



PRONGHORN

Official Publication of the Arizona Antelope Foundation, Inc., a Non-Profit, Tax-Exempt Corporation ~ Volume 9, Number 4, Fall 2003

DOES THIS PRONGHORN'S PLIGHT DISTURB YOU?



YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

Work Projects - You can help the AAF prevent this from happening to more antelope by **volunteering** on one of our fence modification projects. Not only do these projects go a long way in helping antelope, they are a lot of fun. Your next opportunity is in Unit 21 on November 15th. Check our website at www.azantelope.org for details about this project and other ways you can help the AAF improve the pronghorn population.

Sportsman's Expo - We often hear many folks don't have the time to commit to **volunteering**... true enough on occasion, but many of those same people have the time to attend events or functions that are fun! We have an opportunity for you to do both at the same time! We need volunteers to help our Board man the AAF booth at the upcoming International Sportsmen's Expo, Feb. 19-22. Work one shift at our booth and you will be entitled to free admission to enjoy the many exhibits and attractions of this annual event. All you have to do is spend some time helping sell AAF merchandise and raffle tickets. If you'd like to get in free, email us at azantelope@cox.net for more information or to sign up for a shift.

Action Alerts - Another means by which you can impact antelope, help the cause of conservation and have your voice heard, is by watching our Action Alerts on the website, and responding to the given issues. It may be in the form of a letter, email, or phone call. We've got several issues on the "front burner" right now that need some Action by the AAF! Right now, some of these topics include the following: **1.** Comments to the BLM on their "Range of Alternatives", a land use plan impacting almost 1 million acres in NW Maricopa to Southern Yavapai County. The critical piece, managing our Unit 21 pronghorn herd. **2.** U.S. House Bill 1904, a bipartisan plan to manage our forests. We have wildlife and antelope in almost all of our forests in Arizona. **3.** An unfriendly wildlife "barrier fence" along the only remaining pronghorn migration corridor between Units 31/32, we need to write some folks to open this corridor! **4.** Grazing mismanagement in the Prescott National Forest, our grasslands are suffering, and in turn so are the pronghorn! Go to www.azantelope.org and click on the Action Alert tab for more information!

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In this parting message, I would like to review the accomplishments of the Arizona Antelope Foundation in this past year. For those who have accessed our website, www.azantelope.org, you have seen a great change in style and content. Many thanks to our webmaster!

We have had many members volunteering their time and effort to make our projects a success. This began in January in Unit 21, and continued throughout the year with projects in Cabeza Prieta, Sonoita, and Anderson Mesa. We participated with many governmental agencies and the Yuma Rod and Gun club to install a desert water for the benefit of the Sonoran Pronghorn. Our involvement in southern Arizona is a continuing work and more projects are planned in the area.. Of course, pronghorn in northern Arizona are not being neglected. Fence modification and tree cutting were part of two projects. The Anderson Mesa herd will be benefiting from \$40,000 for habitat improvements. Our two tags brought in a record \$105,000 for continuing work on various projects designed to enhance habitat in mostly northern Arizona.

Again this past year we have held three clinics with the aim of helping hunters have a successful harvest. Pronghorn tags have decreased in the past years due to declining number of pronghorn. Congratulations to hunters who have enjoyed the tag and success in the harvest.

I wish to thank our entire Board who has given much time and effort to make this a very successful year. My wish is for the Foundation to continue to have success and growth in the years to come.

Jerry Guevin

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.

2003 HUNTER CLINIC RECAP

Our 11th Annual Hunter's Clinics were once again successful! It was the second year in a row we sponsored 3 clinics over successive evenings in August...Tucson on the 12th, Phoenix on the 13th, and Flagstaff on the 14th. A total of 145 people participated over the three nights, a reflection of several factors, but most importantly due to another reduction in pronghorn permits available to hunters in 2003.

Tucson

We had 43 people participate in our clinic at the SCI International World Wildlife Museum. An excellent facility, not only for the amenities, but also from the standpoint of the gratuitous offer to utilize the room free of charge! We appreciate the offer to return in 2004. We signed up 17 new members at this clinic. We also had some great merchandise sales and rifle raffle sales. Our Treasurer's recap outlines the dollars earned here, and compares this year's efforts to last year. Our speakers included Jim Heffelfinger from Game & Fish, David Brown, Gavin Wellers, Glen Dickens, and Dennis Ward. Special thanks to Jim Heffelfinger for his hard work and effort at making the clinic a success! Thanks to AAF Board members David Brown, Dave Laird, Bill Hook, and Jim Unmacht who made the trip south.

Phoenix

We had 72 people participate in our clinic at the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge. This was our second year at the FOP and it went smoothly. Kudos to Mary Keebler and Bill Hook who took care of the registration and sign in tasks! Our speakers this year included Richard Ockenfels from Game & Fish, Jim McCasland, and Greg McBride. We signed up 30 new members. Our sales were down some on this night, in part because our raffle prizes were fewer than last year. Thanks to the following AAF Board members and others for their help and assistance: Jerry Guevin, Don Johnson, Jim McCasland, Richard Ockenfels, Dave Laird, Sue Foote, Dave Verhelst, Rick Michalek, Warren Leek, and Jim Unmacht.

Flagstaff

We had 30 people at the Elks Lodge for this clinic. This was our third year at this facility, and it went well. Bill Hook made it a trifecta by making the drive north...Thanks Bill! Our speakers this year included Richard Ockenfels again from Game & Fish, Steve Favour, Dave Daughtry, Bill McClean and John Goodwin. We signed up 18 new members. Sales were good, as we had a nice variety of raffle prizes. Special thanks to Jim Mehen for his hard work on this task! Thanks to Jerry Guevin, Bill McLean and Mike Morganthal and volunteers Rick Collins & Randy James for their help in making the Flagstaff Clinic successful! Thanks also to the following for their donations to our raffle: Rick Collins, Tim Williams, Horizon Shooters, and Jim Mehen.

Recap

Our attendance this year was reflective of the permits available. Interestingly enough, when comparing the clinic participants to the number of pronghorn tags, the percentage differences over the last three years relative to how many people attended yields hardly a difference. The participant to permits ratio however has proven to be steady over the last 3 years...16.96%, 16.63%, & 16.36%.

Year	Clinics	Permits	Attendees	New Members	Site Costs	General Raffle	Rifle Raffle	Net Income
2001	2	1072	182	78	\$1,317	\$1,820	No data	\$966
2002	3	1054	175	54	\$885	\$724	\$465	\$784
2003	3	886	145	55	\$785	\$440	\$440	TBA

Our largest expense items are the site costs and postage. Tucson is free of charge, Phoenix FOP was \$500, and Flagstaff FOE was \$285. Postage this year totaled \$500.

The new member winner of the tripod was Jim Lowrey of Prescott Valley, AZ

Many thanks to the volunteers, participants and everyone else involved!

Jim Unmacht



to Mops & Pops Family Car Wash of Flagstaff, Arizona for sponsoring our website this summer. If you'd like some advertising for your business on our website, call Jim Unmacht at 623-581-0534 to find out how you can become a sponsor.

AAF Member Jim Boyd's 1998 Antelope Hunt

My long-time hunting buddy John Fortney and I were lucky enough to get drawn in 1998 for the Arizona fall Antelope hunt. I say lucky because we have only been putting in for this hunt for 8 years without getting drawn. In 1990, I had been drawn in unit 5B and with the help of John, I harvested a nice buck antelope that scored 78 5/8 net on the first day of the hunt. I had been putting in for 12 years before getting drawn for that first hunt. John and I had never hunted antelope before and we learned a lot about hunting them on that first trip. I attended the annual Arizona Antelope Association fall hunting seminar to learn as much as I could about hunting antelope prior to that hunt. At the seminar, I met a lot of nice and knowledgeable people during the evening and saw a lot of beautiful antelope mounts. In 1998, John put in for a tag with me, so we had 2 of the 40 available tags in our unit!

John and I went scouting on several occasions, starting at one end of the unit and working our way to the other end to try and locate herds. On the second trip, we met several ranchers in the area and introduced ourselves. We prefer to scout up our own game, but we figured that it wouldn't be a bad move in case we came up empty. All of the ranchers we met were very friendly and pointed us in the direction of antelope herds that they knew of on their private and leased land.

During the week of the hunt, John and I spent three full days of scouting from Tuesday to Thursday prior to the beginning of our four day hunt. We spotted many animals with long range binoculars on top of tripods and spent the afternoon of the last scouting day planning our first morning hunt. We were on top of a small knoll, about 150 feet higher than the surrounding countryside looking out over a 3-mile by 2-mile natural pasture. During the day, we had glassed-up four different small herds of animals from our little mountaintop perch. We had the sun at our back when it came up in the morning and the antelope seemed to light up when the sun rose, so they were easy to spot.

We were planning how we would hunt the next morning when suddenly a buck and four does came into view directly below us in a small draw. They fed right over to the base of our hill and bedded down for a late morning nap. We were about 75 yards from the buck and does and they had no idea we were just above them. There was one waterhole in this large pasture and John and I decided we would walk into the area under the cover of darkness and plant ourselves near the dam that held back the water of the 50-foot diameter waterhole. There would be no way to stalk into the open field from the top of our knoll (that we glassed from the morning before) without every antelope in the country knowing about it. We knew that we had to meet the antelope on their turf, which would not be easy, but we had watched as a herd with several nice bucks came to the waterhole, drank and then went out into the main pasture and bedded down for the morning the day before our hunt.

About mid-morning on the day before the hunt, we spotted a nice buck by a fence line near a small ranch road that bisected the field. We watched him feed by himself for quite some time, and then a pickup came down the main road three miles away from us and turned onto a small two-track road where the antelope was grazing. The truck came down the road slowly and the antelope didn't move away. The truck came up to about 50 yards from the nice buck and came to a stop. The antelope surely wouldn't do that the next day when the season started, would he? Anyway, the driver looked out his window for a few minutes, then backed up and drove away.

Farther out in the prairie, we watched as a coyote made a run at a couple of doe antelope. Now, I don't really know how fast a coyote can run, but it was certainly no match for the speedy antelope. The antelope would cruise across the prairie and the coyote would be following about twenty yards behind. As soon as it would get a little closer, the antelope just kicked it up a notch and was gone. This happened several times, with the antelope doe just teasing the coyote by letting him get close, only to be blown away by another burst of speed from the antelope. After about twenty minutes of this exercise, the very tired looking coyote finally gave up the chase, turned and walked the opposite direction. I presume it went on looking for slower prey. John and I finally left our spot and slipped back down the opposite side of the knoll and returned to camp.

Opening morning of the season came very early for John and I as neither of us could sleep very well. We got up at about 3:30am and packed up our gear. We left camp and started walking under the cover of darkness and moonlight and needed to travel about 2 miles. It was about forty-five minutes later when we reached our water hole destination. We took up our position and lay down to wait for dawn. The anticipation was great as we looked up at the millions (or is that billions) of

stars in the sky. John and I have hunted for years together and have been through a lot of hunting situations and we always enjoy the hunt itself more than the actual shot. This night, the stars were really shining brightly as we waited for dawn. It is always a time where you stop and think just how insignificant we are in the grand scheme of things. The September air started to get cooler as sun-up was on its way. About twenty minutes before first light, John and I caught a glimpse of movement in the moonlight. It was a herd of antelope moving by the waterhole just a few yards away from us. We had gotten very close to the water hole (perhaps too close) and would surely be seen or smelled. We lay there as quietly as we could for a few minutes and the antelope just moved off into the distance. We were very lucky, but the next question was would the animals move too far off before first light or not? Our answer came pretty quickly as the prairie started to take shape in the first light of dawn. As soon as we could see through the binoculars, we could see multiple antelope about 250 yards in front of us. We spotted 4 bucks in the herd and quickly decided which ones we would like to take. The next question was how we were going to accomplish this task. We briefly talked and it was decided that we would both get ready and John would shoot first since I had killed an antelope on the previous hunt. After his shot, I would then try to shoot the one I had picked out before they realized what was happening. We figured the odds of getting both of these antelope were very slim, but at least we had a fairly solid plan of attack. We both got ready and John said he was ready to shoot. I thought I was pretty much ready (to hear John's gun go off) while he was counting down the shot, but when John's trusty 6mm Remington went off, I flinched big time. As soon as I could get back on my buck and get still, I squeezed off a round from my 7mm Remington magnum. The recoil off of the bipod was pretty fierce and a lot of dust kicked up off the prairie due to having a recoil arrester on the gun, but when the gun settled back down on terra firma and I could see through the scope, I saw the legs of my buck up in the air and he was down.

Incredibly, John and I had taken both bucks with one shot each within about 1 second of each other. Needless to say, we were both beyond excited. It was barely first light of the opening morning of our hunt and our hunt was over. As we walked toward our bucks, John and I reflected on how all of the preseason scouting had really paid off for us. Our antelope were about 100 yards apart, and we walked to mine first. It was a great buck with a beautifully symmetrical set of horns and long prongs. It certainly looked like it would score in the high 70's or low 80's. After the required drying time, it was officially scored at 80 1/8, just making the B&C book. John's buck was also a very nice buck with good length but the prongs were a bit shorter and were beat up from horning brush in the area. John said it was a perfect buck for him as it was his first antelope and as he has always told me no matter what we are hunting, "you can't eat the horns".

All in all, it was a great hunt with a great friend and one I will remember and cherish forever. All I have to do is look up on the wall and see the mounted trophy and I can remember every minute of that hunt. I will continue to put in for another chance to hunt one of Arizona's greatest trophy animals, as they are always memorable experiences. Thanks to the Arizona Game and Fish Department and with the help of the many Arizona Antelope Foundation members and volunteers, I hope we will all be able to hunt these incredible animals throughout our lives and pass on the tradition to our children. I hope that we can save enough habitat in Arizona for these animals to live and prosper forever.



PRONGHORN TRANSPLANT #49

In 1997, the AZ Game & Fish Department transplanted a number of pronghorn into the Cedar Flat area of Unit 6A. One of those animals was a young buck, given an ear tag with the # 49. This animal grew into a fine mature buck! On October 4, 2003, my son and I found his remains in the Pine Grove Quiet Area north of Mormon Lake in Unit 6A on the junior antlerless elk hunt. Ironically the day before a couple miles further west, I found a pronghorn skull in the woods...this was supposed to be an elk hunt!

What was this “prairie ghost” doing in the woods? Was he migrating south from Anderson Mesa? Was he wounded from the previous week’s pronghorn hunt and never found? Had he been overtaken by predators? Was he simply trying to move into the next woodland meadow, maybe into the not too distant Antelope Park?

We’ll never know - #49’s carcass was too decomposed to determine the exact cause of death. We can only hope though that he was able to pass on his genes to a pronghorn population that needed them!

I’ll report in the next Pronghorn what #49 would’ve scored. I can tell you now though; he would’ve been a great trophy for any hunter!
Jim Unmacht



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COUNCIL PROPOSING A “CONSERVATION BONUS POINT” FOR VOLUNTEER WORK

The WCC established a committee this past August, to look into the possibility of recommending to the Game & Fish Commission a Conservation Bonus Point program. The committee’s proposal will be reviewed at the November WCC meeting. The highlights of the proposal would allow volunteers to accumulate work hours on conservation projects in order to earn a “permanent” Conservation Bonus Point. This is similar in nature to the Hunter Safety Bonus Point currently in existence.

In principle, a volunteer would be required to work at least 48 hours on approved conservation projects, i.e.; like our AAF fencing projects. Once the volunteer has accumulated 48 hours, they would then be required to submit the appropriate paperwork to Game & Fish in order to qualify for the point. A nominal fee is being recommended to cover administrative costs. If the application is approved, the volunteer will receive a permanent Conservation Bonus Point towards future big game draws. The committee is also recommending there be no limit on the number of these bonus points a volunteer could earn over the course of their lifetime, but they would be limited to one per year.

Stay tuned as the AZ Game & Fish Department studies the feasibility of this proposal.

ANDERSON MESA TOUR REPORT

(AAF Past President David Brown's comments to Rick Miller from AZGFD following his July 2003 visit)

Good tour yesterday, and I appreciate the invite from the Diablo Trust along with you and Tom taking us to see the effects of the "Lizard Fire." Don Johnson and I saw and learned much. It is too bad that the USFS doesn't go on more of these things.

Looking at things first hand is always beneficial as is listening to the input of the various folks present. I especially appreciated Jack Metzger's comments as he and his sister have such a long term institutional perspective when it comes to evaluating changing conditions on the Mesa. I also enjoyed the drive to and around the buffalo ranch, partially because it brought back so many memories, but also because it confirmed some opinions from last year's visit.

Although the massive effects of drought and bark beetle infestations make any evaluation of the various causes effecting present conditions difficult to evaluate, I did come away with some definite impressions, and some ideas as to how we might proceed.

Despite the drought, I think that conditions are gradually improving on the buffalo ranch (the new water development was also an improvement on some of the older designs). Less is definitely better than more, and it may be desirable to return to the original purpose of managing Raymond Ranch as winter pronghorn range, and maintain the bison herd at about 25 to 30 head to serve as a public showplace rather than as a producer of "red meat." You might even want to consider returning prairie dogs to Koger pasture and managing the ranch as a grassland showplace, charging admission to visit there. The range conditions on the ranches east and north of the buffalo ranch looked about as I had remembered them in the 1970s and 80s.

I also feel that progress is being made on Anderson Mesa proper despite the drought. The variety of forbs appears to have improved over last year and one can actually see some progress in the juniper removal effort. Much, much more is of course needed, but I felt hopeful since all of the problems up there are being addressed other than those attributable to long term drought.

I was of course appalled by the condition of the cliff rose off of the mesa and appreciate Jack sharing his concerns. Drought is obviously a principal factor at work here, but I thought the amount of elk sign in this area was also excessive given the condition of the browse. What was also discouraging, and difficult to evaluate, was the condition of the p-j community between the rim and the buffalo ranch. I had always remembered this area (Flying M) as being in better condition than the buffalo ranch, but the grass and other vegetative cover in this area now appeared in poorer condition. Drought is undoubtedly at work here, and I wonder if past HRM applications in this area may have been less than successful. I took Alan Savory's course myself, and I was so impressed with his confidence that I went to Africa to see some of the applications there first hand. What I found out was that "short-duration grazing," as they originally called it, worked rather well in areas of South Africa where they had a mean annual rainfall of 15-16 inches and not a lot of competition from game. When applied in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) it was less successful, and Savory himself went broke trying to make it work during a drought period. The problem with SGM or HRM was periodic drought, and according to the local range conservationists and ranchers who I talked to, "high-intensity" or "short-duration" grazing can be disastrous during drought periods, unless one has large reserves of ungrazed or lightly grazed pastures. This, as you know, also appears to have been the case in Arizona and New Mexico (Red Hill e.g.). I don't know if this is actually the case below Anderson Mesa, but hopefully, improved precipitation and adjustments in grazing schedules will reverse what appears to be a downward trend in this area.

The Lizard fire was also extremely interesting as it demonstrated that old growth p-j can and will burn during the spring and early summer. I don't know if I would have believed it if I had not seen it. Such fires are very difficult to replicate of course in that they require drought conditions, high winds, a fairly herbaceous ground cover (the cliff rose and grasses in the unburned areas were much more robust than on the Flying M). We need to consider this burn as a research area and evaluate it condition annually for the next several years. My guess is that it will be receiving heavy game use within shortly after the next rainy season. We now need to somehow initiate a spring burn on the Mesa proper so that we can evaluate the effects of fire on a high elevation grassland site.

All in all, a very productive day.

David Brown

Footnote...following the Lizard Fire, the AAF allocated \$4000 in tag fund money to help reseed the burned prairie.



SHORT SHOTS

BIG GAME BONUS POINT RULE CHANGE

The Game & Fish Commission is proposing a rule change to allow hunters to purchase one bonus point per species per season, and also to allow others to have their bonus points reinstated if they are unable to use their tags because of an emergency mobilization. A comment period will commence on October 31st, and you can call 602-789-3271 or send an email to rulemaking@gf.state.az.us.

The first change would allow a hunter to buy a bonus point for a specific species, paying the same as a hunter desiring a hunt-permit tag, but opting out of the draw for that given year. This is a similar provision used in other states.

The second change would establish a provision to allow military personnel or public agency employees unable to use their hunt-permit tag due to a declared national or state emergency, to turn it in to the Department, and have their bonus points restored for future draws

BELLEMONT SHOOTING RANGE BACK ON TARGET!

US District Judge Martone ruled on October 14th that the landowners residing several miles from the proposed Bellemont range site along with a developer constructing a residential subdivision along the Bellemont boundaries, failed to substantiate their claims that the US Forest Service "acted arbitrarily and capriciously in reaching its decision" to allow the shooting facility to be developed by AZ Game & Fish.

Game & Fish Director Duane Shroufe was quoted as saying..." We are pleased with the decision. This helps clear the way for the AZ Game & Fish Department and Commission to move ahead with plans to provide a safe, high quality shooting facility in Northern Arizona."

Bellemont has been on the drawing board since 1996, with the current site selected in 1998. The environmental assessment took 2 years to complete, and the results were released by the Forest Service in September of 2000. The lawsuit in question temporarily halted the land exchange and the special use permit process, but now the process can continue.

This is great news for shooters and hunters in Northern AZ!

PROPOSED 2004 BOARD OF DIRECTORS VOTING AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING NOVEMBER 10TH PHOENIX ZOO 6:30 PM

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GOOD GUN FOUNDATION CLEAN-UP

Kudos to AAF members Brian Taylor and Ginny Ferland for representing our organization at the Dosie Pit Clean up project northwest of Prescott on September 20th. This was the first project sponsored by the Good Gun Foundation, and was part of the National Public Lands Day activities. They had a good time and met a lot of new people. There were approximately 50 people who removed trash, old vehicle parts, and rifle and shotgun casings. There were a number of sponsors that provided various items: bottled water, signs, tow truck, dozier, etc. This clean up project was not only intended to clean up a large amount of trash, but also to help raise awareness of gun owners doing something positive in their community. You can read more about the project and the Good Gun Foundation at www.goodgun.org.



SHORT SHOTS

AZ GAME AND FISH WATER DEVELOPMENT TEAM

On September 20th, Game & Fish personnel Mike Demlong and Fred Bloom presented their Final Report on Arizona's wildlife water developments. Since the first "Arizona guzzler" in 1946, the Game & Fish Department has constructed over 800 wildlife water developments. This comprehensive report establishes the framework and process necessary to not only prioritize the needs and issues of these critical water developments, but the criteria for future maintenance, construction and new development. Each Region will have a designated Wildlife Manager on the Water Development Team to help establish the coming year's priorities. The first meeting will take place in a few weeks, and lay the groundwork for 2004.

For more details, contact Mike Demlong 602-789-3483 or Fred Bloom 602-789-3475 at Game & Fish Headquarters in Phoenix.

RIFLE RAFFLE

Weatherby Ultra Lightweight 257 Mag
Synthetic Gray Stock with Stainless Steel
Fluted Barrel
4.5 x 14 Zeiss Scope
Harris Bipod & Gun Case



TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
Call any of the Board Members listed in
this publication for your tickets

\$10 per ticket or 3 for \$25
Winner will be drawn at the 2004
Sportsman's Expo.
Need not be present to win.

SPECIAL PRONGHORN ANTELOPE LICENSE-TAG FUND PROJECTS

These are the projects chosen by the AAF to be funded by our 2003 Auction Tags.

Project	Cost
Eval-Observation Rate-Fall Pronghorn Surveys	\$1,000
Mustang Mountain Water Development	3,224
Big Game Transport Trailer Repair	2,750
Seeding in Lizard & Mormon Wildfires	4,000
Cedar Rim Habitat Improvement	4,200
Winter Tank Grassland Maintenance	4,220
213 Grassland Maintenance	4,275
Nameless Grassland Maintenance	4,320
Fawning Cover & Population Evaluation	5,645
Unit 21 Fawn Hiding Cover Project	8,290
Anderson Mesa/Post Lake Habitat Restoration	8,438
Woolhouse Habitat Juniper Removal (phase 2)	8,750
Grassland Restoration in Units 5A & 5B	36,000
TOTAL	\$96,112