

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



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

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

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

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

The NWTf effort is a landscape restoration project in the Pinaleno Mountains (Mt Graham) in Southeast Arizona. The Pinaleno Ecosystem Restoration Project will reduce dense timber stands in this part of the Coronado National Forest and will directly benefit both Gould's turkeys as well as the endangered Mt Graham red squirrel. By managing this forest habitat, the potential for catastrophic wildfires should be reduced, not only helping the endangered squirrel, but also the other

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PO Box 12590 Glendale, AZ 85318

wildlife within the ecosystem, including both game and non-game species. This project began in 2013 and is projected to continue through 2020.

The AAF project is another long term landscape scale habitat project in the grasslands of Southern Arizona. The Southeastern Arizona Grasslands Pronghorn Initiative is a multi-phased effort encompassing 20,000 acres of grassland restoration, including mesquite removal, water catchment work, wildlife friendly fencing, migration corridors, pronghorn transplants as well as habitat enhancement for both the pronghorn and the threatened Black-tailed prairie dogs.

You can go here to see some of our past grant recipients and funded projects.

http://www.arizonasportsmenforwildlifeconservation.org/license_plate_fund_projects.html

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

About Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation: AZSFWC is a 501c-3 nonprofit organization dedicated to wildlife conservation youth, education and issues concerning sportsmen and women. AZSFWC has 32 member organizations and affiliates representing more than 10,000 sportsmen and women. AZSFWC's Mission is to educate and inform sportsmen, wildlife conservation organizations throughout the state and the public at large on important issues related to wildlife and wildlife habitat, and to provide, via grants or other sources, funding to conserve Arizona's wildlife populations through habitat enhancement initiatives. For more information about AZSFWC, go to our website at: <http://www.arizonasportsmenforwildlifeconservation.org/index.html> You can also contact the AZSFWC Administrator Tracy Unmacht at info@azsfwc.org or by phone at 602-361-6478.

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