

SONORAN PRONGHORN ANTELOPE RECOVERY TEAM

May 24, 1988

Mr. Mike Spear, Regional Director
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Post Office Box 1306
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

Dear Mr. Spear:

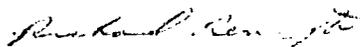
Re: Minutes of the April 26, 1988 meeting of the Sonoran
Pronghorn Antelope Recovery Team

Enclosed for your review and consideration are the minutes of the
April 26, 1988 meeting of the Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope Recovery
Team held at the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge office,
Ajo, Arizona.

Each participant at the meeting has had an opportunity to review
and make editorial comments on the minutes. Additionally each
participant has been forwarded a copy of the final meeting
minutes.

If I can be of further assistance please feel free to contact me
at any time.

Sincerely,



Richard Romington
Team Member
Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope
Recovery Team

RRR:jj

Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope Recovery Team

Minutes of April 26, 1988

Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge

Ajo, Arizona

The April 26, 1988 meeting of the Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope Recovery Team was called to order at 9:00 AM at the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge office in Ajo, Arizona (attendance roster provided).

Introductions were made and a short discussion on the need for the meeting was provided by Richard Remington, team leader (see attached agenda).

This meeting was called basically to discuss three items. (1) current and proposed Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope research, (2) endangered species consultations and (3) discussion of the Chuckawalla Bench of southeastern California as a possible reintroduction site for Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope. A discussion of each agenda item follows.

1. Norm Smith; Arizona Coop. Fish and Wildlife Research Unit

Norm Smith presented a brief history of the Coop. Units involvement in Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope research. University personnel met with the F.W.S. in Albuquerque approximately 6 months ago to develop study proposals to meet research needs recommended by the Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope Recovery team. Initially a study proposal was developed to investigate quality and quantity of the forage base. In subsequent meetings with the F.W.S. Region, Cabeza Prieta, and Arizona Game and Fish Department personnel, study proposals were expanded to include seasonal habitat use based upon forage quality, water content, and relationship of free standing water. Incidental of these aspects general observations of mortality, natality, and antelope response to low level aircraft flights will be gathered.

Norm Smith introduced Keith Hughes as a graduate student working on these studies and passed out a synopsis of "Expected Outputs from Sonoran Pronghorn Study" (copy attached). Keith Hughes is in the field now gathering data for the current study. The current studies basically run on a calendar year schedule and annual reports may be available at the end of each calendar year.

2. Jim deVos; Arizona Game and Fish Department

The Arizona Game and Fish Department became involved in Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope research in 1983. Studies were

conducted between 1983 and 1986. The final report describing the results of these studies has been distributed to cooperators. Current A.G.F. studies were initiated in November 1987 with funds received from the U.S. Air Force, Luke Air Force Base (\$10,000), Wyoming One-Shot Antelope Foundation (\$8,500) and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Current research is basically designed for the capture and radio collaring of individual antelope to continue movement studies. Field activities involve vegetation sampling for forage quality and vegetation typing through spring 1988. AGFD will not assume a lead role in vegetation studies; this will be primarily done in studies conducted by U of A personnel. Aerial location flights will continue to September 1988. Current study contracts are for one year and will end September 1988. The AGFD has no commitment to continue Sonoran Antelope studies past that time. The cost of each aerial telemetry flight for antelope is approximately \$700.00 per month.

The AGFD is also investigating electrophoretic and mitochondrial DNA research to be used in conjunction with cranial measurements for determining subspecific status. This research would cost approximately \$4000.00. During the 1987 Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope captures, blood and bacterial cultures were taken on 9 of 10 antelope. Preliminary disease results suggest there are probably no serious disease factors regulating Sonoran Pronghorn populations. No titers were found to IBR, EVD, PI3, RSV or Brucellosis. There were no internal parasites found from fecal pellet analysis. Analysis of trace elements showed levels of zinc etc. to be normal, levels of copper appeared low. Preliminary results of bacteriology found no serious pathogens, however a variety of common bacteria were identified. Histopathology results from samples taken from an antelope that was euthanized during the capture should be coming in by late summer. The AGFD will continue field studies, primarily vegetation analysis, through spring 1988, aerial telemetry flights to September 1988, and will continue to gather disease, genetic and other data as possible.

3. Dave Stanbrough; Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge

The CPNWR is basically waiting for results and recommendations of researchers before proceeding with any specific field activities. The CPNWR will be providing logistical support to researchers whenever possible. The CPNWR has two diurnal time lapse cameras which may be placed on suspected antelope water sources this summer. The CPNWR is also proceeding to acquire stereo aerial photo coverage of the refuge. This may aid in vegetation mapping and other research needs.

Dave also explained the responsibility of coordination of Sonoran Pronghorn for purposes of the Endangered Species Act was transferred to the CPNWR on March 28, 1988. Additionally the

Ecological Services Division of the FWS will be providing support.

A short discussion on the possibility of installing bee traps around some waters on CPNWR was initiated. It was brought up that the Carl B. Hayden Bee Research Lab is currently monitoring similar traps on Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument to document arrival of Africanized bees. These aggressive bees may effect wildlife use of water sources.

A discussion on vegetation transects on Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge and off the refuge by the BLM was initiated. Dave Stanbrough explained that vegetation and small mammal trapping has been done on the refuge beginning in 1983 and continued through 1986. The BLM is doing similar vegetation transects off the refuge every 3 years. The BLM and CPNWR will coordinate running vegetation transects in the future.

An additional discussion concerning the fence line on the CPNWR and Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument boundary took place. It was suggested that since livestock have been excluded from the CPNWR that this fence was no longer needed. It was brought up that OPCNM will be updating management programs and this item could be discussed in their planning documents.

4. Russ Haughey; Luke Air Force Base

Luke Air Force Base would like to change current personnel on the Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope Recovery Team. It was suggested that LAFB write to the USFWS Regional Director requesting the personnel change. LAFB will send a letter to the regional director in the future.

An outline summary was passed out by Russ showing "needed research for Goldwater Range Operations" from their current contract with AGFD and also additional research they would like to see done (copy attached). Funding for additional research from LAFB is uncertain, however the Air Force will cooperate as possible with all current and proposed Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope research.

5. Doug Pomeroy; U. S. Navy for M.C.A.S. Yuma

The Marine Corp Air Station Yuma wants to ensure that installation operations are in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act and also work through the Sikes Act to promote wildlife resources. Basically these first two laws speak to the actions of MCAS. The Sikes Act is a responsibility of MCAS not necessarily tied to any action of installation operations. MCAS believes any actions taken to improve the status of Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope will be an asset to users of the Barry M. Goldwater Range particularly for meeting endangered species compliance. MCAS Yuma through the U.S. Navy will be funding Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope studies in

cooperation with USFWS. MCAS, through their contractor, has submitted a biological assessment on their WTI and has received a "No Jeopardy" opinion on these operations from the USFWS. Additionally a Preliminary Environmental Assessment on future WTI is being circulated for comments.

6. Open discussion concerning the Biological Assessment and Preliminary Environmental Assessment on MCAS spring 1988 WTI course.

At this point a general discussion took place primarily over the "Biological Assessment for Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope (Antilocapra americana sonoriensis) on the Barry M. Goldwater Range in relation to Weapons Tactics Instructor Training at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma". Doug Pomeroy stated that MCAS wants to improve the quality of documentation for their WTI courses and to develop an umbrella type plan for the WTI and other MCAS uses of the BMGR. It was brought out by Richard Remington and Jim DeVos that the AGFD was not contacted for input on the biological assessment. The AGFD, through cooperative agreements with the USAF and Marine Corps, as well as through normal endangered species compliance routing, should have been involved. Mr. Ron McKinstry, USFWS Ecological Services stated that AGFD should have been involved and the agencies involved should coordinate on endangered species compliance within the BMGR. It was suggested that the contractor writing the assessment for the Marines had contacted AGFD but was unable to get documentation. Jim DeVos and Joan Scott stated the contractor had called AGFD once. The contractor was told to send their request in writing to AGFD. Apparently no further contact between the contractor and AGFD took place. Richard Remington asked specifically what prompted the Marines to draft the Biological Assessment and Environmental Assessment of WTI courses. Dave Stanbrough said the reasoning for the biological assessment was based on requirements for issuance of special use permits for low level aircraft flights through CPNWR which requires endangered species consultation. Dave also suggested that this discussion concerning disagreements between the agencies was not appropriate for the recovery team. Dave suggested that the recovery team should not be used as a forum to air agency grievances.

Subsequently no further discussion concerning the biological assessment or Preliminary Environmental Assessment on MCAS activities occurred.

7. Richard Remington, discussion on possibility of reintroducing Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope into the Chuckawalla Bench of southeastern California.

Richard Remington brought up that he had had discussions with personnel from the California Department of Fish and Game concerning the introduction of Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope into the Chuckawalla Bench of southeastern California. It appears

that California would be favorable to such a reintroduction. It was the opinion of the recovery team that further contacts be made through the FWS to investigate this possibility. Investigations into land status and land uses (i.e. proposed wilderness etc.) and conflicts need to be performed as well as biological investigations of the habitat. The Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope Recovery Team requests that the Regional Director pursue contacts with appropriate agencies to discuss the potential of releasing Sonoran Pronghorn Antelope into the Chuckawalla Bench. If such a release is feasible a captive breeding program may be necessary to obtain antelope numbers needed for this transplant.

ATTENDANCE ROSTER (continued)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>AFFILIATION</u>
Stanbrough, Dave Refuge Manager	1611 N. 2nd Ave. Ajo, Az. 85321	Cabeza Prieta Nat'l W/L Refugo
VanRiper, Steve Asst. Manager	1611 N. 2nd Ave. Ajo, Az. 85321	Cabeza Prieta Nat'l W/L Refuge

ATTENDANCE ROSTER

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McKinstry, Ron	3616 W. Thomas # 6 Phoenix, Az. 85019	Fish & Wildl.Serv 602-261-4720
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Scott, Joan Wildlife Specialist	2222 W. Greenway Rd. Phoenix, Az. 85023	Az. Game & Fish 602-942-3000
Smith, Norm Asst. Unit Leader	Az.Coop. and Wildlife Unit 210 Biosci (E) Tucson, Az. 85721	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serv. University of Az. 602-621-1105