

# Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation

## Annual Report & Accomplishments

2024



# Review from the Ridge

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) continues to be the leading 501c-3 non-profit organization in Arizona dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat improvement, youth recruitment and retention, and providing educational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts.

We ended 2024 with an all-time high tally of 44 member, affiliate, and associate groups! Our member groups span the spectrum of conservation, hunting, angling, shooting, and outdoor recreation from across Arizona, representing over 28,500 people.

The diversity in our membership gives us a measure of credibility that is unique to non-profit conservation organizations. When we are considering a position, our Opt-in policy allows groups to support, oppose, or abstain from the issue. Consequently, if AZSFWC takes a position on a matter, only the majority is listed on any correspondence, reflecting the members' position.

Our collective work was recognized early last year when I was honored by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission Chairman with the Chairman's Award at the Commission Banquet. While I accepted the Award, it didn't happen without the support, engagement, and participation from all our member organizations and their representatives!

Last fall, AZSFWC joined 21 National organizations signing a position statement entitled the Energy Development & Land Use: Fish and Wildlife Platform.

We were the only state based organization signing the document. Read the statement here:

<https://azsfwc.org/wp-content/uploads/Hunt-Fish-Energy-Platform-Signed-11-4-2024-final-1.pdf>

Biden proclaimed eight National Monuments over the course of his term, including the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni – Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument (GCNM) in 2023. AZSFWC's input on the Monument's management plan proposals made a difference for wildlife management, as well as sportsmen and women. To further that impact, the Secretary of the Interior has appointed me to the Monument Advisory Committee (MAC).

Finally, as our membership grows, so too will our impact. You can get a flavor for our work in the following pages. You can also see how your purchase of our "Conserving Wildlife" license plate is making a difference for Arizona's wildlife and habitat, thank you!

Yours in Conservation,  
Jim Unmacht  
Executive Director

## **2024 Officers**

**President - Rich Williams**  
**Vice President - Randy Dahl**  
**Treasurer - Zack May**  
**Secretary - Eddy Corona**

## **Staff**

**Executive Director - Jim Unmacht**  
**Administrator - Tracy Unmacht**

**AZSFWC**  
**PO Box 75731**  
**New River AZ 85087**  
**info@azsfwc.org**  
[azsfwc.org](https://azsfwc.org)

*AZSFWC would like to thank  
George Andrejko, AZGFD, and  
SRP for contributing many of the  
photos in this publication.*



# Wildlife, Habitat & Conservation

- Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) and Commission partnership
- Comment and input:
  - ⇒ Legislation
  - ⇒ Hunt Guidelines
  - ⇒ CO River Management
  - ⇒ MX Wolves and Wolf-Coyote Education
  - ⇒ Mandatory Reporting
  - ⇒ Leftover tags
  - ⇒ Fair Chase
  - ⇒ Land Management Plans
  - ⇒ Travel Management Plans
  - ⇒ Rule Amendments
  - ⇒ Renewable Energy Projects
  - ⇒ Unauthorized Livestock and Feral Horses and Burros
  - ⇒ Wildlife Waters Redevelopment and Prioritization
  - ⇒ Off Highway Vehicle Issues
  - ⇒ National Monument parameters
  - ⇒ Wildlife Crossings
  - ⇒ Hound Hunting



## R-C Pond: About the Fish & Pond

**R-C Pond Fishing Rules**

Please adhere to the following rules for fishing at the R-C Pond

- This pond is catch and release only. No fish can be kept from this pond.
- Release all fish immediately unharmed.
- Only single barbless hooks are allowed when fishing. No treble hooks.
- Only artificial flies or lures are allowed. NO BAIT!
- Only fishing rods are allowed for catch and release.
- AZ fishing license is required for all anglers age 10 and older.

<https://license.azgfd.com/>

- Do not throw rocks into this pond.
- We frequently clean out debris to maintain the water quality.
- Hours of fishing: sunrise to sunset.



**Roundtail Chub**

Roundtail Chub are a native "cryptid" or minnow, and one of three sportfish in Arizona. Roundtail Chub are identified as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD). Species of Greatest Conservation Need are species that the AZGFD considers most in need of conservation actions. While Roundtail Chub are currently considered stable to increasing and they are not listed under the Endangered Species Act. The R-C Pond was established with Roundtail Chub from Spring Creek in 2021 to create a refuge population for the species. Refuge on the landscape and provide important fallbacks in case catastrophic events, such as wildfire or drought, eliminate the original donor population.

Roundtail Chub readily take artificial lures and flies and put up a strong fight, making them an excellent option for anglers. However, Roundtail Chub have **release and release only fishing regulations and must be immediately released unharmed** when caught. Some waters may have more restrictive regulations so it's always good to consult the official Arizona fishing regulations.

**Thanks to our sponsors**












# Access, Input & Outreach

## Arizona State Agencies and Communities:

- AZGFD Wildlife Water Catchment information review
- AZGFD Fair Chase Week
- ADOT/AZGFD Crossing & Connectivity Grant support
- AZGFD Tracking Annual Statewide Conservation Spending
- National Hunting & Fishing Day application to Governor, Proclaimed for 9/28/24
- Joe Foss Shooting Complex discussions

## Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) comments:

Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health (BIDEH) on National Wildlife Refuges' assessment, comments submitted

## SCOTUS

Revue and assessment of Chevron Doctrine ruling

## National Park Service

Inquiry on Lee's Ferry management



# Access, Input & Outreach

## U.S. Department of Interior:

### Bureau of Land Management (BLM) input

- ◆ Solar Projects, Meetings, and Input
  - ◇ Pinyon Solar Project Zoom
  - ◇ Jove Solar Zoom meeting and Draft EIS comments
  - ◇ Solar Variance Zoom
  - ◇ Socorro Solar project
  - ◇ Elisabeth Solar Project Zoom
  - ◇ Ranegras Plains Energy Center Project
  
- ◆ Travel Management Plans (TMP):
  - ◇ Yuma Valley East/Gila River TMP Zoom
  - ◇ Middle Gila and Imperial Hills TMP



- ◆ Hassayampa River Corridor land withdrawal review
  
- ◆ Recreation Business Plan meeting review
  
- ◆ Sonoran Desert National Monument Recreational Shooting input and comments

# Access, Input & Outreach

## Department of Agriculture - Forest Service:

### **Kaibab National Forest (NF):**

- Solar Plan review and comments
- AZ Fiber Optics Installation Project review

### **Prescott NF:**

- Yavapai Ranch Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) update from LandAdvisors
- Yavapai-Apache Land Exchange review
- East Chino Recreation Management Plan
- Yavapai Ranch Phase 4 letter of support submitted

### **Tonto NF:**

- Land Management Plan review
- Salt River horse status monitoring



### **Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (NF):**

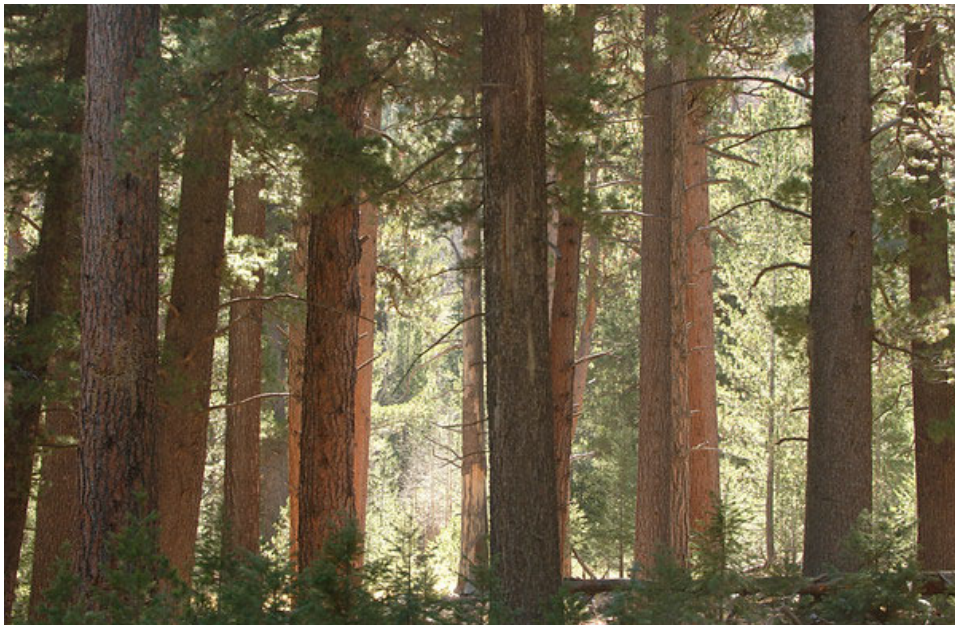
- Travel Management Plan assessment, objections and comments submitted 6/21/2024
- Unauthorized livestock humane auction supporting comments

### **Coconino National Forest (NF):**

- Inner Basin Waterline Wildlife Waters Project support letter

### **Coronado National Forest (NF):**

- Chiricahua NF Public Access Projects update, John Long Canyon
- Huachuca FireScope Supplemental EA review
- Peloncillo FireScope Draft EA comments submitted



# Legislative, Planning & Advocacy

- Correspondence with AZ State Senators and Representatives
- Western Rivers Day at Legislature
- Senate Natural Resources Committee meeting
- Arizona Prop 134 support
- State and Federal legislative monitoring
  - ⇒ Great Bend of the Gila National Monument introduced H.R.9257
  - ⇒ Meeting with Senator Dunn
  - ⇒ Correspondence on National Monument proposal - legislation did not pass and bill died
- Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) planning and input:
  - ⇒ Will Greene at the Governor's office
  - ⇒ Rana Lashgari working with Yavapai County Sheriff
  - ⇒ AZ Farm Bureau OHV proposal
  - ⇒ Tonto OHV plan discussion with Game & Fish
- Positions on OHV bills:
  - ⇒ Opposed weight increase in SB1052 – Bill died
  - ⇒ Supported sheriff's funding in SB1176 – Bill died
  - ⇒ Supported education including renters in SB1567 – Bill signed, without renters



# “Conserving Wildlife” License Plate



- For the 14th year in a row, our annual license plate revenue increased!

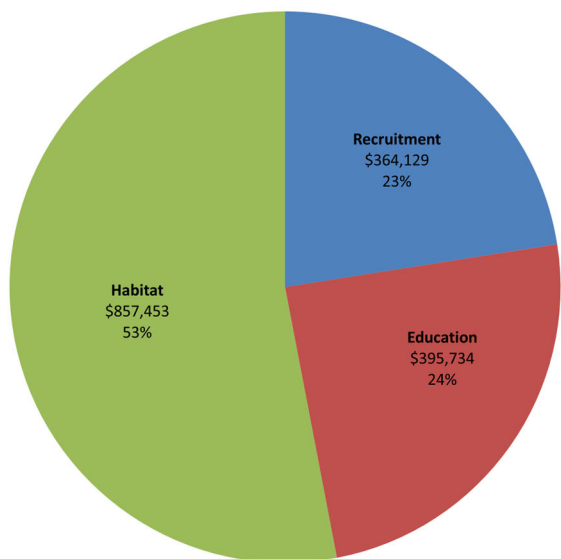
## 2024 License Plate Sales and Grant Activity:

- We averaged \$19,798 per month in plate revenue for a total of \$237,575 exceeding 2023 by \$10,596
- We awarded 26 Stinson Grants totaling \$167,189
- Grant awards included \$81,910 for habitat, \$60,648 for Education and \$24,631 for Youth Recruitment
- **From 2012 - 2024 we approved 266 grants totaling \$1,675,446**
- **Over the last 5 years**, around 75% of license plate revenue funded grants, 20.5% of revenue was retained for future grant funding and 4.5% of revenue funded marketing and administration of the program

AZ Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation Grant History 2012-2024

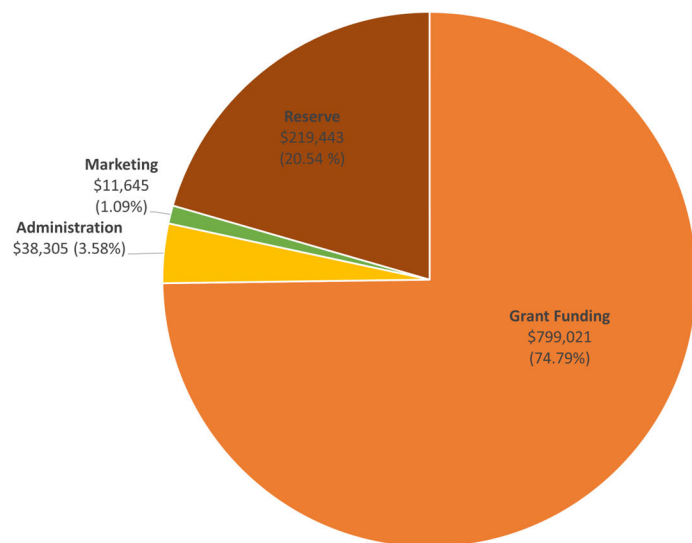
Total Approved - \$1,675,446

Total Utilized - \$1,617,316



AZ Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation License Plate Fund 5 Year Analysis 2020-2024

Total Revenue - \$1,068,414





# Business Matters & Marketing

- Enews and Action Alerts Distributed to 14,250 individuals per release:
  - ⇒ Tis the Season
  - ⇒ The Lay of the Land
  - ⇒ The Special Tags
  - ⇒ Stinson Grant enews
  - ⇒ AZ Legislature - Post Sine Die
  - ⇒ Finally, the Fall
  - ⇒ October Update
  - ⇒ Tis the Season - 2
- BLM AZ Resource Advisory Council recommendation letter for Randy Dahl
- Sportsmen's National Energy Platform signatory on Letter
- GCNM MAC follow up and application, 9/20/24
- GCNM MAC follow up with Senator Kelly's recommendation letter
- Teams Meeting with Senator Kelly's office, 9/5/24
- "From the Ridgeline" Daily News Alerts
- Special Land Use Designations Resolution revised and circulated
- AZGFD Commission Banquet Sponsor
- Corporate Sponsor - Sanderson Ford
- New Member Organizations - Arizona Quail Today, Into the Wild Outdoors, Wildlife for Tomorrow & Wildlife Water Works
- New Affiliate Member - Western Hunter Magazine
- New Associate Member - Sun City Sportsmen Club
- New individual life members - 9
- Sun City Sportsmen Club Presentation
- Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation meeting
- Recruitment Communication with Armed Forces Initiative (AFI) Huachuca BHA and AZ Working Dog Alliance
- Commission Appointment Recommendation Board meetings
- Phoenix Channel 12 Interview on Poaching Indictment
- Bike Masters of North Mesa donation

**ARIZONA SPORTSMEN  
FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**

## WORKING FOR WILDLIFE!

Help us  
improve  
wildlife  
habitat by  
getting your  
**AZSFWC  
License Plate  
today!**

**GO TO [AZMVDNOW.GOV/PLATES](http://AZMVDNOW.GOV/PLATES)**

ARIZONA Sportsmen Wildlife Conservation

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PLATE

ARIZONA GAME & FISH

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) is the leading 501c-3 non-profit organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat improvement, youth recruitment and retention, as well as providing education for outdoor enthusiasts on issues important to their passions.

In 2022, AZSFWC was supported by 42 member, associate and affiliate organizations spanning the spectrum of hunting, angling, shooting, and outdoor recreation across Arizona.

Since 2012, AZSFWC has provided over \$1.36 Million in grants from the "Conserving Wildlife" license plate revenue!

# Partnerships and Collaboration



- ◆ AZGFD Game & Fish Board meeting attendance
- ◆ Commission meeting attendance
- ◆ Outdoor Business Summit participation
- ◆ AZ Commerce Authority Water Seminar
- ◆ Central Arizona Conservation Alliance (CAZCA) meeting in Phoenix
- ◆ AZ Water Forum review
- ◆ Payson Wildlife Fair

- ◆ Salt River Project collaboration and support:
  - ◇ Project evaluation and OHV discussions with Executive Committee
  - ◇ Letter of Support Request - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) America The Beautiful Challenge Pre-Proposal
  - ◇ Dude & Haigler Projects presentation for Board meeting
  - ◇ USDA Secretary Roundtable in Tempe
  - ◇ Dude Fire Restoration Event in Payson
- ◆ MeatEater collaboration at event
- ◆ Greater Chino Valley Collaborative
  - ◇ East Chino Recreation Management Plan meeting
  - ◇ Outdoor Recreation Workgroup meeting
  - ◇ Yavapai County Conservation planning



# AZSFWC Members

