



*February has been an interesting month.* Recall a number of months ago in one of our monthly reports, a reader asked that I keep politics out of the messages. I continue to wish I could.

AZSFWC supported Congressman Gosar's efforts relative to **House Joint Resolution 69** to return management of wildlife on Alaska Wildlife Refuges to the state of Alaska. Obviously not specifically an Arizona issue, but this action eliminates federal overreach in the management of wildlife.

Congressman Chaffetz (Utah) recently withdrew **HR 622** from the House calendar. This bill would've allowed the sale of some public lands. AZSFWC remains steadfastly opposed to the sale of Federal Public Lands to the States. Click [HERE](#) for our position on the matter.

AZSFWC supported the BLM Planning 2.0 in May of 2016, Click [HERE](#) to see our letter. This support gave us standing and a set of criteria we could reference in future planning efforts undertaken by the BLM. Several days ago, the U.S. House voted against the Planning 2.0 process, and it now goes to the U.S. Senate for consideration. We've been told the scrapping of this effort is a good thing, we'll see.

On the State side, we learned the MX wolf population went up to a count of at least 113 compared to 97 a year ago. Officially this is about 1/3 of the agreed on number of wolves that would ultimately be allowed in the USFWS Recovery Plan for management in AZ and NM. Some folks want no wolves on the landscape, but that isn't an option under our 40 year old Endangered Species Act. Also keep in mind, there are as many people on the other side of the issue, that want wolves everywhere! (except probably in their own neighborhood) When you think about that, a managed population of 300-325 is a reasonable compromise. Click [HERE](#) for the press release.

AZ State Senator Farley got everyone's attention with his bill **SB1182** to limit take on mountain lions and bobcats. While the bill is dead in committee, this trial balloon hasn't popped, so we must remain vigilant!

An interesting bill is moving through the AZ House right now, **HB2404**, which would change the requirements of signature gathering for ballot initiatives. Currently folks pushing an initiative "simply" have to get a certain number of signatures from registered voters to get an issue on the ballot. This bill would require signatures

from the voting populace across all Arizona counties, not merely from Maricopa or Pima as examples. We're following this one, because if passed, it would significantly raise the bar for those that would like to manage wildlife by the ballot box.

**HB2369** is moving through the AZ House and will likely head to the Senate. This bill will repeal a number of Boards and Commissions, including the State Parks Board. Our Arizona Game & Fish Commission is not included here, but this too is something we need to be on the watch for in the future.

Speaking of an annual effort to eliminate a Board, **HB2280** has again died in Committee. This bill would have eliminated the Commission Appointment Recommendation Board (CARB). The elimination of CARB is an annual effort downtown at the Legislature by a certain group of folks.

You'll read our recent Press Release in the following article. It will tell you about the success of our "Conserving Wildlife" license plate in 2016. Senator Farley (again) came up with **SB1074** to eliminate specialty license plates. Fortunately for now that bill appears to be stalled in Committee.

And now finally for some non-political news:

- Welcome to our newest AZSFWC members: Valley of the Sun Quail Forever, & American Precision Target Systems.
- Don't miss your chance to get in on the "Pick a Pack" raffle.

Make some memories this spring, take a kid and your camera outdoors, but turn the phone off!

Yours in Conservation and in the Trenches,  
Jim Unmacht  
Executive Director

## Arizona's "Conserving Wildlife" License Plate Benefits Habitat, Education & Youth

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) has sponsored the "Conserving Wildlife" license plate for almost two decades now. Beginning with the Wildlife Conservation Council which merged with AZSFWC in 2011, proceeds from the sale of these plates fund habitat projects, conservation education efforts and youth recruitment in the hunting, angling, shooting and outdoors. In concert with the State of Arizona, each time someone purchases or renews one of these specialty license plates, AZSFWC receives \$17 of the \$25 cost. Those funds are placed in a dedicated account and every quarter AZSFWC entertains grant proposals from qualified organizations.

AZSFWC's President Jim Unmacht said "2016 saw a record number of plates purchased, and commensurately a record number of grants awarded! In fact, the increase in plate sales this year saw our grant budget exceeded thanks to that success."

Last year, 28 different grants were awarded totaling \$147,930 in funding. It took over 8700 Conserving Wildlife license plates to fund

those 28 projects!

While grant money benefited numerous conservation education efforts, and several youth camps and kid's fishing days, AZSFWC awarded grant money to the AZ Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) and the AZ Antelope Foundation (AAF) on two notable habitat projects. Landscape scale habitat projects require a great deal of coordination and effort, spearheaded here by these two AZSFWC member organizations. The project work also requires a lot of collaboration with various contributors, from other NGO's, volunteers, State and Federal agencies and private landowners as well.

- The NWTF effort is a landscape restoration project in the Pinaleno Mountains (Mt Graham) in Southeast Arizona. The Pinaleno Ecosystem Restoration Project will reduce dense timber stands in this part of the Coronado National Forest and will directly benefit both Gould's turkeys as well as the endangered Mt Graham red squirrel. By managing this forest habitat, the potential for catastrophic wildfires should be reduced, not only helping the endangered squirrel, but also the other wildlife within the ecosystem, including both game and non-game species. This project began in 2013 and is projected to continue through 2020.
- The AAF project is another long term landscape scale habitat project in the grasslands of Southern Arizona. The Southeastern Arizona Grasslands Pronghorn Initiative is a multi-phased effort encompassing 20,000 acres of grassland restoration, including mesquite removal, water catchment work, wildlife friendly fencing, migration corridors, pronghorn transplants as well as habitat enhancement for both the pronghorn and the threatened Black-tailed prairie dogs.

You can go [HERE](#) to see some of our past grant recipients and funded projects.

If you are an Arizona resident, you can go here and get your own Conserving Wildlife license plate! <http://servicearizona.com/>

**AZSFWC Grant provides funding for  
AZ Elk Society Wild in the City**



## Upcoming Member Activities

### AZ Fly Casters

Annual Banquet & Raffle  
Sunday, March 5, 4:00 PM  
Arrowhead Country Club  
67th Avenue and the 101

[BUY TICKETS HERE](#)

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8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

# Ryan Thomas Golf Classic

MESA COUNTRY CLUB  
SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017

Click [HERE](#) for more information.



2017 AES Banquet Planning Meetings:  
Tuesday Feb 28th  
Tuesday March 7th

Tuesday March 14th  
Tuesday March 21st  
Tuesday March 28th  
Tuesday April 4th  
BANQUET APRIL 8th

ARIZONA Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation

# Pick A Pack Raffle

## OUTDOORSMANS

Long Range Pack      Winner's Choice of Pack      Optics Hunter Pack



Tickets \$5  
500 tickets will be sold  
[Click here to buy](#)

### Sponsors & Supporters



### Members

Welcome to our newest members, Valley of the Sun Quail Forever and Affiliate Member American Precision Target Systems. We are happy they are on board along with the following:

1.2.3.Go...	Anglers United	AZ Antelope Foundation
AZ Bass Federation Nation	AZ Big Game Super Raffle	AZ Bowhunters Association
AZ Catfish Conservation Assoc	AZ Chapter NWTf	AZ Chapter SCI
AZ Council of Trout Unlimited	AZ Deer Association	AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society
AZ Elk Society	AZ Flycasters Club	AZ Houndsmen's Association
AZ Outdoor Sports	Back Country Hunters & Anglers	Coconino Sportsmen
Mohave Sportsman Cub	Outdoor Experience 4 All	South Eastern AZ Sportsmen Club
SRT Outdoors Inc	Southwest Wildlife Foundation (YVRGC)	The Bass Federation Arizona
The Ryan Thomas Foundation	TRCP	Valley of the Sun Quail Forever
White Mountain Fly Fishing Club	White Mountain Lakes Foundation	Xtreme Predator Callers

## Affiliate Members



[American Precision Target Systems](#)



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 conservation 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.

These plates can be purchased online and can also be personalized. To order an AZSFWC Conservation License Plate go to: <http://www.servicearizona.com> Click on "Personalized/Specialty Plates" then if you wish to personalize it, check its availability. Once you have verified the availability of your personalization, or if you only want to order the AZSFWC

Conservation Special Plate, click on "Order My Plate". Order your plate as a sequential shelf plate for \$25.00 per year or as a personalized plate for \$50.00 per year.

Here is another helpful link when ordering your special license plate. You can have many of your questions answered here:

<https://servicearizona.com/webapp/vehicle/plates/showInfoPage.do>

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 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. The AZSFWC is responsible for managing the conservation license plate program (Wildlife Conservation Habitat 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.

