



PRONGHORN

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Auction Tag Breaks Record!

Two special Arizona Antelope tags were recently auctioned for record sums. On March 8th at the 20th Annual AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society banquet, Dr. James Myers from Tennessee won the first tag with a winning bid of \$40,000. On March 15th at the 2nd Annual AZ Elk Society Banquet, Robert Peterson from California outbid all others paying a record-breaking \$65,000 for the second coveted tag. This was the eleventh time Mr. Peterson purchased this tag for the benefit of Arizona pronghorn.

We want to extend our thanks to these generous sportsmen. The proceeds will go a long way in perpetuating the pronghorn in Arizona.

Life Member #1

Also at the recent AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society Banquet, we auctioned off our first Life Membership. Art Pierce won the right to be called Life Member #1 with the winning bid of \$1300. Our new membership category is off to a great start with 4 Life Members on the rolls. We'd love to see your name added to the list, too! Your generous tax deductible gift will help ensure our efforts continue into the future. Visit our website, www.azantelope.org, or contact one of the board members listed in this publication for details.

Member Trophy Gallery

We have added a new feature to our website and want you to share your hunting successes with all of our members. Pictures from your hunts of any game species can be submitted to the AAF for posting in our Trophy Gallery. All photos will be reviewed for content. Do not send photos with a lot of blood, tongues hanging out, or open body cavities. Photos should show respect for the animal and be taken in a natural setting. We reserve the right to decide which photos may be edited and/or suitable for posting on the AAF website.

All digital photos should be e-mailed in .jpg, jpeg, or .gif formats to the e-mail address listed below. We prefer to receive digital photos sized at 640 x 480 pixels but if you do not have the tools to resize, just send them and we'll do the best that we can with what you submit.

If you do not have a digital camera, photos in any standard print format may be mailed to the address shown below. If suitable for posting, we will scan them into a format that can be used on our website. If you send print photos and want the photos returned, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and they will be mailed back after scanning.

INFORMATION TO SEND WITH YOUR PHOTOS: Hunter's name, where hunt took place (Unit #), month and year of hunt, weapon information (bow, rifle, etc.), name of guide service (if used), comment (i.e. First Antelope, etc.)

WHERE TO SEND YOUR PHOTOS: Email digital images to the Pronghorn editor at hunttheworld@cox.net
Mail print images to AAF Trophy Gallery, P.O.Box 15501, Phoenix, AZ 85060-5501

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Jim & Tracy Unmacht for the fine work in renewing our efforts with the "Pronghorn". We realize that to have a vibrant organization, we need to reach out to our members with articles of interest and news.

I have introduced a monthly report on the state of antelope in the six regions of Arizona. This keeps your board abreast of developments that may affect decisions that are taken in our quest for the conservation of pronghorn in our state.

Our project season is well under way with two projects under our belt already. The first one in the Dugas area was well attended with 50 people willing to work hard modifying fences. The second, just south of Sonoita saw fewer people, but the reward of a spaghetti supper spurred the troops on. Three miles of fences saw their lower strand raised to a minimum of 18 inches above the ground. This is done so that antelope may scoot under the fence in order to move from pasture to pasture. Our next project will be on Anderson Mesa the weekend of May 17. A flyer will be mailed with details of the camping area and work to be performed.

As you are probably aware, there is controversy over the gunning of coyotes in various areas of the state, especially Anderson Mesa. Coyote predation is one of many causes for the decline of pronghorn on the mesa. The various causes are being addressed by the Adaptive Management Plan that has been worked on and implemented for the past couple of years. We must understand that efforts to resolve these problems take time and there are no easy solutions. The reduction of predators is but one piece to the puzzle. If you have any questions about these issues, give us a call.

See you all at the next project!

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 hunttheworld@cox.net.



WHY NOT WYOMING?

By David E. Brown

Part 1

Our story begins at Tesky's Café in Mayer, Arizona. Several of us in the Arizona Antelope Foundation had just finished helping the game department build a holding corral to capture pronghorn on the Fain Ranch in Prescott Valley. The grasslands around Prescott have been developing rapidly of late, and the pronghorn had to be relocated before their numbers withered away to nothing as had recently happened to the nearby "Willow Lake herd." While most of us were bemoaning the increasingly dire status of pronghorn in Arizona, I intently listened to Bill McLean describe his most recent pronghorn hunt near Gillette, Wyoming. Not only had Bill enjoyed his hunt, he

spoke glowingly of the whole Wyoming experience. The people up there, he said, actually liked antelope hunters and they went out of their way to make his hunt a pleasant one. He now hunts in Wyoming nearly every year.

Late last winter, when a hunter's thoughts turn to hunt applications and drawings, and realizing that there was virtually no chance of getting drawn for a pronghorn permit in Arizona, I remembered Bill's comments about Wyoming. After consulting with my hunting partner Thom Hulen, we both agreed that hunting pronghorn in Wyoming would not only be fun, it would be good insurance. The current spate of winter droughts had so reduced Arizona's deer numbers that even fewer deer permits were likely to be available in 2002 than the year before when many of our friends either failed to draw or permit or came home empty-handed. With both pronghorn and deer permits being so scarce, chances were good that neither of us would hunt hoofed game in Arizona this year.

A visit to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's web site-- <http://gf.state.wy.us> -- removed all doubt as to the wisdom of our decision to head northward. Wyoming would probably issue about 40,000 pronghorn permits in 2002, and if past statistics held true, about half of the hunters would be residents of other states. The next morning Thom called the toll-free number (1-800- 842-1934) in Cheyenne, and asked that we be put on the mailing list for the 2002 hunt applications.

While we waited for the new hunt regulations to be adopted and mailed, I did a little research on Wyoming's pronghorn situation. Wyoming was definitely the pronghorn state. With a pronghorn population estimate of 450,000, the number of pronghorn nearly equaled the state's human population. What was more, the "Equality" state could claim to be home to more than half of the continent's prairie goats. Wyoming's average annual harvest of 30,000 plus pronghorn was nearly three times the number of all of the antelope in Arizona. Best of all, the Wyoming game department issued hunt permits that were also licenses thereby reducing both the cost and amount of paper required to hunt there.

My only real concern now was access. Bill McLean, on his first trip to Wyoming, had gone up a week early and befriended a rancher who gave him access to his property. I didn't know any ranchers, and we didn't have enough time to go up prior to the season and find someone that would let us hunt. But I had been good friends with Don Peterson when I lived in Tucson in the early 1960's. Don was a University of Arizona graduate in range management, who had worked for the Bureau of Land Management for more than 30 years. Rumor was that he had retired in Newcastle, Wyoming. Two minutes after dialing "operator assistance," I was talking to Don and his wife Pat as if we were all still living in The Old Pueblo.

"No problem," Don said. "Put in for Unit 7 west of town, and I will scout around for you. My boy and I have hunted there a number of times, and there are lots of antelope. Access is not too difficult as there is quite a bit of Bankhead-Jones and BLM land in that unit. You won't have any trouble finding a place to hunt unless it rains and you can't get off the highway."

When our nonresident hunt regulations and application forms arrived in March, Thom and I were ready. Unit 7 was west of Newcastle and south of Upton, just as Don had said, and 400 "any antelope" permits were available in a drawing system very similar to Arizona's. The time frame for sending in an application was much earlier, however--January 1 through March 15. Wyoming's antelope season opened on October 1, a Tuesday, and ran until the 15th. The non-resident application fee was \$195.00, which, along with a \$10.00 application fee covered the price of both the license and tag. Youth permits were \$120 plus a \$10 application fee. After examining a summary of the draw odds for the previous year, we just knew that we were going pronghorn hunting in 2002.

The Tuesday opening allowed us to leave at a reasonable hour on Saturday morning and to only have to take one week off from work. Nor is a two day truck drive as tiring as it used to be; Thom's full-size Chevrolet 1500 saw to that. By 10:00 a.m. we were having ham and eggs at Miz Zips in Flagstaff—a favorite eatery of mine since I first came to Arizona in 1961. The breakfast was so traditional, and so reasonably priced, that we vowed to avoid eating at chain restaurants for the entire trip. Knowing that we were in pronghorn habitat, and had been ever since Sunset Lookout off Interstate 17, also helped while away the time. Arizona's summer rains, while tardy in coming, had finally arrived and we were able to collect and identify several kinds of newly erupting wild-flowers along the highway, thus familiarizing ourselves with our quarry's fare—if not in Wyoming, at least in Arizona. Traveling through the Indian country on the way to Moab, we couldn't help but wonder how long ago it had been when pronghorn roamed these now barren mesas and valleys. Night caught us in Rifle, Colorado, and a “mom and pop” motel managed by an avaricious Russian couple, intent on becoming overnight capitalists. But, the hour was late, and our disgruntlement was soon erased by a \$10 rib-eye steak and baked potato special at a nearby eatery. The following day, after an attractive drive through the changing colors of the mountain brush south of Craig, Colorado, we entered Wyoming at Baggs. From then on, the towns had names like Creston, Rawlins and Casper, and, after entering Wyoming's “Red Desert,” pronghorn were nearly always in sight. The rut was on, and nearly every band had a herd buck—some of them pretty good ones. By the time we got to northeastern Wyoming our adrenalin levels, already up, took another major surge when we saw several nice bucks while driving through Unit 7. Although not as big as some Arizona specimens, neither were Wyoming bucks the dinks that some people had described to us.

Getting into town early on Sunday night was fortuitous as it allowed us to straighten out some motel reservation snafus. Our tardiness in this regard was not easily rectified as every motel in town was booked solid for the hunting season and we would eventually have to change rooms three times during our stay. But being a day early also gave us a chance to meet with Don, who I found out was not in the best of health. Suffering from a variety of ailments, he had forgone putting in for a pronghorn tag himself, and would dedicate his time to seeing that we had a productive hunt. There were other glitches—a more careful reading of the regulations showed that we needed to purchase a \$10.00 conservation stamp to validate our license-tags, and that at least one article of fluorescent orange had to be worn while hunting. Fortunately we were able to comply with these requirements with a minimum of fuss—thanks to the helpfulness of Don and the local citizenry who made us feel as if we were right at home.

Having a day to scout was also a great benefit. Not only did we now have time to stop by the local offices of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the U. S. Forest Service for last minute advice and maps of Thunder Basin National Grassland, we had time to go out and look at the country that we would actually be hunting. Although the National Grassland contained more than 500,000 acres of public land, the actual boundaries were complex with many private and state in-holdings. Many of the BLM lands were “checker-boarded,” and in some places we needed a GPS unit to locate the actual land status. This complexity is due to the national grasslands consisting of lands never deemed suitable for homesteading, and that was later augmented by abandoned and worn out farms being reverted to federal ownership under the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1934. Nonetheless, with Don's help and the Forest Service maps, we were able to locate several promising hunt locales—all of them having pronghorn.

Not only did we find plenty of pronghorn, we saw several mule deer bucks, one of which was a real dandy. The day before the season was balmy and warm, with just a stiff breeze blowing from time to time. Beautiful weather. Range conditions appeared to be generally good to acceptable, the country being clothed mostly in wheatgrass, sage, and other Great Basin species along with some blue grama. That both sagehens and sharptails were present indicated that the Forest Service was doing a decent job of managing the allotments, and all of the pronghorn appeared in fit condition—but then they almost always do. No snow had yet fallen, and the pronghorn were in small bands, each group having a herd buck with one or more other bucks hanging around the periphery.

Don was a champ and met us each morning for breakfast at Newcastle's chief eatery, a converted flour mill. I just wish the weather had been half as accommodating. By five a.m. on opening day, a steady drizzle was falling and our balmy day of scouting was replaced by one of gloom. But Don told us not to worry, that this was just Wyoming weather, and that everything could change in an hour. And did it ever. On our way out of town we had rain, we had drizzle, we had hail, and we had snow, but mostly we had wind gusts, some of them enough to knock you off your feet! No wonder Wyoming is the pronghorn capitol of the world—no tree can get a foothold out on those plains. Even the deer we saw were forced to use the terrain for cover as there was nothing larger than sagebrush to hide them.

Read the exciting conclusion to David Brown's Wyoming hunt in the next Pronghorn!

WCC Highway Cleanup

On April 19, approximately 30 WCC volunteers literally hit the dirt and cleaned the New River/I-17 interchange and a stretch south along the freeway. Dozens of bags of trash were filled, eliminating an eyesore. Thanks to the following AAF members for getting down and dirty with the WCC:

Warren Leek	Dave Laird
Sue Foote	Pete Cimellaro
Joe Bill Pickrell	Jerry Guevin
Jim Unmacht	Tracy Unmacht
Grace Unmacht	Jimmy Unmacht



AAF and NWR

On March 15, Richard Ockenfels represented the AAF at the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge Centennial Celebration. He was one of 1500 people who helped bring recognition to the NWR system at this event. Many thanks Richard!

Plummeting Pronghorn Permits

For the 8th year in a row, the number of Antelope permits available has dropped. This year a total of 360 permits will be awarded, down from 436 in 2002. For details, 2003-2004 AZ Hunting Regulations are available at www.azgfd.com.

RIFLE RAFFLE WINNER

Congratulations to Ed Gammons from Payette, ID!

Unit 35A Fencing Project 3/22 Volunteer List

Tucson – Eugene Hays, Glen Dickens, Betty Dickens, Scott DeMer, Connie Taylor
Sierra Vista – Sheridan Stone
Hereford – Shaun P Fund, Rene Dube, Ron Gerdes
Phoenix Area – Brian Taylor, Virginis Ferland, Jerry Guevin



Visit us on the World Wide Web at:
www.azantelope.org

Our website is sporting a new look. We've added a few things, changed a few others. Please check it out!

Would you like to be on our Email mailing list? Send us your address or comments to:

azantelope@aol.com
hunttheworld@cox.net



Thanks for the Donations!

- To Federated Insurance Foundation for the donation of \$500 which will help outfit our AAF kitchen.
- To Bill and Mary Keebler for their donation of 3 large cooking pots.