



Tis the Season for many things; ballot box biology, courtroom conservation, frivolous bills, political agendas, bureaucratic malaise, and a host of other stuff, some fun, and some painful!

Ironically, many of those matters don't have a particular season, they seem to be omnipresent. As we end one year, we'll take a look at what the next one might have in store for us.

From a wildlife and conservation perspective, Arizona has not had to contend with ballot box biology with an initiative since the last HSUS effort failed in 2017-2018. That is fortunate for us, however in the meantime, the purveyors of initiative petitions have sought out more fertile ground in some of the other Western states.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/chrisdorse/2023/10/05/ballot-box-biologys-hostile-takeover-of-state-wildlife-agencies/?sh=4041334e5c4c>

Let's look at what is going on in Colorado and Oregon.

Colorado now has wolves on the ground, thanks to their 2020 Proposition 114. That ballot initiative passed by less than 1% of the voters.

[https://ballotpedia.org/Colorado_Proposition_114,_Gray_Wolf_Reintroduction_Initiative_\(2020\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Colorado_Proposition_114,_Gray_Wolf_Reintroduction_Initiative_(2020))

Gray wolves from Oregon were released last week, with more coming. If you're interested, here are some links that will bring you up to date.

<https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/News-Release-Details.aspx?NewsID=4003>

https://www.coloradopolitics.com/news/colorado-gray-wolf-reintroduction-us-fish-wildlife-10j-decision/article_70f31570-7da8-11ee-8b6a-c7920f512611.html

Colorado has another initiative in the que for this election cycle, Proposition 91, called "Prohibit Trophy Hunting". This drumbeat is similar to what we dealt with here in 2017; banning the take of mountain lions, bobcats, and lynx.

<https://leg.colorado.gov/content/prohibit-trophy-hunting>

<https://www.outdoorlife.com/conservation/colorado-mountain-lion-bobcat-hunting-ban/>

<https://catsarenttrophies.org/>

In some respects, Oregon has become ground zero on the initiative front. This cycle has an effort underway to prohibit killing or injuring animals which would eliminate hunting among a host of other things. It is still in the signature gathering phase.

[https://ballotpedia.org/Oregon_Prohibit_the_Injury_or_Killing_of_Animals_Initiative_\(2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Oregon_Prohibit_the_Injury_or_Killing_of_Animals_Initiative_(2024))

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) just turned 50 years old. Some species have been saved; some remain works in progress. The ESA's original objective was admirable, to prevent species from going extinct, however in some cases the means to make that happen have been controversial and sometimes punitive in the process. One could argue an incentive based approach to achieve the desired outcome would be more palatable to many, but unfortunately the disagreements and varying "science" seems to end up in a courtroom where a judge decides what is appropriate conservation.

<https://fronterasdesk.org/content/1866574/whatever-cost-we-will-protect-them-marking-50-years-endangered-species-act>

<https://azdailysun.com/most-money-for-endangered-species-goes-to-small-number-of->

[creatures/article_800259ac-2042-596d-945e-8d36a6b13aa8.html](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/12/27/a-proclamation-on-the-50th-anniversary-of-the-endangered-species-act-2023/)
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/12/27/a-proclamation-on-the-50th-anniversary-of-the-endangered-species-act-2023/>

Naturally, our elected representatives hear from their constituents on both sides and are compelled to act. Success in the Legislature or Congress will track with whichever party is in the majority. There are some well-intended efforts to do the right thing, and there are just as many, if not more misguided attempts that cause one to pause.

The Second Regular Session of Arizona's 56th Legislature will convene January 8th. So far 162 bills have been introduced in the House, and 43 bills introduced in the Senate. Water matters will be front and center again, with many more bills to come! For perspective, the First Regular Session this past year had 1645 bills posted, 345 bills passed, and a record number of vetoes from Governor Hobbs totaling 143.

What about burros? These cute creatures are the wild donkeys of social media, beloved in and around some communities! In truth, these feral animals continue to propagate and expand their range, displacing native wildlife and damaging our desert landscapes and riparian areas.

Burros fall under the auspices of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/about-the-program/program-data>

In 2023 the BLM spent almost \$158M on wild horses and burros, with more money just announced to be released for private and public support for wild horse and burro work.

<https://www.blm.gov/press-release/blm-releases-funding-opportunity-support-wild-horse-and-burro-work>

Next week in the Black Mountain Herd Management Area (HMA) near Kingman, a gather will commence. The population estimate there is 1,925 animals.

<https://www.blm.gov/press-release/blm-gather-wild-burros-black-mountain-hma-arizona>

The combined appropriate management level for all HMA's in Arizona is 1,676.

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/herd-management/herd-management-areas/arizona>

Finally, I want to reference our Associate Member organization, Conserve and Protect Arizona.

<https://conserveandprotectaz.org/>

To date, Arizona doesn't have a wildlife related ballot initiative to contend with in this year's election cycle, but when you see what's going on in some of our neighboring states, and the West in general, it's imperative we remain vigilant and prepared for the possibility that might change.

You can do that here, <https://conserveandprotectaz.org/howtohelp/>

Happy New Year!

Yours in Conservation

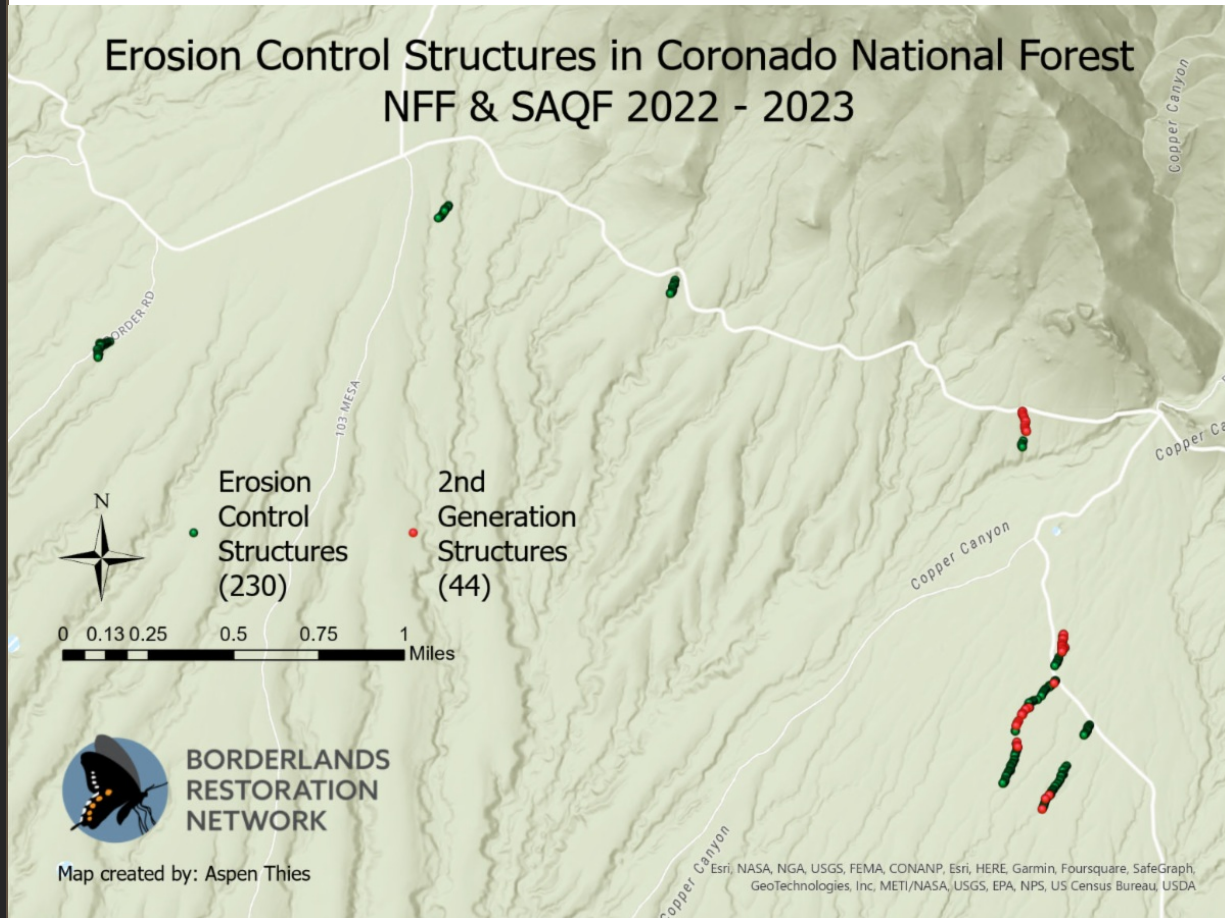
Jim Unmacht
Executive Director

L. Gary Stinson Grant Success

Southern Arizona Quail Forever – Coronado Grasslands Restoration

Since 2018, Southern Arizona Quail Forever (SAQF), Borderlands Restoration

Network (BRN), and Coronado National Forest (CNF) have collaborated to enact the CNF Grasslands Restoration Project and restore 12375 acres of degraded USFS lands along the Arizona/Mexico border. This work includes the construction of over 950 erosion control structures and the restoration of more than 700 acres completed in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. In December 2022, AZSFWC approved \$20,000 in grant funding to contribute to this project. Read the details about this project success [HERE](#).



Please support our Member Group Activities

The 2024 Arizona Big Game Super Raffle is now open!

ELK • PRONGHORN • TURKEY • BIGHORN SHEEP • MULE DEER • BISON • COUES WHITETAIL

HUNT
STATE 48
— FOR —
365
DAYS



Purchase tickets online at conservationfirstusa.org



*Expanding and Improving
Arizona's Native and Wild
Trout Fisheries*

SALT RIVER SATURDAYS

December 2, 2023
January 6, 2024
January 20, 2024
February 3, 2024
February 17, 2024
March 2, 2024
March 16, 2024
April 6, 2024

[INFO HERE](#)

Banquet - February 3, Sonoita Fairgrounds

Our banquet is an opportunity for members of the chapter to get to know each other, celebrate our accomplishments and have a good time. We expect our raffles and auctions to have a lot of great items. Seating will be limited to 150. If your plans change, we offer a full refund if notified prior to 25 January.

Our banquet is our primary fundraiser and the money made will enable us to continue to improve habitat and get more people outside. One of the remarkable things about Quail Forever is every cent we collect except for your membership cost stays with the chapter here in Southern AZ.

Buy your tickets at <https://ch3163-southern-arizona-quail-forever.square.site/>



SOUTHERN ARIZONA QUAIL FOREVER

2024 Family Day

Activities Include:

- Trap Shooting
- Archery
- BB Gun Range
- Fly-Fishing Intro
- Drone Demo
- Animal Footprint ID
- Live Quail Hunt Demonstration
- Bird Cleaning
- Police Dog Demo
- Falconry
- Free Breakfast & Lunch



****No Fee/All Ages Welcome****

Location: Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, Empire Ranch/Airfield Site (north of Sonoita, AZ)

Time/Date: Saturday, March 2, 2024 (8:00am – 1:00pm)

Sponsored by: Southern Arizona Quail Forever Chapter

Register at AZ Game & Fish Outdoor Skills (<https://register-ed.com/events/view/199804>)

For additional info contact:

Tony Valentino | 520-465-6569 | avalen18@aol.com
Zack May | 520-301-8135 | zmay@comcast.net

Sportsmen's Business Directory

Do you really know who you do business with? Do the businesses you patronize support the things you like to do?

Help us build the Sportsmen's Business Alliance online directory to help you find those businesses.

If you are a business owner, here is an opportunity for you to reach out to like-minded sportsmen & women and support organizations that promote causes important to them.

[Read more HERE.](#)

Corporate Partner



Members

Alter Valley Conservation Alliance	AZ Outdoor Sports, Inc
Anglers United	AZ Predator Callers
AZ Antelope Foundation	Christian Hunters of America
AZ Big Game Super Raffle/Conservation First USA	Diablo Trust
AZ Bowhunters Association	Ducks Unlimited
AZ Chapter Backcountry Hunters & Anglers	Fly Fishers Arizona
AZ Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation	Friends of BANWR
AZ Chapter Safari Club International	Mogollon Sporting Association
AZ Council Trout Unlimited	Mule Deer Foundation
AZ Deer Association	No Excuse Hunting & Outdoors
AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society	Outdoor Experience 4 All
AZ Elk Society	Southern AZ Chapter Quail Forever
AZ Flycasters Club	Southwest Wildlife Foundation/YVRGC
AZ Houndsmen Association	The Trust for Public Land
AZ Mule Deer Organization	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
AZ Outdoor Adventures	Valley of the Sun Chapter Quail Forever

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Mohave Sportsman Club

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SPORTSMEN'S
BUSINESS ALLIANCE



THE
WESTERN HUNTER

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation is a 501-c-3 not-for-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.

DONATE

The AZSFWC is responsible for managing the conservation license plate program (L. Gary Stinson Grant Fund). The fund is derived from the sale of wildlife conservation license plates and member organizations as well as non-member organizations are eligible to apply for those funds.



Not Just Another Pretty Plate

By purchasing this plate you will be making a contribution to Arizona's wildlife and wildlife habitat. Seventeen dollars (\$17) of each twenty-five (\$25) special license fee will go to AZSFWC's L. Gary Stinson Grant Fund. AZSFWC will review and approve all grants from the special license plate program revenues. These grants will fund important outdoor recreational and educational opportunities and on-the-ground wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement projects. (More info [HERE](#)).

These plates can be purchased online and can also be personalized. To order an AZSFWC Conservation License Plate go to: <https://azmvdnow.gov/plates>

Scroll through the page, to the "See All" button. Plates will be listed alphabetically with our plate entitled "Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation". Click on the plate and follow the prompts. Order your plate as a sequential shelf plate for \$25.00 per year or as a personalized plate for \$50.00 per year.

The plate is also available for all categories of trailers as well as with the International Symbol of Access for Disabilities.

The AZSFWC Conservation Plate gives all Arizonan's an opportunity to contribute to programs that benefit our wild creatures. **Step up and support "Wild Arizona"**.



Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation | P.O. Box 75731, New River, AZ 85087

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