September 23, 2015

Teresa Chase, Supervisor
Prescott National Forest
2971 Willow Creek Road
Prescott, AZ  86301

RE: Support for Yavapai Ranch Project

Dear Supervisor Chase:

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate and inform sportsmen, wildlife conservation organizations throughout the state and the public at large on important issues related to wildlife and wildlife habitat, and to provide, via grants or other sources, funding to conserve Arizona’s wildlife populations through habitat enhancement initiatives. Our organization is comprised of twenty four member groups and an affiliate member whose goals and objectives are consistent with the mission of AZSFWC.

Among other initiatives, AZSFWC has been an advocate for the current efforts to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We have also advocated for conservation with respect to public lands, particularly for wildlife habitat, and recreational access to those lands as important issues for many of our members and constituents.

We understand that the Prescott National Forest is working in partnership with The Trust for Public Land to acquire private lands within the large checkerboard area of Yavapai Ranch. In conversation with the landowner Fred Ruskin, we understand he is willing to sell some of his land to the Forest Service. Such a project to consolidate these lands into Forest Service ownership would provide a great benefit for access into this part of the National Forest and also prevent the fragmentation of Forest Service lands if any of the surrounding sections of private land were ever to be developed. We believe this would only enhance the value of the surrounding Forest Service land for the benefit of wildlife and the public that would have a desire to recreate on that land.

AZSFWC supports plans to add these private lands to the Prescott National Forest through their acquisition. We also support the Forest Service’s request of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund that may be made available for such acquisitions.
AZSFWC is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to wildlife, habitat conservation work and educating sportsmen on related issues. Our member organizations reach across the spectrum of hunting, angling and outdoor recreation groups from all over Arizona. Collectively, we believe the acquisition of these Yavapai Ranch lands would have a positive effect and impact on the wildlife in the area, and as well be a positive thing for sportsmen and the general public.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Yours in Conservation,

Jim Unmacht
President

cc:

Michael Patrick, The Trust for Public Land
Fred Ruskin, Yavapai Ranch
AZSFWC Member groups supporting the acquisition of some Yavapai Ranch lands by the Prescott National Forest

Anglers United
AZ Antelope Foundation
AZ Bass Federation Nation
AZ Big Game Super Raffle
AZ Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation
AZ Deer Association
AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society
AZ Flycasters Club
AZ Houndsmen
AZ Outdoor Sports
Coconino Sportsmen
Mohave Sportsman Club
Outdoor Experience 4 All
SRT Outdoors
The BASS Federation
Xtreme Predator Callers
1.2.3.Go…