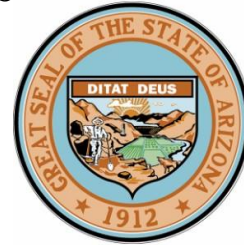


ARIZONA STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RESEARCH STAFF



TO: JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATE: January 26, 2022

SUBJECT: Sunset Review of the Arizona Game & Fish
Commission and Department

Paul Bergelin
Committee on Natural
Resources, Energy & Water
Telephone: (602) 926-3458

Attached is the final report of the sunset review of the Arizona Game & Fish Commission and Department which was conducted by a joint meeting of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water and Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water.

This report has been distributed to the following individuals and agencies:

Governor of the State of Arizona
The Honorable Douglas A. Ducey

President of the Senate
Senator Karen Fann

Speaker of the House of Representatives
Representative Russell Bowers

House Members
Representative Gail Griffin, Chair
Representative Judy Burges, Vice-Chair
Representative Morgan Abraham
Representative Andrés Cano
Representative Frank Carroll
Representative Andrea Dalessandro
Representative Tim Dunn
Representative Mark Finchem
Representative Teresa Martinez
Representative Christopher Mathis
Representative Jacqueline Parker
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Senate Members
Senator Sine Kerr, Chair
Senator T.J. Shope, Vice-Chair
Senator David Gowan
Senator Rick Gray
Senator Juan Mendez
Senator Lisa Otondo
Senator Wendy Rogers
Senator Stephanie Stahl Hamilton
Senator Victoria Steele

Arizona Game & Fish Commission and Department	Senate Resource Center
Arizona State Library, Archives & Public Records	Senate Republican Staff
House Republican Staff	Senate Democratic Staff
House Democratic Staff	Senate Research Staff
House Research Staff	Office of the Auditor General

House of Representatives
Natural Resources, Energy & Water
Committee of Reference



Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water
Committee of Reference

Sunset Review of the
Arizona Game & Fish Commission and Department

Final Report

January 2022

House Members

Representative Gail Griffin, Chair
Representative Judy Burges, Vice-Chair
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Representative Andrés Cano
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Report 2022

Background

Pursuant to [A.R.S. § 41-2953](#), the Joint Legislative Audit Committee assigned the sunset review of the Arizona Game & Fish Commission, Department, and Department Director to the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water and Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committees of Reference for review.

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission consists of five members who are appointed by the governor to five-year terms ([A.R.S. § 17-201](#)). It appoints the Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department and oversees the department's activities ([A.R.S. § 17-211](#)). It has several responsibilities related to wildlife and outdoor recreation including:

- establishing policies and rules for managing, preserving, and harvesting wildfire in Arizona;
- setting rules for hunting, fishing, and taking wildlife;
- regulating the sale, import, export, and possession of wildlife;
- maintaining facilities that preserve and propagate wildlife; and
- supervising public shooting ranges.

The Commission, Department, and Department Director will terminate on July 1, 2022 unless legislation is enacted for its continuation ([A.R.S. § 41-3022.19](#)).

Summary of Committee Activity

The House Natural Resources, Energy & Water and Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committees of Reference jointly met on January 5, 2022, to evaluate the Commission and Department's response to the sunset factors and receive public testimony.

Committee Recommendation

The House Natural Resources, Energy & Water and Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committees of Reference jointly recommended that Commission, Department, and Department Director be continued for eight years until July 1, 2030.

Appendix A:

January 5, 2022 House Natural Resources, Energy & Water and Senate Natural
Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference
Minutes and Reference Materials



August 31, 2021

Representative Gail Giffin
Chairman, Natural Resource Committee of Reference
Arizona State House of Representatives
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Honorable Representative Griffin,

As prescribed in Title 41, Chapter 27, Arizona Revised Statutes and pursuant to A.R.S. § 41-2954, the Arizona Game and Fish Department and Arizona Game and Fish Commission submit to the Legislature's Committee of Reference the enclosed 2021 Sunset Review Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Ty E. Gray". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Ty E. Gray
Director

azgfd.gov | 602.942.3000

5000 W. CAREFREE HIGHWAY, PHOENIX AZ 85086

GOVERNOR: DOUGLAS A. DUCEY **COMMISSIONERS:** CHAIRMAN LELAND S. "BILL" BRAKE, ELGIN | JAMES E. GOUGHNOUR, PAYSON
TODD G. GEILER, PRESCOTT | CLAY HERNANDEZ, TUCSON | KURT R. DAVIS, PHOENIX **DIRECTOR:** TY E. GRAY **DEPUTY DIRECTOR:** TOM P. FINLEY



State of Arizona

Doug Ducey, Governor

Arizona Game and Fish Commission

Leland S. "Bill" Brake, Chair, Elgin

James E. Goughnour, Payson

Todd G. Geiler, Prescott

Clay Hernandez, Tucson

Kurt R. Davis, Phoenix

Arizona Game and Fish Department

Ty E. Gray, Director

Tom P. Finley, Deputy Director

2021 SUNSET REVIEW REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

1. The objective and purpose in establishing the agency and the extent to which the objective and purpose are met by private enterprises in other states.

In the early 1880s, the Territorial Legislature established the Arizona Game and Fish Commission in response to growing concerns over the unrestricted depletion of wildlife. The Commission initially consisted of three commissioners charged with enforcing the few existing conservation laws, as well as stocking desirable species of fish. At the time, the Territorial Legislature established fishing and hunting laws, as well as seasons and harvest limits. As these laws grew more complex, it became apparent that the State needed a specialized agency with the authority to establish hunting and fishing regulations and manage wildlife. Consequently, in 1929, the Legislature established the present-day Arizona Game and Fish Commission (Commission) and Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department).

Arizona Game and Fish Commission and Department Responsibilities

The Commission is the oversight body responsible for providing the Department policy direction to fulfill the statutory responsibilities of the Commission and the Department, including wildlife, watercraft and off-highway vehicles laws and rules.

State law mandates that the Department manage Arizona's wildlife resources, regulate watercraft use and enforce off-highway vehicle laws. The Department implements Commission rules and policies; taking actions to conserve, preserve and manage wildlife; enforcing laws that protect wildlife and their habitats, public health and safety; providing information and safety education programs; and because wildlife and their habitats cross many boundaries, developing partnerships with sovereign tribes, local governments, private landowners, other states and nations.

The Commission and Department mission is **“To conserve Arizona’s diverse wildlife resources and manage for safe, compatible outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future generations.”**

Organizational Structure

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission Appointment Recommendation Board (Board) is comprised of five members who are appointed by the Governor pursuant to A.R.S. §17-202 and A.R.S. §38-211. The Governor nominates a Commissioner from a list of candidates submitted by the Board, and with the consent of the Senate, appoints the selected member. Commissioners serve staggered five-year terms and during that time, hold public meetings, set policy for and provide direction to the Department, approve the Department budget, and appoint a director to supervise the Department and ensure that Commission policies and priorities are implemented.

The Department is structured into the following divisions: Director's Office, Field Operations Division, Wildlife Management Division, Information, Education and Recreation Division and Support Services Division. The Department has a headquarters facility located in Maricopa County and six regional offices located throughout the State to provide services to its customers and local communities.

A.R.S. § 17-231. General powers and duties of the commission

A. The commission shall:

1. Adopt rules and establish services it deems necessary to carry out the provisions and purposes of this title.
2. Establish broad policies and long-range programs for the management, preservation and harvest of wildlife.
3. Establish hunting, trapping and fishing rules and prescribe the manner and methods that may be used in taking wildlife, but the commission shall not limit or restrict the magazine capacity of any authorized firearm.
4. Be responsible for the enforcement of laws for the protection of wildlife.
5. Provide for the assembling and distribution of information to the public relating to wildlife and activities of the department.
6. Prescribe rules for the expenditure, by or under the control of the director, of all funds arising from appropriation, licenses, gifts or other sources.
7. Exercise such powers and duties necessary to carry out fully the provisions of this title and in general exercise powers and duties that relate to adopting and carrying out policies of the department and control of its financial affairs.
8. Prescribe procedures for use of department personnel, facilities, equipment, supplies and other resources in assisting search or rescue operations on request of the director of the division of emergency management.
9. Cooperate with the Arizona-Mexico commission in the governor's office and with researchers at universities in this state to collect data and conduct projects in the United States and Mexico on issues that are within the scope of the department's duties and that relate to quality of life, trade and economic development in this state in a manner that will help the Arizona-Mexico commission to assess and enhance the economic competitiveness of this state and of the Arizona-Mexico region.

B. The commission may:

1. Conduct investigations, inquiries or hearings in the performance of its powers and duties.
2. Establish game management units or refuges for the preservation and management of wildlife.
3. Construct and operate game farms, fish hatcheries, fishing lakes or other facilities for or relating to the preservation or propagation of wildlife.
4. Expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices.
5. Remove or permit to be removed from public or private waters fish which hinder or prevent propagation of game or food fish and dispose of such fish in such manner as it may designate.
6. Purchase, sell or barter wildlife for the purpose of stocking public or private lands and waters and take at any time in any manner wildlife for research, propagation and restocking purposes or for use at a game farm or fish hatchery and declare wildlife salable when in the public interest or the interest of conservation.
7. Enter into agreements with the federal government, with other states or political subdivisions of the state and with private organizations for the construction and operation of facilities and for management studies, measures or procedures for or relating to the preservation and propagation of wildlife and expend funds for carrying out such agreements.

8. Prescribe rules for the sale, trade, importation, exportation or possession of wildlife.
9. Expend monies for the purpose of producing publications relating to wildlife and activities of the department for sale to the public and establish the price to be paid for annual subscriptions and single copies of such publications. All monies received from the sale of such publications shall be deposited in the game and fish publications revolving fund.
10. Contract with any person or entity to design and produce artwork on terms that, in the commission's judgment, will produce an original and valuable work of art relating to wildlife or wildlife habitat.
11. Sell or distribute the artwork authorized under paragraph 10 of this subsection on such terms and for such price as it deems acceptable.
12. Consider the adverse and beneficial short-term and long-term economic impacts on resource dependent communities, small businesses and the state of Arizona, of policies and programs for the management, preservation and harvest of wildlife by holding a public hearing to receive and consider written comments and public testimony from interested persons.
13. Adopt rules relating to range operations at public shooting ranges operated by and under the jurisdiction of the commission, including the hours of operation, the fees for the use of the range, the regulation of groups and events, the operation of related range facilities, the type of firearms and ammunition that may be used at the range, the safe handling of firearms at the range, the required safety equipment for a person using the range, the sale of firearms, ammunition and shooting supplies at the range, and the authority of range officers to enforce these rules, to remove violators from the premises and to refuse entry for repeat violations.
14. Solicit and accept grants, gifts or donations of money or other property from any source, which may be used for any purpose consistent with this title.

C. The commission shall confer and coordinate with the director of water resources with respect to the commission's activities, plans and negotiations relating to water development and use, restoration projects under the restoration acts pursuant to chapter 4, article 1 of this title, where water development and use are involved, the abatement of pollution injurious to wildlife and in the formulation of fish and wildlife aspects of the director of water resources' plans to develop and utilize water resources of the state and shall have jurisdiction over fish and wildlife resources and fish and wildlife activities of projects constructed for the state under or pursuant to the jurisdiction of the director of water resources.

D. The commission may enter into one or more agreements with a multi-county water conservation district and other parties for participation in the lower Colorado river multispecies conservation program under section 48-3713.03, including the collection and payment of any monies authorized by law for the purposes of the lower Colorado river multispecies conservation program.

The Department is unaware of any other State that has delegated these stated primary objectives to private contractors. The key functions critical to the agency mission remain the sole responsibility of the Commission through the Department.

The Commission maintains the authority to direct the Department in carrying out wildlife conservation and recreation strategies to ensure decisions are made using the best available scientific and social data and recommendations of professionally qualified personnel.

Watercraft

A.R.S. § 5-311. Powers and duties of the commission

A. The commission may:

1. Make rules and regulations required to carry out in the most effective manner all the provisions of this chapter.
 2. Modify the equipment requirements in conformity with the provisions of the federal navigation laws or with the navigation regulations promulgated by the United States Coast Guard.
 3. Prescribe additional equipment requirements not in conflict with federal navigation laws or regulations.
 4. Provide for a uniform waterway marking system and establish, operate and maintain aids to navigation and regulatory markers on the waters of this state.
 5. Make regulations for the registration and operation of watercraft.
 6. Prescribe regulations for the issuance of permits for motor boat races, regattas or other watercraft events.
 7. Administer the law enforcement and boating safety program on the state level, and accept federal grants for the purpose of boating safety and related enforcement.
- B. Regulations established under this section shall not be in conflict with those prescribed by the United States Coast Guard.

No states have completely relinquished authority and privatized watercraft registration and/or titling. Many states utilize other government agencies such as the Clerk of the Court, Motor Vehicle Division, State Department of Revenue, or County/State Tax Assessor. A bonding requirement is common in states where privatized entities offer registration and/or titling and the state's governmental issuing authority remains responsible for audit and approval of such services.

The Department provides watercraft registration services at its headquarters facility and six regional offices and additionally maintains active contracts with five third-party vendors that process watercraft transactions and issue the registration certificate and decals. There are also 30 watercraft agents that have been authorized by the Department to issue 45-day temporary certificates for new watercraft through the Department's agent site. All documents and associated evidence are mailed to the Phoenix office for review and approval before the registration certificate and decals are issued. The Department also maintains an online watercraft registration renewal system, which currently accounts for 60 percent of renewals received by the Department.

Off-Highway Vehicles

A.R.S. § 28-1176. Off-highway vehicle recreation fund; annual reports; definition

C. The Arizona game and fish department shall spend thirty-five percent of the monies in the off-highway vehicle recreation fund for:

1. Informational and educational programs related to safety, the environment and responsible use with respect to off-highway vehicle recreation.
2. Law enforcement activities relating to this article.
3. The administration of the indicia program.

4. Off-highway vehicle law enforcement pursuant to title 17, chapter 4, article 3, including seven full-time employees to enforce this article and title 17, chapter 4, article 3.

A.R.S. § 28-1177. Off-highway vehicle user fee; indicia; registration; state trust land recreational permit; exception

E. The Arizona game and fish department may provide for the purchase of nonresident off-highway vehicle user indicia and may impose an additional service fee in an amount to be determined by the Arizona game and fish commission by rule. The Arizona game and fish department shall deposit, pursuant to sections 35-146 and 35-147, the service fees collected pursuant to this subsection in the game and fish fund established by section 17-261.

No other states have completely relinquished authority and privatized OHV registration and/or titling. Many states utilize other government agencies such as the Clerk of the Court, Motor Vehicle Division, State Department of Revenue, or County/State Tax Assessor. Those states that use “Agents” or “Private Business” require them to be bonded and stipulate that the state issuing authority remains responsible for audit and approval.

The Department provides nonresident OHV decal registration services online, and processes all nonresident OHV decal transactions before issuing them to customers. The Department also maintains an online nonresident OHV registration renewal system, which accounts for 100 percent of renewals received by the Department. Current statutes are enforceable by all state certified peace officers. The enforcement of state OHV laws by private enterprise is inconsistent with statutory mandate.

2. The extent to which the agency has met its statutory objective and purpose and the efficiency with which it has operated.

The Commission is composed of five members appointed by the Governor pursuant to A.R.S. §38-211 and is the oversight body responsible for setting regulations and policies designed to provide Arizona’s citizens with hunting, fishing, and wildlife-related recreational activities. Commissioners serve staggered five-year terms, set policy, and appoint a director to supervise the Department and ensure that Commission policies are implemented. The Department implements the Commission’s rules and policies, and assists the Commission in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, including:

- Developing broad policies and long-range programs for wildlife management, preservation, and harvest;
- Establishing hunting, trapping, and fishing rules and methods for taking wildlife;
- Enforcing laws that protect wildlife;
- Establishing programs for the management of Arizona's wildlife; and
- Providing educational programs for the general public;
- Establishing license structures and fees

Wildlife Management

The Commission and Department manages wildlife under the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which asserts that wildlife is held in public trust, not owned by any one person or entity. Wildlife is managed based on the overall public good. The North American Model promotes management practices that provide an opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, and relies on scientific research-based management. It recognizes that wildlife cannot be managed along political boundaries, so cooperation across boundaries is a necessity. The North American Model also relies on laws and enforcement, and provides a public process for the development of wildlife related laws and rules.

The goals of the Department's Wildlife Management Program are to conserve and protect wildlife populations and habitats, to provide for compatible public uses, while avoiding adverse impacts to habitat and wildlife populations, to promote public health and safety, and to increase public awareness and understanding of wildlife resources.

Wildlife management is funded through fees charged to hunters, anglers, trappers and other wildlife users for licenses, permits, stamps and tags; a federal excise tax on some types of hunting and fishing equipment; the Arizona Heritage Fund (funded through the Arizona State Lottery); Wildlife Conservation Funds (from Tribal gaming revenue); a federal program for State Wildlife Grants; voluntary contributions to Arizona's Wildlife Checkoff on Arizona state income tax forms; donations to the Commission and specific Department programs; conservation membership package purchases and other sources.

The Department manages all wildlife species to maintain biological diversity, examples of this include managing big game species within population objectives as well as performing actions to monitor, enhance or recover wildlife considered for listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, such as the Sonoran Desert Tortoise. Research and monitoring by Department biologists resulted in the most complete set of data and information on the species available; which was integral in the decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that land development will not be considered as a threat to Sonoran Desert Tortoises. To ensure the Department is managing and implementing actions for all wildlife species the wildlife management program is subdivided into two programmatic areas: aquatic wildlife and terrestrial wildlife. The success of these programmatic areas relies on other key project areas, including habitat evaluation, research, law enforcement, development and engineering, education, public affairs and marketing.

Watercraft

As the designated state watercraft authority, the Department is responsible for law enforcement, providing education, watercraft registration, and boating access. The Watercraft Program's purpose is to promote recreational boating safety for all motorized and non-motorized users and to maintain the state's compliance with federal boating regulations as outlined by the U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Division.

The Department is authorized to maintain aids to navigation markers, perform dock maintenance, register watercraft, investigate violations of state law including theft of watercraft and impaired operation, maintain records of stolen boats, offer grant opportunities, perform boat inspections, and provide outreach materials and educational opportunities to the public.

The Department's Watercraft Law Enforcement Program provides a key public contact mechanism for ensuring that boaters are operating safely on Arizona's waterways. The Department allocates law enforcement officers throughout the state to enforce boating safety through outreach and education, as well as enforcement actions, when necessary. More than 6,000 hours have been allocated to Department officers in the current fiscal year, patrolling bodies of water throughout the state.

In order to best realize the goals of the state as outlined by statute, the Department provides competitive grant opportunities for equipment to agencies with boating safety programs and makes various training opportunities available to multiple Arizona law enforcement agencies. In addition to training topics such as Boating Accident Investigations and Officer Water Survival, the Department is the only agency that offers an Arizona Police Officers and Standards Training certified Watercraft Law Enforcement course that satisfies training standards required to engage in watercraft patrols. The Department is also the lead agency providing training approved by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) in Seated Battery Field Sobriety testing (SFST), with six certified instructors available to provide that training anywhere in the state.

Finally, the Department maintains a boating accident reporting database, ReportBeam, to collect boating incidents across the state, including those submitted by our Boating Safety Partners. All incidents are reviewed by the Department and submitted to the United States Coast Guard to maintain the state's eligibility to claim funds under the Federal Boating Safety Act of 1971.

The Department continues to increase its overall efficiency by offering online renewals as well as online resources for boat owners. Despite the pandemic, a total of 129,431 recreational boats were registered in Arizona for calendar year 2020, which is higher than the previous year's (2019) total of 124,055.

The Department offers online boating safety classes as well as in-person paddle craft classes to the public. These courses include instruction on the basic skills required to safely operate a boat or personal watercraft, trailering your vessel, navigational rules, buoys, anchoring, legal requirements, boating emergencies, water sports and paddling.

Off-Highway Vehicle Program

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is the primary state agency for law enforcement, education and training related to off-highway vehicles.

To fulfill its statutory responsibility, the Department works to manage off-highway vehicles in a manner that protects Arizona's wildlife and wildlife resources; to educate people about responsible and ethical off-highway vehicle use; to manage off-highway vehicle recreation; and to encourage users of off-highway vehicles to operate in a manner that is safe, responsible, ethical and legal. The Department disseminates public information in support of these goals and provides services in the form of education, law enforcement and habitat damage

assessment to ensure that recreation is safe and compatible with wildlife conservation principles.

The Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Fund, established by A.R.S. § 28-1176 and administered jointly between the Department and Arizona State Parks and Trails is the primary source of funding for these activities. This fund has been supplemented by the passage of legislation in 2018 that created a means for visitors to this state to operate their vehicles in compliance with state laws (non-residents operated under limited 30 day reciprocity, when available). The Department has established a non-resident OHV registration program where there had previously been none and administers the non-resident indicia program independently.

Governance and Business Administration

The Department's Governance and Business Administration function supports the financial, physical, regulatory and information technology needs that allows the Department to serve its customers and accomplish its goals and carry out the policy direction of the Commission. This includes strategic planning and performance management processes to set strategies and objectives for the systematic management of the Department's financial and physical assets, human resources, and regulatory oversight and compliance. The Department's Commission-approved budget is developed in a public process and monitored through rigorous controls that ensure statutory and funding eligibility requirements are met.

The Department uses internal auditing tools to help accomplish its objectives by applying a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, internal controls, and governance processes. Internal audits evaluate all components within a risk-identified process and produce report recommendations for improvements. The results facilitate management's ability to provide the highest, most ethical level of procedural and fiscal governance.

Volunteers

Volunteers provide critical services and support to the Department's mission and operations in a variety of areas including shooting ranges, water hauling, building and maintaining water catchments, and educational instructors for hunting, angling, off-highway vehicle, watercraft and youth programs. Volunteers also support landowner relations through the Adopt-a-Ranch program, assist with wildlife habitat improvement projects and work in the field surveying wildlife and a myriad of other activities. Over the last five years, volunteer hours donated to the Department have equated to the work of more than 50 full-time employees annually. Volunteer hours for eligible projects also serve as in-kind match which is required for most federal wildlife grants. In FY22, volunteer hours are projected to provide close to \$1.2 million of in-kind match. The Department's effective use of volunteer match allows cash revenue to be reallocated to other purposes.

Partnerships

The Department's statewide shooting range business model is based on four major criteria: demand, an organization to operate, availability, and funding. All four factors are necessary for long term success, but demand and having an organization willing to take the lead in the day to day management of range operations are key. The Commission currently owns 10 shooting

facilities, nine of which are operated by a local organized group (club) through a lease agreement and under the direction of the Department. The other range, the Ben Avery Shooting Facility, is operated by Department staff due to its size, location and high use. This model increases efficiency by applying specialized Department staff time to non-operational roles and responsibilities such as oversight of range design to meet safety requirements, ensuring compliance with regulatory obligations, public access, and arranging for construction support thereby allowing the managing organization to dedicate its time and effort to range operation.

Under the Department's license agreement, a partner club may collect user fees that are required to be reinvested in the development and operation of the shooting range facility. Clubs that operate Commission-owned ranges typically utilize range funds for new development, maintenance and upgrades of the properties after overhead and expenses are met. This model has proven to be successful in allowing the Department to provide opportunities throughout the state to meet the need of recreational shooters, on land that is available at a reasonable distance for public access and with a majority of the funding for operations being generated by the managing partner club.

As another example, The Department maintains over 3000 water catchments statewide that it regularly maintains and constructs new ones where needed. In addition, during dry periods, the Department and its partners haul water to these catchments to maintain acceptable water levels for all species of wildlife. In FY21 alone, the Department and its partners hauled approximately 3.3 million gallons of water to these critical wildlife waters.

Presently, the Department has more than one thousand agreements in effect within Arizona supporting cooperative fish and wildlife management. In the past year alone, over 463 cooperative agreements were entered into with various landowners, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and other governmental and tribal partners. These formalized partnerships expand the capacity and improve the efficiency with which conservation programs are implemented, thereby supporting the Department's effectiveness in meeting statutory requirements for the management of wildlife. In addition to cooperative partnership agreements, the Department offers several grant programs that allow external entities the opportunity to apply for and receive funding to implement projects that also support the Department's mission. Examples of granting programs offered in the past 10 years include local sportsmen's groups, habitat stewardship, shooting range, watercraft, public access, wildlife education, and wildlife inventory, survey and habitat enhancement grants.

The Department also has several other agreements and cooperative programs with municipal governments, landowners and conservation organizations that help the Department accomplish its mission while leveraging programs that enhance the quality of life within the state's communities and aid in partner success.

The development and maintenance of mutually beneficial partnerships with entities operating in Arizona, including public-private alliances, allows the Department to reach and serve new customers, provide funding for wildlife conservation, and support outdoor recreation. Standard processes are in place that provide a consistent and transparent approach by which the Department enters into and manages public-private alliances. The Department embraces

innovation to promote Arizona's businesses while expanding opportunities to fund conservation of the state's wildlife resources.

Diverse Customers

Over the past three decades, Arizona has rapidly changed. A large number of people have relocated to Arizona, bringing with them different perspectives about wildlife. Thus, the residents of Arizona are seeking different wildlife-related services. While historically, the Department has, and will continue, to serve the needs of hunters and anglers, it now also serves a growing number of people who appreciate and interact with wildlife in different ways. To continue to serve these diverse customer needs, the Department has implemented several improvements and new programs, products and services over the past ten years, many of which are described later in this and the following section.

Public Awareness and Engagement

In 2015, the Department introduced the Conserve and Protect campaign, a comprehensive statewide outreach campaign to help Arizona residents understand the Department's wildlife conservation efforts, how it is paid for, and why it matters. The Department's traditional customer base generally understands and takes pride in their contribution to funding wildlife conservation. In order to help expand the level of awareness for the Department's activities and services it provides throughout the state, this campaign is directed toward people who may not hunt or fish, but have a strong connection or appreciation for wildlife and outdoor recreation. This target audience enjoys the outdoors, hiking and camping. They fully appreciate the value of wildlife, but may not realize the Department's efforts to conserve Arizona's wildlife and habitats for this and future generations to enjoy or how those efforts are funded at no cost to the state's general fund.

In addition to communicating how the Department's efforts are funded, this campaign serves to introduce the Department's services to new audiences and why conserving Arizona's wildlife resources matters. This is an ongoing task as Arizona is constantly welcoming new residents at a very high rate.

Messaging is distributed to Arizona residents through a multi-channel campaign. In addition to capturing consistently high engagement across message placements, this past fiscal year the campaign raised over \$430,000 in donations and through sales of Conservation Membership packages, an offering that provides assorted Department products in exchange for an annual gift. Through these efforts, the Department has the opportunity to communicate directly with these new audiences, share its critical mission across the state, and provide another opportunity for the public to actively support the conservation of the state's wildlife.

Efficiency Improvements implemented since the 2011 Sunset Review

License Simplification - In January 2014, the Department implemented License Simplification which streamlined existing licenses structures to facilitate a more efficient purchasing process for hunters and anglers. This effort reduced the number of license options from over 40 down to essentially six, bundled privileges, significantly discounted youth and became valid for 365 days from purchase. This was enabled by the Legislature giving the Commission the authority to set license structure and fees in rule which has allowed the Department to operate more like

a business and provide value, create new products and services and respond quickly to customer needs. License sales and customer satisfaction have increased significantly since this improvement.

Faster Big Game Draw Results - The Department significantly reduced the time to post draw results for its customers. Prior to 2017, the Department averaged 65 days from the time the online draw application period closed to post draw results. The current average is 25 days to post draw results. The more than 50% reduction has been sustained through continuous focus on improvements.

Public Involvement/Access - The Department implemented live broadcasting (audio and video) of Commission meetings over the internet and phone lines, enabling many more customers and constituents to view Commission meetings and participate remotely.

Customer Portal - The Department developed and successfully launched an online customer portal that provides access to review and update customer information in real-time. The portal also provides online access to license purchases, big game draw applications, big game draw results, watercraft registrations and other products and services.

Online Reservation System - The Department implemented an online reservation system at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility, providing customers better service and convenience.

Online Watercraft Registration - Online registration has improved since implementation in 2004, and customers now have the ability to renew their watercraft registration from multiple device types, including personal computers or phones, which generates a 45-day temporary certificate. This allows customers to complete their transaction easily and conveniently, and provides the added benefit of allowing them immediate use of their watercraft. In 2016, the Department eliminated the \$2.50 convenience fee that was charged as part of the online registration process. This eliminated a barrier and made the service free for customers to utilize.

Lake Havasu Registration Site - In response to customer demand, the Department opened a part time remote watercraft registration office in Lake Havasu City. This area has the highest density of watercraft registrations and watercraft owners in the state but the nearest available registration services were located in Kingman and Yuma. Following a successful launch in 2016, this service was transitioned from Department staff to a third-party vendor.

Watercraft Third Party Providers - The Department authorized its first third-party watercraft registration provider in 2018, and currently has five third-party vendors on contract that are processing watercraft transactions providing additional options for customers located in areas that do not have a Department office.

Watercraft QR Codes - Changes were made to the watercraft renewal notices sent to customers in 2019, which provided a QR code that allowed customers to use mobile devices to directly connect to the Department's website for watercraft renewals online.

Mobile Device Licenses - The Department updated its online license system to offer customers the ability to purchase hunt and fish licenses via their smartphone or mobile device. This

convenience allows for customers to purchase needed licenses at any time of the day, and any day of the year. Additionally the license can be stored on the customers smartphone and used in the field to show proof of licensure.

Online Draw - The Department successfully implemented a secure online draw application system that allows a customer the convenience of submitting their big game application from their personal computer or mobile device. The Department has achieved a 100% participation rate in its online draws, demonstrating a success that continues to reduce paper-based processes involved in conducting the big game draw.

Updating Credit Cards - After noting a significant number of successful draw applications delayed or lost due to declined credit cards, the Department developed functionality within the draw application process for customers to update the credit card used when applying. This grants customers an effective self-service solution for a situation that would previously have required contact from Department staff to rectify, improving the customer experience and reducing a significant delay in the posting of draw results.

License Purchases during Draws - An unexpired hunting or combination license is required to enter the big game draw. Where previous iterations of the draw software ended an application with a reported failure to meet required conditions, the Department has developed functionality to purchase the required license in conjunction with an online draw application. Purchasing a license online while submitting an online draw application allows customers to efficiently enter the draw without leaving the online environment.

Fleet Management - In 2018 the Department implemented a new approach for managing standard fleet vehicles that improved the way the Department administers and maintains its vehicles and ensures access to safe, available and affordable vehicles. The new model resulted in a reduction of 33 individual Department motor pool administrators to one, and created a model that replaces the entire fleet of the standard vehicles on an eight-year cycle. It will also facilitate more efficient use of vehicles.

Procurement - The Department implemented the Arizona Purchase Portal, an automated purchasing system that interfaces with the State accounting system.

Employee Time Entry - The Department implemented the Employee Time Entry System, eliminating the need to collect and process hundreds of time sheets every pay period.

Budget Management - The Department has begun implementing a new budget development and management process, called Budget Simplification, which is similar to “Zero Based Budgeting.” This further increases management and oversight of both budget development and expense management.

Field Apps - Administrative activities that field staff like Department officers and biologists previously had to complete in the office environment can now be performed while in the field, making field/patrol days more efficient. Online applications designed in house, allow the viewing of data and maps and the collection and entry of new data, for a variety of purposes, real time while in the field.

License Dealers Fees - In 2019, the Department implemented a legislative change that allowed private license dealers to charge a convenience fee rather than receiving a set percentage (5%) of license fees. In addition to alleviating the accounting burden this conversion significantly increased flexibility for license dealers.

Online Regulations - The Department publishes a comprehensive guide to its regulations including statutory requirements, Commission administrative codes, and hunt guidelines. This resource is available to customers as a physical guide and online through the Department's website. This allows instant access and does not require the customer to travel to a license dealer or a Department office.

Coming Soon - Paperless Licenses, Electronic Tags and Auto Renewals - The Department is currently in the process of migrating license dealers to a paperless licensing environment beginning in 2022, developing a digital option for its big game tags that will allow a more efficient way to report harvest, and implementing an auto renewal process for hunting and fishing licenses that customers may choose to opt in for.

System Scalability/Reliability (Cloud Technologies) - Prior to 2015, the frequency of server crashes and the unavailability of the online draw application to customers during normal and peak usage was common. Servers were unable to be increased or scaled in size to handle the online customer demand from entering a draw application without significant manual intervention. Failures rendered the Department's entire system unavailable for customer use. The average time to restore online services was between 2-4 hours. In order to provide dependable and efficient service, the Department fully implemented the State's Cloud First initiative to increase the scalability of its systems and specifically improve the online availability of the online draw system during application periods. The Department now optimizes the use of cloud technologies to support and continuously improve efficiencies throughout its systems. Moving all software applications, including the draw, to an on demand Cloud base platform significantly improved all areas of efficiency. The Department now delivers an average of 99.98% system availability rating, has experienced no unexpected system failures since the move to the Cloud Platform, and has reduced typical maintenance time to less than (10) minutes. All changes within the cloud environment now happen in real time, do not require a system to be offline, and can be done without service availability impacts to the customer.

Arizona Management System (AMS) - The Department has implemented AMS which is a results-driven management system that focuses on delivering customer value and vital mission outcomes for customers. Based on "Lean" principles, the goal of AMS is to equip employees with the tools and skills for data-driven decision making and disciplined problem solving. As a result of AMS implementation, the Department has improved numerous processes, created efficiencies for its customers, and established standardized problem solving practices to eliminate waste and delay.

Comprehensive Management System (CMS) - The Department is one of only five state wildlife management agencies that operates utilizing the CMS to manage its federal Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) funding apportioned by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. WSFR funds are derived from excise taxes on hunting and fishing supplies

and equipment. The CMS framework allows for multiple WSFR funding sources to be received in one large grant whereas most other states use the project-by-project method. The CMS is a much more efficient process and meets all federal requirements for a management system that includes 1) Biological inventory and customer assessment, 2) Identification of strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities, 3) Strategic planning, goal and objective setting, 4) Operational planning, project review and implementation, and 5) Control, evaluation and project tracking.

3. The extent to which the agency serves the entire state rather than specific interests.

The Commission and Department manage the state's wildlife as a public trust using no state general tax dollars. Instead, operations are funded via a "user-pay, public-benefit" model that ensures all citizens of the state benefit from the Department's programs and activities. In order to ensure that wildlife resources and recreation opportunities remain available and abundant the Department must operate as a business and maintain the highest possible level of customer satisfaction with its products and services. The following is a general list of the Department's customers and constituents that benefit from the products and services it provides:

Hunters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small game • Big game • Waterfowl • Archery • General • Youth • Champ (disabled hunters) • Pioneer • Veteran • Falconers • Species specific • Special Tags • Resident • Non-resident • Amphibian and Reptile enthusiasts • Industry 	Recreational Shooters/Shooting Ranges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry • Volunteers • Hunters • Contractors • Government • General Public • Licensed Security Companies • Self-Defense / CCW training providers • Novice/beginner shooters • Recreational shooters • Specialty shooters • Competitive shooters • Olympic level shooters • Law Enforcement • Military • Sportsmen's groups • Corporate Groups • Youth Organizations • Communities and Municipalities • Counties • Federal Land Management Agencies 	Special Licenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoo • Wildlife Rehabilitation • White Amur Stocking • Aquatic Wildlife Stocking • Wildlife Holding • Wildlife Education • Live Bait Dealers • Shooting Preserve • Scientific Activities • Wildlife Service • Sport Falconry
Anglers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm water • Cool water • Cold water • Fly Fishing • Resident • Non-resident • Youth • Pioneer • Veteran • Group Licenses 	Wildlife Interaction/Conflict Customers	Boaters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Watercraft (PWC) • Sailboats • Power boats • Kayakers • Canoeing • Swift Water Rafting • Standup Paddleboards • Water sports Outdoor Recreationists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHV Users • 4-Wheelers • Hikers • Bikers • Campers

- Urban
- Group Disabled
- Industry

Trappers

- Recreational
- Nuisance/Depredation

- Private Homeowners
- Landowners
- Businesses
- Golf Courses
- City/County Parks
- Homeowner Associations
- General Public

- Wildlife Viewers
- Wildlife feeders (at home)
- Photographers

Natural Resource Industries

- Farmers, Ranchers and Cattle Growers
- Agriculture
- Wool growers
- Timber
- Mining
- Sand and gravel
- Residential Developers
- Commercial Developers
- Energy Developers
- Aquaculturists
- Natural Resource Planners
- Natural Resource Consultants

Water Users/Managers

- Power and Electrical Companies
- Irrigation Districts
- Drinking Water Providers

Tourism Industry

- Tourists
- Hotel Managers
- Resorts
- Chambers of Commerce
- Arizona Office of Tourism

Businesses

- Manufacturers
- Retailers
- License Dealers
- Boating Retailers and Manufacturers
- Guides
- Taxidermists
- Campgrounds
- Resorts

Government

- Commission
- Legislators/Elected officials
- AZ State Agencies
- Tribal Governments
- Other State Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- Mexican Government
- Federal Agencies
- County Governments
- City Governments
- City, County, State and Federal Courts

Media

- Local, State and National
- Television, Print, Radio, Online

Educational Institutions

- Elementary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- Charter Schools
- Home school families
- College/Universities

Non-Governmental Organizations

- The Department currently engages or communicates with several hundred NGOs in AZ

Youth Organizations

- Boy Scouts of America
- Girl Scouts of America
- 4-H
- Cub Scouts
- Brownies
- Big Brothers Big Sisters

License Agents & Dealers

- 237 across AZ

Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Plan outlines the Department's guiding principles and defines its diverse roles and functions. It is a living document that conveys policy direction that the Commission has provided to the Department to guide work and priorities into the future.

The Department uses this plan to convey the short and long-term nature of its mission to the public, including the challenges inherent in managing resources for a diverse public. The Department considers this plan to be an important communication tool for sharing the Department's goals and priorities with customers, the public, partner agencies, organizations and employees.

The Plan is built around two "Lines of Business;" Wildlife Conservation and Recreation. The lines of business are central to this plan, and are the driving force behind the Department's operational plans and project implementation plans. It gives broad strategic guidance for all Department programs.

The Department's operational plans translate strategies and objectives from the strategic plan into short-term plans that are linked to the annual budget process, and implementation plans further refine operational plans and link operational strategies and objectives into annual activities tied to the Department's annual budget. Examples of operational and implementation plans include the Department's Hunt Guidelines, Sport Fish Management, Law Enforcement, Ben Avery Business Plan, Wildlife Area Plans, and the State Wildlife Action Plan which focuses on species of greatest conservation need.

The Department's intent to involve and serve a broad public is demonstrated in that many of these plans are either annually or periodically available for public review and comments.

Wildlife Education

The Department's wildlife education program promotes a sense of awareness and stewardship of the natural environment and also uses the environment as a context for learning science, social studies, math and language arts. This program is available to educators and the general public through the Department's website and provides complete lesson plans aligned to the Arizona Academic Content standards, educator training and workshops, educational resources and live wildlife presentations. In 2020, over 900 educators received professional development training on ways to incorporate wildlife conservation into their lessons. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in person engagement was limited and teachers were looking for assistance in making their lessons and resources virtual. The Department met those needs by offering training opportunities on GIS in wildlife management, live streaming webcams, and using Google Suite products to create interactive digital wildlife education activities. In addition, the Department consolidated many of its educational resources into a single "Learning from Home" webpage that provided easy access to dozens of ready to use activities for teachers, parents and students.

The Department's Wildlife Center provides specialized care for its collection of wildlife ambassadors (non-releasable animals) who travel with staff to various public outreach programs throughout the state. The Department finished construction and moved into the new Wildlife Center building in 2020. This building provides a space to care for the wildlife

ambassadors as well as the hundreds of tortoises that are surrendered annually to the adoption program. The Center is vital to the ever expanding wildlife education programs that the Department offers that continue to reach new audiences across Arizona. Staff and volunteers provide public wildlife education to thousands of Arizonans per year through virtual education programs and at in-person outreach events.

The Department's Tortoise Adoption program reaches a diverse audience statewide. This program provides education and awareness for Arizona citizens and desert tortoise caretakers. For generations, homeowners in Arizona's desert communities (Tucson, Phoenix, Yuma, and Kingman) have kept desert tortoises as pets in their backyards or enclosures. Families that choose to adopt a desert tortoise gain valuable knowledge about desert tortoises, their care and essential role in the desert environment. Many of the education and awareness campaigns focus on ensuring that unwanted desert tortoise pets are not released to the wild, potentially spreading pathogens or parasites to a resident wild population. The Department adopts out an average of 250 desert tortoises each year.

Commission Meetings

Commission meetings are conducted in accordance with Arizona Public Meeting laws. The Department publicizes each meeting time, date and agenda on its website, through media and E-News notifications and physically posts the notifications at all Department Offices. In addition, the Department webcasts Commission meetings live allowing them to be viewed by anyone in the State or beyond. Anyone from the public may attend a Commission meeting in person and provide comments on any specific agenda item or any issue they desire under the "Call to the Public" agenda items. The Department webcasts Commission meetings at all regional offices where the public may also view the meeting and provide comment using the regional office facilities. Following public health guidance related to COVID-19, the Department also incorporated means for the public to provide comments using free, commonly available video conferencing protocols that also support telephone audio. Additionally, any member of the public may "petition" the Commission or request an agenda item on any issue as prescribed in R12-4-611. Finally, Commissioner's email addresses are available on the Department's website allowing all citizens direct access to the Commission.

Arizona Trends and Customer Surveys

Arizonans collectively own the state's wildlife. The Commission and Department have been entrusted as stewards to make informed decisions regarding wildlife as a public trust. One of the mechanisms the Department uses to inform wildlife management decision-making is to conduct trend and customer surveys on a variety of topics and issues. These samples allow the Department to determine residents' participation in and satisfaction with outdoor recreation, their attitudes toward wildlife, and their opinions regarding the Department and its services.

As hunting and fishing license sales have increased over the past several years, resident customer satisfaction with those activities has remained high where in 2020 hunting satisfaction was 84% and fishing was 87%. In addition to hunters and anglers, the Department is heavily involved in wildlife viewing and photographing activities, off-highway vehicles, boating, and target shooting. In 2020, satisfaction with those outdoor recreation activities that residents had participated in ranged from 91 percent (target/recreational shooting) to 96 percent

(wildlife viewing trips). Satisfaction with boating and off-highway vehicle driving remained high as well at 92 percent and 93 percent, respectively. Furthermore, the Department's products and services also benefit those who don't participate in these activities by managing healthy and balanced wildlife habitats. Trend Survey data shows that a majority of Arizona residents feel the Arizona Game and Fish Department is the most credible source of information on wildlife related issues.

Statewide Shooting Range Development and Support

The Department continues to support the development of shooting ranges across Arizona to provide safe places for firearms use, education and training. The Department's investments benefit communities by providing a safe venue for recreational shooters, as well as venues for hunter education, law enforcement and other shooting disciplines. These efforts also serve other segments of the public by ensuring there is access to safe shooting ranges, which minimizes the conflicts with other outdoor enthusiasts, landowners, homeowners and communities.

Since 1996, the Department has provided \$100,000 annually in grants to encourage and support the development and improvement of public shooting ranges. These funds are allocated through a competitive grant process and matched 1:1 by applicants. Since 2011, \$1 million has been administered in support of over 30 public shooting ranges across Arizona. In addition, the Department has invested in improvements on Commission-owned ranges for safety, development, maintenance, and operations, which have had a positive impact on shooting participation at these facilities statewide, as well as the surrounding local economies. For instance, the Utery Mountain Shooting Range in Mesa experienced a 50 percent increase in membership since 2015, and the Commission-owned shooting ranges, not including Ben Avery, have seen an increase in use of approximately 50,000 shooters since 2015 which is over a 25% increase.

Since 2011, the Department identified three underserved communities without access to safe public shooting ranges. Working with land management agencies and local shooting organizations, the Department constructed new public shooting ranges in Show Low, Bullhead City, and Flagstaff. Since construction, these ranges have combined to generate over 100,000 shooter days. The Department also worked with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to provide support in the development and construction of four designated shooting range sites on BLM property in the west valley. In addition, the Department has provided range support to several communities including Chino Valley, Payson, Prescott, Cottonwood, Fredonia, Buckeye, Clifton, Wickenburg, Duncan, Oro Valley, Pima County, Lake Havasu, San Manuel, Mammoth, Wilcox, Safford, and Yuma in the form of engineering, equipment, labor, environmental compliance, safety, operational and procedural plans, business plan development, master plan development and land acquisition/site location advice.

The Department has made considerable investments in the infrastructure, development and management of the internationally-recognized Ben Avery Shooting Facility (BASF) and Clay Target Center (CTC) since 2011. Many of the following improvements were made possible through partnerships, donations, and revenues generated by range users. BASF/CTC improvements and developments include:

- An online reservation system and store
- FITA Archery Range improvements including an operation center, and range and parking lot expansions which supports the annual USA Archery Arizona Cup tournament that is an Olympic qualifier event
- Two additional sporting clay courses which hosted the 2021 NSCA Western Regional Championship with over 500 participants, the largest clay target shoot ever held at the CTC
- Road and parking lot improvements, new water lines, safety berms, upgraded septic systems across the facility
- DPS training center
- DPS 300 Yard Range with a canopy funded in part through a public donation
- ADA accessibility improvements to Benchrest range and Clay Target Center
- Public/Private partnerships with local and international corporations such as Berger Bullets, Nightforce, OneAZ Credit Union, and Patriot Ordnance Factory, INC
- New facilities including the Berger Building at High Power Range, maintenance facility, OneAZ Credit Union Pavilion at CTC, and Administrative Center
- Main Range berms refinished and new insulation on the canopy of Main Range installed
- Cowboy mounted shooting horse stalls and central campground built in 2014
- Canopies and concrete slabs added to Rifle 1 and Pistol 2
- Laundry room added to the east campground
- Since 2011, the Rifle-Pistol Range had 1,044,301 shooter days and the CTC threw an estimated 49 million targets

Urban Wildlife Conflicts

The Department's Communication Center has fielded more than 31,000 Human-Wildlife Interaction (HWI) calls from citizens throughout Arizona since 2014. The Communication Center operates 24-hours a day, seven days-a-week, and generates written HWI reports provided to wildlife managers and other regional office personnel via email, phone call and/or radio.

The subjects of these calls include, but are not limited to, bears and mountain lions moving through residential areas; nuisance coyotes, bobcats, and javelina; potentially rabid skunks, foxes and bats; and hawks and other birds of prey in distress. Pursuant to the Department's Human-Wildlife Conflicts policy, most of these human-wildlife interactions only require providing "self-help" information and wildlife education, while others require a wide-variety of Department responses based on public safety or welfare concerns. Department responses include site visits; public meetings with concerned citizens, HOA boards, City Councils and Boards of Supervisors; coordination with police, sheriff's deputies and animal control agencies; and on rare occasions, removal and destruction of aggressive, dangerous, or injured animals. Many Human-Wildlife Interactions occur in major population centers and the Department's regional offices in Mesa and Tucson are accordingly staffed with Urban Wildlife Specialists who are responsible for actively resolving or assisting with the many human-wildlife conflicts that arise in urban or suburban areas.

Of the 31,000+ calls, 328 were "Category-1" calls, which involve wildlife attacks on humans or wildlife deemed an immediate threat to human health or safety. These types of calls have been increasing annually since 2014. Given the trend, as well as a 2011 black bear attack in Pinetop that ultimately proved fatal, the Department created a Category-1 Incident Response

Team. The 17-member team, composed of specially trained wildlife personnel, has responded to multiple wildlife attacks or incidents throughout the state, primarily involving dangerous bears and mountain lions. In addition to an investigative role, the team is responsible for capturing the animal and linking it to the victim using a variety of forensic techniques.

The Department Communication Center has also taken 575 Operation Game Thief (OGT) 1-800 calls since 2016 for illegal feeding of wildlife. Most of the illegal feeding issues are resolved by the Department sending a letter to advise the feeder of the law and the potential repercussions of continued feeding of wildlife. In addition to the statewide law (A.R.S. 13-2927), there are also county and municipality ordinances that prohibit the feeding of wildlife. Wildlife feeding leads to animals being habituated to humans and increases the potential for wildlife becoming a threat to human health and safety which also threatens the safety of the animal. The OGT tip line enables citizens throughout Arizona to report any wildlife violations, anonymously if need be.

Tribal Partnerships

The Department routinely engages with, supports, and coordinates with Arizona's 22 federally-recognized Tribes. While Tribes retain sovereign authority over the management of wildlife resources on approximately 20 million acres of tribal lands across Arizona, the significance of these diverse resources combined with shared interests in deploying sound conservation of the state's diverse wildlife resources drives the Department to building and maintaining effective relationships with Tribal Governments.

The Department facilitates an annual statewide coordination meeting with counterpart agencies of all Arizona Tribes to broadly provide necessary outreach addressing key management and planning updates while also identifying major issues of common interest. In addition, the Department continues to perform outreach and coordination with numerous Tribes on an individual basis. Coordination with individual Tribes varies widely, depending upon management issues, challenges and/or shared interests relating to each tribal relationship. The Department typically provides direct outreach, coordination and technical support to Tribes that encompass the following areas:

- Wildlife management planning, data sharing and project support, to include training and/or operational support to wildlife conservation efforts of common interest. Examples include annual Bald Eagle Nestwatch program, administration of hunts on tribal trust lands, wildlife survey and research projects, big game tagging/collaring and monitoring projects, and native/sport fish management programs. This also includes providing engagement and outreach to tribal agencies on species recovery/reintroduction efforts in Arizona (e.g. Apache trout, California condor, Blackfooted ferret, Mexican wolf, etc.).
- Law Enforcement training and case management coordination. The Department continues to work closely with tribal enforcement agencies and, as requested, will provide standard officer training courses to tribal officers. Additionally, the Department continues to foster professional relationships with tribal enforcement agencies to promote effective coordination and management of law enforcement cases/issues of common interest.
- Hunter education and outreach, to include providing direct assistance to Hunter Education courses and recruitment events held on tribal lands. This coordination further involves providing public outreach/education support on a myriad of wildlife issues of common interest (e.g. hunting/fishing recreation, nuisance wildlife prevention).

- Cultural resource compliance relating to Department plans or projects that involve Native American cultural sites or resources in Arizona.

The Department also enters into formal agreements with individual Tribes to facilitate the ongoing deployment and management of identified collaborative conservation and/or enforcement efforts.

Lastly, the Department manages the Statewide Non-Bird Wildlife Repository which was developed in partnership with the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society to provide requested wildlife remains to Native American Tribes for ceremonial and cultural uses. The repository relies upon opportunistic collection of wildlife remains through the assistance of Department staff performing mission-oriented activities, with collected items ultimately being distributed to interested Tribes for uses in traditional practices.

Geospatial Planning

The Department continually strives to provide up-to-date, data-rich, wildlife conservation information in an effort to better inform project planners, wildlife management efforts, and decision-makers throughout Arizona. The Department has various tools available including an Online Environmental Review Tool for Arizona's sensitive and federally protected species; guidelines and recommendations for incorporating wildlife conservation into planning; and the Department's Conservation Analysis Tool.

The Department is currently developing the Arizona Wildlife Conservation Strategy (AWCS) as the revision of Arizona's State Wildlife Action Plan. An inherent part of the AWCS will be the Conservation Analysis Tool (CAT), an interactive, web-based geographic information system (GIS) tool. The CAT will contain all of the data developed for the AWCS including species distributions and Conservation Opportunity Areas. These geospatial planning tools are intended to provide an efficient way to access useful, non-regulatory information to guide project planners and developers in the early stages of planning at a statewide, landscape-level. The CAT and associated wildlife information and products are intended to serve a variety of stakeholders throughout Arizona including, but not limited to, the following:

- City, county, and statewide planners
- Conservation groups
- Developers
- State government
- Federal government
- General public

Landowner Relations

The Department works to secure recreational access to and through private land holdings, as well as ensure recreational access for a variety of activities to land-locked National Forests, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) State Trust lands. Additionally, the Department works with partners to secure Federal Farm Bill funding for public access, to improve Arizona's natural landscapes and works to ensure that Arizona's forests, BLM lands, State Trust lands, and undeveloped private lands maintain the biodiversity and beauty that attracts visitors from all over the country. This program supports rural economies by securing funding from partners to hire local contractors to conduct projects that

benefit wildlife. By maintaining recreational access and improving habitat for wildlife species, the Department ensures that local economies will benefit from hunters, anglers and wildlife enthusiasts staying in motels, dining at local restaurants, buying gas, and purchasing other products and services that provide a critical influx of revenue to rural communities.

Public Information

The Department makes use of a full array of communication methods to inform the public about key issues and Department activities. These include:

Website - The Department manages a robust website (www.azgfd.gov) that includes extensive information (over 700 pages) on all aspects of the Department's mission. Each month the site receives an average of more than 1.2 million unique visitors and approximately 15.2 million visits annually.

E-news - The Department maintains nine different e-newsletters which are available by e-mail to any member of the public on a free, opt-in, self-managed subscription basis. The different e-newsletters are: Boating and Watercraft News, Community Fishing Bulletin, Educators Update, Fishing Report, Hunting News, Mexican Wolf Update, Off-Highway Vehicle News, Shooting Sports News and Wild+Life. There are more than 240,000 subscriptions to these products.

Arizona Wildlife Views magazine - The Department's award-winning Arizona Wildlife Views magazine currently has over 20,000 subscribers. Articles in the bi-monthly magazine cover all aspects of wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation in the state.

Video Assets - The Department produces digital content in various formats designed to educate the public about topics related to the Department's mission and activities. Arizona Wildlife Views TV is an Emmy award-winning television show that airs on local cable stations. The Department also creates hour-long specials that air on Phoenix PBS Channel 8 and Tucson PBS Channel 6 during pledge drives. The recent "Birding in Arizona" reached more than 50,000 households. Department videos can be viewed and searched on the Department's YouTube channel, which has nearly 60,000 subscribers and more than 25 million views.

Social Media - The Department has enhanced its social media presence through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, and YouTube. Across its social media channels, the Department has more than 259,000 followers.

Live Interactive Webcasts - The Department offers live webcasts of the Commission's public meetings. This was expanded to include fully and hybrid virtual Commission meetings in 2020 and 2021 which allowed these critical meetings to continue to take place while remaining within health guidelines and protocols. The Department also webcasts other events of interest. Examples include webinars on tag modernization, lectures and virtual experiences on wildlife in Arizona, educator interviews with biologists, and regional activities such as a hummingbird banding event.

Media Relations - The Department actively engages with news media, both proactively to provide reporters and editors with story ideas, and reactively in response to media requests. The Department pitches stories and issues news releases and media advisories to about 350 media outlets in Arizona, including both general market and Spanish-language outlets. The Department also engages with national media.

Spanish-language Outreach - Spanish-language outreach activities include bilingual outreach to Spanish-language media partners, as well as bilingual content for social media and educational videos to build awareness of the Department's activities and services and encourage participation in outdoor recreation among Arizona's Spanish-speaking communities. Since 2020, the agency has been featured in more than 60 stories by Spanish-language media outlets. Bilingual posts have also generated excellent engagement on social media, including the most-saved post on Instagram in 2020.

Publications - The Department produces a wide array of content to inform and educate the public. These publications include regulation manuals, brochures, books and pamphlets on various wildlife and recreation related topics .

Wild About Arizona Podcast - The Department's "Wild About Arizona" podcast is available to listeners on 23 platforms, including the Department website, Spotify and Apple Podcasts. The podcast introduces listeners to the full scope of the agency's work conserving more than 800 species of wildlife, as well as the diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities that Arizona has to offer. Topics have included wildlife watching, boating safety, off-highway vehicles, wildlife education opportunities, and the impacts of drought. As of June 2021, the podcast had 492 downloads across all platforms.

Law Enforcement

The Department's Law Enforcement Program's primary focus is to serve communities and maintain public trust and safety while enforcing laws and Commission rules as outlined in Arizona Revised Statutes Titles 17, 28 and 5. The Department's law enforcement function also serves the state in many other ways. During the course of patrols and special projects, the Department's officers routinely assist members of the public in every facet of law enforcement. This assistance takes the form of providing personal and emotional support to the victims of accidents; locating lost family members; and all duties associated with being a certified state peace officer. Department officers routinely assist other law enforcement agencies with tasks related to public safety during the course of their regular duties. Department law enforcement officers also conduct wildlife surveys and translocations, habitat improvement projects, landowner relations, community engagement and public outreach as part of their regular duties.

Wildlife Viewing

The Wildlife Viewing Program (WVP) promotes wildlife conservation through managed wildlife viewing recreational activities that appeal to both traditional and nontraditional customers and are available at locations throughout the state. WVP events range from a series of in-person and virtual wildlife lectures, public bat netting, bison, bighorn, sandhill crane, and other birding viewing and photography programs, to a series of live streaming wildlife cameras. The goal is to get people from all walks of life and all across the state, outdoors and

increase their awareness and appreciation of Arizona's wildlife so future generations can continue to enjoy it, while also helping to foster an ever-increasingly diverse constituency that values wildlife and wildlife-related recreation.

Nearly two million Arizona residents took trips statewide to view wildlife in 2020, and 50% of Arizonans participated in wildlife viewing as a recreational activity. The Department's streaming wildlife cameras have increased accessibility and wildlife viewing opportunities for the public with views into select wildlife's daily habits, and these cameras have received more than 3 million unique viewers over the past five years of operation. The WVP's virtual wildlife lecture series works to educate the public about wildlife and its inherent value. More than 1,200 constituents have attended these informative wildlife lectures in FY21 alone.

The WVP serves Arizona on numerous levels, including promoting the economic benefits of wildlife viewing recreation to the state, urban and rural communities, and businesses (\$1.4 billion total economic impact in 2011, with activity in every county). Statewide, the WVP is an important link between wildlife viewing as an extremely popular and enjoyable recreational activity and as a much sought-after attraction for tourism in the state. The WVP engages, educates, and enhances wildlife recreation opportunities for broad swaths of the constituency with programming designed to meet the public at various levels of ability and teaches how to ethically pursue wildlife-based recreation.

Off-Highway Vehicle Safety

The Department became involved with off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation in 1989 when legislation was passed that gave the Commission the authority to approve and expend funds to identify habitat damage; provide information and education; and create rules to regulate OHV-related activities for the purpose of protecting Arizona's diverse wildlife habitats. Under the Department's stewardship, the Off-Highway Vehicle Program has evolved into a "user pay" program developed to promote safe, ethical and responsible OHV use, while emphasizing protection of Arizona's unique environmental resources and vulnerable wildlife habitats. The OHV decal program provides funds that are used to help ensure sustainable opportunities by bolstering grant programs that pay for maintenance and development of OHV trails and special use areas; signage; mitigation (restoration of damaged lands); education; and, enforcement.

The Department recognizes the use of off-highway vehicles as a popular source of recreation by Arizonans. However, it is the Department's mission to identify and minimize OHV impacts to wildlife and their habitats, and to protect them for the enjoyment, appreciation and use by present and future generations. The Department also works with landowners, communities, state agencies, land management agencies and law enforcement agencies across the state to address and mitigate legal and social issues that arise from OHV use. To that end, the Department acts as a conduit for statewide OHV training and forums to address law enforcement, dust control, training, law and legal updates, decal issues, and overall programmatic topics.

The Department's Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Safety Education Program promotes safe, ethical and responsible OHV use that minimizes impacts to wildlife resources. The Department collaborates with partners to enhance OHV recreation and access statewide by delivering

nationally recognized and approved OHV safety education classes. Classes are offered through online learning and/or skills-based training. In addition to courses offered to the public, agencies (state or federal) can also receive training at the Department's OHV training range. The Department partners with OHV dealers and rental companies to promote public education about safe operations, laws, rules, and impacts to habitat and wildlife to their customers.

To reduce the number of accidents and fatalities within the State and to reach all OHV enthusiasts, the Department conducts the following types of public outreach: trailhead safety events, on-the-trail contact, show-me rides, citizen-based science events, informational booths, fairs and expos, and helmet exchange events for children.

Watercraft Safety

There are 131,240 registered watercraft in Arizona and many thousands of unregistered paddle craft. According to a 2018 report by the National Marina Manufacturers Association, recreational boating supported 235 businesses, 6,100 jobs, and provided a \$1.5 billion annual economic benefit to the state. The Department serves the state by providing boat registration services, watercraft safety classes, safety equipment to the public, training partner law enforcement agencies in best practices, enforcing watercraft laws and rules, including operating under the influence. The sum of this work helps keep boaters and the waterways safe for all citizens of Arizona.

The Department's Watercraft Safety Program is funded by watercraft registration fees and is augmented by federal grant funding authorized by the Boating Safety Act of 1971. Compliance with the Boating Safety Act requires the Department to ensure adequate boating safety for the State of Arizona and act as the centralized agency for reporting all watercraft-related accidents to the United States Coast Guard.

The Department's Boating Safety Education Program encapsulates the efforts of classroom, online, virtual, home study, hands-on training, outreach material, boating safety events, and partnerships to accomplish the Department's mission to manage for safe, compatible outdoor recreation. The program ensures the public has a safe and enjoyable recreational boating experience by delivering statewide, nationally recognized and approved boating safety education classes to the public. In addition to the courses offered to the public, the boating safety education program also offers specialized courses for government agencies such as in close-quarters boat handling.

One of the Department's watercraft safety goals is to educate boaters on the significance of wearing the appropriate size and type of life jacket while boating. State and federal laws require certain types of life jackets be on board a vessel while underway, meaning that recreationists may be prevented from operating their boats on Arizona waterways if they do not have the required equipment. To enhance safety on the water and provide everyone the opportunity to operate in compliance with the law, the Department launched a statewide Life Jacket Loaner Program where a boating family can check out a life jacket for a day, free of charge, and return it at the end of the day.

To reduce the number of boating accidents within the State and to reach all boating enthusiasts, the Department conducts the following types of public outreach: boat ramp safety events,

on-the-water contact, citizen-based science events, informational booths, fairs and expos, and life jacket exchange events.

Watercraft Registration

The Department maintains a consistent numbering system administered in compliance with Coast Guard standards and applied consistently to all motorized watercraft in the State. This information can be used by all law enforcement agencies statewide and also serves as a single point of contact for watercraft registrations in Arizona. The online registration system, which facilitates easy registration of watercraft, has seen continuous improvement since it was first launched in 2004. In addition to initial registration, customers now have the ability to renew their watercraft registration from multiple device types, including personal computers or phones, and instantly receive a 45-day temporary certificate to serve as proof of registration. This allows customers to complete their transaction easily and conveniently, and provides the added benefit of allowing immediate use of watercraft.

In order to better serve customers and remove barriers to participation, the Department eliminated the \$2.50 convenience fee that had been charged as part of the online registration process. As of 2016, the service is free for customers to utilize. Updates have also been made in communicating with boaters statewide including the watercraft renewal notices sent to customers. Beginning in 2019, the Department includes a QR code that allows customers to more easily use mobile devices for online registration by directly connecting to the Department's website.

In response to customer demand, the Department opened a part time remote watercraft registration office in Lake Havasu City. Though this area has the highest density of watercraft registrations and watercraft owners in the state, the nearest available registration services were located in the Kingman and Yuma regional offices. Following a successful launch in 2016, this service was transitioned from state agency staff to a private third-party vendor within the community. The Department authorized its first third-party provider in 2018, and currently has five third-party vendors on contract that are able to process watercraft transactions. These vendors provide further options for watercraft customers including making services available at locations where the Department does not have a conveniently located office.

Nongame and Sensitive Species Management

The state of Arizona ranks among the highest for its diversity of wildlife; third in the nation for the number of native bird species, second for reptiles, fifth for mammals, and eighth for overall vertebrate diversity. The Commission and Department are proud to serve all of Arizona's citizens as the stewards of that diversity and recognize that these resources are a public trust, managed for the benefit of present and future generations. There are many factors that influence wildlife management that are beyond the Department's control, such as human population growth, drought and wildfire. In addition, much of the habitat on which wildlife relies occurs on land managed by others. The Department depends on the cooperation of several partners to safeguard wildlife for future generations.

The purpose of nongame and endangered wildlife management is to conserve, protect, restore, and maintain nongame and endangered wildlife as part of the natural diversity of Arizona, and

to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy nongame and endangered wildlife. Nongame wildlife includes all wildlife except game mammals, game birds, furbearing animals, and predatory animals.

The Department has been performing nongame and endangered wildlife population enhancement actions since 1983. Much of Arizona's natural biological diversity is composed of nongame species, wildlife that is neither hunted or fished in a traditional sense. However, the Department manages some nongame species of wildlife that may be harvested, such as certain reptiles, amphibians, and fish. The Department also focuses on wildlife that is protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, or is imperiled, including those that are federally listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act, or otherwise protected by federal law. In addition, the Department administers Scientific Activity Licenses, which potentially allow for take of any species for scientific, educational, or public welfare purposes.

Most native species in Arizona are still abundant and offer tremendous recreational opportunities, whether through harvest or viewing. Some species are not as abundant, and some are increasingly threatened by habitat degradation, disease, introduced species and extended drought. The role of the Department is to manage all nongame and endangered wildlife in Arizona, preferably using a landscape approach to maximize the benefits of management activities for multiple species.

The Department uses a series of conservation tools and activities as part of its management practices. Many of these tools are connected to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as amended in 1973. These include but are not limited to: use of Section 6 funds for species recovery; development and implementation of species Recovery Plans; development and use of Candidate Conservation Agreements, and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances; and Safe Harbor Agreements. Additional resources and partnerships exist through the development of the Arizona Wildlife Conservation Strategy, that enables the Department to receive State Wildlife Grants (SWG), and through other formalized partnerships.

The Department's bald eagle management program is an example of these partnerships. Beginning in the 1970s, the program has grown into a State-led conservation partnership among 25 federal, state, and local agencies, Native American tribes, and private organizations. The Department implements multiple projects to study and conserve the bald eagle population in Arizona. The most notable project implemented by the Department is the Arizona Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program. This program monitors bald eagle breeding areas near the most heavily used recreation areas so that proactive management can be implemented to allow recreation to continue and for successful breeding to occur. The Department surveys the breeding success for the statewide population, searches for new breeding areas annually, conducts a mark-recapture study to identify population demographics, and monitors threats to the population. The bald eagle population has grown from 11 breeding areas in 1978 to 93 in 2021. The bald eagle has been removed from the Endangered Species Act.

The Department continues to engage partners in the development of conservation agreements that ensure long term management and conservation of various imperiled species, and thereby help to preclude the need to list those species under the ESA, and to maintain the State's

authority for species management. Recent examples of species covered by multi-agency conservation agreements, assessments and/or strategies include, San Xavier talussnail, land snails in the Pinaleno Mountains, Page springsnail, Huachuca springsnail, relict leopard frog, and Sonoran desert tortoise. Safe Harbor Agreements provide a means by which the Department can work with non-federal partners (typically in the private sector) to contribute to the recovery of federally listed species. The Department has led the development of highly successful Safe Harbor Agreements for Desert pupfish and Gila topminnow, Chiricahua leopard frog, and black-footed ferret.

Wildlife Habitat Connectivity and Roadway Mitigation

Wildlife-vehicle collisions are a serious and growing threat to wildlife populations and contribute to human injuries, deaths, and property loss. An estimated 26,000 injuries and 200 human deaths attributable to such collisions occur in the United States every year, and the economic impacts of these collisions exceed \$8 billion annually. As the state's human population grows and roads are upgraded to accommodate increasing traffic volumes, the increasing potential for wildlife-vehicle collisions will continue to be a concern for Arizona.

Aside from motorist safety, roadways are a predominant threat to the persistence of wildlife in Arizona, the U.S., and for most terrestrial species in the world. The reduction of habitat fragmentation and the interruption of movement corridors is essential for survival. Even species considered more mobile, such as elk, have shown the inability to cross high traffic volume roads. For example, 70% of elk captured along I-17 during an elk movement study conducted jointly with ADOT did not attempt to cross I-17 during the 2 years they were collared. Restoring previously compromised wildlife movement corridors to connect these fragmented populations along with improving, maintaining, and conserving current corridors are priorities for the Department.

The Department collaborates with bordering states to address migration and habitat connectivity through the United States Department of Interior Secretarial Order (SO) 3362 - Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors. In Arizona, the Department's involvement with SO 3362 includes identification of migration corridors, important winter range, and potential wildlife crossing structure locations along with habitat improvement projects. The Department collaborates on connectivity statewide through GIS modelling efforts which identifies threats to connectivity and important wildlife corridors like the overpass and underpass located in the Tortolita-Catalina corridor along SR 77 near Oro Valley.

At a local level, the Department assists ADOT and other partners with long-term wildlife-vehicle collision and habitat fragmentation mitigation planning efforts through telemetry collaring of wildlife. The implementation and improvements in GPS technology has informed recommendations on effective locations for wildlife crossing structures. Some of these plans include crossings for pronghorn, elk, and deer on SR 64 (between Williams and Grand Canyon); pronghorn along US 89 (north of Flagstaff); elk along I-17 (south of Flagstaff), elk along I-40 (from Williams to Winona) and along SR 260 (from Heber to Show Low).

Once projects are implemented the Department learns from these collaborative efforts by using camera surveillance, wildlife-vehicle collision records, and animal movement data (from GPS collars) to consider the effectiveness of underpasses and crosswalks for elk and deer (SR 260 near Payson); underpasses for bighorn sheep (SR 68); overpasses for deer and bighorn sheep (US 93 by the Hoover Dam and SR 77 in Oro Valley); culverts for smaller fauna (all around Tucson); and, fencing for species from tortoises to elk (SR 87 east of Phoenix; I-17 south of Flagstaff). The Department has also collaborated with other states to gather information on species that exist in Arizona to further inform future design and planning for future mitigation efforts.

Zoonotic Disease Monitoring/Response

The Department contributes to the protection of public health and domestic livestock health for the citizens of Arizona. The Wildlife Health Program conducts sampling for zoonotic diseases such as West Nile virus, enteropathogenic *Escherichia coli*, salmonella, plague, and rabies. The program also surveys for the presence of livestock diseases such as avian influenza, and bluetongue virus. Investigation of wildlife mortality events includes diagnostic testing for diseases which can affect livestock and people, in addition to wildlife. The results of the Department's disease surveillance efforts are regularly communicated to the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Arizona Department of Agriculture. When a common disease interest occurs, the Department coordinates with these state agencies and any federal resources involved in the response and management efforts. The Department has been surveying for chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal brain disease of deer and elk that has had significant impacts to the economies and deer populations of other states, for the past 24 years. Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus was identified in Arizona in March 2020. The mortality event, first identified in April 2020, continued until late August. The Department continues to monitor for this disease and identified new clusters of disease in March and April 2021 in Prescott Valley and Wickenburg. The Department has continued public outreach and coordination with the Department of Agriculture. The recent outbreaks were short-lived and relatively localized. Some recovery of the affected populations has already been noted.

Wildfire Response and Assistance

Large-scale wildfires have increased statewide. The Department serves as a valued resource in several capacities to the agencies (Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management) responsible for the management of these fires. During active fires, the Department assisted firefighting resources to access difficult terrain, provided fire security, and notified and evacuated communities in the paths of fire.

Post fire, the Department works with these agencies on rehabilitation efforts and is often included on Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) teams in order to provide recommendations relating to wildlife habitats and populations, watershed needs, and the maintenance of access for outdoor recreationists.

In recent years, the Department has partnered with these agencies on fuel reducing projects that will in turn reduce the intensity of future wildfires while creating more favorable habitat conditions for wildlife. These efforts are gaining momentum and the Department has been in

frequent coordination with Arizona's Department of Forest and Fire Management, in order to highgrade projects that complement the Governor's Healthy Forest Initiative.

This type of proactive wildfire prevention is just one component of the Department's drought response focus. Although fuel-reducing projects improve a watershed's health by increasing water and forage availability, decreasing sedimentation and runoff, these actions alone aren't enough to support Arizona's wildlife. In addition to fuel reducing projects, the Department partners with land managers, livestock producers, and private landowners on specific water enhancing projects that create and/or repair infrastructure that provide year round water for wildlife. Some of these projects include water catchments, well developments, and dirt stock tank building and repair.

Dam Operations and Maintenance

The Commission owns and the Department is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 36 dams across the state, 29 of which are considered jurisdictional, meaning they are of significant size or create a threshold reservoir capacity to fall under compliance requirements of Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). These dams range from 6 to 80 feet in height with reservoir capacities of up to 9,000 acre feet. Commission-owned dams and associated reservoirs are critical to the Department's statewide fisheries program and provide a broad spectrum of easily accessible recreational opportunities including fishing, boating, camping, and wildlife viewing activities. Associated with these activities is a corresponding and significant economic benefit to rural communities as many of these lakes are a popular attraction that draws large numbers of Arizonans from metro areas. Without the Department's trained staff and operational budgets, the continued viability of these facilities would be severely compromised. The Department maintains compliance with ADWR standards on all dams to ensure safety for residents and dwellings that reside downstream.

Hunt Guidelines and Hunt Permit Public Process

The Department follows a multi-tiered process for setting hunting season structures, season dates, hunt permit allocations, and other controlling elements for regulating hunting of game animals. The Department's objective is to protect and manage wildlife populations and their habitats to maintain the natural diversity of Arizona, and to provide wildlife-oriented recreation opportunities for present and future generations. This is done by using science-based methods to assure wildlife is managed within the biological limits of each species. Management strategies are also developed to consider social acceptability.

A guiding principle requires continually refining the hunt guidelines process through better science-based management and extensive public involvement which is critical. In North America, wildlife is held in the public's trust and belongs to all citizens, unlike in other countries where access is restricted by financial or social class. Law regulates hunting and that too is a public process. Both are core principles of the North American Wildlife Conservation Model.

Public input is encouraged at several points in the process, including:

- Outreach occurs through webcasts and public meetings
- Media releases guiding the public to web postings of guidelines
- Soliciting comments on draft guidelines

- Opinion surveys of public meeting attendees, web access to the same survey, and a random survey of license buyers
- Guidelines are ultimately approved by the Commission in a public meeting at which the public may participate in person or through webcast access at each of the six regional offices.

CURRENT GUIDELINES PROCESS TIMELINE & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT (every five years; occurring now)	
Anytime	Collect and compile comments from the public for the next guideline review
August	Formally solicit public input via news releases, website and publications
Aug-Sep	Formally solicit public input via news releases, website and publications
November	Present draft guidelines - webcasts and/or public meetings
Dec-Jan	Compile public input from meetings and finalize guidelines for executive staff review
March	Release final draft guidelines to the public and Commission for review
April	Final draft presented to the Commission for adoption of guidelines at its public meeting. Public input is permitted via blue slip
May	Final Commission-approved hunt guidelines posted on the Department's website

Hunt Recommendations

With the guidelines in place, and survey data in hand, wildlife managers and game specialists propose the permit allocations on a unit-by-unit basis resulting in the proposed hunt recommendations. After the public comment period and once approved by the Commission, the recommendations are incorporated into the hunting regulations (fall Arizona Hunting and Trapping Regulations, spring turkey, javelina, bison, and bear supplement, and pronghorn and elk supplement). Each of these regulations contains all of the information needed to apply for a hunt permit tag through the draw; which hunts are over-the-counter non permit tags; determine open areas and season dates; and youth hunting opportunities. A public webcast occurs prior to finalizing the hunt recommendations.

Fish Hatchery and Stocking

Naturally-reproducing populations of native and non-native sportfish, particularly trout within state waters, are often insufficient to sustain angler demand. Therefore, it is crucial to produce and stock fish in order to meet sportfish management goals and angler demand, as well as produce native fish for mitigation efforts. Solely, purchasing and importing trout is neither cost effective, reliable, or of sufficient frequency to sustain the high angling demand. Fish hatcheries are therefore a crucial element in producing and stocking trout in Arizona. The Department operates six fish hatcheries that service the entire state, and the majority of trout harvested in Arizona are stocked from these six hatcheries.

Every year, the Department's fish hatcheries contribute to the state economy by producing and stocking on average 390,000 pounds of fish into 140 locations throughout the state. Trout stocking provides a major contribution to tourism, particularly in small communities.

According to a Department study, Arizona's 400,000+ anglers annually spend over \$950 million on equipment and trip-related expenditures supporting an estimated 20,038 full time and/or part time jobs across the state.

Community Fishing Program

The Department's Community Fishing Program offers close, convenient and accessible fishing recreation for anglers of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. As human populations continue to increase, these small lakes and ponds serve a vital function for anglers seeking close-to-home opportunities to go fishing. More than 4 million Arizona residents live within a 20-minute drive of a stocked Community Fishing Program lake. Developing communities throughout the state have increasingly sought to create small lakes and ponds within municipal parks and requested Department assistance in managing them as community fishing waters.

In 2021, the Department's Community Fishing Program included intensively managed, put-and-take fisheries at 49 waters in 23 communities; growing from 21 waters in 11 communities in 2013. Department roles and responsibilities include stocking fish, fish management, selling licenses, enforcement of regulations, public outreach, and sportfish education. The municipalities are responsible for managing their parks and water within the lakes and ponds that provide close-to-home fishing opportunities.

Condor Recovery

The California condor was one of the first species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Thanks to recovery efforts including propagation and reintroduction programs, condor numbers have risen from 22 birds in 1982 to approximately 450 today. The condor reintroduction program in Arizona plays a key role in recovering this iconic species. In 1996, the Department and 14 federal, state, tribal, and non-governmental organization partners began a reintroduction program for the California condor into their historic range of northern Arizona. Initially, six birds were released from the Vermillion Cliffs near Marble Canyon. However, early efforts were hampered by the magnitude of lead-poisoned mortalities of released birds. The Department began, and has continued to address this issue through a Voluntary Lead Reduction Program. Through this program the Department provides educational outreach to hunters regarding lead poisoning and its effects to the California condor and all scavenging wildlife. The Department encourages and facilitates hunters to use non-lead ammunition while hunting in the condor prime recovery range through; 1) an incentive based gut pile removal program, and 2) by providing non-lead ammunition alternatives to hunters. Since 2007, 88% of big-game hunters in Arizona's condor recovery area have utilized one of these two activities to reduce the availability of lead to foraging condors. In contrast to Arizona's voluntary program, California has banned lead ammunition through legislative action. Both approaches have reduced the lead burden on the environment, but Arizona's program has provided a positive partnership between the Department and the hunting citizens in the state. For the last several years, even with a ban on lead ammunition, the percentage of known lead caused mortality in Condors has been greater in California than in Arizona. Building on that success, the North American Non-Lead Partnership was formed to facilitate state wildlife agencies interested in lead reduction to develop their own successful program. Four states have joined and four others are considering. In addition, 35 other wildlife conservation groups, tribes, and agencies have

joined this partnership. Today through supplemental releases, natural breeding, and the success in reducing lead mortality, there are over 100 condors in Arizona.

Community Outreach

The Department provides information, outreach and educational presentations to over 500,000 Arizonan's each year through events, activities, speaker requests, expos, county and state fairs, classroom presentations, civic group meetings, etc., in communities throughout Arizona. Events in which the Department has participated includes, but is not limited to:

- Arizona Game and Fish Department Outdoor Expo
- Becoming an Outdoors Woman
- Boy Scouts Camporee
- Bowhunter Happening
- Wapiti Weekend
- Hispanic Women's Conference
- Sipe Wildlife Area Hummingbird Festival
- Wings Over Wilcox
- Tres Rios Nature Fest
- Payson Wildlife Fair
- Yuma Optimist Club Catfish Rodeo
- Parker "Take a Kid Fishing" Day
- Pinetop Fall Festival
- Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival
- Southwest Wings Birding & Nature Festival (Sierra Vista)
- Badges and Bobbers (Lynx Lake near Prescott)
- Flagstaff Bald Eagle Workshop
- Bighorn Sheep Viewing at Canyon Lake
- Kingman Library Wildlife Presentations
- Sipe White Mountain Elk Workshop
- Flagstaff Elk-Viewing Workshop

Statewide Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Program (CE) is focused on collaborating with local communities and their leaders (Mayors/City Councils, County Board of Supervisors, industry/business leaders and the Chamber of Commerce/Tourism, economic development representatives and NGO's) to help them be more successful by integrating wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation into their community. Local communities receive economic, social, mental, physical and quality of life benefits from wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation, which includes activities that are core to the Department's Mission. The key component of the CE program is creating a dialogue and cooperative approach using a variety of strategies. One of these strategies is the sharing of information with local governments and other partners via website integration, social media, press releases, highlighting Department programs and resources, event support, project participation, marketing and advertising. The program emphasizes the value wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation provide communities around the state, providing economic, social, mental/physical health and overall quality of life benefits. The Department has recently started

formalizing these partnerships through agreements with communities including Buckeye in 2020, Wilcox in 2021, with more in development.

Local Sportsmen's Organization Grants

The Department offers \$75,000 in competitive grants to local sportsmen's groups on an annual basis to provide funding to assist these groups in their efforts to introduce people to Arizona's outdoors. The projects funded by this grant are open to anyone in Arizona and focused on helping residents learn how to hunt, fish, camp and view wildlife. National research highlights significant health, learning and lifestyle benefits to people who engage in outdoor-related recreation. This program adds to the quality of life for Arizonans statewide.

Native Trout Recovery

The Department's native trout recovery program works to conserve, protect, and enhance Apache trout and Gila trout populations and their associated habitats. The Apache trout is officially designated as Arizona's state fish, and its present and historical range is found only in the headwaters of the White, Black and Little Colorado Rivers above 5,900-foot elevation in east-central Arizona. There are currently nine recovery populations of Apache Trout located on USFS lands, four of which are open to angling. The Gila trout is primarily found in New Mexico, but in Arizona there are currently seven recovery populations, two of which are open to catch-and-release angling. The Department also stocks Apache and Gila trout to provide recreational angling opportunities throughout each species' historical range. A large part of the native trout recovery program relies on the passion, persistence, and partnerships with other government agencies, tribes, angling clubs, and the general public. The dedication of these partnerships reflects the uniqueness of Apache trout and Gila trout, the native "southwestern" trout species, and typically gains state and national attention for its importance to their recovery and conservation, and their value as recreational sportfish species.

Front Counter and Dealer Services

The Department strives to deliver value-added services to customers throughout the state with the highest level of quality. The Department has a physical presence throughout Arizona with 7 office locations in Phoenix, Mesa, Flagstaff, Pinetop, Tucson, Yuma, and Kingman designed to provide in-person and over the phone support for customers. These offices provide a wide variety of services, including purchasing licenses, tags, stamps, and permits; processing special licenses; registering and inspecting watercraft, providing information regarding regulations; and assisting with general information regarding Arizona's wildlife and recreational opportunities.

The Department's online presence allows customers the opportunity to conveniently purchase a license electronically through its website or their mobile device. This facilitates the ability to purchase a license 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and provides increased convenience to customers. In addition, there are approximately 237 license dealers throughout the state that also sell licenses, tags, and stamps to customers and provide information regarding current regulations. Through the Department's Regional Offices, License Dealers and online sales, customers can obtain services, purchase a license and renew watercraft registrations almost anywhere at any time.

Customer Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation Activities (R3)

The Department provides public programs available to all Arizonans statewide. These programs appeal to a diverse public and provide opportunities for multiple types of outdoor recreation. R3 statewide programs include Angler Recruitment, National Archery in the Schools (NASP), Hunter Education, Hunter Recruitment, Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP), and Sportfish Education.

The Department administers the NASP in approximately 100+ Arizona Schools which reaches an estimated 30,000 students a year. This nationally recognized program was designed to teach International style target archery either in the physical education class or as an after-school program regardless of physical ability. The Department offers the program, training, and equipment free of charge to interested schools which range from large inner city public schools to rural communities and provides follow-up support on an ongoing basis. The Department supplies age appropriate curriculums that exceed both state and national standards in physical education, history and math. These curriculums are taught using positive language and examples only, a model that has been proven overwhelmingly successful.

The Department's Hunter Education Program teaches youth and adults how to be safe, ethical and responsible hunters. This program provides classroom and online education courses to over 4,000 students each year on topics that include: hunting techniques, hunter responsibility and ethics, firearm safety, wildlife identification, landowner relations, survival and first aid and wildlife conservation and management. This program is a valuable tool that benefits not only the hunter education graduates, but all who enjoy experiencing the outdoors. Hunter education courses are available statewide in person and online. The program is open to all and required for big game hunters ages 10-13. This training is the foundational step for beginners, regardless of age, to get in the field and participate in safe, legal, ethical pursuit of wildlife.

The Department works with an extensive network of partners, including conservation groups, local organizations, and community partners to offer dozens of events teaching outdoor skills through the award-winning Outdoor Skills Network. These coached and mentored events provide safe developmental experiences for beginners and families to learn how to hunt, fish, view wildlife, target shoot, and safely enjoy the outdoors. Attendees also learn about wildlife conservation, habitat restoration, and outdoor ethics. The events provide the multiple engagements necessary for participants to hone their new skills and become mentors and pass on the skills of safe outdoor recreation. The Outdoor Industry Association reports that 65% of Arizona residents participate in outdoor recreation and there is an ever-increasing demand for outdoor products and services.

The Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) is a team-based youth development program that uses the shotgun sports of trap, skeet, and sporting clays to instill life skills such as discipline, safety, teamwork, ethics, self-confidence and other life values. It has a strong following in Arizona. The Department supports 38 SCTP teams across the state with no-cost training to ensure coaches are qualified to run safe ranges and skilled at mentoring youth in safe firearm handling practices and sportsmanship. Additionally, the teams are provided resources through a loaner program at no cost. Athletes that perform well and achieve top levels in competition on

the national level may compete for and earn college scholarships to support their continued education.

The Department's statewide Sportfish Education program provides over 200 public workshops throughout the state annually, teaching over 15,000 people how to fish. It is an educational program, designed to promote awareness, appreciation and support for Arizona's recreational fishing opportunities. This free program supplies all of the educational materials, rods, reels, bait and tackle for students and the general public to use. Classes include tips on: selecting tackle, selecting bait, how to cast, where to fish, when to fish, understanding rules and regulations, fishing safety and ethics, care of the catch and much more. This statewide program is designed to highlight the many fishable waters available in both rural and urban areas of the state.

Outdoor Recreation Business Summit

The Department hosts two Outdoor Recreation Business Summits a year. These free events are offered to any Arizona businesses that are supported by the demand of outdoor recreation. These events inform small businesses of national trends and outdoor customer preferences. They serve as a networking opportunity to facilitate collaboration and give small businesses a platform to showcase new products and services. The recent partnership with the Arizona Commerce Authority provides advanced opportunities for small businesses to obtain skill building training. Finally these events inform industry of pending changes on the landscape that may affect their business.

Outdoor Expo

The Department conducts an Annual Outdoor Expo at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility to inform, educate, train and introduce the public through activities, demonstrations and exhibits of hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, archery, wildlife watching, off-highway vehicle and watercraft recreation, wildlife conservation, wildlife education, camping and other related outdoor activities that are available to all Arizonans and visitors. The Department partners with many organizations, including those from industry, retail, government and non-government, to help exhibit and demonstrate the variety of outdoor opportunities in Arizona. The Expo averages over 170 vendors and 52,000 attendees. Admission and parking are free as are many of the hands-on introductory activities.

4. The extent to which rules adopted by the agency are consistent with the legislative mandate.

The Commission has sufficient authority to promulgate rules and regulations. Authority is granted through A.R.S. §§ 5-311, 17-201, 17-231, 17-234, 17-333. Rules and regulations are published in the Commission Rules, Commission Orders, Arizona Hunting and Fishing Regulations, Arizona Reptile and Amphibian Regulations, Arizona Migratory Bird Regulations, and Arizona Trapping Regulations. The following laws have been enacted over the past ten years (2011-2021) and are consistent with the Department's legislative mandate. These laws are further described in Sunset Factor 8.

HB2623 landowner prohibition of hunting; posting Laws 2011, Chapter 202

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2006 firearms within game refuges Laws 2011, Chapter 276

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2358: wildlife; guides; wasted meat Laws 2011, Chapter 282

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for R12-4-208 with the Secretary of State's office on October 31, 2014. The notice contained an effective date of January 3, 2014.

HB2396: game and fish; trophies; enforcement Laws 2011, Chapter 113

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for R12-4-311 with the Secretary of State's office on April 5, 2013. The notice contained an effective date of July 1, 2013.

SB1012: lakes; non-motorized watercraft; rulemaking exemption Laws 2011, Chapter 112

- The Commission filed a Notice of Exempt Rulemaking for R12-4-517 with the Secretary of State's office on May 24, 2011. The notice contained an effective date of May 24, 2011.

HB2314: NOW: boating safety; fees; fund Laws 2011, Chapter 333

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

SB1334: hunting within city limits Laws 2011, Chapter 349

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for R12-4-321 with the Secretary of State's office on June 8, 2012. The notice contained an effective date of January 1, 2013.

SB1229: recreational users; landowner liability Laws 2011, Chapter 123

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2322: watercraft; registration; fees Laws 2012, Chapter 237

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for rules within Article 5 with the Secretary of State's office on March 8, 2013. The notice contained an effective date of July 1, 2013.

HB2457: hunting; possession of unauthorized weapons Laws 2012, Chapter 225

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for R12-4-318 with the Secretary of State's office on April 5, 2013. The notice contained an effective date of July 1, 2013.

HB2639: game and fish omnibus act Laws 2012, Chapter 272

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

SB1300: game and fish department; continuation Laws 2012, Chapter 28

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

SB1223: license classifications; fees Laws 2013, Chapter 197

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for rules within Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 with the Secretary of State's office on September 27, 2013. The notice contained an effective date of January 1, 2014.

SB1469: applying aquatic poisons Laws 2013, Chapter 117

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2551 off-highway vehicles; use; authority; enforcement Laws 2013, Chapter 231

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

SB1118: hunting on private land; trespassing Laws 2014, Chapter 182

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2303: permits or tags; transfer; veterans Laws 2014, Chapter 55

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for R12-4-121 with the Secretary of State's office on November 13, 2013. The notice contained an effective date of January 2, 2016.

HB2003: watercraft; civil and criminal penalties Laws 2014, Chapter 127

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2443: hunting and fishing licenses; military Laws 2014, Chapter 93

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2365: Off-Highway Vehicles; Enforcement Laws 2015, Chapter 305

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2396: Wildlife; Guides; Firearms Laws 2015, Chapter 122

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2399: G&F; Hunter Harassment Laws 2015, Chapter 215

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

SB1466: Livestock Loss Board; Compensation Fund Laws 2015, Chapter 172

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

SB1361: Game and Fish; heritage fund; expenditures Laws 2016, Chapter 224

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

S.B.1154: G&F; Omnibus Laws 2017, Chapter 13

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for R12-4-511 with the Secretary of State's office on June 9, 2017. The notice contained an effective date of August 5, 2017.

S.B.1285: G&F; in-lieu fee; trust fund Laws 2017, Chapter 186

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

SB 1253: game and fish; licenses; fees Laws 2018, Chapter 103

- The Commission filed a Notice of Final Rulemaking for R12-4-102 and R12-4-105 with the Secretary of State's office on February 5, 2021. The notice contained an effective date of July 1, 2021.
- The Commission filed a Notice of Exempt Rulemaking for R12-4-102 and R12-4-202 with the Secretary of State's office on June 22, 2021. The notice contained an effective date of August 3, 2021.

HB 2342: off-highway vehicles; definition; user indicia Laws 2018, Chapter 184

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB 2272 G&F; resident; definition Laws 2019, Chapter 77

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB 2433 G&F; trophy definition; repeal Laws 2019, Chapter 210

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2246 G&F; private lands ; trespassing Laws 2021, Chapter 104

- The Commission's current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

HB2038 salvage permit; big game animals Laws 2021, Chapter 128

- The Commission’s current rules are not in conflict with the legislative mandate, and the Department is able to comply with the mandate without rulemaking.

5. The extent to which the agency has encouraged input from the public before adopting its rules and the extent to which it has informed the public as to its actions and their expected impact on the public.

The Department encourages public input throughout the rulemaking process and uses a variety of methods to encourage participation and feedback from constituents. The “Our Agency” portion of the Department’s internet website includes a section devoted to the rulemaking process. This site provides an overview of the rules process and information for submitting comments regarding Commission rules. The site contains several downloads related to the rule process, including the AGFD laws and rules book; the annual Department regulatory rule review agenda, which provides an update regarding the progress of each Department article; information on submitting a petition for rule change; information for submitting written comments to the Department; and, a list of Department contacts. Links to external resources involved with the rules process are also provided, including the Arizona Administrative Code and Register and the Governor’s Regulatory Review Council.

The Department has an electronic “rulemaking” mailbox, dedicated to receiving public comments related to rules. Any comments submitted to this mailbox, or received via other methods, are kept on record and considered by the Department during the appropriate rule review or rulemaking period. The Department also maintains a list of constituents interested in rulemaking activities and provides electronic notifications of upcoming rules items to these individuals.

The petition process, outlined under Article 6 Rules of Practice before the Commission, provides additional guidance for commenting on Commission rules. The Commission evaluates and provides direction on all petitions received by the Department and rulemakings presented at a scheduled public meeting. Agendas for these meetings are noticed to the public in accordance with Arizona’s open meeting laws and are webcast electronically for individuals to view online or at regional offices. Constituents also have the opportunity to visit regional offices and submit electronic “blue cards” to provide input at the meetings from remote locations. In addition, the Department has organized special meetings or traveling road shows to inform the public of proposed changes when high interest topics occur (such as implementing the 10 percent cap rule, collecting input on fees and licenses, methods of taking wildlife, etc).

The Department utilizes a variety of media methods to inform the public about the actions it takes and their expected impact. The Department offers several e-news subscription products that communicate Department information, changes and impacts of decisions. These include Wildlife News, Fishing Report, Urban Fishing Bulletin, Hunting Highlights, Shooting Sports News, Off-Highway Vehicle Update, Endangered Species Update, and the Educators Update. Approximately 240,000 users currently subscribe to these services, which are free to any member of the public on an opt-in, self-managed subscription basis. The Department also maintains a Facebook page and several other social media accounts, which contain news releases and refer people to topical items of interest. The “What’s New” section of the

Department's internet website contains additional information of public interest. Information posted to the "What's New" section also goes out as tweets on Twitter. In addition, the Department issues press releases whenever a rulemaking is placed on a Commission meeting agenda. Press releases about proposed rulemakings and their associated public comment periods are issued whenever a proposed rulemaking is open for public comment.

The print and digital versions of the hunting and fishing regulations guides contain an "alerts" section to inform the public of pertinent changes and include references to modified rules and statutes. The Arizona Game and Fish Laws and Rules book is also published and available online in a downloadable format or for purchase at front counters. The Department has the ability to target specific topics of interest and help educate the public about their impacts. Specialized printed products that have been generated in the past include customized posters for license dealers to display, informing the public about fee changes, and aquatic invasive species brochures and pamphlets. Webcasts with an option for on-demand viewing have also been utilized for larger issues. A recent example was webcasts used to inform constituents in high-use areas about aquatic invasive species concerns and new protocols to prevent transporting them by boats or trailers. The Department's news magazine, *Wildlife Views*, is also used to communicate specialized topics of interest.

6. The extent to which the agency has been able to investigate and resolve complaints that are within its jurisdiction.

The Department accepts and addresses citizen complaints through a variety of means. Department Policy C.1.10 is a mechanism by which the Department takes complaints regarding employees. The Department has also taken complaints through the "send comments" link on the Department's website since January 2008. Since its inception, this feature has taken hundreds of questions, complaints and comments of varying degrees from the Department's constituent base. The protocol has been to respond to the comments with an initial contact within four working days. In many cases, those initial responses occurred much sooner than the four day response deadline.

In October 2001, the Department established an ombudsman position in the Director's Office. This position serves as a citizen's advocate in a multi-faceted capacity that helps to resolve public complaints regarding the Department and its programs including coordinating agency compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. This individual coordinates regularly with all entities, including non-governmental organizations, other government agency personnel including Governor's and State Ombudsman staff, Commissioners, and all other regular constituents on any and all customer issues/concerns.

All Department employees are expected to act on any complaint that is shared with them. In the course of their duties, employees may learn of a constituency issue either by phone, in-person or in writing via email or regular correspondence. If the employee is unable to handle the complaint at their level, they share the information appropriately with their chain-of-command to ensure the issue is addressed. The Department makes a concerted effort in answering all of these with a call-back, email or in many cases a formal written response. In many cases, depending on the situation, Department staff is tasked with addressing the

complainant one-on-one, or in a group or other fashion to better understand the problem and offer solutions, depending on the issue. The Department also uses emerging technologies and opportunities to engage the public in a proactive manner that reduces complaints and questions regarding management actions. The Department has expanded and refined its Public Affairs and Marketing functions to include a Social Media Specialist so that the public is able to ask questions and obtain information through social media channels. Use of new technology has also resulted in informational webcasts, both proactive or reactive to citizen concerns, becoming a mainstay of Department public engagement efforts.

The Commission also takes complaints via the website link on the Commission page, in person, over the phone and also at public meetings that occur almost monthly throughout the year. At meetings, this is allowable through the Call to the Public agenda item and “blue-card” speaker request for items not on a publicly noticed agenda. Most scheduled Commission meeting agenda items relate to ongoing management issues that the Department and Commission address regularly with its constituency. The Commission meeting process has also evolved to provide both in person public access as well as access through webcasts, phone and a virtual blue card process.

Complaints involving wildlife violations, including big game and commercial violations, are reported, tracked and managed through the Operation Game Thief (OGT) 24-hour violation telephone hotline managed by the Department’s Law Enforcement Branch. The OGT program continues to be one of the most successful programs of its type in the nation. In 2020, the OGT program fielded 1500 calls, 357 of which were big game related. A total of more than \$12,000 in reward money was paid to 21 reporting parties in 2020. In 2020, as in years past, many of the Department’s constituent groups continue to sponsor, or offer additional reward amounts boosting the program’s effectiveness. Additionally in 2018, the Department received a donation of \$8,000 to the OGT program to update the wrap on an OGT trailer which is used at patrol camps and other outreach events for public engagement.

7. The extent to which the attorney general or any other applicable agency of state government has the authority to prosecute actions under the enabling legislation.

The Attorney General, pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 41-192 and 41-193, has assigned two full-time assistant AGs to the Department and Commission to prosecute and defend any proceeding in which the Department or Commission is a party. The AG’s authority extends to the interpretation and enforcement of A.R.S. Title 17 (Game and Fish Laws), A.R.S. Title 5, Ch. 3 (Boating and Water Sports laws), A.R.S. Title 28 (Off-Highway Vehicle laws), and A.A.C. Title 12, Chapter 4 (Game and Fish Commission Rules). In addition, A.R.S. § 17-103 authorizes the county attorneys to prosecute and defend criminal and civil actions arising under Title 17. Under A.R.S. § 41-193, a county attorney may request the Attorney General to prosecute any criminal case. These prosecutions may involve, for example, violations for unlawful hunting, fishing and trapping, misuse of firearms while taking wildlife, boating or operating an off-highway vehicle while intoxicated, and illegal cross-country vehicle travel.

The Attorney General is authorized to prosecute and defend the Commission’s license suspensions and revocations under A.R.S. § 17-340 and the Wildlife Violator Compact, and

may bring a civil action on behalf of the Commission to collect civil penalties under A.R.S. § 17-314 against any person for the unlawful take or possession of wildlife.

8. The extent to which the agency has addressed deficiencies in the enabling statutes that prevent it from fulfilling its statutory mandate.

Several legislative changes, many proposed by the Commission, and enacted over the past ten years have enabled the Department to better carry out its mission.

HB2623 landowner prohibition of hunting; posting

Laws, 2011 Chapter 202

- Prescribes the criteria to establish criminal trespassing on private property that a landowner does not want to make available to hunting, trapping or fishing.
- Establishes basis for criminal trespassing if a person knowingly remains unlawfully on properly posted property after a reasonable request to leave by the owner or any other person having lawful control over the property or if the person knowingly disregards reasonable notice prohibiting trespass at the person's entry to any real property.

HB2006 firearms within game refuges

Laws, 2011 Chapter 276

- Permits a person to carry or possess a firearm within a game refuge.

HB2358: wildlife; guides; wasted meat

Laws, 2011 Chapter 282

- Expands the definition of guide in the Arizona Game and Fish statutes and adds acting as a guide without a license and wasting edible portions of meat to the current list of prohibited acts which may result in the revocation or suspension of a license issued by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission.

H.B. 2396 game and fish; trophies; enforcement

Laws 2011, Chapter 113

- An emergency measure that prohibits a person who has been assessed civil damages for poaching from applying for or obtaining a new hunting or fishing license at specified times relating to the civil action and collection of damages.
- Requires Arizona Game and Fish Department employees and volunteers who work with children to have a fingerprint clearance card, and exempts the Arizona Game and Fish Commission from the state's rulemaking requirements for one year for specified purposes.

SB1012: lakes; non-motorized watercraft; rulemaking exemption

Laws 2011, Chapter 112

- An emergency measure that exempts the Arizona Game and Fish Commission from the state's rulemaking requirements for one year in order to revise its rules relating to watercraft motor and engine restrictions.

HB2314: boating safety; fees; fund

Laws 2011, Chapter 333

- Transfers the administration of the Law Enforcement Boating Safety Fund from State Parks to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and directs the State Treasurer to distribute the monies to eligible counties on a monthly basis.

SB1334: hunting within city limits

Laws 2011, Chapter 349

- Prohibits a political subdivision from enacting an ordinance, rule or regulation that limits the lawful take of wildlife during an open season unless it is consistent with the state's hunting laws and regulations.

SB1229: recreational users; landowner liability

Laws 2011, Chapter 123

- Modifies the state's educational or recreational immunity statute to specify that a landowner is not liable for injury incurred by a recreational user who engages in specified off-highway vehicle and aircraft activities.
- Specifies that purchase of a State Land Department recreational permit or off-highway vehicle indicia does not constitute an admission fee for educational and recreational user purposes.

HB2322: watercraft; registration; fees

Laws 2012, Chapter 237

- Restructures Arizona's boating registration fees to comply with federal regulations.
- Requires all watercraft owners to pay the same registration fee regardless of residency, and further requires nonresidents to pay a Nonresident Boating Safety Infrastructure Fee as established.

HB2457: hunting; possession of unauthorized weapons

Laws 2012, Chapter 225

- Permits, while hunting, the possession of legal weapons, devices, ammunition or magazines that are not authorized to take wildlife, if the weapon or device is not used to take wildlife.

HB2639: game and fish omnibus act

Laws 2012, Chapter 272

- Permits the Commission to sell its goods and services, excluding firearms, to the public and directs revenues to specific Department funds.
- Exempts geospatial data that is maintained by the Department from public records requests (i.e. disclosure and inspection) so long as that information is otherwise provided to the public through the Department's GIS online services.
- Exempts the Department's wildlife species location information from public records requests when the information is about wildlife species located on private property; or when the Department determines that disclosure of the information might harm wildlife.
- Prohibits the purchase, acceptance or use of a tag or stamp by fraud or misrepresentation.
- Grants Arizona residency status for purposes of applying for a hunting and fishing license, permit, tag or stamp to a person who is a member of the U.S. armed forces on active duty and stationed either in Arizona for at least 30 days prior to application or another country but lists Arizona as their home of record at the time of application.

- Removes the prohibition on selling the heads, horns, hides, feet, or skin of bighorn sheep that have been taken after October 1, 2005 permitting the sale of legally-taken, nonedible bighorn sheep parts.
- Exempts vehicles that are driven by Department enforcement officers who are conducting night patrols and investigating night poaching activities from the state's laws on vehicle equipment requirements.
- Allows the Commission to solicit and accept grants, gifts and donations of money or other property for any purpose that is consistent with its statutory mandate.

SB1300: game and fish department; continuation

Laws 2012, Chapter 283

- Continues the Arizona Game & Fish Commission and the Arizona Game & Fish Department for ten years.

SB1223: license classifications; fees

Laws 2013, Chapter 197

- Allows the Game & Fish Commission to establish license, permit, tag, and stamp fees by rule. Repeals all statutory language relating to fees for licenses, permits, tags, and stamps.

SB1469: applying aquatic poisons

Laws 2013, Chapter 117

- Prohibits the Arizona Game and Fish Department from using rotenone or antimycin A unless an impact analysis is conducted and approved by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission

HB2551 off-highway vehicles; use; authority; enforcement

Laws 2013, Chapter 231

- Modifies Off-Highway Vehicle regulation and motorized cross-county travel enforcement by creating permissive authority for peace officers of this state, county or municipality and other duly authorized state employees (officers) to enforce rules and regulations relating to motorized cross-county travel.

SB1118: hunting on private land; trespassing

Laws 2014, Chapter 182

- Authorizes law enforcement officers who are acting at the request of a property owner to request that hunters leave private property for purposes of enforcing trespassing statutes on land that has been properly posted to prohibit entry for the purposes of hunting, fishing or trapping.

HB2303: permits or tags; transfer; veterans

Laws 2014, Chapter 55

- Authorizes a person to transfer their big game permit or tag to a qualified non-profit organization so that it may be used by a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States who has a service-connected disability.

HB2003: watercraft; civil and criminal penalties

Laws 2014, Chapter 127

- Establishes penalties for failing to stop a watercraft under certain circumstances and a specified offense related to operating a watercraft under the influence (OUI). Modifies the criteria in which OUI is classified as aggravated and the fund in which related assessments are deposited.

HB2443: hunting and fishing licenses; military

Laws 2014, Chapter 93

- Allows a member of the United States Armed Forces to purchase a resident hunting license immediately upon being stationed either permanently or temporarily in this state

HB2365: Off-Highway Vehicles; Enforcement

Laws 2015, Chapter 305

- Modifies enforcement criteria relating to off-highway vehicles for state, county and municipal peace officers as well as other authorized state employees that enforce rules and regulations relating to off-highway vehicles.
- Specifies the definition of off-highway vehicle does not include a vehicle that is used in the exploration of mining of minerals or aggregates as defined in A.R.S. Title 27.

HB2396: Wildlife; Guides; Firearms

Laws 2015, Chapter 122

- Eliminates statutory language that prohibits an acting guide from carrying firearms other than a revolver or pistol.

HB2399: G&F; Hunter Harassment

Laws 2015, Chapter 215

- Allows the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to take action against a person's hunting and fishing license privileges if the licensee has intentionally interfered with, prevented or disrupted the lawful taking of wildlife.

SB1361: Game and Fish; heritage fund; expenditures

Laws 2016, Chapter 224

- Allows the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to spend not more than 20 percent of monies in the Game and Fish Commission Heritage Fund allocated for identification, inventory, acquisition, protection and management of property for purposes of operation and maintenance of acquired property.

S.B.1154: G&F; Omnibus

Laws 2017, Chapter 13

- Allows the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to impose a civil penalty against any person unlawfully taking, wounding or killing, or unlawfully in possession of certain wildlife and to deny a license to take wildlife for a person with a civil penalty imposed against them for the unlawful taking, wounding or killing, or possession of wildlife until the person has paid the civil penalty in full.

- Expands permitted usage of Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund monies to include investigations of the unlawful taking or possession of wildlife, rather than unlawful commercial use of wildlife; and fraud related to licenses, permits, tags or stamps.
- Removes the requirement that a parent, grandparent or guardian must accompany a minor child in the field in order for the minor child or grandchild to use the parent's, grandparent's or guardian's big game permit or tag.
- Updates obsolete language related to personal floatation devices.

S.B.1285: G&F; in-lieu fee; trust fund

Laws 2017, Chapter 186

- Establishes the Game and Fish In-Lieu Fee Program Restoration Endowment Trust Fund to fulfill obligations of the Arizona Game and Fish Department to act as the State's in-lieu fee sponsor under the Clean Water Act.

SB 1253: game and fish; licenses; fees

Laws 2018, Chapter 103

- Provides permanent authority for the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to establish license classifications and fees by rule.

HB 2342: off-highway vehicles; definition; user indicia

Laws 2018, Chapter 184

- Allows a nonresident to apply for off-highway vehicle user indicia.

HB 2272 G&F; resident; definition

Laws 2019, Chapter 77

- Allows a youth who resides with and is under the guardianship of an Arizona resident to obtain a resident game and fish license, permit, tag or stamp.

HB 2433 G&F; trophy definition; repeal

Laws 2019, Chapter 210

- Eliminates the designation of "trophy" from statute as relates to civil penalties for unlawfully taking, killing, wounding or possessing wildlife.

HB2246 G&F; private lands ; trespassing

Laws 2021, Chapter 104

- Allows the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to take action against the license privileges of a person who is convicted of taking wildlife from posted private land without permission from the landowner or lessee. Modifies requirements for posted notices and signboards prohibiting hunting, trapping, fishing, taking and guiding on private land.

HB2038 salvage permit; big game animals

Laws 2021, Chapter 128

- Expands authorization for persons to receive a big game salvage permit and modifies requirements for issuance of a big game salvage permit.

9. The extent to which changes are necessary in the laws of the agency to adequately comply with the factors listed in the Sunset Laws.

At this point in time, no changes are necessary in the laws of the Commission and Department to adequately comply with the factors listed in the Sunset Laws.

10. The Extent to which the termination of the agency would significantly affect the public health, safety, or welfare.

Public Health

The Department has an important role in ensuring public health. Principle areas of involvement are in the detection and management of zoonotic and livestock disease vector control (primarily insects carrying zoonotic diseases), and Special Local Needs registration of pesticides for management of vectors of zoonotic diseases.

Some wildlife can serve as reservoirs for disease agents that can be passed to and infect humans (zoonotic diseases). The Department works with the Arizona Department of Health Services, Arizona State Veterinarian, and USDA-APHIS on zoonotic diseases, including but not limited to rabies, plague, and tularemia. The Department provides the wildlife expertise for its partner agencies, and holds the regulatory authority to restrict possession of wildlife which is critical for the prevention of certain zoonotic diseases such as rabies and simian herpes B virus. Where wildlife may serve as a reservoir for a disease agent, it is critical that the State act to regulate, and where necessary restrict the possession of live wildlife by the public to avoid disease transmission. Termination of the Agency would impair Arizona's interdiction of zoonotic diseases.

The Department also plays a critical role in protecting livestock and poultry in the state by investigating unusual mortality events involving closely related species such as waterfowl, turkeys, deer, elk, pronghorn and bighorn sheep. These investigations could be the key to identifying the introduction of a foreign animal disease such as occurred with the incursion of rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus last year. The introduction of a foreign animal disease would have serious trade and market implications for the state and country.

The Department works with state and county authorities where chemical and biological measures may be used to control disease vectors. As a regulatory authority for the acquisition, possession, and stocking of wildlife, the Department works with local authorities to determine prudent and appropriate uses of wildlife as vector control strategies. The Department also advises state and county authorities on the use of pesticides to control plant pests where they might affect important ecological services provided by wildlife.

Public health aims to promote healthy lifestyles as well as to detect, prevent and respond to diseases. Mental health issues can lead to drug abuse, impact how people make decisions, and generally make people more susceptible to diseases of all types. The presence of healthy wildlife and healthy ecosystems has a positive impact on mental health as evidenced by the public's response to the recent pandemic. Researchers from North Carolina found that outdoor play and nature-based activities helped adolescents cope with the stressors associated with COVID-19. A review article by Lackey et al. found that nature-based recreation had a strong

potential to improve general well-being and resilience and potential to decrease anxiety and depression. Many Department education programs (hunting, angling, boating, shooting, OHV and wildlife viewing) provide Arizonans the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to safely and ethically recreate outdoors, contributing to building a healthy and active lifestyle.

Public Safety

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is a law enforcement agency. Its wildlife managers and law enforcement specialists are fully commissioned Arizona Peace Officers. Many of the Department's wildlife managers and field supervisors work from their homes, in rural and urban communities, where they work collaboratively and interactively with county and local officers. The principle functions and focus of Department officers are providing public safety, maintaining public trust and enforcement of wildlife, watercraft safety, and off-highway vehicle laws.

Wildlife managers patrol almost all of Arizona, from the most remote corners of the state's wildlands to urban areas. Wildlife managers provide a significant public safety presence in Arizona's back country and waterways particularly in association with providing for public safety while they are recreating outdoors.

Wildlife managers respond to concerns from the public about actual or potential conflicts between humans and wildlife. Some of those conflicts involve public encounters with dangerous wildlife. Wildlife managers work with local communities to establish local policies and procedures that minimize the potential for dangerous wildlife incursions into human spaces; minimize the potential for negative or dangerous interactions between wildlife and people; and, in appropriate instances, the removal of offending wildlife when they present a human safety risk.

The Department coordinates watercraft safety enforcement on all Arizona waters and works closely with county Sheriff's Offices, municipalities, state agencies, and federal land management agencies to coordinate a statewide network of public safety for water-based recreation. This network includes conveying leadership, training, rule-making, training, and in some instances, funding to enforcement partners. Watercraft regulation and education are primarily public safety issues, unsafe operation of watercraft presents a danger to the operators themselves and to the surrounding public. In the absence of the Department, these public safety activities would have to be assumed by other agencies on a uniform statewide basis in order to ensure a safe environment for the public on the state's waterways.

Enforcement of watercraft laws, with a particular focus on Operating Under the Influence (OUI), is critical to prevent injuries and fatalities on state waterways. The regulatory, enforcement, information and education activities simply cannot be eliminated without a direct negative impact to the Arizona public's safety.

Similarly, off-highway vehicle regulation, enforcement and education involve direct impacts to public safety and environmental conditions. The activities cannot simply be eliminated. If the Department were eliminated, other state agencies would have to assume the off-highway vehicle regulation, enforcement, information and education, and activities.

Public safety associated with hunting, fishing, water-based recreation, OHV recreation, and public shooting sports activities could not be ensured if the Department was terminated. Public safety in rural and urban communities associated with human interactions with wildlife would be impaired in the absence of the Department.

With the upgrades of roads to accommodate Arizona's growing population, collisions with wildlife are an increasing concern. Wildlife Biologists work directly with ADOT and other partners to identify and implement methods to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and in turn minimize risk of fatalities, injuries, and property damage to the traveling public. The knowledge that Department staff have obtained through the implementation and evaluation of these mitigating efforts over the past few decades have led to better informed planning efforts as new roads are upgraded and expanded. These collaborations not only increase public safety but also lead to the maintenance and restoration of habitat connectivity essential to healthy wildlife populations. Department staff are considered nationwide experts on reduction of wildlife-vehicle collisions while maintaining habitat connectivity. Without this expertise and collaboration, ADOT and other partners would lack much of the institutional knowledge needed for planning future mitigation efforts, and both public safety and Arizona's wildlife could be compromised.

The Department's Hunter Education program provides instruction that teaches firearms and field safety. This training, which is required for youth 10-13 years of age who are hunting big game, builds safe, legal, and ethical hunting practices. These practices reduce hunter risk in the field and minimizes the potential for injury to all outdoor recreationalists. This training is the foundational step for beginners of every age to recreate safely and begin to support wildlife conservation.

Commission owned shooting ranges support a critical public safety function by providing a safe venue for the public to learn and practice safe firearms use as well as providing all law enforcement agencies that operate in Arizona a safe, controlled and secure location to train. Termination of the Department would severely impact, if not eliminate, this public safety service.

Public Welfare

Elimination of the Department or any of its primary functions would have a long lasting and devastating impact on Arizona's wildlife resources, outdoor recreation, public welfare, and the state's economy. Without the agency, Arizona's public trust mission to manage and sustain its wildlife resources for its citizens could not be carried out. The impact on rural areas would be even more significant as a large portion of outdoor recreation occurs in these areas.

The impact to Arizona business should wildlife management programs and the associated recreational opportunities no longer be available to the citizens of Arizona would be catastrophic. The popularity of wildlife-associated recreation makes it big business in Arizona. According to the Sportsmen's Economic Impact Report for Arizona by the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, 786,000 hunters and anglers (residents and nonresidents) spend \$1.2 billion on hunting and fishing in Arizona annually. This spending supports 18,200 jobs (many

impacting rural economies), generates \$132 million in state and local revenue, and has a ripple effect of \$2.1 billion to the economy.

Wildlife viewing is very popular and provides another economic driver in the state. According to the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Census Bureau, more than 1.5 million people (residents and nonresidents) participated in wildlife viewing activities annually in Arizona, spending more than \$900 million combined in trip-related and equipment expenditures.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation is also increasing in popularity. According to a 2017 report conducted by Arizona State University's School of Community Resources and Development, resident and nonresident OHV recreationists generated \$1.86 billion in total direct spending, supported 21,000 jobs, and generated more than \$221 million in state and local tax revenues. The total economic contribution of OHV recreation in Arizona is \$2.64 billion in output with an estimated economic benefit of more than \$4 billion annually.

Boating recreation remains very popular in Arizona. According to a 2018 report by the National Marina Manufacturers Association, recreational boating supported 235 businesses, 6,100 jobs, and had a \$1.5 billion annual economic benefit to the state.

Without the Department, necessary conservation, management, research and biological programs would be eliminated. The vagaries of climate, precipitation, and vegetation, as well as predator/prey relationships and zoonotic diseases, that affect wildlife populations could not be studied and managed for. The ability to effectively manage Arizona's wildlife would be lost.

An overwhelming majority of Arizona residents support legal and regulated hunting and fishing under the framework that is established by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and executed through the Department. Elimination of the Department and Commission would result in the loss of established rules for ethical take of wildlife and enforcement of those rules via Department law enforcement personnel patrolling Arizona's lands and waters, to ensure the legal and acceptable pursuit of wildlife by directly deterring the illegal take of wildlife and preventing the destruction of wildlife habitat.

Elimination of the Department would result in the loss of a minimum of 600,000 acres in statewide habitat improvements each year. This loss would lead to a decline in environmental health and wildlife populations, and worsen impacts from drought and wildfire. These projects are critical to supporting wildlife populations that provide wildlife related recreation opportunities. In addition to the economic benefit derived from the increase in wildlife related recreation, these projects are critical to Arizona's agricultural industry. These habitat enhancements improve forage conditions and water availability for livestock and attract additional partnerships and funding from Federal programs. In turn, these projects are implemented through public-private partnerships that source local contractors and suppliers whose industry provides economic support to local and rural communities across Arizona.

Elimination of the Department could also result in the loss of public recreational access to nearly 4.6 million acres in private and landlocked federal lands. These lands are critical in

supporting the public's participation in outdoor recreation that supports conservation and local economies. These programs also provide economic benefit to Arizona's agricultural industry and help build relationships between agricultural producers, recreationists, and the Department.

Elimination of the Department would result in the annual loss of approximately \$30 million of federal funding that is critical to the implementation of the following programs:

- Game Management and Hunt Recommendations (population monitoring, research, seasons, tags and permits)
- Sport Fish Management including the Community Fishing Program (population monitoring, fish purchase, research, water quality monitoring, seasons and limits)
- Fish and Wildlife Health and Disease Monitoring/Response
- State Hatchery Operation and Sport Fish Stocking
- Aquatic Sport Fish Habitat Management and Enhancement
- Sport Fishing & Aquatic Education
- Hunter and Shooter Education and Recreation
- Statewide Shooting Range Operations
- Nongame Terrestrial Wildlife Species Management (Condors, Black Footed Ferrets, Bald and Golden Eagles etc.)
- Landowner Relations Program (access and habitat improvements on private lands)
- Wildlife water development and water hauling (drought response)
- Large scale wildlife habitat restoration projects across AZ
- Recreational Access
- Aquatic Invasive Species Response and Management
- Wildlife Connectivity and Wildlife Highways Crossing Research and Management
- Wildlife Area Operation and Maintenance
- Industry Coordination and Support (economic development projects, etc)
- Boating Safety enforcement and education (Coast Guard)

These programs provide recreational opportunities for approximately 550,000 hunting and fishing license buyers annually, countless wildlife enthusiasts, and support an average 400,000 shooter days each year at Commission owned shooting ranges which all provide significant economic and quality of life benefits to Arizona's citizens.

Eliminating active management of wildlife populations could lead to overabundance or extinction, neither of which is viewed as desirable by society. Elk, pronghorn antelope, turkey, and bighorn sheep were all extirpated, or nearly so, from Arizona at one time. The Department has restored all these populations to healthy and sustainable levels, and continues to focus on restoration and management of all wildlife resources. Continued active management of wildlife populations is necessary to prevent negative outcomes such as the listing of species under the Federal ESA, and subsequent loss of the State's authority to manage its wildlife resources.

Elimination of the agency would result in loss of the ability to annually raise and purchase more than 700,000 pounds of sportfish and stock them into 140 locations throughout the state. Stocking sportfish annually supports 6,009,716 anglers fishing days that leads to direct expenditures of \$957 million. This spending supported 20,038 jobs in 2013 with \$565 million in wages and \$61.9 million in State tax revenues. The total multiplier effect of these angling

dollars provided an estimated \$1.47 billion economic benefit to Arizona. Termination of management programs that regulate and control the harvest of fishes in the state would lead to the decline in quality and angler satisfaction which is currently very high.

Termination of the Department would impair the state's ability to prevent and control the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) within Arizona and to neighboring states. Further establishment of AIS in new waters would continue to exacerbate this issue and likely lead to reductions in boaters and anglers due to the increased costs, further restrictions on recreation, as well as increasing water and electric rates due to increasing maintenance expenses by Arizona's water and electric companies.

Elimination of the Commission and Department would also result in the state losing its influence and representation of its interests in federal land and water management decision making processes.

11. The extent to which the level of regulation exercised by the agency compares to other states and is appropriate and whether less or more stringent levels of regulation would be appropriate.

The Commission and Department's regulatory programs are necessary to carry out its legislative mandate. Pursuant to its normal regulatory review cycle, the Commission reviews pertinent rules, orders, and regulations through a public input process. Additionally, as public needs or requests arise, the Commission may initiate the rulemaking process or may seek to amend orders or regulations. As part of this process, the Department has worked to simplify, streamline and enhance existing regulations and rules to meet public and resource needs.

The Department regularly assesses customer needs in order to gauge and improve customer service and public safety. Public input has been the basis for the Commission and Department to improve customer service, simplify and clarify regulations, increase communication and education regarding regulations, and enhance and prioritize law enforcement presence and management activities toward specific needs.

There is a need, demonstrated by public input and requests, for the Commission and Department to continue its current regulatory scope, with modifications to specific regulations as deemed appropriate through review. The Department is not aware of any more efficient or cost-effective alternatives, including those used by other states, regarding its current regulatory framework.

Wildlife

The Commission's wildlife regulations are appropriate to carry out its legislative mandate, and are regularly revisited for improvements such as the simplified license structure which replaced a complex and hindering barrier for potential customers purchasing a license to participate in hunting and fishing.

Unlike some other states, especially those in the Midwestern and Eastern United States, Arizona's demand for many of its hunting opportunities far exceeds the supply. Therefore,

regulations are required to fairly and equitably distribute opportunity and limit harvest to ensure healthy wildlife populations now and into the future. The Commission and Department strive to maximize opportunities for everyone interested in hunting and fishing.

Regulations are also required for the possession of live wildlife, as many species of wildlife endemic to Arizona or other parts of the globe can threaten public safety, healthy environments, and native wildlife populations. Some states have more liberal live wildlife possession regulations, and many of those are now struggling with illegally released live wildlife and their impacts on native wildlife and public safety. This includes the intentional and unintentional release of various simians (monkeys and apes), large reptiles (pythons) and large carnivores (lions, bears and tigers).

The Commission's regulatory framework includes the following types of licenses:

Licenses, permits, stamps and tags that allow for the take of wildlife:

- Hunting and Fishing Licenses
- Big Game Tags
- Pioneer License
- Disabled Veterans License
- Crossbow Permit
- Challenged Hunter Access\Mobility Permit
- Trapping License
- Migratory Bird Stamps
- Big Game Salvage Permit

Other wildlife-related activity licenses:

- Falconer License
- Guide License
- Live Bait Dealer's License
- Private Game Farm License
- Shooting Preserve License
- Field Trial License
- Field Trial Training Permit
- License Dealer's License
- Fur Dealer's License
- Taxidermist Registration

The following licenses and permits allow for the taking, possession, and transportation of live wildlife for purposes that are generally intended to benefit wildlife or the public and include:

- Aquatic Wildlife Stocking License
- Wildlife Holding Permit
- Scientific Collecting Permit
- Wildlife Hobby License
- Zoo License
- Wildlife Service License
- Wildlife Rehabilitation License
- White Amur Stocking License

Watercraft

The Commission's watercraft regulations are adequate for helping to meet its legislative mandate. The Certificate of Numbers application for vessels registering in Arizona conform to Coast Guard Federal Regulations. In addition, the Department does offer the registrants the opportunity to apply through other options such as abandoned Title, Bill of Sale, Gifting, and Transfer. All of which are authorized in statutes. In addition, registration fees are set by the Commission and will vary according to the length of the vessel. This process is uniform across all the 50 states and territories.

Some states, in addition to requiring registration of watercraft, require titling of watercraft similar to on-road motor vehicles. Arizona currently does not title watercraft.

Off-highway vehicle

The Commission retains sufficient regulatory authority to prescribe rules and direct the Department in establishing and enforcing a structure that continues to meet legislative mandates as outlined by Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 28, Chapter 3, Article 20.

12. The extent to which the agency has used private contractors in the performance of its duties as compared to other states and how more effective use of private contractors could be accomplished.

The nature of the Department's activities allows for the use of private-sector contractors. In fact, in order to accomplish its mission, the Department partners with contracts for a wide variety of services with the private sector. As a result, many of the products and services that the Department provides to the citizens of Arizona are provided through mechanisms involving the assistance of the private sector. If the Department's ability to acquire these services were eliminated, it would be difficult to achieve the mission-related goals and objectives.

Many services in the private sector are extremely beneficial to the Department in relation to reducing the time it takes to provide a given product or service, and the cost savings that can be realized through the competitive bid process. The ability to use the private sector to augment full-time staff gives the Department the ability to implement projects and activities for which there is neither adequate time nor justification to hire personnel to accomplish the planning and development of the actions. Examples of the types of services the Department obtains through the private sector are as follows:

Archeology/Cultural Resource Services - A professional archeologist must evaluate each action undertaken by the agency that may impact cultural resources. The Department does have an archeologist on-staff to provide oversight and the Department routinely utilizes "on-call" contracts to perform cultural resource surveys and any mitigating measures that may be required.

Copier Maintenance - All services in this area are provided by outside vendors.

Custodial/Janitorial and Landscaping Services - All services of this nature are provided by the private sector.

Cyclic Facilities Maintenance - All significant actions accomplished in this venue are accomplished by the private sector. Activities include well and pump maintenance and replacement, building refurbishment, septic systems replacement, electrical system maintenance, carpentry, plumbing and painting.

Engineering and Land Surveys - The Department routinely utilizes "on-call" contractors that provide expertise in these two professional fields. The Department does not currently employ a certified land surveyor.

Fleet Maintenance and Repairs - The Department utilizes ADOT and local private contractors to perform minor routine maintenance for standard vehicles.

Heavy Equipment Repair - Due to the physical size and specialised nature of this equipment type, the majority of these repairs are completed by private contractors.

License Dealers - Hunting and fishing licenses are sold throughout the state at 237 private sector locations.

Major Construction - Contract vendors accomplish all major construction projects, including architectural design. Each project is bid based on the geographic location and architectural rendering. These types of expenditures encompass highly skilled, technical organizations to accomplish the desired outcome. This is the Department's largest category of expenditure with private contractors.

Printing and Publications - The Department's printing and publication products are provided through competitively solicited contracts. The Department evaluates each publication to determine the most economical production method prior to solicitation. The printing category is a well-publicized and highly-competitive area.

Specialized Services – The Department frequently contracts with private entities for specialized technical services including some types of wildlife capture and trapping services.

Security System Monitoring - Currently, all Department fire and security systems are monitored by outside contract vendors.

Other services procured from private firms include:

- Subscription Fulfillment Services
- Training
- Lab Testing and Analysis
- Medical Evaluations and Screening
- Sportfish for stocking
- Fish Eggs
- Helicopter Flight Services
- Aircraft Repair and Major Maintenance
- Graphic Arts
- Editing and Writing
- Property Appraisals
- Veterinary Services
- Marketing Services

Based on the Department's experience, there are many service capabilities in the private sector that are of great benefit. The Department has found these services to be cost effective in two major areas. The first involves the use of skilled labor and manpower for short-term periods or to accomplish a specific desired outcome. In the second instance, contracting with the private sector has allowed the Department to secure the services of specialized functions for which in-house expertise does not exist.

The Department's funds are primarily derived from the sale of its products and services. As a result, the Department must be fiscally conservative and responsible. The Department has been granted the broadest procurement authority by the Department of Administration that is available. With this authority, the Department has made a concerted effort to use its delegated responsibility in order to secure the most efficient and effective services available.

13. The extent to which the agency potentially creates unexpected negative consequences that might require additional review by the committee of reference, including increasing the price of goods, affecting the availability of services, limiting the abilities of individuals and businesses to operate efficiently and increasing the cost of government.

The Department operates under a “user-pay, public-benefit” model and receives no state general fund tax revenues. The Commission and Department are statutorily mandated to manage the state’s wildlife resources and support, promote, educate, and enforce laws and regulations related to hunting, fishing, shooting ranges, watercraft safety, OHV operations, and outdoor recreation. Therefore, the Commission is required to promulgate rules to conserve wildlife, equitably provide customer opportunities, support business, and manage for public safety. This user-pay business model has been successful by establishing price points for all products and services that cover operational costs while delivering value at a price customers are willing and able to pay. Nearly all Department revenue reflects a discretionary decision by a customer to participate in an activity or make a purchase that is associated with or supports that activity. As such, any inefficiencies or barriers to services would only reduce the Department’s primary source of revenue and thus its ability to fulfill its mission. In order to keep prices affordable for all customers the Commission and Department have begun offering additional discretionary products and services that add value and customers may choose to purchase but are not required to continue to participate in wildlife related recreational activities. This has enabled the Commission to not increase general hunting and fishing related fees since 2014.

Additional Information Requested:

1. Identify the problem or the needs that the agency is intended to address.

The primary needs the Commission and Department are intended to address are to conserve the state’s wildlife resources as a public trust asset to ensure current and future generations have abundant wildlife populations to enjoy and to provide safe, ethical and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities. These needs are further outlined in statute as summarized below.

Wildlife:

Arizona Revised Statutes Title 17 directs the responsibility for maintaining and managing the state’s wildlife resources to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and Department.

A.R.S. § 17-102: Most wildlife in Arizona is the property of the state.

A.R.S. § 17-231: Directs the Commission to:

- Establish policies and programs for the management, preservation and harvest of wildlife.
- Establish hunting, trapping and fishing rules and prescribe the manner and methods that may be used in taking wildlife.
- Enforce laws for the protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- Develop and distribute information about wildlife and activities of the Department.

A.R.S § 17-333: Directs the Commission to:

- Establish license classifications that are valid for the taking or handling of wildlife, fees for licenses, permits, tags and stamps and application fees.

Watercraft:

A.R.S. § 5-311 directs the responsibility for watercraft recreation, safety and enforcement to the Commission. The Commission may:

- Make rules and regulations required to carry out in the most effective manner all the provisions of this chapter.
- Modify the equipment requirements in conformity with the provisions of the federal navigation laws or with the navigation regulations promulgated by the United States Coast Guard.
- Prescribe additional equipment requirements not in conflict with federal navigation laws or regulations.
- Provide for a uniform waterway marking system and establish, operate and maintain aids to navigation and regulatory markers on the waters of this state.
- Make regulations for the registration and operation of watercraft.
- Prescribe regulations for the issuance of permits for motor boat races, regattas or other watercraft events.
- Administer the law enforcement and boating safety program on the state level, and accept federal grants for the purpose of boating safety and related enforcement.

Off-highway Vehicles:

A.R.S. § 28-1176 establishes the Off-highway Vehicle Recreation Fund, which is apportioned between the Department, Arizona State Land Department and the Arizona State Parks and Trails. With its portion of the fund, the Department shall:

- Provide an informational and educational program on off-highway vehicle recreation
- Conduct law enforcement activities relating to state off-highway vehicle laws and enforcement to protect wildlife habitat and public safety.

A.R.S. § Title 17, Chapter 4 allows the Commission to expend funds to:

- Investigate and survey habitat damage from motor vehicles.
- Post notices of restrictions, prohibitions and permitted uses of motor vehicles.
- Provide maps.
- Provide an informational and educational program on wildlife habitat preservation and restoration.
- Enforce the provisions of state law.

2. State, to the extent practicable, in quantitative and qualitative terms, the objectives of the agency and its anticipated accomplishments.

Aquatic Wildlife Objectives:

- 1) Increase angling opportunities
 - Stocking 700,000 pounds of sportfish (17 species) annually into 140 unique waters
 - Expand the Community Fishing Program by adding at least two new waters each year
 - Evaluate limnologic, productivity, and environmental conditions on priority waters to determine suitability for sportfish stocking
- 2) Control the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species

- Perform boat decontamination and inspection services near AIS positive waters along the Arizona border via public private partnerships
- 3) Improve population status of ESA listed, candidate, or priority SGCN fish species
 - Stockings or augmentations at 25 locations annually

Terrestrial Wildlife Objectives:

- 1) Manage terrestrial wildlife species (game and nongame) for conservation, hunting and wildlife view opportunities.
 - Develop comprehensive game management plans for big and small game species
 - Provide hunt recommendations to the Commission for big and small game species based on input from the public and constituent groups.
 - Establish bag and possession limits for nongame species based on Department's data, with input from the public and constituent groups
 - Survey wildlife populations for disease and health concerns and develop mitigation strategies
- 2) Improve population status of ESA listed, candidate, or priority SGCN species
 - Perform enhancements or augmentations at 100 locations annually
 - Participate in projects with partner agencies and organizations for species monitoring and assessment in order to acquire data on the status of SGCN populations and ESA listed and candidate species

Watercraft Objectives:

- 1) Increase watercraft recreation safety
 - Patrol waterways of the state on an annual basis, focusing on gaining voluntary compliance with safety regulations
 - Manage the placement of hazard, directional, and regulatory buoys on assigned waters
 - Administer grants to support municipal and county law enforcement agencies with their watercraft safety missions
 - Train partner law enforcement agencies in watercraft safety patrol techniques and detection of impaired watercraft operators
- 2) Maintain a federally approved watercraft numbering system
 - Manage watercraft registration process for the state of Arizona
- 3) Increase annual boating safety education course attendance
 - Implement a targeted marketing and outreach approach to increase course attendance and promote safe boating practices
 - Decrease the number of watercraft accidents by building public awareness of safe boating practices through targeted marketing, media and community outreach
 - Promote customer use of online registration renewal system
 - Improve boating access and launch areas impacted by lower water levels

Off-Highway Vehicle Objectives:

- 1) Increase OHV recreation safety
 - Employ a minimum of seven Department officers focused on gaining voluntary compliance with OHV safety, enforcement and education, and habitat protection
 - Provide pick-off funding for other Department officers to conduct OHV patrols focused on gaining voluntary compliance with OHV safety, enforcement and education, and habitat protection statewide

- 2) Minimize habitat damage caused by OHVs
 - Deploy over 10 special OHV patrol projects focusing on habitat protection, equipment use and operation
 - Enhance OHV recreational access statewide to promote adequate and appropriate routes
 - Work with land management agencies to erect habitat protection structures, information kiosks, and signage to protect habitat
- 3) Increase public awareness on OHV related issues
 - Provide OHV users, non-users and land agencies with information on habitat protection, safe OHV use and available OHV use areas
 - Promote safe, ethical and responsible use of OHVs through outreach efforts that include targeted marketing, media and community engagement
 - Conduct education courses and participate in outreach events to promote safe, responsible and ethical OHV use
 - Partner with OHV dealers and rental companies to educate buyers and renters on equipment, operation rules, and habitat protection

Shooting Sports Objectives:

- 1) Ensure safe shooting range facilities are available for a wide variety of public uses
 - Operate the Ben Avery Shooting Facility (BASF) as a fiscally sustainable business while maintaining it as an affordable recreational destination
 - Provide grants for the development and improvement of public shooting ranges
 - Provide a range of opportunities, from introduction to advanced shooting, at Commissioned-owned ranges
- 2) Maintain, develop or support public ranges within reasonable proximity of urban areas
 - Build partnerships with industry, communities and organized shooting groups to enhance the long-term viability of shooting sports
- 3) Increase the percentage of Arizonans who participate in recreational shooting
 - Recruit new customers to the shooting sports through introductory events
 - Enhance range facilities to accommodate growth in various shooting disciplines

Habitat Improvement Objectives:

- 1) Maintain and restore habitat capacity to promote abundant and thriving wildlife populations
 - Improve a minimum of 600,000 acres of wildlife habitat annually through grassland restoration and the development and maintenance of year round wildlife waters
 - Complete 6 aquatic habitat restoration projects or phases annually to improve habitat for sportfish in reservoirs or native fish species in streams across the state
 - Develop and maintain water catchments and haul water as necessary

Customer Service Objectives:

- 1) Increase Customer access to Department information, products and services
 - Implement new technologies to provide 24/7/365 customer access
 - Migrate all Department licenses and tags to online/electronic platforms

Public Access Objectives:

- 1) Maintain and enhance public access to outdoor recreational opportunities

- Maintain access to 4.6 million acres of private and landlocked public lands through access agreements, perpetual access easements and building bypass roads
- Provide informational signage, access gates, and cattle guards to enhance public access
- Connect NGOs with private landowners through the Adopt-A- Ranch program

Volunteer Program Objectives:

- 1) Increase workforce capacity and financial agility through volunteers
 - 25 percent increase in volunteer hours due to increased social media presence and standardization of volunteer administration
 - Increase engagement and diversity of volunteers
 - Increase volunteer in-kind match by identifying new opportunities and using technology to track eligible hours

Public Outreach Objectives:

- 1) Increase the frequency and availability of Department education programs
 - Train and develop volunteers to assist in the delivery of education programs statewide
 - Provide additional options for online education programs
- 2) Increase Public Awareness of Department's education programs
 - Expand partnerships and program delivery to engage with diverse constituencies
 - Survey customers to align education program offerings with diverse customer needs
- 3) Expand the Department's customer base
 - Conduct an annual statewide outreach and marketing campaign to reach new and underserved communities
 - Provide and promote new products and services to new and underserved communities
 - Use surveys and other methodologies to gain an understanding of customers' needs
- 4) Increase public awareness of the Department's mission
 - Use all available methods and technologies to communicate with the public
 - Develop relationships with local and national media outlets
 - Improve targeted demographic communication products and services

3. Identify any other agencies having similar, conflicting, or duplicative objectives, and an explanation of the manner in which the agency avoids duplication or conflict with other such agencies.

In Arizona, no other state agency has similar or duplicative objectives to those of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and Department, whose approach to achieving its statutory mandate and other requirements is to work efficiently and cooperatively with other land and resource management agencies. Specifically, the Commission and Department manage the state's wildlife resources while recognizing that other state and federal agencies manage the land and water resources upon which the wildlife depends.

The primary mechanism for avoiding duplication and conflict is solidified in the development of formal agreements that clearly define statutory authorities and identify mutual objectives. These agreements not only identify specific authorities and missions, but also mutual goals, objectives and methods for resolving disputes. The Department has numerous agreements in effect within the State of Arizona to enable and guide cooperative fish and wildlife management, recreational shooting, off highway vehicle and watercraft recreation.

Under these agreements, the Department works at the state, regional, national and international level with state and federal partners on issues of significant interest to develop strategies to ensure Arizona's interests are represented. The Department also works with the various tribes, military installations and quasi-governmental water and utility entities to resolve issues and seek opportunities to cooperate on numerous fish and wildlife management and recreation related projects.

As fish and wildlife resources are not restricted by land ownership and jurisdictional boundaries, representing the interests of the state and the Commission's authority is achieved through direct involvement in national-level associations such as the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, regional-level associations such as the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Western Governors Association, and state/local organizations such as cities, counties, Arizona County Governments Association, Natural Resources Conservation Districts, Habitat Partnership Committees.

4. Assess the consequences of eliminating the agency or of consolidating it with another agency.

Eliminating the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and Department would leave the state's wildlife resources and habitats vulnerable to mismanagement, no management, or overexploitation and potentially lead to sole federal control of Arizona's wildlife resources which is held in trust for Arizona's citizens. In turn, there would be a certain decrease in the quality and/or existence of many recreational opportunities throughout Arizona. Many Arizona residents' quality of life, and favorite pastimes would be significantly impacted as well as the state's economy, especially in rural communities where hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation is one of the top four economic drivers. Elimination of the current "user pay - everyone benefit" model would essentially leave Arizona's wildlife conservation needs completely unfunded and force the necessary or federally mandated conservation expense upon the state's general fund. Elimination or consolidation of the Department would abdicate wildlife management in large part, if not exclusively, to federal agencies less focused on the well being of Arizonans and the state's interests.

One of the primary strengths of Arizona's approach to wildlife management is the current public Commission system of governance. The current Commission system provides for more legislative oversight through Senate confirmation of commissioners and interaction with commissioners who in turn provide policy direction to the Director and agency as a whole. A separate Commission providing policy direction to the Game and Fish Department provides focused resource management that is responsive to the public that it serves. In other states, consolidation of the wildlife management role and function of state government under the auspices of a broader resources organization has increased the potential for negative consequences or deficiencies including:

- Diversion of license revenues from wildlife conservation purposes jeopardizes millions of dollars in federal funding that requires that license revenues be dedicated

solely to wildlife purposes which in turn creates funding pressure on the state to use general fund appropriations

- Illegal reallocation and diversion of assets acquired with WSFR or license funds, which in turn will increase pressure to replace assets with state general funds
- Degradation of customer trust and confidence in wildlife resource management
- Decreased public access to decision makers and decision making processes
- Decreased wildlife management expertise and focus among decision makers
- Increased politicization of decisions and potential for special interest influence
- Degradation of the principles of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation including the core principle of “Opportunity for All” meaning the deterioration of the principle that every Arizonan has the same access

Occupational Regulation Information

1. The extent to which the occupational regulation meets the requirements of A.R.S. § 41-3502, as amended, transferred and renumbered by Laws 2021, Chapter 176.

Guide License - A guide license is required for any person who, for pay, aids or assists another in the taking of wildlife in Arizona. The Department issues both hunting and fishing guide licenses for a fee of \$300.00. Any person wishing to obtain a guide license must demonstrate appropriate knowledge by successfully passing a Department administered examination of Arizona hunting and fishing laws and rules.

Guides provide services intended to keep hunters safe and in compliance with laws and regulations, and promote a positive and successful hunting experience. The inherent responsibilities of such a role has led the Commission and Department to hold guides to a higher standard of accountability through testing and specific licensure. Guides can potentially endanger clients or cause them to unwittingly commit violations that carry serious legal consequences for the individual themselves as well as having potential impacts to public safety and wildlife habitat.

Guides service a very specific market within the subset of the public desiring to hunt or fish. Unlike some other states, there is no statutory requirement that an individual contract the services of a guide to hunt or fish on open public lands in Arizona. The service provided is very limited in duration, typically for a single hunt or fishing trip. The prices for such specialized services, offered to a limited number of customers are inherently high, and unlikely to be influenced by the current level of cost imposed by Department regulations. Maintenance of a specialized license including demonstration of familiarity with changing state regulations is the least restrictive form of regulation for protecting clients and the public.

Taxidermy Registration - A taxidermy registration is required for any person that wishes to process or mount wildlife parts on behalf of another person. The taxidermy registration is valid for one year at an annual cost of \$150.00. The ability to properly conserve and mount legally harvested game requires special tools, training and facilities that are not available to most individuals. As a result, people more often pay a taxidermist for specialized services than seek alternatives. The taxidermist registration helps protect taxidermists against liability for violations committed by others, including their incidental possession of wildlife unlawfully taken by another, provided reporting obligations are met. Registration also allows the

Department to verify information about hunter harvest that can aid in combating poaching and that may help prevent the spread of wildlife diseases in this state.

Wildlife Services License - A wildlife services license is required for any individual that wishes to perform wildlife capture and disposal services for the public; the act of capturing and relocating wildlife would generally be unlawful for a member of the public without this license. Licensure helps to ensure that individuals providing this service professionally are aware of and prepared for the ways in which wildlife can become aggressive when perceiving a threat and when confined. The public can call an individual with a wildlife services license to capture and remove the wildlife safely from their home or property. The fee for a wildlife services license is \$20.00, and licenses must be renewed annually. Licensees charge customers rates that are generally in excess of this amount and there is a relatively steady demand for these services.

The Department identifies significant requirements, knowledge and training requirements to obtain a wildlife services license. This helps ensure a minimum level of standard has been met before a member of the public calls a wildlife services licensee to capture and remove the wildlife safely from their home or property. It is important to note that Arizona's revised statutes allow a person to protect themselves and their property from wildlife under certain circumstances, and that many individuals prefer to hire a licensed wildlife services provider to remove an animal.

2a. The extent to which the failure to regulate a profession or occupation will result in the loss of insurance.

None of the licenses identified in this section impact an individual's ability to obtain or maintain insurance.

2b. The extent to which the failure to regulate a profession or occupation will result in an impact to the ability to practice in other states or as required by federal law.

All of the licenses identified in this section are valid within the state of Arizona and do not transcend state boundaries. Any lawfully harvested wildlife that is taken out of Arizona must contain proof of legality which is issued by the wildlife agency of the state or country in which the wildlife was taken.

2c. The extent to which the failure to regulate a profession or occupation will result in an impact to the required licensure or registration with the federal government.

None of the licenses identified in this section are connected to federal government licensing.

2d. The extent to which the failure to regulate a profession or occupation will result in the loss of constitutionally afforded practices.

None of the licenses identified in this section impact constitutionally afforded practices.

ARIZONA STATE LEGISLATURE

HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE

Minutes of the Meeting January 5, 2022 1:00 P.M., HHR1

Members Present:

Senator, Kerr, Co-Chair
Senator Gowan
Senator Gray
Senator Mendez*
Senator Otondo*
Senator Rogers*
Senator Shope
Senator Stahl Hamilton*
Senator Steele*

Representative Griffin, Co-Chair
Representative Burges, Vice Chair
Representative Abraham
Representative Cano
Representative Carroll
Representative Dalessandro*
Representative Dunn
Representative Martinez
Representative Mathis
Representative Parker
Representative Quinonez

*Participated remotely via a teleconference platform.

Members Excused:

Representative Finchem

Staff:

Rachel Caldwell, Senate Research Analyst
Paul Bergelin, House Research Analyst
Ahjahna Graham, House Research Analyst

Co-Chair Griffin called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and attendance was noted.

INTRODUCTION

Representative Griffin asked for the members to introduce themselves.

SUNSET REVIEW OF THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

Presentation by the Arizona Game and Fish Department

Kurt Davis, Commission Chairman, Arizona Game and Fish Commission, made opening comments and introduced Director Ty Gray.

Ty Gray, Director, Arizona Game and Fish Department, distributed and explained a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Arizona Game and Fish Department" (Attachment A).

Mr. Gray answered questions posed by the Committee.

Public Testimony

No public testimony took place.

Discussion and Recommendation

Representative Griffin requested a motion on the recommendation.

Senator Kerr moved that the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference and the Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference recommend that the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Game and Fish Commission, and Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department be continued for eight years.

The motion CARRIED by a voice vote.

SUNSET REVIEW OF THE ARIZONA WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE AUTHORITY

Presentation by the Arizona Office of the Auditor General

Adam Tillard, Audit Manager, Office of the Auditor General, distributed and explained a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona" (Attachment B).

Presentation by the Arizona Water Infrastructure Finance Authority

Daniel Dialessi, CFA and Executive Director, Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) distributed and explained a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona" (Attachment C).

Mr. Dialessi answered questions posed by the Committee.

Public Testimony

John Mendibles, Executive Director, League of Veterans, spoke about renewable energy and Arizona water resources.

Discussion and Recommendation

Representative Griffin requested a motion on the recommendation.

Senator Kerr moved that the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference and the Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference recommend that the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority be continued for eight years.

The motion CARRIED by a voice vote.

SUNSET REVIEW OF THE WATER QUALITY APPEALS BOARD

Presentation by the Water Quality Appeals Board

Fred Brinkler, Board Member, Water Quality Appeals Board, participated remotely via a teleconference platform, explained the Water Quality Appeals Board, the duties and the appeals process.

Public Testimony

No public testimony took place.

Discussion and Recommendation

Representative Griffin requested a motion on the recommendation.

Senator Kerr moved that the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference and the Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference recommend that the Water Quality Appeals Board be continued for eight years.

The motion CARRIED by a voice vote.

SUNSET REVIEW OF THE ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Presentation by the Arizona Office of the Auditor General

Marc Owen, Performance Audit Manager, Office of the Auditor General, distributed and explained a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Arizona Department of Environmental Quality" (Attachment D).

Mr. Owen answered questions posed by the Committee.

Presentation by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Misael Cabrera, Director, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, responded and explained information presented in the Auditor General's report and the advancements in the department.

Mr. Cabrera answered questions posed by the Committee.

Public Testimony

Sandy Bahr, Director, Sierra Club, Grand Canyon Chapter, expressed concerns about the Department of Environmental Quality and the findings of the Auditor General's report.

Discussion and Recommendation

Representative Griffin requested a motion on the recommendation.

Senator Kerr moved that the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference and the Senate Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee of Reference recommend that the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality be continued for eight years.

Senator Mendez offered a substitute motion that the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality be continued for two years. The motion FAILED by show of hands.

Senator Kerr's original motion CARRIED by a voice vote.

Representative Griffin offered closing comments.

Attached are forms noting the individuals who submitted a Speaker slip on the agenda items (Attachment E).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey Gardner
Committee Secretary

(Audio recordings and attachments are on file in the Secretary of the Senate's Office/Resource Center, Room 115. Audio archives are available at <http://www.azleg.gov>)

Arizona Game and Fish Department



Our Mission:

*To conserve Arizona's diverse wildlife resources
and manage for safe, compatible outdoor
recreation opportunities for current and future
generations.*

Arizona Game and Fish Commission

- Established in 1929
- Sets Policy & Direction
 - Monthly public meetings statewide
 - Webcast and Regional access
- 5 member citizen board
 - Governor Appt - Senate confirmed
 - Five-year term
 - No more than three members of same political party
 - No two members from same county
- Commissioners serve 1,500+ hrs/yr



Arizona Game & Fish Department

Conserving and
Protecting
Arizona's 800+
Wildlife Species
for Current and
Future
Generations at
no cost to the
State General
Fund



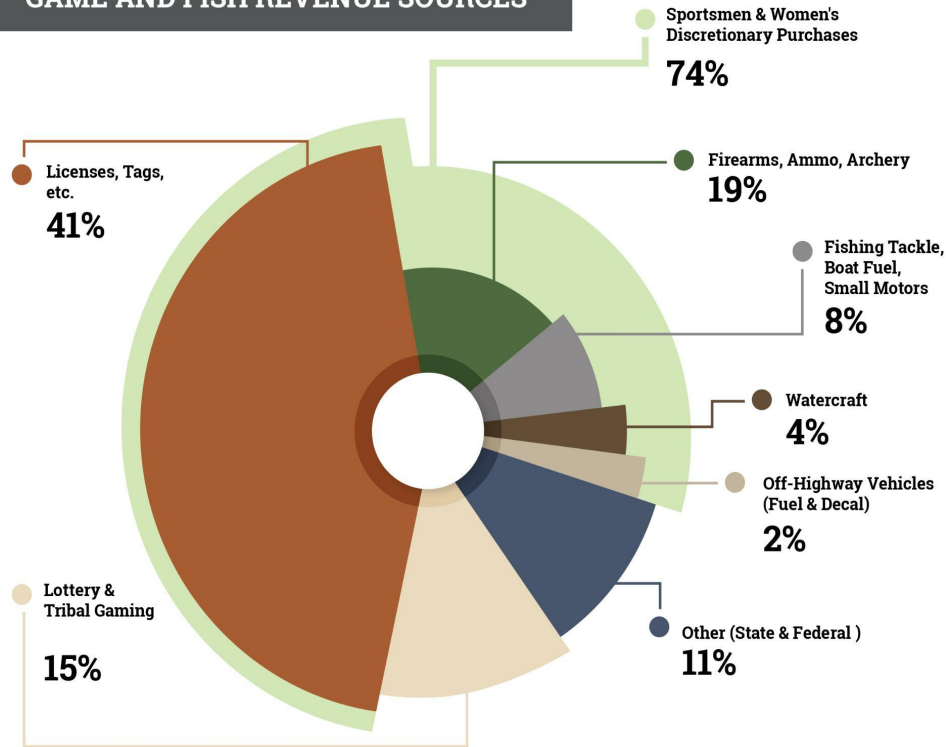
Service Statewide

- 600 Staff
- 7 Offices
 - Phoenix HQ
 - Pinetop
 - Flagstaff
 - Kingman
 - Yuma
 - Tucson
 - Mesa
- 6 Hatcheries
- 10 Ranges



Customer Driven Revenue

GAME AND FISH REVENUE SOURCES



- 74% from Sportsmen & women spending
- No General Funds



Highlight: License Simplification

Arizona Hunting & Fishing Licenses

A valid Arizona license is required for taking wildlife in the state. A valid tag or stamp is required for the take of big game animals and migratory game birds. General Fishing, Hunting and Combination licenses are valid for 365 days from the date of purchase.

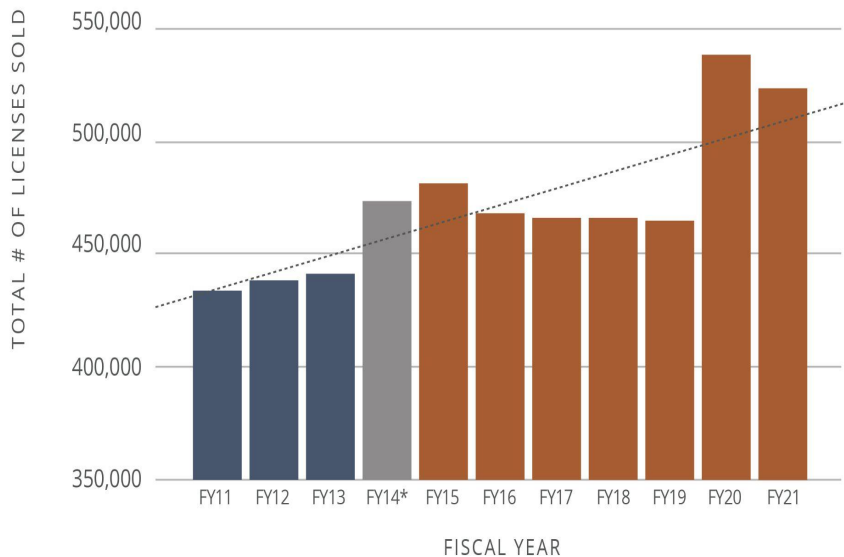
LICENSE	RESIDENT FEE	NON-RESIDENT FEE
General Fishing	\$37	\$55
General Hunting	\$37	n/a
Combo Hunt & Fish	\$57	\$160
Youth Combo Hunt & Fish (ages 10-17)	\$5	\$5
Short-Term Combo Hunt & Fish	\$15/day	\$20/day

- Implemented Jan 2014
- Simplified Structure
 - >40 to 5 options
 - Youth definition
- Increased Value
 - Valid 365 days
 - Bundled Privileges
- No fee increase since 2014
- Model for other states



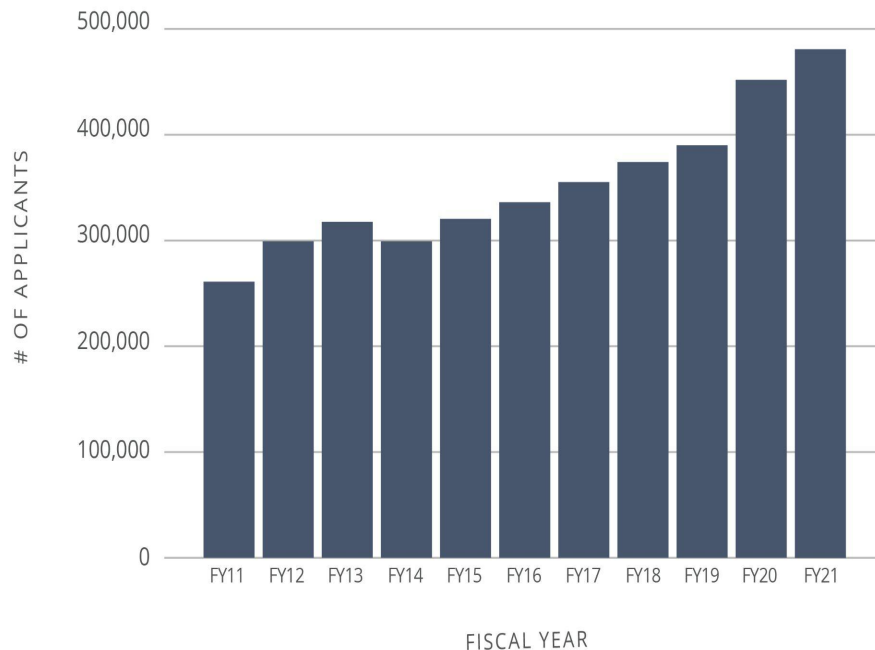
License Sales & Hunt Apps

Total # of Licenses Sold by Fiscal Year (Excluding Stamps)



*License simplification was implemented during FY14 (Jan 1, 2014)

Draw Applicants by Fiscal Year



Economic Benefits

Hunters and Anglers

- Spend \$1.2 billion/yr
- Supports Rural Economy
- 18,200 Related Jobs
- \$132M State/Local Taxes
- \$2.1B Economic Benefit
- WC, OHV, WW
- Health, Learning, Lifestyle



Highlight: Customer Service

- Reduced time to publish Draw results
 - > 60 to 25 days
- Draw - 100% online in 2019
- Customer Portal, Apps - 24/7
- Online license sales at dealers Jan 1
- **COMING SOON:** Electronic Tags



Draw

Log Out AZGFD Apps ▾

Hunt Species Selection

Please select the hunt species for which you would like to submit an application. If you would like to apply to hunt different species, you will have to successfully submit and pay for this application, and then start a new application for a new hunt species.

Select Species

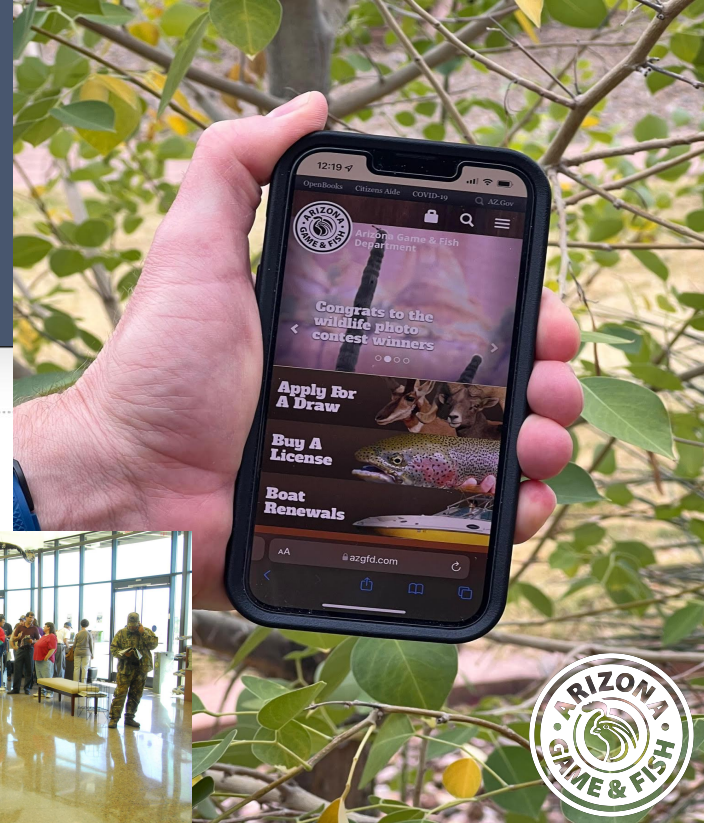
- ✓ Select One
- Bighorn Sheep
- Bison
- Deer
- Javelina
- Sandhill Crane
- Turkey

(selection screen).

Once you move on from this page by clicking the "Submit Species Selection and Continue" button below, you will not be able to edit your species selection, point only, without starting over.

Please make sure you review your species selection before moving on.

Submit Species Selection and Continue



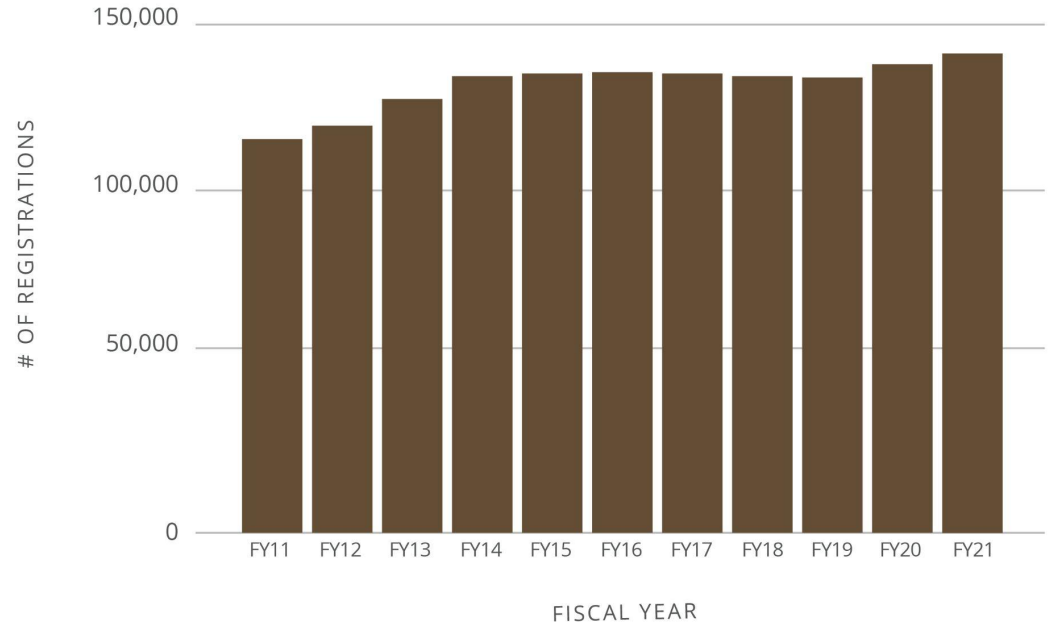
Highlight: Customer Service

WC Registrations

- Online registrations
- 24/7 - any device
- Eliminated \$2.50 fee
- 3rd Party Providers

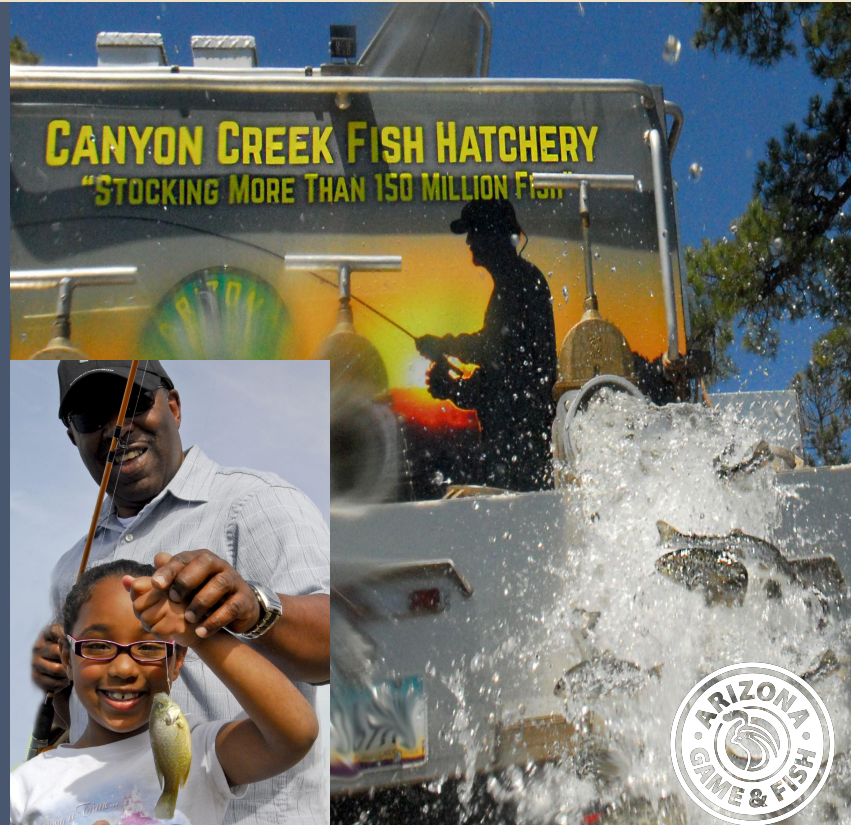


Watercraft Registrations



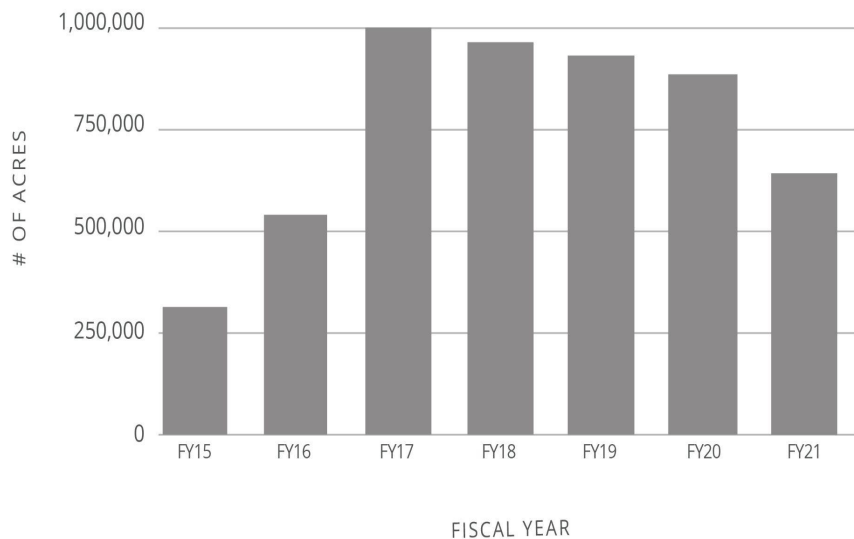
Highlight: Fishing/Hatcheries

- > 700,000 lbs of fish stocked per year
 - 140 locations
- Community Fishing Program
 - 21 waters in 11 communities in 2011
 - 49 waters in 23 communities 2021
 - 4 more planned
- Multiple Species - sportfish and native
- Sterling Springs Hatchery Renovation
 - FY17 G&FF Appropriation (\$3.02M)
 - Completed FY20
- FY21 G&FF Appropriation (\$2.6M)
 - Improvements at 3 hatcheries

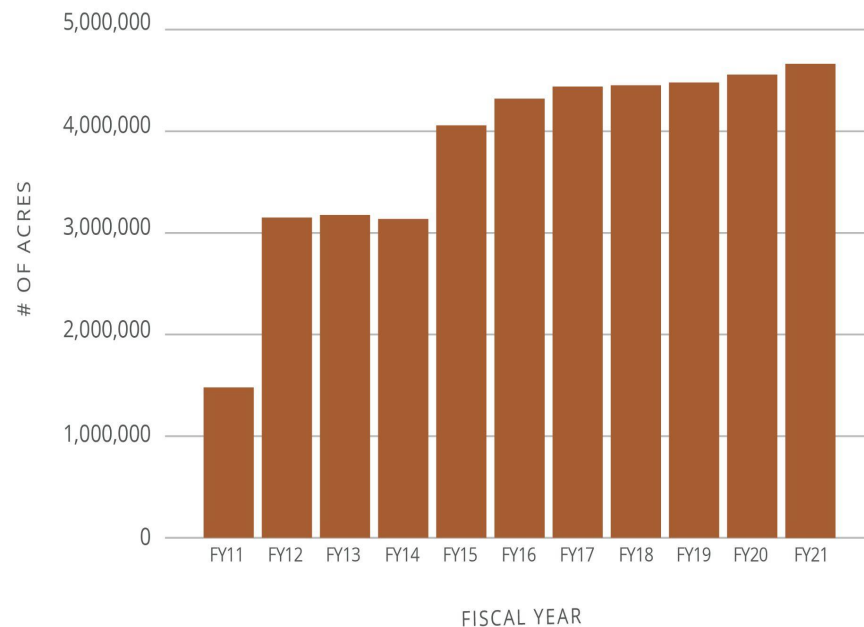


Highlight: Habitat & Access

Acres of Habitat Improved by Fiscal Year



Acres Made Available for Recreational Access



Highlight: Drought Response

- 3000 wildlife waters
- 1.3 M gallons hauled in FY20
- 3.7M gallons hauled in FY21
 - Dept
 - Ranchers/Farmers
 - Conservation Groups
 - Volunteers
- Public support
 - Send Water Campaign
 - > \$625,00 in donations
- FY23 Budget Proposal
 - Water Dev/Hauling
 - Sportfish



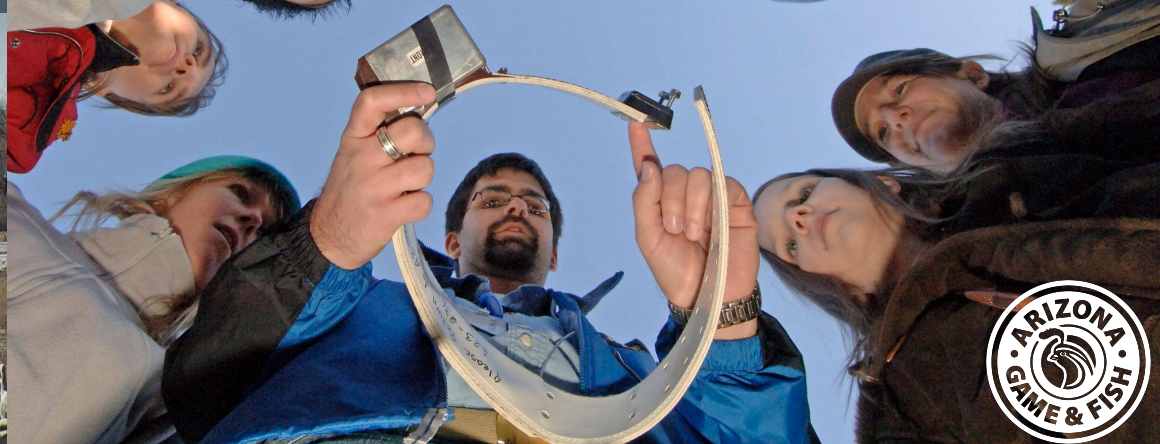
Highlight: Shooting Ranges

- > 400,000 recreational shooter days/year
- LE, Hunter Education, etc, training
- Since 2011:
 - Provided \$1M grants to 30 public ranges
 - BASF served 1.8M customers
 - BACTC threw over 49 million targets



Highlight: Outreach

- **Wildlife Curriculum:**
Trained 6,250 school educators since 2011
- **Wildlife Cams:**
> 2.6M viewers since FY15
(32 states, 40 countries)



Highlight: Volunteers

- > 100,000 hrs/yr
- 50 FTE
- Federal match



Highlight: Wildfire Support

- 11,960 hours
- 82 fire security assignments
- Public Safety, community protection



Highlight: Species Recovery

Sonoran Pronghorn:

- Listed in 2002 - 21 in AZ
- 2021 - est. 232 in AZ
- 3 herds - + 1 in Jan



Bald Eagle:

- Listed 1978 - 11 KBAs
- Delisted 2007 - 36 KBAs
- 2021 - 93 KBAs



Mexican Wolf Program

- Protected under ESA since 1976
- Efforts to re-establish began 1998
 - Binational breeding program, 7 wolves
- Recovery efforts led by USFWS
- Managed under 2015 10(j) Rule and 2017 Recovery Plan
 - Under court order revision
- Interagency Field Team (IFT)
 - Implements on-the-ground activities
 - Annual Count
 - Cross-fostering of captive born pups in the wild to meet genetic goals

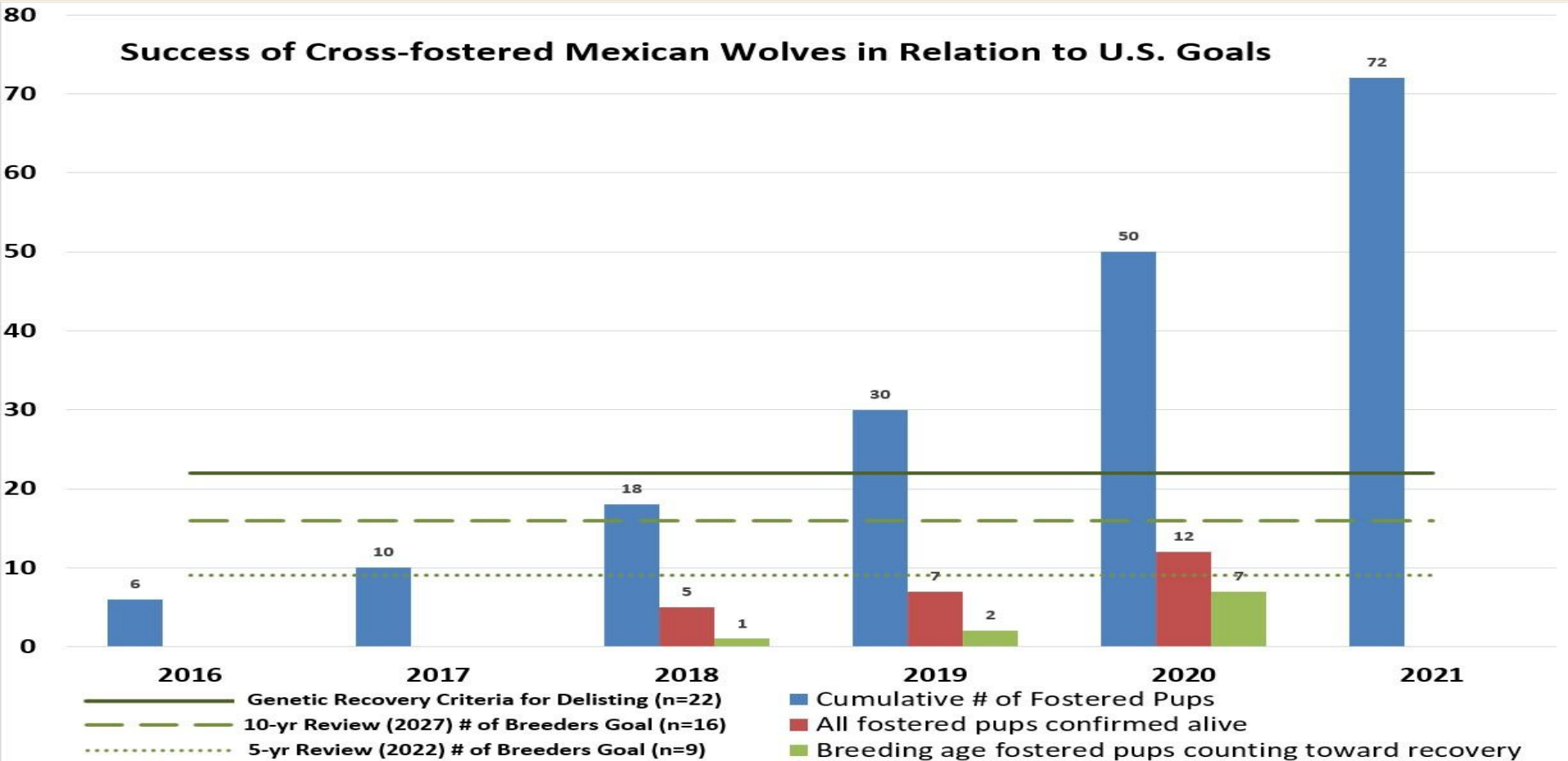


Mexican Wolf Program

- 2020 Annual Count
 - 186 Wolves: 114 New Mexico, 72 in Arizona
 - 46 packs, up from 42 in 2019
- Expand efforts to meet recovery criteria in Mexico
 - 90% suitable habitat is in Mexico
- Collaboration with stakeholders
 - Livestock operators, property owners, agency partners
- AZ Livestock Loss Board
 - Admin support
 - Federal grant applications (FY22 \$270K)
 - Compensation for depredation and avoidance
- Program Costs 1977-2021: \$10,742,473
 - \$6,873,045 Federal
 - \$3,869,428 Non-federal



Mexican Wolf Program



Highlight: US 93 Overpasses

- Pre-2011: 11 sheep/vehicle collisions/yr
- 3 overpasses built/monitored
- Increased sheep ability to cross by 1367%
- > 6,000 sheep overpass crossings
- Zero collisions since 2014
- ADOT, FHWA, NPS, BOR, BLM, USFWS, ADBSS
- Success led to collaboration with NDOT/NDOW - construction of Boulder City Bypass
- Modeled success of HWY 260 Project
 - Decreased elk collisions by 98%



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