

conservationists, Game and Fish struck a cooperative partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Federal Junior Duck Stamp program. This partnership allows the panel of contest judges to select a piece of artwork from the kindergarten through sixth grade categories to represent Arizona as an alternate state duck stamp. This stamp has been unofficially deemed as the Arizona Junior Art Duck Stamp, and this year, that honor goes to Taylor Forbeck. Director Voyles presented Taylor with her original artwork, framed and matted and with the number one stamp signed by Governor Jan Brewer.

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1A. Request for Commission Approval for the Acquisition of the Horseshoe Ranch in Yavapai County, Arizona, and to Enter into an Agreement with the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service for Future Management of the Associated Allotments.

**Presenter:** Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief

The Department recommended that the Commission approve the acquisition of the Horseshoe Ranch (Ranch) in Yavapai County, Arizona. The Department has been working with The Trust for Public Land on the purchase of the Horseshoe Ranch and associated federal grazing allotments and water rights. The purchase will include 198.8 acres of deeded property and entering into agreements with the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service for the 32,388 acre Horseshoe Allotment and 35,899 acre Copper Creek Allotment respectively.

The Horseshoe Ranch is an in-holding within the Bureau of Land Management's Agua Fria National Monument. The proposed purchase will also include approximately ½ mile of the Agua Fria River on the deeded property. Additional portions of the Agua Fria River, Indian Creek and Silver Creek are located on the allotments.

The Western Yellow-billed cuckoo has been documented in the riparian habitats on the Ranch. The portions of Silver Creek and Larry Creek on the allotments support Gila chub and the portions of Larry Creek on the allotment also support Gila topminnow and Desert pupfish. The allotments include the core fawning habitat for the southern population segment of the Unit 21 pronghorn herd. In addition, reaches of the Agua Fria River and its tributaries, surrounding the subject property, have been designated an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society.

The Department proposes to use Heritage Funds as match to a proposed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Section 6 Recovery Land Acquisition award to acquire the deeded property. The funding package for the acquisition is contingent upon the Department receiving this award. To meet federal requirements for the Commission to retain legal control of the grazing allotment permits, the Commission will need to enter into agreements with the Bureau of Land Management and the U. S. Forest Service and/or a qualified livestock operator.

Mr. Avey provided the Commission with additional information using a PowerPoint presentation that included the following:

- Transaction Structure:
  - Purchase 198.8 acre deeded property

- Enter into Memorandum of Understanding with US Forest Service and BLM
- USFS permit would be waived back
- Permit would remain in vacant status
- Sublessee of BLM permit would be given priority for USFS permit
- Enter into Coordinated Resource Management Plan for Management of the Allotments
  
- Acquisition Funding
  - Deeded - \$2,590,000 (Heritage Acquisition; Section 6 Recovery Land Acquisition; Award notification pending for \$ 1,000,000)
  - Permit - \$710,000 (Habitat Partnership Committee, Arizona Antelope Foundation - \$185,000)
  - Habitat Partnership Committee, Wild Turkey Federation - \$1,000
  - Remaining funding from internal Department funds
  
- Completed: Appraisal, Phase I ESA, ALTA Survey, Title Review
  
- Pending: Appraisal Letter, Appraisal Review, Phase I ESA – Follow-up surveys

Commissioner Husted asked if it was necessary for the Commission to commit to the \$710,000 permit portion of this agreement at this time so the Department could continue to look for additional partners.

Mr. Avey stated it is necessary for the Commission to commit to both the deeded and permitted portions.

Director Voyles stated that the Department will continue to seek partners after acquisition that could defray and actually enable the Department to reimburse some of the accounts that they would withdraw from initially. It will depend upon the prospective partner's desire to be a part of the process and their ability to participate.

Commissioner Husted expressed concern about creating types of partnerships that may someday keep the Department from putting operation and maintenance dollars into the ranch and maybe making a return on it, not just through grazing but through hospitality or other functions. He does not want to craft anything that locks out the ability to create partnerships that are needed to possibly break even and to benefit wildlife.

Commissioner Harris confirmed with Mr. Avey that the deeded acreage provides a key access point to a large portion of the northern segment of the Agua Fria National Monument, and further noted that the property is a riparian area as well, so there are all kinds of opportunity and advantages with this property.

**Motion:** Harris moved and Woodhouse seconded THAT THE COMMISSION VOTE TO APPROVE ACQUISITION OF THE HORSESHOE RANCH LOCATED IN YAVAPAI COUNTY, ARIZONA, AND TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND U.S. FOREST SERVICE FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATED ALLOTMENTS AND AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT TO COMPLETE ALL DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACQUISITION AS

RECOMMENDED OR APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. THE RANCH PURCHASE INCLUDES BASE PROPERTY FOR THE FEDERAL GRAZING PRIVILEGES ON THE ASSOCIATED HORSESHOE AND COPPER CREEK ALLOTMENTS

**Vote:** Unanimous  
4 to 0  
Freeman not present

#### Public Comment

Rem Hawes, BLM Agua Fria National Monument Manager, addressed the Commission in support of the Commission's approval of this acquisition.

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Meeting recessed for a break at 9:18 a.m.

Meeting reconvened at 9:30 a.m.

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#### 1. Shooting Sports Activities Briefing

**Presenter:** Jay Cook, Education Branch Chief

Mr. Cook provided the Commission with a Power Point presentation highlighting several items in the Shooting Sports Activities Briefing (provided to the Commission prior to this meeting and available to the public). The report included shooting programs and shooting range development statewide and covered activities that occurred since the September 2010 Commission meeting. This briefing is part of the Department's ongoing commitment to provide the Commission with updates on a regular basis. The presentation included the following additional information:

##### Northern Arizona Shooting Range

- Conceptual Range Designs
  - 3 initial designs currently developed (maps provided in Power Point presentation)
  - Department is currently consolidating public comments to be considered for range design
  - Consultations with external engineers and architects that have volunteered their time
  - Ultimate goal of developing a preferred alternative for design that incorporates public comment, Department input and external expertise that meets the Commission Objective.
- State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) Coordination
  - The Department is in the process of adding information to the Archeological survey that will be re-submitted to SHPO for review and approval
  - SHPO has 30 working days to review and comment on the report and Department plans for the project
  - The eligibility status does not affect the Commission's authority to enact this project
  - SHPO will determine whether or not the property is eligible to be listed as a historic site