Sustaining members are up and Family memberships are up! So are individual memberships, in spite of a dues increase.

-Our Anderson Mesa focus and effort speaks for itself, and next year we're set to begin something similar on a landscape scale in the Mesa Planning Unit in Eastern Arizona.

What's ahead?

-State Trust Land Initiative...as written, this initiative does nothing for Arizona wildlife, sportsmen or women...watch out!

-AZ Sportsmen for Wildlife...want a political voice? This organization is set to kick off, moving sportsmen & women into the political arena in an organized fashion. We'll keep you posted.

-Pronghorn transplants...herd enhancements are in the works.

-Partnerships...work continues as the AAF takes an active role in expanding the conservation network with our limited number of volunteers.

-Super Raffle for Special Tags...watch for details!

-2006 Project Planning...underway, come and join us next year! The work is satisfying, and the camaraderie is excellent, especially if you make it a family camping event!



If you're not drawn for pronghorn, you have to hunt something!

*Jim Unmacht*

# THE FIRST SOUTHWEST PRONGHORN FOUNDATION?

By David E. Brown

It is an unarguable fact that most of what we know about a people is derived only from what they have left behind for others to find. So it is with the Mimbrenos or Mimbres Culture, a prehistoric Indian population that lived along the Mimbres or Willow River north of Deming, New Mexico. Like a number of other Southwest Indians, the Mimbres began expanding from a basic hunting and gathering way of life to a more settled existence when they took up irrigated farming sometime between 500 and 800 A.D. Abandoning their temporary pit-houses, the Mimbres increasingly became villagers, living in communal dwellings that might contain up to 100 or more rooms. Then, about 1130, the Mimbres, as did several other communal cultures, began abandoning their *pueblos* due to deteriorating environmental conditions brought on by drought and bands of predatory Indians. No longer able to sustain a dense population, the Mimbres were forced to abandon their agricultural settlements and either disband or merge with the Casa Grande peoples to the south. By 1200 A.D. the Mimbrenos had disappeared.

Most of what we know about the Mimbres is from the excavation of their former pueblos. We know for example that the Mimbres periodically burned their communal structures in a sort of ritualized house cleaning. The items of greatest interest, however, were their distinctive black on white pottery designs. These exquisitely decorated pots or bowls were not mere storage containers, but objects d'art, the best examples of which were often buried with their owners. The deceased was interned in a fetal position with his prized possessions, and his or her pet bowl was placed over the deceased's head. Invariably, a hole was broken in the bottom of the bowl to allow for the passage of spirits. These intricate pieces of art are much coveted by collectors, and would later fuel a regional industry in grave robbing.

Although some of the pottery from sites earlier than 900 A.D. is decorated red on brown ware, the classic Mimbres pottery is black on white, or less often, brown on white. And although many of the designs are highly abstract, others depict people and animals in highly realistic poses. Indeed, Mimbres designs are the only prehistoric Indian art in which the animals can regularly be identified as to species and sex. The most naturalistic pieces were made after 1000 A.D. and oftentimes represent some sort of ritualistic behavior. So life-like are some of the figures that one can differentiate the various quails, including cock Montezuma Quail, and biologists have been able to use the fish illustrations to identify which fish species were formerly native to the Mimbres River. As befits the location of the Mimbres pueblos in southwest New Mexico's semi desert grasslands, pronghorn are especially prominent among the big game animals depicted. Continuing a hunting tradition even after becoming farmers, Mimbres artists, most of whom were probably women, depicted numerous pronghorn figures, both abstract and natural. These include illustrations of wounded pronghorn, pronghorn coupling, pronghorn silhouetted on ridges, and one especially intriguing figure of a pregnant woman carrying a pronghorn buck in her burden basket.

Pronghorn obviously had a prominent place in Mimbres Culture--even during the times when most of their food was grown as crops. From the sheer number of figures, one can easily imagine that the Mimbres also regarded the pronghorn as a special totem or cult figure. With the pronghorn so important as both a game animal and a symbol, one wonders what the Mimbres must have thought when the time came for them to leave their valley in sole possession of their totem.

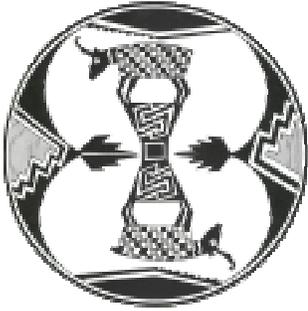
Special thanks to Thom Hulen and the background information contained in the Fall 2003 issue (Vol. 17, No. 4) of *Archaeology Southwest*, published by the Center for Desert Archeology, 300 E. University Blvd., Suite 230, Tucson, AZ 85705.



Figure 1. Buck and doe pronghorn coupling. Partial figure restored by Myrna Smith from a bowl shown in J. J. Brody. 1977. Mimbres painted pottery, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque



Figure 2. Woman with buck pronghorn in burden basket. Note the staff. Figure retouched by Myrna Smith from a bowl photographed in J. J. Brody. 1977. Mimbres painted pottery. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.



# SONORAN PRONGHORN UPDATE



BY JILL BRIGHT AZ GAME & FISH  
OCTOBER 7, 2005

**Captive Breeding:** All 13 pronghorn in the pen are doing fine. We are continuing to irrigate in the pen to make sure there is plenty of food. We have purchased all the pipe and related materials necessary to complete the irrigation system in the south half of the pen. Due to Hurricane Katrina, pipe and other building materials have doubled and sometimes tripled in price and are becoming increasingly difficult to acquire. Apparently, some of the material to make PVC pipe was made in New Orleans and those factories are now not working. However, we were able to get enough material to get the south half of the pen ready for new animals this December. Building new irrigation arrays and getting shade cloth on the fence are the main priorities.

**Water Projects:** We have also purchased the pipe and materials for 5 waters to be constructed this winter. Two are on the Marine Range and 3 on the Cabeza Prieta. Again, this PVC pipe was twice as expensive as before the hurricane. We flew over pronghorn range on October 2 and all the existing waters except one have water available for pronghorn.

**Forage Enhancements:** We have not irrigated at any forage enhancements due to favorable habitat conditions. We will continue to monitor conditions and irrigate if necessary. The pen monitors have kept the water source at Charlie Bell full.

**Other Projects:** We are planning a meeting with US Fish and Wildlife Ecological Services, Kofa National Wildlife Refuge and Yuma Proving Ground next week to begin preliminary discussions about reintroducing pronghorn to a second site within their historic range in the future.

In an effort to try to get pronghorn from Mexico for the pen this winter, Jim DeVos is planning to do another range-wide survey of pronghorn in Mexico this December.

**Wild Pronghorn:** Pronghorn range was flown October 2. No wild pronghorn were seen. Habitat was fair to excellent. Most valley bottoms and wash habitats are still green, some upland areas have dried out considerably. Overall, habitat still looks good for the wild herd.

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## AGING STUDY

The Arizona Antelope Foundation in cooperation with the Armendaris Ranch in New Mexico is undertaking a study to age harvested pronghorn antelope and compare their respective horn size and B & C score. In most antlered big game species, the older the animal, the larger the antlers and the bigger the B & C score. That's proving to **not** hold true with pronghorn, hence the study.  
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## 2005 HUNTERS' CLINIC

The 13<sup>th</sup> annual Antelope Hunters' Clinic was held on Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, at Sportsman's Warehouse, 19205 North 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Phoenix. With over 100 people in the audience, the clinic was very well attended, and hunters and their guests were treated to a wide variety of presentations on subjects important to the outcome of their upcoming hunts.  
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# AN EVENING FOR ANTELOPE!!

The second annual Arizona Antelope Foundation fundraising banquet took place on Saturday evening, August 6, 2005. For the second year in a row we tested fate and chose an August date in the middle of vacation season and early hunts. But in spite of that, and facing other seasonal odds stacked against us, 235 dedicated and generous supporters of antelope turned out for a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Leo Balthazor and the El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium provided an

excellent buffet dinner and Darla Bardelli, the Master of Ceremonies, kept the evening moving well. Darla is the host of the radio show "Outdoors Arizona".

As people came in to door, each received a free gift: a soft-sided camo coffee mug with the AAF logo emblazoned on the side. We wanted to be sure to provide a quality gift for each of the antelope supporters who took time out of their busy schedules to attend!

300 balloons were on sale by the door, everyone with a prize inside. We sold every balloon and auctioned off the final bundles of red, white and blue balloons to the highest bidders. They were popped by color and winners claimed a variety of prizes.

A lovely ladies raffle was spread out over several tables containing over 65 beautifully wrapped gifts designed to please the members of the more attractive gender. Every raffle ticket won a prize and all were sold without difficulty. In fact, there was a rush to the table when Darla announced that the last few were going to be sold!



AAF Life Members in attendance: (l-r) Art Boswell, Jim Mehen, Al Sue, Art Pearce, Jim McCasland, Pete Cimellaro, Mary Keebler, Chrissy Weiers, Charlie Kelly, and seated, Harry Carlson.

The bucket raffle took up an entire wall and featured nearly 50 items! Of course, the 18 firearms were hotly contested as were the scopes, range finders, binoculars, etc. The raffle girls were busy! While this was continuously going on throughout the evening there were other raffles which included the tent package, rifle raffle and the Jimmy "Hussey 500" which awarded \$500 cash to the winner.

Before we get to the auctions, let's talk about the blitz's. Blitz #1 was a special edition AAF logo cap distributed on two colors: black and stone. Hats went for \$20 each and every one contained at least \$20 in bucket raffle tickets. 250 caps were sold in about 4 minutes! These special caps will be available through the AAF on an ongoing basis if you missed out (\$15 but no raffle tickets!). Blitz #2, #3 and #4 were all "pick-a-price" blitzes. Winners got a chance to pick from a pool of high value prizes including firearms, archery equipment, optics and a lifetime Arizona hunting and fishing license. The items were so good we gave three chances to the crowd.

Okay, we need to talk about the auctions. The two silent auctions containing over 50 items each were arranged to entice the bidders. As usual, there were many desirable prizes and some great deals! The silent auction areas were crowded the whole evening with interested bidders trying to outmaneuver each other to win bids. It was great fun!

The live auction is always the highlight of the evening. We had an outstanding auctioneer: Brad Smith from Flagstaff. He did an excellent job presenting each item to the crowd for bid and working the action – all for the benefit of antelope in the great state of Arizona! 18 hunts and 2 fishing trips highlighted the bidding. But the evening agenda was punctuated by an historic offering of a lifetime membership in the AAF. Bidding was active, the prize was contested to the end, and the 15<sup>th</sup> life membership to the AAF was sold at a fine price to Mary Keebler.

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AAF Life Member Harry Carlson purchased our custom bronze sculpture, "High Lonesome". Pictured with Harry is Banquet Chair Bruce Johnson



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# Antelope to Order

Foreword by David E. Brown

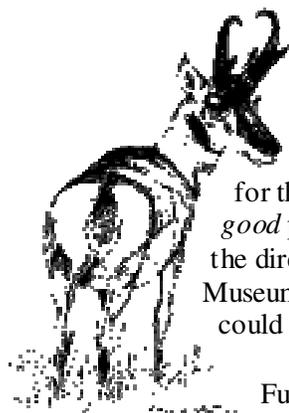


This story, published in the April 1939 issue of *Outdoor Life*, takes place on Anderson Mesa during the fall of 1936 when the pronghorn population was estimated to number 4500 animals! O'Connor knew Anderson Mesa well, having taught English at Flagstaff State Teacher's College (now NAU) from 1931 to 1933. This was during the time that Anderson Mesa's pronghorn population was making its phenomenal recovery from a few hundred animals in the 1920s to "thousands in the early 1930s." Adopting the Mesa's antelope as a personal conservation project, O'Connor had begun what would be a lifetime career of writing outdoor stories, beginning with an impassioned plea for the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to allow the hunting of the Mesa's plentiful trophy bucks in a May 1934 *Outdoor Life* article entitled, "*Arizona's Antelope Problem*."

In this article, Jack describes how he obtained a pair of pronghorn on Anderson Mesa for the Arizona State Museum in Tucson after receiving a permit to do so from the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Jack was not the first museum collector to visit Anderson Mesa, however, as E. A. Goldman collected a series of pronghorn there in 1913 for the National (Smithsonian) Museum in Washington D. C, and A. A. Nichol had collected one of a pair of buck pronghorn for the National Park Service there in June 1933. And, as the story states, archeologist J. C. McGregor, O'Connor's friend and hunting partner, had collected a "trophy" buck on Anderson Mesa the previous year for his employer, the Museum of Northern Arizona.

This article is interesting in that it describes an Anderson Mesa "covered with grass" and teeming with pronghorn—the author seeing "100s of antelope on a single day," and "tracks and droppings everywhere." Jack is also surprisingly honest, perhaps because he has a witness to his foibles. He misses the largest buck he ever saw in a spate of "buck fever," and wounds another large buck after taking a 400 yard shot. Despite his undeniable stalking and shooting ability, Jack takes multiple shots at running animals, nearly losing the doe he wounds.

The large number of large, trophy size bucks while interesting, undoubtedly have their dimensions exaggerated. One has to wonder about the buck with the 22 inch horns as the length of O'Connor's buck is given in the 1939 Boone and Crockett Club record book as 15 1/8 inches (McGregor's was 15 1/2). It was nonetheless a dandy, as indicated in a photo accompanying the article that shows Jack's wife Eleanor posing with both specimens. Even the doe had nice horns. But alas, as is so often the case with museum specimens, several inquiries to the Arizona State Museum and Museum of Northern Arizona failed to produce the heads of either O'Connor's or McGregor's trophies. All that we have for posterity is this written account. Thanks Jack!



There's something we want for the museum very much. That's a good pair of antelopes for life mounts" the director of the Arizona State Museum told me. "Do you think you could help us out?"

Could I? I could.

Furthermore, I knew exactly the place where I would collect that pair of antelopes. Arizona's Anderson Mesa. So I painted a word picture on this mesa high covered with grass and volcanic rocks, spotted with little lakes that were once craters, thin patches of cedar, and occasional clumps of pine, and all around 7,000 feet above sea level.

And antelopes. Well, the mesa was one of the finest antelope ranges in all America. Many times I had seen hundreds of the swift, beautiful pronghorns in a single day. Bucks, does, and fawns. I had seen dozens of bucks with horns that would make a head-hunter's mouth water.

Did I know that Country? I had studied antelopes there off and on for three years. I knew when the bucks shed their horns, when the new horns were hard and bright, when they bred, when the does dropped their fawns.

I had to hurry, as it was along toward the middle of October, and even then the horns of the bucks were turning brown and some were beginning to curl around the bottom in preparation for shedding.

So a few days later I left my home in Tucson, Ariz., for the north, a special permit from the State Game

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## Antelope to Order, *Continued from page 8*

Department in my pocket and a pair of 8X binoculars and a scope-sighted Springfield in the car. I planned to get two good antelopes, the buck and the doe my license called for. That wouldn't be so easy as it might seem.

Antelopes on the mesa were easy to see, but hard to get close to. Furthermore, I had to be sure the buck had a good head and that the doe was barren and in good coat.

In Flagstaff I picked up John McGregor, an archaeologist by profession and a hunter by hobby, and the next morning with heavy October frost still on the ground, we were on the antelope mesa, a wide, free plain, rolling gently, yellow with rich ripe gramma grass. Prairie dogs barked at us, ducks rose from a little silver lake, and a coyote, with a jack rabbit in its mouth, fled through tall grass.

But we were after bigger and rarer game. Presently we saw it a half dozen tiny dots of white. A novice would probably have taken those dots for light-colored rocks, but their very whiteness and suspicious grouping told us we had seen the first game, as the rump of an antelope is the whitest-looking object in nature, with the possible exception of the rump of a bighorn sheep. The animals were so far away that the glasses told us little. They were feeding and hadn't seen us, but two were smaller than the others and we suspected, does with fawns. Still, we couldn't tell, as in October the bucks and does are still running together.

We left the car in the narrow road and made a stalk through the timber. We drew a blank. When we got close enough for the glasses to be of some use, we discovered we had been after a young buck, two does, and three fawns—exactly the animals we didn't want.

So we started hoofing it back to the car. We saw tracks and droppings everywhere, and the skeleton of a fine big buck which undoubtedly had been pulled down and killed by coyotes. His great horns, at least seventeen inches long, had split and gone to pieces in the weather as all horns do.

Suddenly John stopped in his tracks. "Sh-h-h-h!" he hissed.

"What is it?"

"Over there, through the timber."

And I saw what he saw – a patch of white that seemed to move. The glasses showed the belly white of antelope, but whether it was buck doe, or fawn we were unable to determine. Then we saw another patch and another. All were around 300 yards away.

A light, eddying wind was against us, so we made it a long circuit, crawling part of the way through a shallow draw, and came up close to the place where we had seen our second herd. Gone. No, it was a couple of hundred yards off. John had the



glasses and I was using my rifle scope. Fifteen antelopes: bucks, does, and fawns.

An old doe picked us out almost instantly, and stood with her telescopic eyes fastened on the patch of grass from which we were sticking our heads. If you don't think antelopes can see, by the way, just try hunting them. Their eyes are as good, I am convinced, as those of a human being armed with 8X glasses, and, unlike other American game, antelopes seem to be able to distinguish stationary objects. I have had deer almost walk over me when I remained still.

But I had to think of the bucks. There were four of them. I had to make up my mind in a hurry, as every animal in the herd had taken a tip from that wise old doe. To shoot or not to shoot!

"The big one on the right has a good head, but the horns look pretty brown....The buck next to him has a nice spread but not much beam....All those does are wet." This was the gist of the rapidly whispered conversation between John and myself. Then the head turned almost as a unit and began to run.

The legs of an antelope are as good as his eyes and the speed with which a frightened antelope can leave the country is something few persons who have not actually timed one can believe. An antelope can make the fastest coyote look sick. I've seen coyotes try to catch them. This particular herd of antelopes stretched out, opened the throttle, and scrambled. When they settled down to a low, hard, even run, they must have been raveling over that rocky, volcanic country at close to fifty miles an hour.

Before we got back to the car, however, we saw exactly the buck we were looking for, a cynical old fellow who had been driven away from the herd by younger and friskier bucks. He came out of a shallow draw about 250 yards away, and I didn't even need the glasses to know he was the buck I was after. It would be pleasant to say I got him. I didn't.

I think it was that head that did it. Even through a scope of less than 8X, I could tell it was probably the largest head I have ever seen. It was incredible, even on Anderson Mesa, where the bucks grow big horns. I had a world record right under my nose; or more than 200 yards from my nose to be exact and I missed. I wanted that buck so much I could taste it, but I could no more hit him than I could fly. The bullets went in front of him, behind him, over his back, below his belly, and, when he went unreached over the sky line at 400 yards, he was going as fast as his stiffening legs could propel him.

"Well," I said, reloading my rifle with shaking fingers and feeling about eight inches tall, "I missed him."

"A little antelope fever?" John asked.

*Continued on page 10*

## Antelope to Order, *Continued from page 9*

"Yes," I admitted. "That head was just too good to be true."

"I know just how you feel."

John and I had hunted together a lot, both in Arizona and Sonora, and the bitter truth is that both of us had occasionally succumbed to that malady which in popular belief, is supposed to affect only movies.

Just before noon, after looking over a score more antelopes and deciding against them, we again sighted one that looked like what the doctor ordered. He, too, was a lone buck, and feeding about a half mile away. He had seen us and was suspicious, but he was out of rifle shot and was not greatly worried. I decided to stalk.

Dropping into an arroyo, I found easy going for the first couple of hundred yards. Then, for the next 200, I snaked through the grass heading in his general direction, afraid to stick my head up for fear he would see me. I was still a little more than 400 yards from him when I came to the top of a gently grass-covered swell. I could go no farther. There was not a bush to shield me, except one about large enough to hide my head. If I tried to crawl down the other side of the little slope, he'd surely see me.

The shot would be a long one, but I decided to try it. I moved then, slowly bringing the rifle into position, and getting into my sling for as hard and close a hold as I could manage while lying on a bed of those sharp volcanic rocks. The instant I pushed the rifle clear of the bush, the buck saw me and froze. He stood directly facing me, and through the scope. I could see those long, massive horns of his silhouetted against the sky. I held right at his chin, hoping the bullet would strike him in the chest cavity.

At the shot, he went down at the fore quarters and then started running rapidly in a circle. I thought he was done for, and, expecting him to go down, I rose. But he straightened up and disappeared over the ridge. The next time I saw him, he was about 800 yards away, running as if a whole flock of devils was pursuing him. Where was he hit? Probably, from my hold, he had got a slight neck wound.

Discouraged, we ate an early lunch. My batting average so far that day was considerably less than .000. We could see antelopes, but hitting them seemed to be another matter. About 2 o'clock, we saw a herd of nine old fellows all of which had evidently been driven from the does. At least three of the heads were exceptional, but their owners wanted to keep them. We stalked, but they evidently left the country as soon as we went into a ravine. We saw two more good bucks across a flat at something more than 400, but I wanted to get closer than I had on my last fiasco.

Then, as so often happens when things look gloomiest on a hunting trip, I got an excellent break. We

had decided to look over some new country nearer the western edge of the mesa, and had just rounded a bend when we saw a herd of three bucks and two does within 200 yards. One of the bucks had a very good head, not so good as the horns worn by the two I had missed but pretty fancy none the less. I sat down on the rocks so hard I carried bruises for a couple of weeks afterward, got into a hasty sling, and went into action. Here were the buck and the barren doe I wanted, if I could only do my stuff. I took three shots at the buck and two at the doe as they sped like rockets up the edge of a rise and disappeared over the sky line. Then John and I looked at each other.

"I hit that buck," I said.

"No, you missed him, but you hit the doe."

Deciding not to argue about it, we climbed the slope to take a look. Nothing in sight. But wait – what's this on the ground? The chewed-up contents of an antelope's paunch. And there's some more. Here's some blood.

A few yards farther, when we topped the rise, we saw a very sick buck about fifty yards away. He was groggy, weaving his beautiful head back and forth. I didn't want to shoot again, but I had to, for he jumped to his feet as we approached, and ran, making good speed despite his punch-drunk condition. I broke his neck.

We dressed the big buck out, and in admitting the head, we almost forgot the doe. Then John said, "look over there about 500 yards – three antelopes. Aren't they part of the bunch you were shooting at?"

"Sure, but where's the second doe?"

"Must be hit!"

Leaving the buck where he lay, we walked slowly toward the remnant of that little bunch, taking the direction the animals had run. Presently I saw a spot of blood, then another, and another. We found the doe stone dead in tall grass, hit twice behind the shoulder. One of those 150 grain bullets, traveling at 3000 feet a second had made a pulp out of her heart. Yet she had traveled 300 yards at a dead run. Can antelopes take it?

Well, it's my experience that they can pack more lead for their size than any animal I know of. If a big buck antelope ever weighed much more than 100 pounds, I have yet to see him, but one of them can run off with a wound which would lay low a deer weighing upward of 200.

That doe was a beauty. She was in full, bright winter coat, and very fat. Her little horns were a bit more than three inches long, and, as both bullets had blown up completely in her lungs, her hide was perfect for mounting. How she kept her feet at all is a mystery I can't explain.



*Continued on page 11*

## Antelope to Order, *Continued from page 10*

The buck, too, was a beauty, with an excellent head, the main beam of which was right around sixteen inches, well up in the records. But he was a breeding buck and, as a consequence, was still shedding. Both animals are now mounted and on display at the Arizona State Museum at Tucson, together in death as they were in life. Hunters who haven't seen the big, lone bucks of Anderson Mesa admire and gape at the male's head. But I have seen them, even if they did get away, and, if I had got one of them. I am convinced I would have been able to write about taking a new Number 1 in the records.

My buck had a fine head, but he looked like a school boy compared with some of the others I have missed.

If you are interested in really big antelope heads, and happen to find yourself at Flagstaff, Ariz., on the way to the Grand Canyon, say, just drive south some thirty miles to Anderson Mesa. You'll surely see antelopes there, and if you're patient and lucky, you may even see one of the really huge ones. At the risk of being hooted down, I'm going to make a guess. That big buck – the one that gave me the heebie-jeebies had a main beam of around twenty-two inches. If he didn't have, I'm willing to eat him. And that wouldn't be so hard to take, either.

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## ANDERSON MESA WORK PROJECT JUNE 25, 2005

The AAF joined forces with Game & Fish and the Coconino National Forest again for our annual venture to the Mesa to cut and clear encroaching juniper and pine trees from the grasslands. The trees didn't stand a chance!

Our efforts were coordinated again with some other groups bringing our volunteer total to almost 40 at different times during the day. The only problem was we didn't get 8 hours of work out of everyone. Quite a few folks started at 8 am and went until noon, leaving for the day. Not what the AAF is used to!

Several of us worked past noon to maximize the use of our time. When the work was done, we finished the day with a tour of some sections cut a couple years ago and a tour of a pronghorn corridor still being used, notwithstanding the thick stand of junipers that make it almost impassable. The lush growth on the high-ground, free of trees was most satisfying! The old corridor brought out a myriad of options to open it up and make it more pronghorn friendly. That future project will have to wait for another day.

In the meantime, a must read is retired AZ Game & Fish Game Branch Chief Paul Webb's article on the Anderson Mesa Drift Trap! Thanks Paul, well done, and extremely interesting almost 50 years later!



Thanks to the following AM volunteers, you helped us make a difference! Vernie Abbitt, Cary Asmus, Ryan Behrend, Richard Bosch, David Brown, Barbara & Philip Brunner, Kelly & Robert Chabak, Tom Conger, Larry Cullen, Benny Davis, Thomas Deasey, Lynn DeMuth, Regina Eason, Todd Elliott, Suzanne Fonoti, Dan Hancock, Julie Hernandez, Celia Holm, Don Johnson, Sylvie Johnson, Jeremy Lawhom, Kari Mallen, Matthew Massey, Jim Mehen, Duke Mertz, Elaine Morrall, Ivo Pavlich, Paul Pavlich, Sue Rodman, John Sampanes, Frank Shaffner, Gregg Simon, Jack Simon, Sherman Stephens, George & Betty Tallent, Connie Taylor, Jim Unmacht, Paul Webb.

# THE ANDERSON MESA ANTELOPE DRIFT TRAP

BY PAUL WEBB

RETIRED GAME BRANCH CHIEF  
AZ GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT

During the weekend of June 24-26, 2005 I worked on an AAF Work Project clearing juniper and pinyon trees on a small area of Anderson Mesa under the direction of Rick Miller, Arizona Game & Fish Department Habitat Specialist for the Flagstaff Region. After lunch on the first day, Rick took a small group of us on a short tour of other clearing projects. The amount of work Rick has done is impressive. At one point we stopped and walked to the Mesa rim over-looking Grapevine Canyon, a shallow canyon know as a migratory pathway for Anderson Mesa antelope when winter snows cover food supplies. Standing on the rim and looking over the vast wintering grounds to the east reminded me of my early days with the Arizona Game & Fish Department when assigned the job of trapping antelope not far from where we stood. My remarks about the assignment prompted Jim Unmacht to request a short account of my trapping experiences for the AAF. Now you know who's responsible for this!

The trap, cleverly and simply designed, reflected the ingenuity of early workers and their knowledge of Anderson Mesa antelope habits. Plans called for a permanently constructed trap to be used only when winter storms pushed the antelope off the Mesa. Built in 1943 and continuously operated until 1951, the trap still stood in good condition when I arrived in 1959. It needed only minor fence repairs.

Essentially identical to antelope traps operated in other states, the Anderson Mesa trap differed in two respects. First, the permanence of the trap contrasted to the portable traps of other states and, secondly, methods used to get the antelope into traps differed. Most states used fixed winged aircraft and later helicopters to drive herds into fenced wings that formed a "V" leading to a trap. Our method took advantage of the Anderson Mesa antelope migration habits by placing a bottom wire on an existing livestock fence that extended easterly from the Mesa and dead-ended at a perpendicular fence. Both fences contained bottom wires preventing access under the fences for about a mile in each direction from that junction. Antelope drifted along the fence to where the two fences met. Here, the bottom wires of the perpendicular fence were raised to allow access further eastward or into the trap.

The trap, a rather large enclosure, had wide wings attached to the perpendicular fence on each side of the east fence. Consisting of high wire netting supported by deep set steel fence posts, the wings formed a "V" over a



Paul Webb supervises David Brown's "hatchet" job during the recent Anderson Mesa Work Project

slight rise gradually narrowing to a 10 foot gate out of sight. This gate was closed only when trapping.

The gate opened to a smaller oval "corral", 8 feet high, designed to contain only a small manageable number of antelope. These antelope were then divided and hazed into a still smaller "catch" pen, also 8 feet high. Here, the antelope could readily be caught, ear tagged, and placed into waiting trucks. Rope netting, 8 feet high, lined the last two structures to protect the antelope as they frequently rammed the sides very hard.

A long strip of heavy white muslin cloth, 36 inches wide and more than 100 feet long, proved to be a most useful tool (if it could be called a tool) in separating the herd into manageable units and in pushing them toward the corral and catch pens. Personnel stood in a line holding and shaking the cloth forming a barrier the antelope would not cross. The muslin also proved effective when hung across the trap entrance, keeping the antelope away so the trap could be secured by lowering the bottom wires.

And so it went. Winter storms forced antelope off the Mesa where the "drifted" eastward along a livestock fence with a bottom wire until they encountered a perpendicular livestock fence, also with a bottom wire. The bottom wire on that fence was raised to provide access into a large "V" shaped trap. Once inside, a waiting crew (Usually just two persons) hung a long white muslin strip of cloth on the fence and wired the bottom wires securely. The antelope were trapped!

It was time for prearranged assistance and for hauling trucks. Considerable effort went into all trapping operations – from making sure the storms were heavy enough to start

*Continued on page 13*

## ANDERSON MESA DRIFT TRAP, *Continued from page 12*



antelope migration, to advising Regional personnel when they may be needed, to making all equipment ready, and to being at the trap when the antelope arrived. With that effort antelope were successfully trapped every winter – sometimes in great numbers

In October, 1961, a herd, estimated at 160-180, entered the trap – a lot of antelope. At one time, in efforts to separate this herd into smaller units, they refused to be separated and hit the wire net fence seemingly all at once. When the accumulated weight of that many animals lean on a fence, something has to give. It did! The fence went down and it seemed as if the whole herd was going to escape. But for the actions of Harold Van Sickle, Wildlife Manager for the Flagstaff Region, they surely would have. Harold jumped into the middle of the herd, grabbed the fence, straightened it, and waggled it back and forth, turning most of the antelope back into the trap. He got the medal for the most valuable player for that day! Records show that 125 antelope were processed through the trap so our initial estimate was close enough for state work! About 45-50 escaped.

The October, 1961 antelope capture was the last operation of the Anderson Mesa Antelope Drift Trap. The bottom wires were subsequently removed from the cattle fences rendering the trap ineffective. Even so, of 650 antelope captured during the life of this

relatively simple trap, 433 were released at 12 sites within Arizona with the remainders a part of a tag and release program to support antelope studies.

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## AGING STUDY, *Continued from page 5*

You can help us in the process by rough scoring your trophy and submitting a tooth for us to age. It won't cost you anything except some postage...mailing us a tooth and score sheet, and including a self addressed stamped envelope if you want to know the results. You can print the tooth collection form from our website, [www.azantelope.org](http://www.azantelope.org).

After you harvest your trophy, the first thing you need to do is to make sure you pull the correct tooth. The best tooth to take is one of the middle incisors from the lower jaw (antelope do not have any upper incisors). The best way to do this is to take a heavy knife or screwdriver and cut through the gums along the sides of the tooth. Once the tooth is loose, or you have cut deep enough, pry out the entire tooth including the root.

The second thing you need to do is make sure that the tooth gets placed into the tooth envelope you were provided at our Annual Hunter's Clinic, or simply put it in a small envelope with your name & address on it. We can also send you one of these envelopes if you'd like one, email us with your name and address at [azantelope@cox.net](mailto:azantelope@cox.net) and we can send you one. Once you've got your pronghorn tooth in the envelope, send it to us along with your name, address, phone number, state, game management unit, and any other pertinent information.

We also would like the rough B & C (or P & Y) green score. Scoring your animal, regardless of size, will add to the hunting experience. Green scores will be fine and all we need is the length of the right and left horn plus the circumference at the base, circumference at 1st quarter, circumference at second quarter, and the circumference of the 3rd quarter along with the length of the prong for each horn. The guide in the Arizona Trophy book or B & C book shows just how to do it. If you don't have a score sheet, you can get a copy from our website.

We can give you the age of your animal, but to partake in our study we need you to score your trophy! Data collected on the Armendaris Ranch and elsewhere show that the biggest bucks are those in the 2 to 6 year age categories. So staple your score sheet and tooth envelope together before you mail it to us. This will give us some meaningful results that will be useful in determining which age classes to manage for, and how it may impact the various pronghorn herds.

Then, and this is important, encase the tooth envelope inside a regular envelope so that there is no blood or gore showing (we don't want the P.O. getting excited). Now, address and mail the outer envelope to our P.O. Box 15501, Phoenix, AZ 85060-5501. You can also deliver it to one of our Board meetings too.

After the season, and after we have gathered up all of the envelopes, we will code each hunter to a number and send the paired data with the tooth on to the Armendaris Ranch and Mapston's Laboratory.

We will then post our results on our website, and if you've given us a self addressed return envelope, we'll give you your individual results. Congratulations on your success and thanks for participating in our study!

## **2005 CLINIC, Continued from page 5**

Presentations were made by:

- Arizona pronghorn history and behavior, by Richard Ockenfels, Arizona Game and Fish Department research biologist.
- Optics, by AAF past president Pete Cimellaro.
- Archery hunting tactics, by Corky Richardson and Dennis Wark.
- Rifle hunting tactics and trophy evaluation, by AAF past president Jim McCasland.
- Field care, taxidermy issues, and photography, by Greg McBride, Trail's End Wildlife Artistry.

In addition to the formal presentations, representatives of each of the six AG&FD regions were on hand to discuss the specific hotspots in the game management units drawn by the hunters in the audience. The regional representatives were:

- Region 1 (Pinetop) – Bob Birkeland
- Region 2 (Flagstaff) – Velma Holt
- Region 3 (Kingman) – Bill Ough
- Region 4 (Yuma) – Bob Henry
- Region 5 (Tucson) – Jim Heffelfinger
- Region 6 (Mesa) – Jake Fousek

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Sportsman's Warehouse store manager Bruce Gibson and his folks for the outstanding support they provided in helping us plan, set up, and conduct the clinic. Sportsman's Warehouse generously donated a Ruger model 77 rifle to the Foundation, which was raffled off during the clinic to help offset our costs.

In addition, we had a new members' raffle, in which the winner had his choice of a Garmin Etrex Vista C GPS, Bushnell YardagePro laser rangefinder, Nikon Monarch 10X42 binoculars, or a Leupold 15-30 X 55mm Gold Ring spotting scope, all made available to the AAF at a reduced rate by Sportsman's Warehouse.

A common theme throughout all the presentations was the ethical aspects of the hunt and how we, as hunters, conduct ourselves in the field. This is a particularly important issue for antelope hunters because our hunts generally take place in open spaces that, in many cases, are pretty close to other people, most of whom are non-hunters. Antelope and other big game animals deserve to be treated with respect. We owe it to them to not take shots that have a high probability of wounding them (that means not shooting at running antelope for most of us) and, after the kill, we need to ensure that we show the proper respect in the way that we photograph them (no "blood and guts" shots) and transport them from the field (properly field dressed and covered in the back of your truck).



## **2005 BANQUET, Continued from page 6**

Events like this don't just happen without a lot of sweat and the kind of giving of time and money and talent that just can't be described. Many gift donors furthered the cause with their gifts (and there are too many to mention in this short article). But all of their gifts are dearly appreciated! Major donors included Don's Sport Shop and Sportsman's Warehouse, Hensley & Company, Phoenix Precast Concrete Products, and Rep. Jerry Weiers. Their participation was critical!

My name is Bruce Johnson, and as chairman of the 2005 AAF Fundraising Banquet I need to thank my committee members for making this event happen: Ignacio Beltram, Pete & Cathy Cimellaro, Larry & Sharon Cullen, Leia Florez, Sue Foote, Jerry Guevin, Bill Hook, David Hussey, Don Johnson, Bill & Mary Keebler, Charlie & Linda Kelly, Dave Laird, Warren Leek, Bill Luffy, David McCasland, Jim & Susie Mehen, Connie & Rose Taylor, Frank & Robin Tennant, Jim, Tracy & Jimmy Unmacht, Jerry Weiers, Chrissy Weiers, and Ron & Karen Yee. The time and sweat and effort these people put forth is what made this banquet a success. If you see them, thank them!

The banquet was all about antelope and it's our intent that all the money will go to help antelope on the ground in Arizona. None of the monies received will be wasted and the AAF board will see that every penny is spent well! Thanks again if you were one of the generous people who attended the banquet and emptied your wallet or purse for the cause!

Bruce Johnson AAF Secretary/2005 Banquet Chairman

# AZ GAME & FISH COMMISSION NEWS

## 2006 SPECIAL ANTELOPE TAGS AWARDED TO THE AAF!

At the October 21<sup>st</sup> meeting in Phoenix, the Commission awarded all three Special Antelope Tags to the AAF. These Special Tags have generated \$857,621.00 for pronghorn habitat since the first antelope tags were awarded in 1985. The AAF has been awarded the tags since 1994 and has raised \$771,100.00! Two of the tags will be auctioned and one will be raffled in 2006.

The first Special Tag will be auctioned at the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society Banquet on March 4<sup>th</sup> at the El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium in Phoenix.

The second Special Tag will be auctioned at the AAF Banquet on July 15th...banquet details will be announced soon.

Finally, the third Special Tag will be raffled in a joint effort with several organizations! The Commission awarded collectively, 9 Special Raffle Tags to the AAF, the AZ Deer Association, the AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society and the AZ Elk Society. These tags include antelope, black bear, buffalo, Coues whitetail, desert bighorn, elk, turkey, javelina and mule deer. Joining these four organizations as sponsors are: the AZ Bowhunters Association, AZ Chapter of Safari Club International, AZ Wildlife Federation, Foundation for North American Sheep, Mule Deer Foundation and the National Wild Turkey Federation!

The **Arizona Big Game Super Raffle** is being kicked off soon! Watch for details in upcoming newsletters and magazines. You'll also soon be able to find details at [www.arizonabiggamesuperraffle.com](http://www.arizonabiggamesuperraffle.com) ...stay tuned!

This raffle will not only afford you a great opportunity to win a fantastic 365 day hunt for one of Arizona's premier big game species, but you'll also have an opportunity to win a Swarovski Optics package second to none!

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CONSERVATION BONUS POINT?

At their June 25th meeting in Payson, the AZ Game & Fish Commissioners voted down the concept 4 - 1, surprising many that the effort did not pass and move forward in the Rule process. Where were the supporters? Volunteering at several different projects, including the AAF Anderson Mesa work project. How ironic that some of those opposed to the concept attended the Commission meeting and were able to sway the Commissioners. While many of us in favor of the concept, thinking it would sail through and pass the vote, were out volunteering. Shame on supporters.

The CBP was designed to do a number of things, including: increasing volunteers, enhancing habitat, expand the member rolls of conservation organizations, provide more Federal matching dollars to AZ (via increased volunteer man hours and miles driven to and from projects), and the bottom line...helping Arizona's wildlife.

Opponents saw the CBP in a different light, including: not wanting to volunteer time to get a bonus point, thinking this was designed just for conservation organizations, not wanting volunteers to get ahead of them in the bonus point "race", thinking the bonus point was "too valuable as presented", agreeing it could be OK if it was less "valuable", to concerns about the procedures, and lack of the G & F Department's buy in. (Apparently an anonymous Department employee even expressed satisfaction it failed.)

So where does this take us? The WCC is going to revisit the matter and see if it makes sense to spend any more time and effort to resubmit a proposal. We'll see what happens.

In the interim, if anyone has any ideas, send them in and we'll consider them. This includes how to invigorate the aging volunteer pool, inject some youth and families into the process, and help wildlife all the while we're at it!





## CUSTOM RIFLE DRAWING



CONGRATULATIONS to Chris Franklin of Buckeye, AZ. He was the lucky winner of our Custom .25-06 Rifle drawn at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Fundraising Banquet on August 6<sup>th</sup>. Chris is pictured below with Gunsmith Joe Machac. Many thanks to Joe, Chick Menard/CAM Enterprises, Nancy Lewis, Joe Bill Pickrell, and Duane Swanson for their contributions to the creation of this fabulous firearm!

## PRONGHORN “PREDATOR CONTROL“

I just heard an interesting story that I thought I would share with you. One of our fire engine foremen owns about five acres just east of Mormon Lake along Lake Mary road. You may have seen his property he has a very small cabin and a travel trailer on it, just east of Lake Mary road (fh-3). Anyhow, Bob was watching a group of seven pronghorn feeding near his property when suddenly they all took off in a dead sprint. Bob grabbed his binoculars and noticed a coyote chasing the pronghorn. Suddenly the pronghorn slowed, turned on a dime surrounding the coyote and proceeded to trample the coyote to death. Bob said that it all happened very quickly and the coyote never had a chance to escape. Bob was amazed at how orchestrated the attack was, sounds like they've done this before. I have seen pronghorn chase coyotes; just never seen them actually get one.

HENRY PROVENCIO, Wildlife Biologist  
Flagstaff Center Coconino National Forest

## SPECIAL TAG SUPER RAFFLE

SB 1365's passing added a new wrinkle to the Special Tag mix earlier this year...a third tag option per species for the Commission. Several organizations, including the AAF, have asked for the 3rd tag, with plans on joining a group effort at putting on a "Super Raffle"!

In rough draft, think about a ticket order form with most of your favorite AZ big game species listed on it. Let's say you always wanted a chance at one of those Commissioner's Tags, but could never afford \$40K or \$50K to buy one. Well this would be your chance! In conceptual form, you'd have the opportunity to buy as many raffle tickets as you'd like in entering this "Super Raffle". If all your funds would be channeled to pronghorn, the money would go to antelope habitat. If you bought a sheep ticket and an antelope ticket, the money would be split between the two species, etc.

*A potential windfall for wildlife in the Grand Canyon State!*

## AZOD FEATURES AAF!

Check out the latest edition of the Arizona Outdoorsman Magazine...the Feature Article is on the AAF! Many thanks to AZOD Editor, and AAF Sustaining Member Linda Dightmon for featuring our organization!

## PRONGHORN RECRUITMENT

Stay tuned for the upcoming fawn to doe ratios...early returns report some of the best numbers in years! What does this mean? Maybe we have finally turned the drought corner and our pronghorn populations are on the upswing too.

Volunteers + Habitat Work + Favorable Weather + Favorable Habitat Conditions (i.e.; food & water) = More Pronghorn Fawns for AZ!

## HUNTER CLINIC THANKS

Special thanks this year to Sportsman's Warehouse, Bruce Gibson & Warren Leek! Store Manager Bruce Gibson donated not only the meeting place for our Clinic, but also Ruger Rifle for our raffle drawing! Thank you Bruce!

Thanks too to AAF Past President Warren Leek for donating the \$150 in Gift Certificates for our New Member raffle, and Pronghorn Trophy Display raffle! We appreciate that, as well as Warren's work in planning and organizing the Clinic itself!



## SHORT SHOTS

### SPECIAL TAG PROJECT MONEY

Our two Special Antelope Auction Tags didn't bring as much money in 2005 as they did in 2004. In fact the decrease was pretty substantial, \$126,500 down to \$82,500. While that's disappointing, we're still putting the money to good use for pronghorn. The biggest chunk is going to Anderson Mesa to help us sustain that landscape scale effort, \$40,000. The rest will be split amongst several other projects from Unit 21 to Unit 1. Stay tuned in 2006 to track we're the AAF will be on the Project Front, as opportunity abounds!

### NEW AAF LOGO GEAR

Check out our newest gear in the AAF Store on our website! Our new ball caps come in either black or stone, with the petroglyph pronghorn, capped off with a camo bill! One heckuva deal at \$15 each! Also check out our camo coffee mug too...a steal at \$4!



Visit [www.azantelope.org](http://www.azantelope.org) for order information.

### AAF LIFE MEMBERS VIE FOR AZ GAME & FISH COMMISSION

The governor has an impressive field to choose from this year, starting with two AAF Life members, Life Member #1 Art Pearce, and Life Member #6 and Past President Nancy Lewis. Both attended a candidates' forum sponsored by AZ Sportsmen for Wildlife on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Other candidates participating in the forum included AWF President Mary Jo Froman Miller, retired teacher Lois Drinkwater Thompson, former G&F biologist Jennifer Martin, and ASU Provost Dr. Louis Olivios. Resumes for some of the candidates can be found on the Wildlife Conservation Council website.

[www.azwildlifecouncil.com](http://www.azwildlifecouncil.com)

### AAF ANNUAL MEETING DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> 6:30 PM PHOENIX ZOO

The following slate of officers will be presented for election at our annual meeting in December.

#### 2006 Officers & Directors

President	Dave Laird
Vice President	Connie Taylor
Secretary	Tice Supplee
Treasurer	Jim Mehen

#### Directors with terms ending 12/31/06:

Sue Foote  
Thom Hulen  
David Brown

#### Directors with terms ending 12/31/07:

Matt Massey  
Brian George  
Scott Anderson

### BUY WCC CONSERVATION LICENSE PLATES

Help support wildlife in Arizona by purchasing a conservation license plate for all your vehicles. The cost is \$25, \$17 of which goes directly to the Wildlife Conservation Council. This organization uses funds raised in this manner to improve habitat throughout the state and provide conservation education. These plates must be purchased directly from the Wildlife Conservation Council and are not available in the MVD office. Visit the Council website for information on how to obtain yours.

[www.azwildlifecouncil.com](http://www.azwildlifecouncil.com)



**Don't forget to visit our website  
[www.azantelope.org](http://www.azantelope.org)**