

ARIZONA

SPORTSMEN *for* WILDLIFE



SPORTSMEN'S ACTION NETWORK

Newsletter

February 2, 2010

OUR MISSION: To make Arizona sportsmen an effective force in determining political, legislative, educational and administrative issues that promote wildlife, wildlife habitat, and continuation of our hunting and fishing traditions.

AZSFW Fights to Save AZGFD Funding

I know many of you are aware of the current fight we are in to save funding for the Arizona Game & Fish Department. This year Arizona's deficit is far worse than it was last year and the situation is becoming more desperate with the Governor and Legislature taking funds from any and all available sources. All state agencies, including the AZGFD are going to take a hit, and to think otherwise is foolish. What we must do is work to keep the loss of funding to an absolute minimum and keep the loss of certain funds from becoming permanent.

I have seen more email notices and alerts in the past week than I have ever seen for any similar issue. **Kudos goes to those of you who are responding to this latest threat to AZGFD funding. Some of your messages have had the desired effect; the effort to sweep all Heritage Fund monies for the foreseeable future is no longer on the table. One of the six bills introduced yesterday as part of the Governor's Special Session Call to the Legislature (SB 1004 state lottery; authorization) contains provisions to preserve game and fish and parks as beneficiaries of lottery funds. This proves our united voice is invaluable to the Department as they seek to keep the agency intact.**

In difficult times the stress of the issues sometimes opens the door for even more threats. I would like to mention a persistent rumor that has been circulating; an effort to consolidate some state agencies into a Department of Natural Resources. Combining the AZGFD with the State Land Department and the State Parks Department is completely

unacceptable and must be aggressively opposed. This consolidation would only weaken the AZGFD and not solve the problems of State Land and Parks Departments.

Those of you who were around when former Governor Symington and his staff attempted a similar move, remember how quickly diverse constituents came together to immediately stop the effort. That uneasy coalition was extremely effective working together on a very narrowly defined threat. Today, if it were necessary, I'm not sure those same folks could come together to save the AZGFD. It appears some might have a motive to combine the agencies!

The argument being touted as a reason to establish a DNR is that funds could be saved by eliminating multiple administrations. From my perspective as sportsmen this would be a disaster. Why would anyone want to dismantle the only state agency that pays its own way and burden it with two agencies that have almost no funding and who struggle to fulfill their missions? One motive I can think of is a great concern; such as diminishing the partnership between the AZGFD and its main funding source, Arizona sportsmen and women. Another concern is that it could allow AZGFD funds to be siphoned off to aid the State Land and Parks Departments. Given a little more time, I believe we could provide a list long enough to stop any right-minded person from pursuing such a merger.

We will be vigilant in our effort to monitor any effort to change the structure and mission of the AZGFD. Hopefully bringing this issue out of the shadows will go a long way toward stopping any such effort. However, if this same discussion persists, look for more updates in the future!

In the meantime what do we need to do? Tremendous pressure is being brought to bear on everyone in state government. Other constituent groups are fighting as we are to save very important funding for children's health, education, transportation, etc. Some very difficult choices will have to be made and we need to maintain a working relationship with all of those who will make those decisions. *Please refer to the article below to see how you can support SB 1004.*

For specific information on current threats to AZGFD funding, go to azgfd.gov

Pete Cimellaro
Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife

Call Your Legislators Today and Ask Them to Support SB 1004

As mentioned in the previous article, the concept of reauthorizing the lottery beyond its current termination date of July 1, 2012 and re-directing net proceeds to the state's general fund has taken a turn for the better. After hearing from affected stakeholders, that concept seemingly has been rejected in favor of continuing existing apportionment of lottery funds to current beneficiaries including the Arizona Game & Fish Department

and State Parks.

SB 1004, in reauthorizing the lottery, will preserve the ability for the Game and Fish Department and State Parks to each remain eligible for up to \$10 Million in lottery proceeds annually. **This bill is now rapidly moving through the legislative process having passed out of Senate Natural Resource earlier today with a 7-0 vote.**

It is important that you contact your legislators today, both [Senate](#) and [House](#) members, and ask them to support reauthorization of the lottery with the current list of beneficiaries, which includes the Game & Fish Department.

Legislator contact information is listed below. **Email or Call today and ask for support of SB 1004. Remember, Be Courteous and Respectful.** Even though we may disagree with prior funding sweeps it is important that we show appreciation for the pressure the Legislature is under to find solutions to eradicate the state's budget deficit.

To contact your State Senator, please click [here](#).

To contact your State Representative, please click [here](#).

If you are unsure as to who represents you at the Capitol, please follow this link: [Find your Legislator](#)



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