

PRONGHORN

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My Antelope Hunt

By Justin Williams

Hi, I'm Justin Williams, 11 years old, from Gilbert, AZ, and I went on the 2002 Arizona antelope hunt in 4-A. We did a lot of scouting and saw lot's of nice bucks. On the first day of the hunt we saw a good buck and put a stalk on him but never got a good shot. On the second day we spotted two really nice bucks and got to watch them sparring. Me, my dad and his friend had to belly crawl about 65 yards so they couldn't see us. When they were done fighting I got a broadside 70-yard shot. My buck was almost 18 inches tall, and it scored 79. It was the best day of my life and the best hunt I've ever been on!



AAF Member Ken Williams Guides Son to Success!

NEW LIFE MEMBERSHIP NOW AVAILABLE!

In 2002 the Board of Directors of the Arizona Antelope Foundation (AAF) approved a new category of membership. That is the "LIFE MEMBERSHIP" (LM). To be a LM you make a Tax deductible donation and you are a member for life. This is an exciting new program. As a LM you will receive the following:

- No additional dues for the remainder of your life.
- Free copies of all mailings from AAF, including the news letter "Pronghorn".
- Recognition as a LM in each issue of the "Pronghorn".
- Recognition as a LM at each of the 3 annual clinics.
- A plaque with your name and LM number.
- An AAF decal for your car.
- Free AAF t-shirt and ball cap.
- Free admission to the annual clinics.
- The satisfaction that your membership will provide a permanent endowment for the welfare of the Arizona Pronghorn.

To become a LM you simply fill out the form on the back of the newsletter, make your check payable to AAF and mail it to P. O. Box 15501, Phoenix, AZ 85060-5501. Your donation is based upon your age at the time you become a LM.

- * Ages 00-59 \$1,000
- * Ages 60-66 \$ 750
- * Age 67 + \$ 500

You may make your donation all at once or in three installments. If you choose the installment method, then donate 50% at the time you become a LM and 25% each on the first and second anniversaries. LM # 1 will be auctioned off at the Arizona Sheep Society's banquet on March 8, 2003 at the El Zaribah Shrine Auditorium located at 552 N. 40th St. in Phoenix starting at 5PM. LM # 2 has already been purchased. So sign up early and receive a low number.

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***THANKS FOR YOUR
SUPPORT!***

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the 2003 Arizona Antelope Foundation. It is my privilege to be your president for this year. I intend to be a guide to the foundation, while implementing our goals. There are many issues which must be addressed, particularly in this time of drought. While the antelope population in some areas is in fairly good shape, other areas of our state need lots of help and care.

The Anderson Mesa area has been the object of much concern. An "Adaptive Management Program" has been put into place and is being implemented. There is still much work to be done. The Foundation has been active in the planning and implementation phase of the project. We will continue monitoring the progress of the plan.

Another area of concern is the status of the Sonoran Pronghorn. Steps are being taken in hopes of halting the decline of the herd. Last year in cooperation with the Arizona Bighorn Sheep Society and the Yuma Rod and Gun Club, we worked at some fence removal and modification. We are in contact with the Cabeza Prieta and Arizona Game and Fish department in order to set up other work projects, where we will be able to help the Sonoran Pronghorn in its recovery.

It is my wish that all who have a love for the Pronghorn will become involved in its care and recovery in the critical and other areas of lesser concern. At present we have four projects planned. We need everyone to help on these projects. Physical work is just but a part of these projects. Learning about the Pronghorn and the camaraderie are also part and parcel of these get togethers.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve as your president.

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.

ORME RANCH FENCING PROJECT JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 2

Our first work project of the new year opened with a Bang! We had 50 volunteers for the Unit 21 project on January 31st to February 2. On Saturday our efforts were concentrated on fence work near the Orme Ranch. We removed a 2+ miles of barbed wire on the bottom strand and replaced it with a smooth wire. We also removed some fence around Hooker Tank and the Big Flat Tank in Reimer Draw. We made short work of the fencing efforts with all our volunteers!

The day before the work project, our AGFD leader Dana Bayer counted 36 pronghorn to the west and north of the project site! (We believed her, but they were no where to be found when the work started!) This is a good sign that our efforts from the November 2002 project, coupled with this one, can have a positive impact on the northern portion of the Unit 21 herd.

Our evening festivities started with some great hors d'oeuvres from Chef Ignacio and Chef Leia. Head Chef Don had the cooks working like a well oiled machine. Chef Frank did his usual wonderful job on the steaks too!

After our appetites were satisfied, all our canine friends proceeded to clean up the camp. While that was going on, we heard an excellent presentation on Arizona Pronghorn History by Richard Ockenfels. His slide show and narrative was a fitting end to Saturday's efforts!

Thanks to donations from ADBSS, Chef Don prepared biscuits and gravy for the hungry workers on Sunday morning. A number of the remaining volunteers headed south to finish the work project with some brush removal for the BLM in the Cactus Basin. (Dana, our chainsaw's are crying out for juniper!)

Thanks to all the volunteers for making this a successful project! We had people from our AAF, AGFD, USFS, BLM, Coconino Co. Parks, Coconino Sportsmen, Verde Search & Rescue, and the Hunter Education programs. Special thanks to the ASU students for joining us, and to Grace, our youngest volunteer!

Those folks on their first project receive a Pronghorn pin as a token of our appreciation and your efforts. We handed out several, but if we missed you, we are ordering some more. Let me know if you need one. Until next time... think rain!



Jim Unmacht

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Dave Stewart, Flagstaff
Rochelle Silva, Flagstaff
Chris Vassel, Queen Creek
Michael Thomas, Tucson
Robin Morse, Tempe
Sue Foote, Phoenix
Rick Peebles, Camp Verde
Warren Leek, Scottsdale
Elizabeth Ray, Tempe
Dana Bayer, Mesa
Ignacio Beltram, Phoenix
David Brown, Tempe
Bob and David Errington

Cynthia Lovely, Flagstaff
Barbara Knox, Cornville
Bruce Johnson, Peoria
Keith Menasco, Flagstaff
Krissy Joehnig, Mesa
Dave Laird, Phoenix
Thorry Smith, Mesa
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Jim Unmacht, Phoenix
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Tom Boggess, Phoenix

Geoffrey Gross, Flagstaff
Cindy Upshaw
Brett Thomas
Elizabeth Ridder, Chandler
Nicole Mann, Tempe
Tom Mackin, Flagstaff
Sophia Fong, Mesa
Garrett Holway, Tempe
Albert Sillas, Camp Verde
Grace Unmacht, Phoenix
Frank Tennant, Mesa
Ginny Ferland, Phoenix

Kevin Van Horn, Flagstaff
John Vassel, Queen Creek
Eddie Reel, Camp Verde
Cristen Jester, Tempe
Oscar Oland, Glendale
Rob Mackin, Flagstaff
Wendy Ferguson, Cottonwood
Amy Lou Pinterich, Mesa
Troy Christensen
Don Johnson, Phoenix
Jim Warnecke, Mesa
Mark Roth, Phoenix

Sonoran Pronghorn Numbers Down

The Arizona Game and Fish Department, in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, recently completed a range-wide survey of endangered Sonoran pronghorn in the U.S. The results show an estimated 21-33 animals, which is a substantial decline from previous surveys.

The aerial survey took place from Nov. 30 to Dec. 4. Almost 2,000 square miles in southwest Arizona were surveyed including parts of the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Barry M. Goldwater Range, and some Bureau of Land Management lands.

The department conducts the survey every two years. The December 2000 survey yielded a population estimate of 99 while the December 1998 survey showed 142 animals. However, in 2002 the entire range of Sonoran pronghorn, like most of Arizona, experienced a devastating drought.

Virtually no rain fell for more than 13 months over much of the range. The result was extremely poor forage conditions for pronghorn. While eight years of continuous pronghorn monitoring has shown that dry conditions often result in low fawn recruitment, this was the first year adult animals have died in large numbers due to drought.

From the first of June to mid-August this year, 80 percent of the radio collared sample of pronghorn died from drought-related causes. Recent rainfall throughout pronghorn range has provided substantial though temporary relief for the remaining animals.

Federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Department of Defense and Bureau of Land Management, along with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, are taking immediate actions to provide water and high quality forage.

Data suggest drought-induced nutrient-and-moisture-poor forage has been a primary factor in the decline of Sonoran pronghorn. "We are digging wells and installing a sprinkler system to grow forage this winter in habitats used by pronghorn," says Dale Hall, director of the US Fish and Wildlife's Southwest Region. "Winter moisture is critical for growing the lush forage that nursing mothers will feed on in the spring when their fawns are born."

Background

Pronghorn are unique to North America. Sonoran pronghorn were listed as an endangered species in 1967. The listed pronghorn currently include three sub-populations of Sonoran pronghorn: two in Sonora, Mexico, and one in Arizona. All three sub-populations contend with roads, fences, canals, and other barriers to movement. Border fencing and highways have divided the United States' sub-population from the sub-population on Mexico's El Pinacate Biosphere Reserve.

Further south, the largest sub-population is isolated from the El Pinacate sub-population by Mexico's Highway 8. In December 2000, the population of Sonoran pronghorn in Mexico was estimated at approximately 350 animals. Biologists from the United States and Mexico are planning another aerial survey of the Mexican populations to get more current estimates later this month.

10th Annual Hunter's Clinics

Our 10th Annual Hunter's Clinics were again a success! Three separate Clinics were held this year on successive nights in Tucson, Phoenix and Flagstaff on August, 13th, 14th, and 15th respectively. We had 175 total attendees, broken down as follows...38 in Tucson, 97 in Phoenix, and 40 in Flagstaff. This number is comparable to the 183 attendees in 2001 at the Flagstaff and Phoenix clinics in 2001 when more Antelope Hunt permits had been issued.

Our Treasurers Report on 9/15 itemizes and compares the clinic's income and expenses for the past two years, and the numbers are very similar. The net income difference is within \$200, dollars, after adjusting for postage in 2002. Rental fees totaled \$500 in Phoenix, \$100 in Tucson, and \$284.63 in Flagstaff, resulting in a savings of \$432 even with the expansion from two sites to three. Shifting the Phoenix location to the FOP Lodge resulted in saving nearly \$817 alone. The Tucson Clinic took place in the FOP Lodge (no A/C!), and the Flagstaff Clinic was at the Elks Lodge.

The other major expense savings this year compared to prior year's was in the cost of raffle items. Last year we spent \$825, compared to this year's \$25. Raffle income was down commensurately this year, but such shortfalls can be recouped at future clinics by being more aggressive in soliciting raffle donations! As an example, the rifle raffle generated \$465 in sales this year. Since we handled this raffle differently in prior years, our sales data can't be compared to this year. Clinic registrants and memberships were roughly comparable with 2001--\$690 versus \$770 in 2001 registrations; \$1845 versus \$1960 in 2001 memberships.

Clinic agendas and programs mirrored previous year's programs, and included discussions of pronghorn life history and behavior, optics, hunting tactics, and judging & scoring. Presentations were made by various experts depending on the location, but the format and message were the same. Similar handouts and reference material were also distributed at each location. Kudos to our volunteers, presentation experts, and Game & Fish personnel who made our 2002 clinic another success!

LEGISLATIVE ALERTS

We want to keep all members alerted to legislative issues and other matters of importance to wildlife conservation and pronghorn. Send us your email address so we can keep you on the alert!

Email us at
azantelope@aol.com

2002 PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Arizona Antelope Foundation had an aggressive project season in 2002. We started with a project in March on the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge. This was fence modification work. The first weekend of April was a project on the Horseshoe Ranch in unit 21. This is the Antelope Foundation's adopted ranch. Our work there appears to be having a positive affect. The fawn survival in the southern part of unit 21 (Horseshoe Ranch) has been substantially higher the past few years than in the northern part of that unit. Some of us think it is a result of the work the Antelope Foundation has done on the Horseshoe Ranch. A study to determine if it is linked to the many fence modification projects the Antelope Foundation has done on the Horseshoe Ranch or if there is some other factor will be funded with antelope tag fund money. A very interesting thing happened on this project – it rained.

The next project was on the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge. This was a joint project with the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society and the Yuma Rod and Gun Club. It was fence modification work on the West boundary of the Refuge that adjoins Bureau of Land Management land and fence removal (carried it out on "deer" carriers) between the Cabeza Prieta and the Organ Pipe National Monument. The Antelope Foundation was involved in the project because it will benefit the endangered Sonoran pronghorn antelope. Two weeks later Antelope Foundation volunteers worked at Ft. Huachuca removing hog wire fence on the North boundary of the Fort that the Arizona Game and Fish added in the 1950s when they had buffalo there. Several of us on the project noticed the high dry yellow grass and the lack of forbs that antelope need. We discussed the possibility of doing some controlled burns that would help improve the groceries for the antelope. The Monday after we left a fire started West of the Fort and burned 3,500 acres on the Fort.

Our next project of the season was fence removal at Raymond Ranch. We've now removed most of the internal fences on Raymond Ranch. Members saw antelope and buffalo during this project. The Arizona Game and Fish Department originally acquired Raymond Ranch for antelope. With the fence removals and modification and the upgrades in the water system on the ranch we hope to see more antelope there.

We ended the summer season in the Springerville area. On this fence modification project we replaced bottom wire on two and a half miles of fence along highway 260. This will allow the antelope to move back and forth easier. We camped on the Arizona Game and Fish grasslands ranch a few miles from highway 260. Volunteers saw fifty to seventy antelope on the ranch every evening while we were there. This was encouraging. The week after we left there the Rodeo fire started.

Our final project of the year was in the northern portion of Unit 21, east and north of the I-17 Dugas exit. The lower barbed wire was replaced with smooth wire on several miles of interior and boundary fence to enhance this herd's migration and movement.


I see the same people at most of the projects. I would like to see some fresh faces. The Antelope Foundation provides a dinner on Saturday night to encourage people to come out for a day or day and a half of work and not have to fix dinner after working all day. I encourage all members to try to make it to at least one project this year. There is something for everyone to do.

Arizona Antelope Foundation and the Arizona Game and Fish Department reached an agreement on how the antelope tag money will be spent this year. The two tags sold for a record high in 2002. The first sold at the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society fundraiser for \$51,000 and the second sold at the Arizona Elk Society fundraiser a week later for \$39,000. A report on the approved projects from the antelope tag fund will be included in the next Pronghorn.

The Antelope Foundation sponsored three hunter clinics in 2002, the first clinic ever in Tucson and the second in Flagstaff. They were all successful and appreciated by this year's antelope hunters. I invite all of you to attend one of the clinics, even if you don't draw a tag, this August. We can always use some help at them.

I hope to see all of you at one of the projects this year.

Bill Keebler



THANKS! THANKS! THANKS!

- To John and Chris Vassel for their donation of 2 fence stretchers.
- To David Brown for his donation of the book "Antelope Country" by Valerius Geist



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