

# **OUR WORK ON ANDERSON MESA**

## **BY AAF LIFE MEMBER**

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This year's Anderson Mesa work project had quite a good turnout. There were approximately twenty-five workers – some newcomers and some old timers. It is always nice to see new faces and to meet new people. This June 9th project was put on by the AAF and the AWF.

The morning started out with the usual roundup and morning meeting. We covered what was in store for the day and what needed to be accomplished from start to finish. Richard Miller (AZGFD) and Henry Provencio (USFS) presented a map to us that had different colored regions of Anderson Mesa. These colored regions represented areas where pinyon junipers had been cleared, areas designated for future pinyon juniper clearing, areas of past, present, and future control burn sites, areas that have been seeded after burns, as well as, the Pronghorn travel corridor. This map showed the progress over the past five years and the intended goals for the future. Both Richard and Henry mentioned several times that the progress on the mesa is moving forward rapidly thanks to organizations like the AAF, AWF, ADA, AES, RMEF, the Diablo Trust, etc. Richard Miller said, "The Anderson Mesa Habitat projects have accomplished more than he ever thought he would see completed in his lifetime, let alone the past five years." What they are saying is that we do make a difference! People, families, organizations, AZGFD, USFS, ranchers, as well as, federal grants and special tag monies, all working together truly can make a difference.

At the meeting, they pointed out the new fences that were built in the area. The new fencing is well constructed and wildlife friendly. The four-strand fence has a bottom strand that is smooth wire 18 to 20 inches from the ground, two middle strands that are regular barbed wire, and a top strand that is a ¼ inch cable. Goat bars and jump bars are strategically placed on these fences. Plastic conduit pipe is used for both goat bars and jump bars. Goat bars are placed on the bottom strand while jump bars are placed on the top strand. The purpose of these bars is to help wildlife crawl under or jump over the fences. The bars are placed along fence lines where high concentrations of wildlife crossings occur. This new fencing replaced existing barbed wire fences.

Now it was time to go to work. Our chore for the day was to completely remove about three quarters of a mile of existing four strand barbwire fence and the fence posts. The majority of the work force set out to disassemble the fence. The fence crew removed the four strands of barbed wire from the posts. The next crew that followed was fence post removers. They used a nifty tool that removed the fence posts from the ground. The third crew separated the four strands of barbwire and cut it into lengths about 400 feet long. The last crew came along and rolled up the old fence wire with a fence roller. The gas-powered fence roller was attached to an all terrain cart. This cart had large tires on it that helped it through rough terrain. Ranchers then loaded all the old fence posts and rolls of barbwire in their trucks. It would be stored so that it could be used again someday on fence repair projects. When the fence removal was finished, we all headed back to the truck for some well deserved lunch and beverages.

After lunch, close to one o'clock, Henry Provencio gathered us together and invited those who were interested to go on a field trip. The three-hour field trip covered areas where upcoming wetland projects are planned. We started at Perry Lake, went to Indian Lake, Post Lake, and then continued to a few more wetlands. These lakes are seasonal reservoirs and only contain water in wet years or during rainy seasons. Each of these wetland areas will have a fence built around the perimeter to keep cattle out. The fences will prevent cattle from grazing on the grasses in the wetland areas and thus keep the cattle from disturbing the waterfowl during breeding and nesting seasons. The cattle step on the nests containing eggs or the young hatchlings destroying the hatch. The fenced wetland areas will be opened alternating years to the cattle and ranchers. The ranchers and the USFS are working together for the wildlife.

After the educational wetland excursion, it was time to head back to camp. We arrived just in time for some hot-off-the-griddle quesadillas that were just being passed around and disappearing fast. We grabbed cold beverages and chairs and sat down to indulge. After a hard days work it felt good to kick back and relax. The cook staff was busy preparing the steak feast. As always, the meal was awesome. Special thanks to the cooks – Jerry Guevin, Ken Langford, and Art Boswell.

