

PRONGHORN

1st Quarter 2016

Volume 22 Number 1



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

THANKS ONCE AGAIN TO
BETTY DICKENS WHO
CONTINUES TO SEND US
SOME FABULOUS PHOTOS
FROM SE ARZIONA

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: Tracy Unmacht, Pronghorn Editor, PO Box 12590, Glendale, AZ 85318, or by email at info@azantelope.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to introduce myself; I am Brian George the new AAF President for 2016. I am a charter member and was president back in 2007 and I am back for another stint. I would like to shout out a HUGE THANK YOU to Shane Stewart who served as AAF president for five years!!! Shane and his wife Jodi (who served as treasurer as well), both sacrificed many, many days, nights and weekends over 5 years carrying out the AAF mission. So, again a Huge Thank You from all of us at the AAF!!

One of the reasons that I have agreed to serve as President again is that our member numbers and involvement are at critically low levels. We need new members and old ones that haven't renewed to renew and hopefully get active. In the history of the AAF, we have never accomplished more than we are right now! The efforts that have been put into the antelope herd in southern Arizona down around Sonoita has been unprecedented, both by a non profit organization and by the Arizona Game & Fish Department. We have helped the department recover that herd from less than 9 animals in one herd and 27 in another with NO fawn survival for 3 years to a herd that this fall will number over 300! This has happened because of the commitment by the department to make something happen and in particular Brad Fulk of AGFD. He was and is a major driving force to own that project. Also our own Vice President and Project's Manager Glen Dickens, who is a former WM for the department in a previous life. If you are unaware of the historic success that we have had down there, then I strongly urge you to go to our website or the departments or to YouTube for that matter and search for "*Triumph for Pronghorn*", it is an OUTSTANDING video on the success of the salvation of the southern Arizona antelope herd!

That being said this effort can be re-created ALL over Arizona. We are starting a new three year program over in the Unit 31/32 area near Bonita. That herd which used to number a couple of hundred or more back in the 80's was down to 28 animals observed on the most recent survey data I have, so they are in need of a variety of major restoration efforts! All this does NOT happen without members!!

When I got active again on the board a couple of years ago, what I noticed about the makeup of the Board is we had no young people. I made a statement at that time, "...25 years ago, I was the youngest guy in the room and here we are 25 years later and I am still the young-



est guy in the room...there's a problem!!" The problem is that hunter numbers are declining, there are more & more single parent families and they don't have the time or resources to get involved, thus we end up going back to the well again and again and again to the same folks that have supported us over the years. We have been fortunate since that time to land a new Treasurer, Pat Frawley who is in his early 40's and has a degree in Wildlife Management from the UofA. Pat grew up in Arizona and is fairly familiar with all the antelope units in Arizona and his background will be a huge asset for the AAF. However, we need more young folks like Pat to get involved! We will continue this theme over the next year or two on some things that we are going to do to drive up membership. But the first thing is that anyone who is reading this magazine should be a member and if you haven't renewed your membership, please go online to www.azantelope.org and do it now, for tomorrow may be too late!

I wish everyone the best in the upcoming Antelope Draw and be sure to check our schedule of the projects this summer and fall!!! Hope to see you at the projects!

Brian George, President

"LIBERTAS AD VAGOR"....

FREEDOM TO ROAM"

**AAF'S SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA FIELD MANAGER JOHN MILLICAN
RECOGNIZED BY THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH COMMISSION**

John Millican

has dedicated 35 years to wildlife and habitat conservation professionally and voluntarily. As a volunteer, John has accomplished overwhelming benefits for conservation in Southeastern Arizona. John's name has become a trademark for many conservation groups as he developed and fostered productive relationships and respect for his active role in wildlife conservation efforts. John's efforts are broad; hunter recruitment and retention, wildlife management, wildlife water development and maintenance, support of sportsman's access on public and private lands through developing and maintaining positive relationships with landowners and land management agencies, and unwavering support for all hunting programs.

For those who know John, understand and respect his position as it relates to conservation. John is a man of many hats, which may best describe his level of activity in various conservation groups he actively supports. Most noted in 2006, John became the president of the local NWTf-Huachuca Gould's Chapter in Sierra Vista. The chapter quickly evolved in direct support of the Department's active Gould's turkey recovery program. As president, John formed a very determined and dedicated board to support all conservation activities to follow. Under John's direction, the board and members have accomplished impressive results annually to include a wide array of projects; JAKE's events, Women in the Outdoors, Get Outdoor Days, Youth Predator/Family Hunt camps, Predator Hunt Fundraiser events to support youth hunt camps, participates in the Hunters Who Care program, coordination of Eagle Scout projects, host the Gould's turkey survey camps, assist with Gould's trapping and relocation efforts, trash clean-up events and funding youth scholarships for education. John has submitted grant applications for numerous conservation projects to include the construction and renovation of fourteen wildlife waters in the Huachuca Mountains and annual maintenance of established critical waters. John represented the public on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the USFS-Sierra Vista Ranger Districts Travel Management Plan and a member of Cochise County's Public Lands Advisory Committee.

(Continued on page 5)



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In 2008, John became a volunteer on the local Southeastern Arizona - Habitat Partnership Committee. Acting as the Chairman of the committee, John has been a critical member in writing HPC grants, project design, evaluation of members grant applications and conducting field visits with NGO members. This relationship has resulted in an average of 5 habitat projects being approved annually in the Southeast corner of Region V.

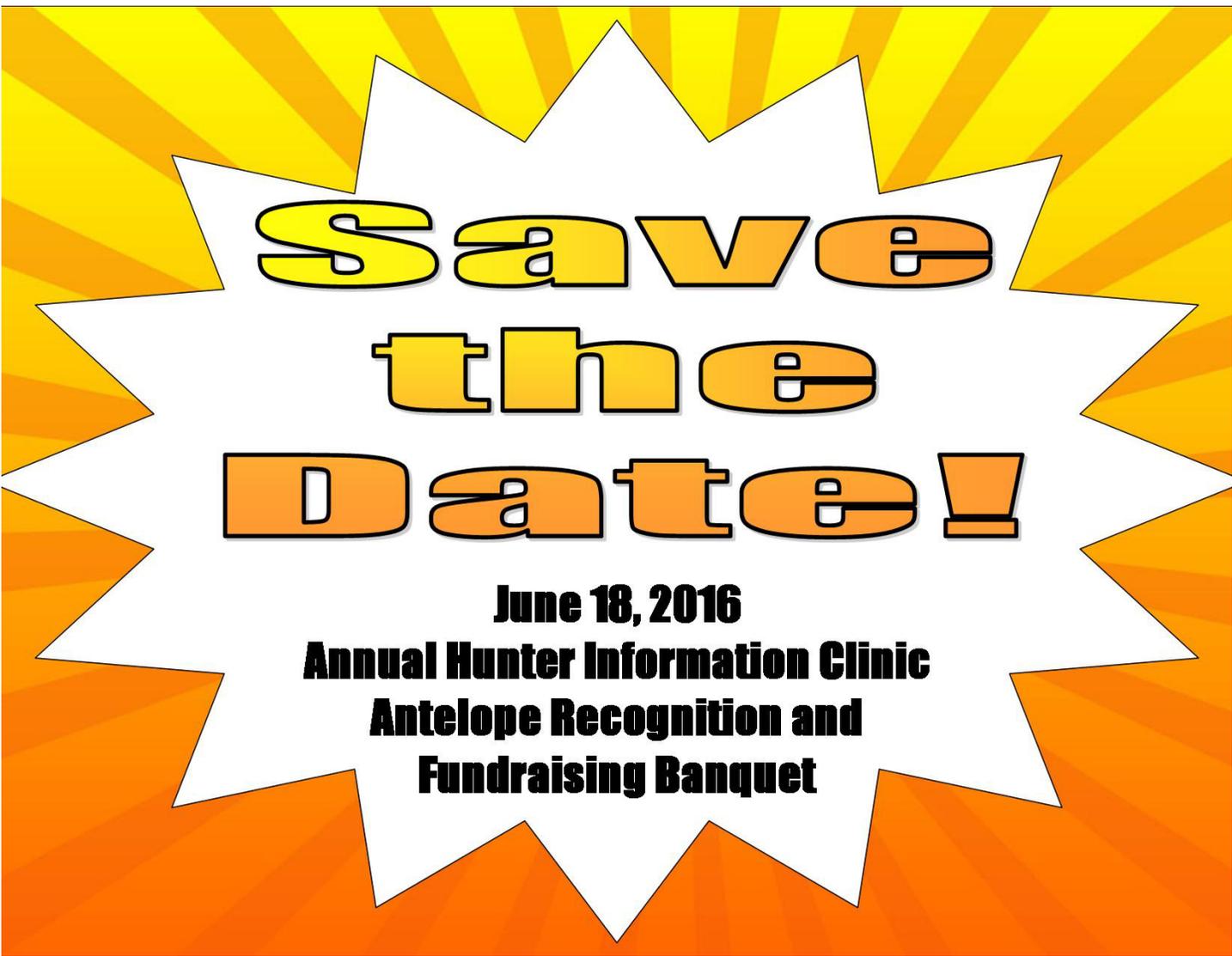
John became a significant project partner in the AZGFD's Sonoita/Elgin Pronghorn Enhancement Project in 2012. John's vast knowledge of the populations' dynamics and issue was critical in the development of an effective project plan to recover the quickly declining population. During the next 4 years, as the Arizona Antelope Foundation's (AAF) Field Biologist, John initiated additional projects representing the AAF to include over 40 miles of fence modification, grassland habitat improvements, two water project developments, animal

distribution mapping, corridor use mapping and fence modifications on travel corridors crossing SR 82 and 83 near Sonoita, and mentored Tombstone High School Agriculture students on a class project. After the project reached the 4 year end, the herd south of SR 82 increased from 26 animals to near 200 in 2015.

John Millican's support for conservation is evident. His actions and motivation are represented through his accomplishments. This quote may best describe John's passion for the outdoors and wildlife conservation, "John can be passionate and outspoken at times when it comes to things he strongly believes in, John believes in conservation."

Congratulations John!





**Save
the
Date!**

**June 18, 2016
Annual Hunter Information Clinic
Antelope Recognition and
Fundraising Banquet**

**Embassy Suites
4400 S Rural Rd, Tempe**

**Clinic 12-4
\$15 per person**

**Banquet 4:30 - 9:00
\$60 per person
\$100 per couple**

Trophy scoring throughout the day, annual hunter information clinic in the afternoon, evening banquet to recognize antelope hunters and raise some much needed funds for the Foundation.

Watch your mailbox for more information, early bird ticket incentives, and MORE!

PRONGHORN SEASONAL MOVEMENT STUDY

BY RICK LANGLEY & TYLER RICHINS, AZGFD

Background:

The majority of land in Game Management Unit (GMU) 1 is Public Land. It is comprised of approximately 75% United States Forest Service land and 16% State Trust land. This provides a great management opportunity that may allow for the maintenance of a substantial pronghorn population in Arizona. Within GMU 1 there are high quality summer ranges that occur on United States Forest Service land at elevations of approximately 9,000 feet. These high elevation grasslands generally are north and east of Big Lake. On these high elevation ranges the fawn:doe ratio is often much higher than the ratio observed in the pronghorn populations that use the lower elevation grasslands, north of Highway 260. These ranges are separated from each other by large stands of ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests. Pronghorn leave the high elevation summer range during the winter and mingle with the pronghorn that inhabit the lower elevation grasslands, but the migration corridors by which these pronghorn move between summer and winter range were unknown.

A majority of the area that separates the summer and winter range and the anticipated movement corridors are within the burn perimeter of the 2011 Wallow Fire. The fire had a significant impact on the forest landscape and projects are being conducted to maintain and improve the forest, salvage lumber, and replace pasture fences. Additionally, the USFS is working on a new management structure, Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI), that was anticipated to go into effect in 2014. The combination of these factors provided a great opportunity to collect important data that can help direct future management projects to improve and maintain pronghorn movement on and off these summer ranges.

In addition to identifying migration corridors, the collected data could also help identify locations where pronghorn cross Highway 260, Highway 273 (recently paved), and to a lesser extent Highway 60. The identification of highway crossings will help with future projects to improve highway permeability for pronghorn and to address mitigation measures for any future highway expansion projects.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

Primary

- a) Identify pronghorn migration corridors from high elevation to low elevation grasslands and direct habitat and forest treatments to these areas in order to maintain access to high quality

seasonal habitats via these routes.

- b) Identify highway crossings used by pronghorn in order to address future highway expansion projects and maintain/ improve their permeability to pronghorn.

Secondary

- c) Identify fawning areas in the high elevation grasslands.
- d) Identify mortality rates of pronghorn using the high elevation grasslands.
- e) Identify how pronghorn are using the high elevation grassland habitat.

Project Details:

In September of 2013, Region 1 personnel along with a net-gunner from Region 2, an AGFD pilot and spotter plane, and volunteers from AAF gathered for the capture event. Over two days, 8 Sirtrack Iridium GPS collars were placed on pronghorn does captured on the high elevation grasslands. These collars would allow managers to check the locations of the collared pronghorn on a daily basis and change the frequency of location recording, all from a remote computer.

Initially the collars were set to collect one location every 2 hours, but once movement from the high elevation grasslands (HEG) was detected, all collars were set to collect data at a rate of one location every hour. After migration occurred and all of the pronghorn had moved to the lower elevation grasslands (LEG), the collars were set to collect one location every 4 hours. The collection rate was then adjusted back to one location every hour to capture the migration in the spring, but once they had reached the HEG, they were adjusted back to the 4-hour intervals.

In 2013, the first collared pronghorn began moving to the LEG on September 22th. The last collared pronghorn completed its migration on October 20th. During this first migration, after deploying the collars, there were two routes used to migrate from the summer range to the winter range. The most used route was to the east and northeast of Greer. This was the same corridor that the majority of the collared pronghorn used in 2014 as well. The map on page 10 documents the movement of all 8 pronghorn from September to November 2013.

(Continued on page 10)



SONORAN PRONGHORN

UPDATE



BY JILL BRIGHT AZ GAME & FISH
FEBRUARY 2016

Captive Breeding:

Cabeza Prieta Captive Breeding Pen

All the animals in the Cabeza pen are doing well. We have 5 fawns so far from 4 females.

Cabeza Pen

NORTH HALF		SOUTH HALF	
Adult Females	11	Adult Females	10
Yearling Females (b 2015)	5	Yearling Females (b 2015)	8
Adult Males	2	Adult Males	3
			1
Yearling Males (b 2015)	1	Yearling Males (b2015)	8
Fawns (born 2016)	3	Fawns (born 2016)	2
TOTAL	22	TOTAL	31
Total Pen	53		

Kofa Captive Breeding Pen

All the animals in the Kofa pen are doing well. We have documented 5 fawns so far from 3 does.

Kofa Pen

Adult Females	11
Yearling Females (b 2015)	8
Adult Males	2
Yearling Males (b 2015)	8
Fawns (born 2016)	5
TOTAL	34

Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR Herd: The radio-collared pronghorn are mostly in green areas. The females are beginning to break up into smaller groups for fawning. We documented 3 fawns on the latest telemetry flight.

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Wild Pronghorn KOFA Herd: Most of the pronghorn on Kofa have generally been using the same areas around King Valley on the Kofa NWR and Yuma Proving Ground. The buck that crossed Highway 95 has returned to King Valley and was observed with other pronghorn in the vicinity of Clancy Tank.

The doe that was north of King Valley near New Water Well has moved to the vicinity of the Eagletail Mountains. The doe from the Gila Bend Mountains has also moved near the Eagletail Mountains.

The newly released pronghorn have mostly been in the vicinity of the pen, and north and northwest of the pen in several intermingling groups, sometimes joined by previously released bucks. Two have joined other pronghorn and are south of Neversweat Water.

Wild Pronghorn BMGR East Herd: These newly released pronghorn initially stayed together in one or two groups, but with the onset of fawning season have broken up into several smaller groups. Most are south of the Saucedo Mountains, but two groups totaling 11 animals have moved north and are on East Tactical Range. One buck crossed Highway 85 and is north of the Crater Mountains.

There has been one mortality of a buck sometime around mid-February; a mortality signal was detected on the February 21 telemetry flight. The investigation suggests possible mountain lion predation however the length of time since the buck's death may have concealed some evidence. There were both coyote and mountain lion tracks and drag marks near the site.

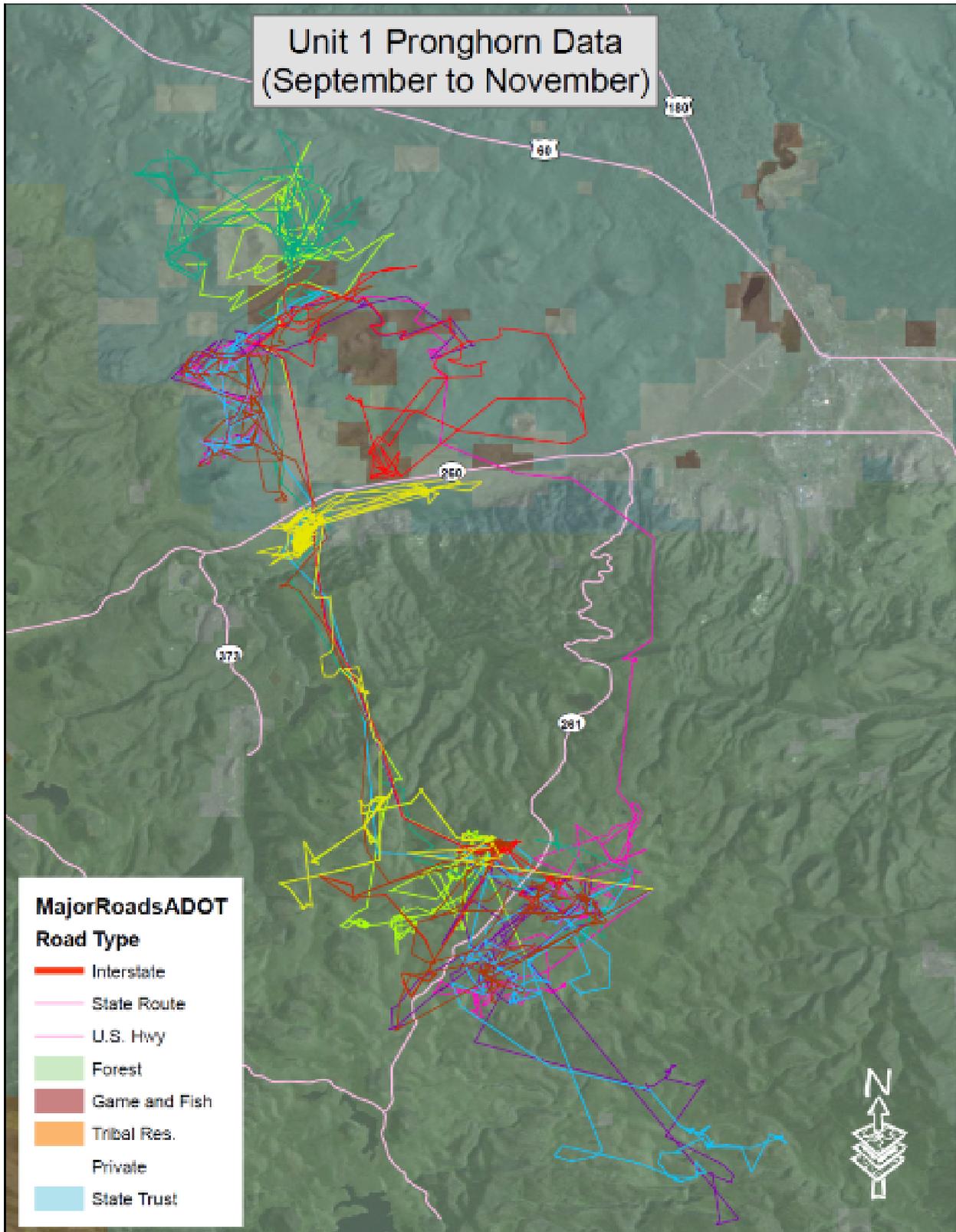
Water Projects: Three temporary waters on BMGR-East were put out in February.

Forage Enhancements: Nothing new to report.

Other Projects: Nothing new to report.

← PRONGHORN ON THE BABACOMARI RANCH BY LINDA KENNEDY →





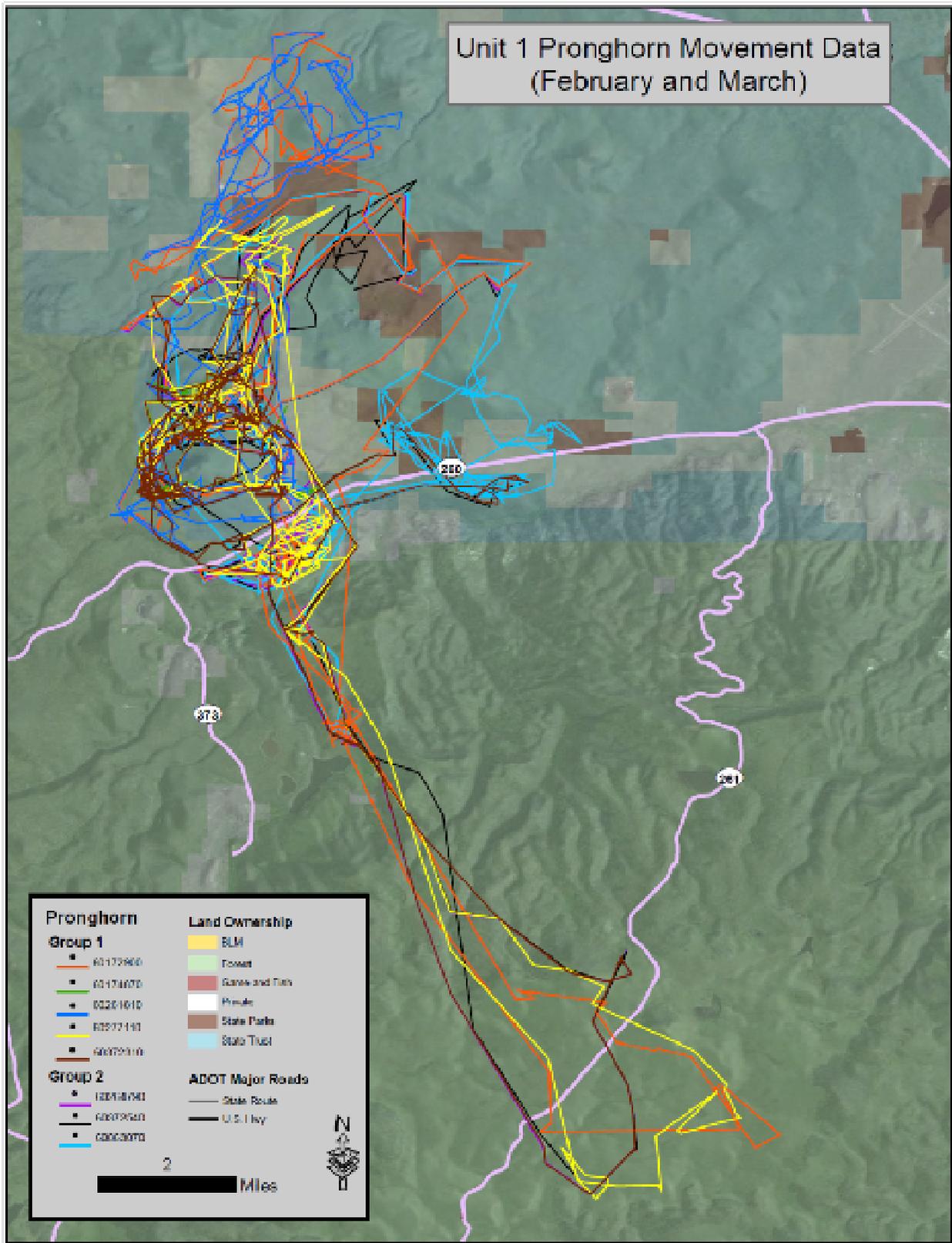
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Throughout the winters of 2013/2014, the collared pronghorn remained primarily north of Hwy 260. Some of the pronghorn would stage on the south side of Hwy 260, just north of the Little Colorado River (LCR) be-

fore making the move to the HEG. In most instances, the movement would take place in one days' time.

As you can see in the map on the next page, five of the collared pronghorn moved to the HEG in mid-February,

(Continued on page 11)



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but all of them returned to the LEG within a couple of days (4 of them returned immediately, due to a storm). All movements occurred between February 16, and February 27, 2014 which was much earlier than expected. There was very little snowpack that winter and we feel it allowed the pronghorn to migrate sooner than they

normally would.

One of the more notable revelations noted on this migration was the movement of two of the collared does from the LEG all the way through the HEG, south

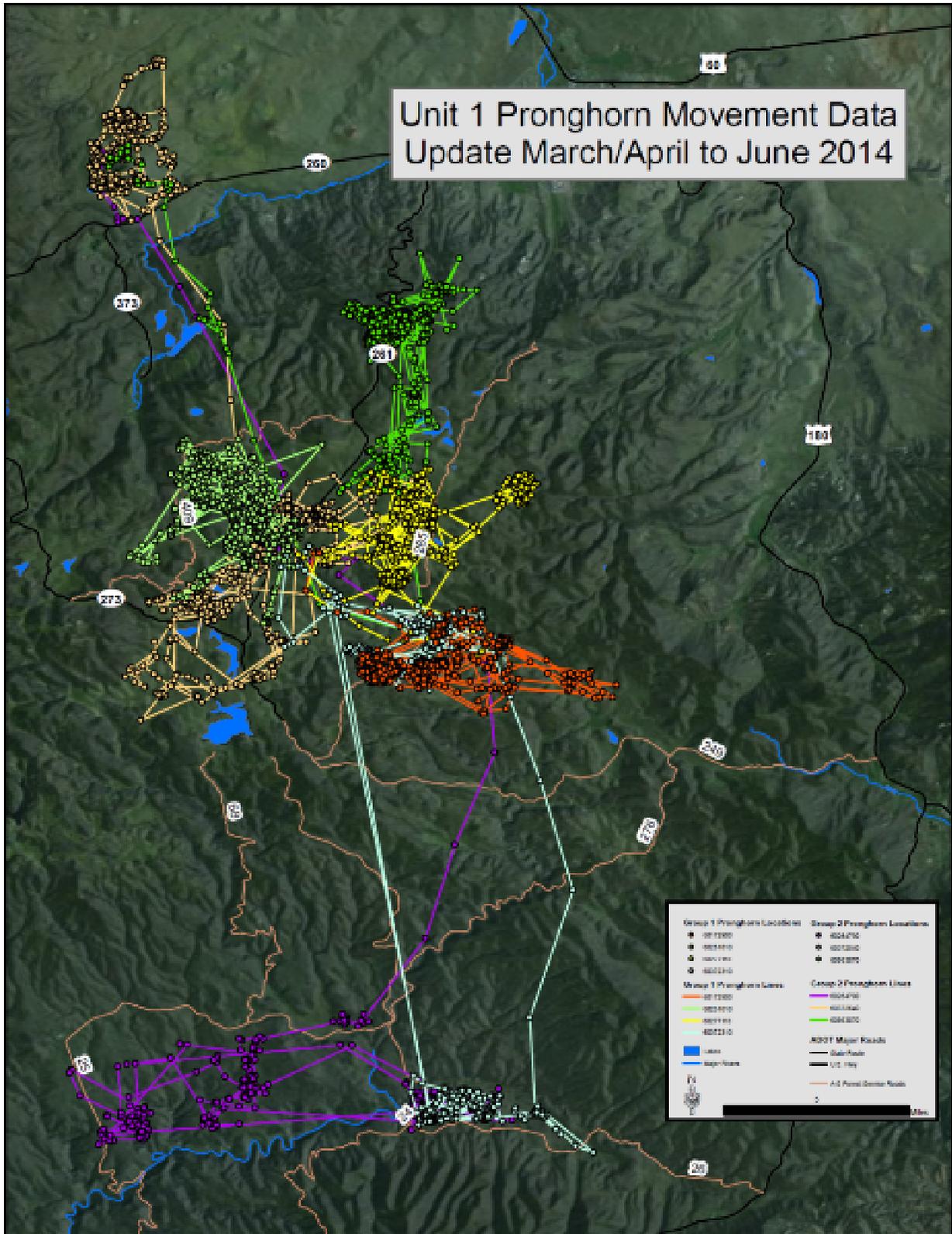
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across the East Fork of the Black River to the Rocky Prairie area in Unit 27. One of the does returned to the HEG shortly after and remained there the rest of the summer. The doe that stayed south also moved west across the East Fork and into the Kettleholes and PS

Ranch area. This movement answered many questions about the origin of the groups of pronghorn that have been observed in Rocky Prairie and the PS Ranch/Kettleholes areas and where they go during the winter. This same doe also returned to the Rocky Prairie area in

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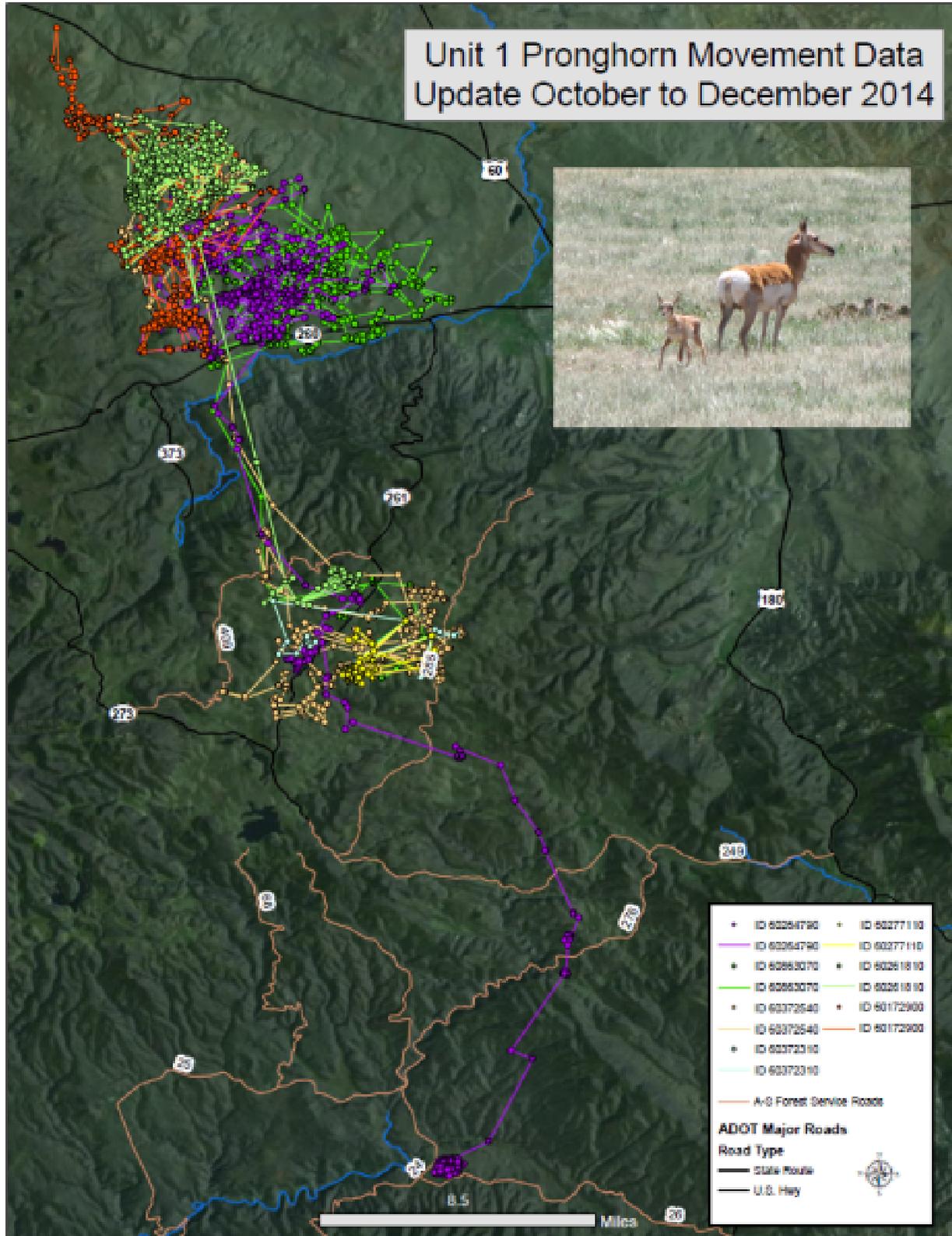
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the spring of 2015 and remained there all summer. Overall these movements between the HEG and Rocky Prairie took one day. Once the individual began to migrate, they completed it quickly. This makes sense as the individual would want to move through this forested

and rough habitat as quickly as possible to minimize risk of predation.

In the fall of 2014, the pronghorn left the HEG as early as August 24, 2014 with the rest following in October

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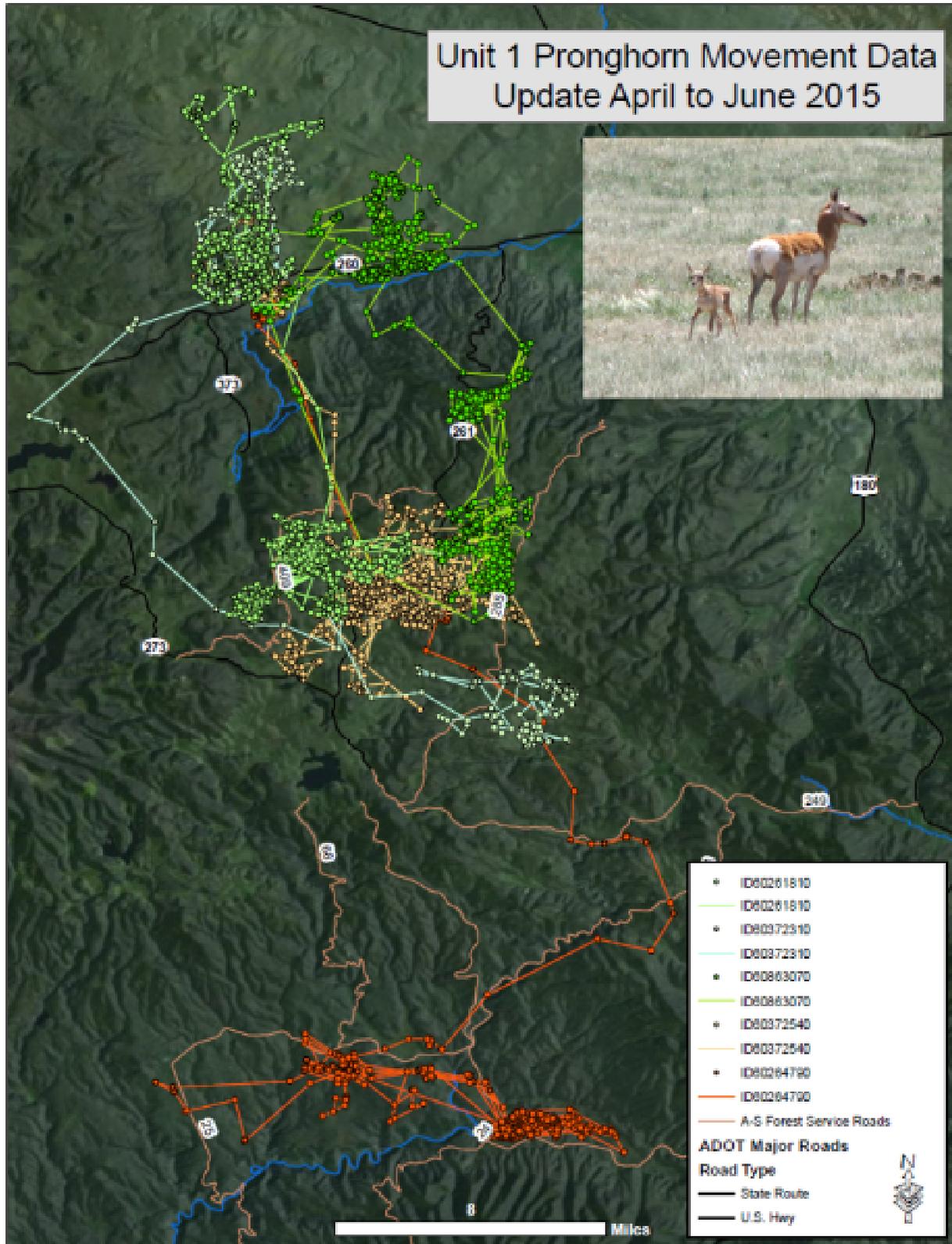
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migrating from the HEG. Most likely, the batteries died and were no longer able to send a location to the satellite. The region is still trying to determine if the collars can be recovered and re-furbished, but we have not been able to pick up VHF signals on the collars or even begin to know where to look for them.

Conclusions:

This project has been extremely successful in documenting the main migration corridor for pronghorn from the high elevation summer range to the low elevation winter range. Of course there were a couple of individuals that deviated from the primary route, but these are probably just anomalies. We were also successful in

(Continued on page 16)



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identifying where the Rocky Prairie and Kettleholes pronghorn originated from and where they go in the winter.

This project also helped us to identify not only where the pronghorn migrate, but when they move. They are obviously responsive to snowpack and green-up.

Several highway crossings were identified on Hwy 260 and it was documented that none of the collared pronghorn crossed Hwy 60 on the border with Unit 2C. Over the summer of 2015, the right-of-way fencing along Hwy 260 was replaced by ADOT and we were able to push for the placement of "goat bars" where the pronghorn had been crossing the highway. We were also able to document pronghorn crossing highways 261 and 273 (which was recently paved and the right-of-way fenced).

One of the secondary objectives was to attempt to identify fawning areas in the HEG. We are able to focus on areas where pronghorn were during the likely period of fawning, but we were unable to visually locate specific does and verify if she had a fawn with her to ground-

truth those locations and determine if it was where a doe had dropped a fawn or was raising a fawn. The collars did not have a strong enough VHF signal to triangulate the location from the ground and get a visual verification of the presence of a fawn with the collared doe.

Follow-up:

The next step in this project is to personally explore the migration corridor and look at risks to the corridor and opportunities for maintaining or improving this important area. Risks could be fences, dead trees that are either jack-strawed or could potentially fall and become barriers to pronghorn moving through this area, encroaching vegetation, or patches of heavy cover that could provide hiding cover for predators. This spring and summer we will be out identifying these issues then following up with the US Forest Service to evaluate our options. Hopefully we will be able to identify some projects that can be tackled during the summer project weekend in June!

This project would not have been possible without the support and funding of the Arizona Antelope Foundation! Thank you for recognizing the value of this project and for the support of our valuable resource!

HABITAT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

Once again, hunters have come through in a big way in their support of Arizona's wildlife.

A record \$2.4 million was raised during the 2015-16 funding cycle for the Habitat Partnership Committee (HPC), mostly through the auctioning or raffling of special big game permit-tags, although the committee strives to incorporate multiple funding sources to bring the maximum benefit to wildlife.

Proceeds are expected to fund more than 70 projects to improve habitat or management for big game species. Those same projects mutually benefit other wildlife as well.

"The biggest thing about (HPC) is the partnerships and how they benefit wildlife in this state," said Clay Crowder, committee coordinator and a wildlife specialist for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "The funds have to stay in the state, and they have to go back to help the individual species."

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission annually approves three special big game permit-tags, per species, that are awarded to nonprofit wildlife conservation organizations to auction or raffle. Every dollar generated

from these auctions and raffles comes back to the department and is used to benefit the species for which the special big game permit-tag is issued.

Funds are allocated through the HPC program by collaboration between the department and the organizations. Once project proposals are submitted, the department coordinates with the organizations, and funding is allocated to the projects that provide the most benefit to big game species in Arizona. For more information, visit <https://www.azgfd.com/Wildlife/HPC>.

"HPC builds partnerships with hunters, land management agencies, ranchers and wildlife conservation organizations," said James Ammons, Game and Fish commissioner and committee chairman. "It is encouraging to see Arizona's habitat and wildlife benefitting from these endeavors."

The AZ Antelope received 2 tags this year which sold at auction for \$40,000 and \$50,000.

The final antelope tag is currently being raffled by the Arizona Big Game Super Raffle. Be sure to see page 19 in this publication for information on how to buy your tickets!



SHORT SHOTS

A TRIUMPH FOR PRONGHORN



The AZ Game & Fish Department produced a fabulous video showcasing the tremendous progress that has been made with our 4-year project designed to save a diminishing herd of pronghorn antelope in southeastern Arizona.

You can view the video on the home page of our website. Or enter the following URL or search YouTube with the words "Triumph for Pronghorn"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb4pyyHzs6Y&feature=youtu.be>

2016 PROJECT SCHEDULE

- APRIL 15-16-17, HW 82 SONOITA**
- JUNE 25, SPRINGVILLE**
- AUGUST 13, UNIT 7**
- SEPTEMBER 24, BONITA**

Please note this schedule is tentative and subject to change. Please watch your mail and our website for updates to this schedule.

DON'T FORGET TO THINK OF THE AAF WHEN YOU SHOP

SIGN UP YOUR FRY'S CARD. FRY'S WILL DONATE A PORTION OF PURCHASES



Shop at AmazonSmile and Amazon will make a donation to:



SIGN UP FOR OUR ENEWS

It's easy to join our email list!

Just send your email address by text message:

Text **AZANTELOPE** to **22828** to get started.



Message and data rates may apply.

AAF PARTICIPATES IN AZ G&F EXPO

Thanks to all of our volunteers who helped spread our message: David Brown & Brianna, Betty & Glen Dickens, Pat Frawley, Brian George, Dave Laird, Jim McCasland, Joe Bill Pickrell, Al & Marsha Sue, Tice Supplee.



WWW.AZANTELOPE.ORG

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| 5. Nina Gammons, Payette, ID | 25. Adam Geottl, Cottonwood | 45. Mark Boswell, Mesa |
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| 17. James Stewart, Phoenix | 37. Keith Joyner, Scottsdale | 57. Robert Neal Bushong, Yuma |
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| 19. Dale Hislop, Calgary Canada | 39. Susan Pearce, Tucson | 59. Matt McNeil, Chandler |
| 20. Mick Rusing, Tucson | 40. Glen Dickens, Tucson | 60. Susan Morse, Jericho VT |

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| Linda Dightmon, Peoria | David Justice, Prescott | David L. Wolf, Flagstaff |
| Michael Domanico, Scottsdale | Keith Newlon, Sierra Vista | |
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**WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST LIFE MEMBER
SUSAN MORSE, JERICHO VT**