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ARIZONA ELK SOCIETY

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Arizona Elk Society is to benefit elk and other wildlife by generating resources for habitat conservation and restoration, and to preserve our hunting heritage for present and future generations.

The Arizona Elk Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) wildlife organization.

Visit us online at www.arizonaelksociety.org
www.facebook.com/arizonaelksociety

The cover photo is by Mike Pellegatti, with Wild Vision. Thank you for sharing your wonderful photo with us Mike!
I was optimistic when last I wrote that the Covid-19 outbreak would move past as had previous flu outbreaks. Clearly, that is not to be and so now, I am contemplating the logistics for travel to Arizona elk country. Being a “senior” elk hunter, I am thoughtful about not only my health but also the health of my friends that help me in my elk hunting exploits.

Arizona Elk Society has dramatically altered our usual plans for our friends and members to spend time together at our banquets, volunteer projects, and Wapiti Weekend. My heartfelt THANK YOU to the Arizona Elk Society staff. Their dedicated work in the past few months has allowed a successful transition from an in-person banquet to online auctions and raffles. I also thank the folks who had planned to attend our banquet, have given donations and have been willing to switch to the “virtual” world.

With great sadness, we have cancelled Wapiti Weekend for this year. We want you and your families to be safe and healthy and we plan to come back bigger and better next year. Congratulations to our three outstanding youth who received college and high school scholarships. I look forward to seeing them at future AES events and regret we could not recognize Jordan Faux, John Valentine, and Hunter Wood in person.

A point of good news is the willingness of the AES Sawyers team and local volunteers that have completed smaller-scale projects, repaired wildlife water catchments, and hauled water to empty wildlife waters. These small teams have been careful to keep everyone safe and healthy. Heroes Rising Outdoors is planning the 2020 Hunts for Heroes. Thanks to those who donated tags and have volunteered to help at individual hunter camps.

Stay connected to Arizona Elk Society through our Tracker magazine, eNewsletter and web pages. Enjoy our 2019 Year in Review Report—see link on home page at www.arizonaelksociety.org. Thanks to all of you! We’ve accomplished a lot!

Please send any ideas or thoughts that you may have as to how AES can be an effective conservation organization for elk and wildlife in Arizona during these strange times.

Yours in Conservation,

Tice Supplee

For more information on volunteering opportunities, scan the QR code using your smartphone's camera.
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HEROES RISING OUTDOORS
Disabled Veteran Outdoor Experiences
HUNTING | CAMPING | FISHING | EQUINE
Oystershell scale, a tiny, invasive, non-native insect, has attached to aspen trees statewide in four Arizona national forests. There is very little known about its origin, transmission or long-term impacts on Arizona Aspen trees. Arizona Elk Society is participating in a project north of Parks, AZ in the Kaibab National Forest to treat and study aspen stands infested with the oystershell scale. The Kaibab National Forest, USDA Forest Service Forest Health Protection, and Northern Arizona University, the other partners in this project, are all working toward the goal of not only limiting the spread of the insects but also gathering information to help with research towards the preservation of healthy aspen stands across the Southwest.

Oystershell scale is a very damaging insect to aspens. They are tiny, armored insects that live under protective covers. Feeding on their host plant, their covering is hard to penetrate making treatments like insecticide spraying much more challenging. The damage by the insects could
destroy northern Arizona’s aspen. Research is critical to finding solutions for treatment techniques. This project will provide the Forest Service with the data needed to study the scale.

Last quarter, after months of weather and Covid-19-related delays, AES was able to join the project and assist in the study. Paul Dicerbo (AES), Travis Largent and Michael Sedgeman from the Kaibab National Forest, and Mel Faux (AES), teamed up to make this project work. Mel developed a procedure that addressed the AES and Forest Service requirements related to Covid-19. Once the Covid-19 plan was approved, the AES Sawyers were ready to start work. Two weekends were spent focused on Phase I which covered three enclosures, totaling 10 acres. Trees in each of the enclosures were cut and trimmed to support the Forest Service research.

With so many delays and cancellations, this project gave the AES Sawyer team a jump start on projects planned for 2020. This project demonstrated the AES Sawyers skills
and abilities, as well as the support volunteers provide to all AES programs and events. Without these committed volunteers, programs like this would not be possible.

Working in a gorgeous area of the Kaibab National Forest, north of Parks, made the project very enjoyable. And like all AES projects, the teamwork and the food were outstanding. Thanks to Paul, Wayne and Michelle for the excellent food and snacks! ☕️

For additional information visit:
news.nau.edu/oystershell-scale-research/#.XvJsCdiSIPY
www.flickr.com/photos/kaibabnationalforest/albums/72157713462413367

A clearfell treatment on the Coconino National Forest. Photo by Connor Crouch, Northern Arizona University.
2019 found me applying to Arizona Elk Society's Heroes Rising Outdoors, a program whose mission focuses on providing unique opportunities to help disabled Arizona veterans move forward in their lives. I couldn't believe it a few months later when I was offered the chance to go hunting by way of a donated elk tag, and that the cost of the entire hunt would be covered by the Arizona Elk Society! It was another fun moment when I told my son, Nowen, that he could come along with me on the hunt.

The antlerless (cow) elk hunt I would be going on was set aside for muzzleloaders only. The volunteer guides for my hunt provided me with a black powder rifle to hunt with (since I didn't own one) and reviewed safe firearms handling with me as we spent practice time shooting before the hunt. Nowen and I counted the days until my hunt was to start in mid-December.

That time finally arrived! My son and I were provided lodging and evening meals in Springerville throughout my hunt. We would wake up in the morning and step outside our room to take in the fresh mountain air. To cover my young son's appetite for our days in the field, we were given a cooler full of soda, sandwiches, and beef jerky. It was great how everyone supported us throughout each day!

My excitement at potentially bagging an elk kept building as the hunt progressed. I was also a bit anxious about the hunt, as I'd never done this before. But it was clear my guides, Jose Morales and Ramon Morales (his dad) and Tyler Holland, knew what they were doing. As they drove us around my hunt unit, we saw lots of small game animals—squirrels, rabbits, and turkeys. They were very patient with us as they showed us the ropes. We spent a lot of time discussing the importance of hunting regulations and why we need to follow them. Nowen and I also learned about campfire safety and the problem of littering in the outdoors.

We didn't have much luck getting an elk the first two days of my hunt. While waiting for our group to meet up the third morning, I watched my 14-year-old son's excitement as he put on the new hunting clothes his mother had brought him the day before. Nowen had been feeling under the weather and I had felt bad taking him out in the cold. It was great seeing his renewed energy! I remember tagging along on elk hunts as a
Seeing his eager eyes that morning, I had the feeling his enthusiasm would bring us good luck!

We started out early again, about 5 am. With several inches of snow on the ground and temperatures in the upper 20s, I could feel the cold on my face as we loaded our gear into the truck. It was every hunter’s dream—I was eager to find some elk!

The evening before, we had all poured over the guides’ topo maps until we agreed on an area we felt might hold elk. We talked hunting the entire 20-mile drive to our chosen location. The sun’s morning rays were angling through the trees when we bumped some elk working their way through the woods. I didn’t want these elk to give us the slip as others had done—my guide and I eased quickly out of the truck and headed towards the herd.

It took a little while before we were able to stalk to within 200 yards of the elk in a more open part of the forest. This was the first real opportunity on my hunt to attempt a shot, and my nervousness had my mind racing! After I finally centered a cow in my scope, I pulled the trigger—and the elk took off! After carefully checking where the herd had been standing, we confirmed I had missed. Talk about a let-down!

It’s very easy to get flustered in the heat of the moment, especially for a rookie elk hunter. I had wanted to make sure of my shot placement. And because I wasn’t confident in my shooting abilities yet, I had wondered what might happen if I missed. That concern had become reality.

But things weren’t over yet! After some quick words of encouragement, we located the elk again after a short hike and moved in closer. I found a place to sit and took a few seconds to gather myself, hoping the adrenaline rushing through my body would ease. While I sat on the pine chips that were scattered underneath me, a memory flicked through my brain of me picking those up as a young boy to start fires to warm our home. The elk in front of us quickly brought me back to the task at hand.

While the elk moved around within the herd, I singled out a cow and focused once again on my target, this time only 60 yards away. While making note of every little thing, I made sure I squeezed the trigger. Smoke exploded in front of me, the cow elk bucked awkwardly and then bolted to our right. I felt an enthusiastic slap on my shoulder and heard an excited “You got it!” We watched the cow make her way a few yards through the trees before dropping to the ground. The rest of the herd scattered crazily in different directions. We paused a couple minutes to soak in the moment before getting up and making our way to the fallen elk.

The idea of field dressing an elk and what to do with the meat was something new to me but Jose and Tyler got right to work and soon had the elk broken down into manageable pieces. Nowen was intrigued by the entire process. After we had the elk loaded into my truck, the guides directed me to a meat cutter in town who would process the elk for me.

Rusty’s, the meat processor in Springerville, produced jerky packets, summer sausage, steaks, and roasts for me, along with lots of ground burger—quite a haul for the couple hundred pounds of meat my elk provided! When we finally got the packaged elk home a couple weeks later, my mother immediately made some of it into corn stew to eat with fry bread. It was very tender—my son loved it! We also shared my elk with other family members.

Wouldn’t you know it—Nowen now wants to go elk hunting too. That should be fun. I can’t wait!

This hunting adventure had been a dream of mine for a very long time. Now that I am part of Heroes Rising Outdoors, I’m looking forward to another possible hunt sometime in the future. My dream would be to go buffalo hunting like my tribal ancestors did—here’s hoping!

What I remember most of all from this adventure was that it was so nice to soak in the quiet and peace of nature together with my son, Nowen. The fact that there are people out there willing to donate their big game tags to Heroes Rising Outdoors means that other disabled vets will be able to discover the joy of hunting and the peace of the outdoors just like I did. Thanks to everyone’s thoughtfulness and help, my hunt has helped me deal
better with my TBI and PTSD issues. The peaceful scenery, quiet and calm took me back to times before my deployment.

Thank you so much, Arizona Elk Society, for this wonderful gift! It was a special time to bond with my son, and we now have a freezer full of meat. The memories will stay with us forever! 🐦 🍇
Now is the time of year, like every year, when people start thinking about rattlesnakes again. Interconnectedness through social media has increased this awareness of those “danger noodles” and brought to light some misconceptions, confusion and concern about snakes. My aim is to educate you on the biology, anatomy, potential dangers, what to do in case of a bite, and statistics and common myths surrounding rattlesnakes! I hope to make it educational, informative, fun and put you at ease while giving you a sense of clarity when you come across one of these AMAZING creatures.

Arizona is home to a whopping 50 species of snakes! They are all very cool critters. Only 13 of these 50 species are rattlesnakes. The most “dangerous” of the 13 is, in my opinion, the Mojave rattlesnake (Crotalus scutulatus). They can have both hemotoxic and neurotoxic constituents in their venom which attacks fleshy tissues and the nervous system. Mojave rattlesnakes’ venom composition changes depending on their location throughout their range. Dangerous is in quotation marks because it’s only as dangerous as you make it out to be, and I’ll wrap back to this at the end. The most common rattlesnake to see and hear of is the western diamondback (Crotalus atrox).

Hey everyone! I am a trained biologist and herpetologist and I’ve had thousands of encounters with all sorts of snakes—especially rattlesnakes. My reptile background started when I was a young boy. I would watch the weather all summer waiting for monsoon season so I could tell my dad, “Look, rain in the forecast!” After my repeated pestering, dad would take me out driving down dusty desert back roads in the middle of the night. In the first several hours, I would often grip the dashboard with eyes peeled in anticipation of seeing our first rattlesnake of the night. There began my journey towards a lifetime of fascination with reptiles.

AMAZING ANIMALS
by Andrew Olson

Tracker 2nd Quarter 2020
There are a few other rear-fanged snakes (non-rattlesnakes) which are venomous as well, but you would most likely have to shove your pinky finger in their throat to get envenomated. Additionally, there is one snake in the elapid family which is very small compared to its eastern sibling. The western coral snake, although extremely venomous, has 0 reported deaths. Its mouth is very small and it feeds primarily on small insects with its weak fangs.

Some species of non-venomous snakes are often mistaken for rattlesnakes. Gopher snakes (Pituophis catenifer) are notorious for this claim because of their Batesian mimicry. I call it BS mimicry, because it not only helped me remember it in college, but because the snake is BS-ing you. Gopher snakes will flatten their head to seem triangular in shape, the classic shape of any venomous snake. They will also shake their tales rapidly, often in dry brush, to make a rattle-like noise! Tricky BS-ers.

Back to rattlesnakes. Surprisingly, rattlesnakes can be active all year long! I’ve seen large rattlers come out in mid-December when temperatures are not that favorable, though peak activity is in spring and summertime. Rattlesnakes prefer temperature ranges from approximately 65-85 degrees diurnally and warmer from 75-95 degrees nocturnally. Rattlesnakes can “see” in two ways. Pit organs on the front of their faces are sensitive to changes in heat up to a distance of about 6 feet. These pit organs, in conjunction with their elliptical pupils (like a cat), are both sensitive to changes in heat. Cones in the inner eye catch infrared colors beyond the human visible spectrum which makes them very “visual” hunters. I have been surprised by a rattlesnake one time. As I was hiking off trail during my AZGFD position, I heard a rattle sound off! An unmistakable sound, but I stopped, perplexed, and looked at my coworker and asked if that was indeed a rattlesnake? The rattlesnake had seen us over 100 feet away and began defensive posturing and fervently rattling! I laughed, maybe he had some bad experiences with large mammals before.

Mammals (humans, mice, deer, and anything with fur and mammary glands) emit a lot of body heat compared to reptiles. This is twofold in its implications. First, rattlesnakes see heat as we discussed. They not only see their prey, (rabbits, rodents etc.) but also their predators (coyotes, badgers, etc.) which emit body heat. Secondly, rattlesnakes, being reptiles, must regulate their body heat by basking in the sun to warm up and hiding in the shade when it is too hot. If you feel like getting into terms ectothermic and endothermic, we can geek out later and talk about how birds are weird. Large reptiles brumate...
during cold weather deep down under rocks, burrows or crevices that provide shelter from exposure. Brumation is a type of hibernation that applies to cold blooded animals; their heart rate slows, and metabolic rates will drop drastically for the winter months. You may see smaller reptiles such as the very common side-blotched lizard (Uta stansburiana) and the ornate tree lizard (Urosaurus ornatus) active all year round. This is because their small size helps them to heat up faster and get going with their day! During temperatures exceeding 105 degrees F, it is rare to come across rattlesnakes unless you are also seeking shady rock crevices to hide from the sun.

Unfortunately, the temperature ranges mentioned earlier coincide with our favorable temperature ranges for hiking, biking and other outdoor activities. When you are hiking, and a rattlesnake sees you, often times they won’t even rattle. I bet my best dollar, you all have walked within a few feet of multiple rattlesnakes if you’ve ever done any hiking in the desert, and you never even knew it was there. Good thing about this bet is you can’t prove it! But still I would wager. Oftentimes rattlesnakes don’t care about you. The infrequent times they are concerned with you being a little too close they will let you know! And boy that rattle noise still gets my blood pumping! The best thing to do at this point is to calmly stop, look, locate, and back up to a safe distance quickly but without jumping around. The last thing you want to do is jump right on top of it, like a predator would do. Or just hurt yourself in another way by jumping into a jagged rock or into a cactus! A safe distance that I keep in my mind is 3+ feet, someone may disagree with me here, so, I’ll just say stay at what distance you are comfortable with. A distance of 6 feet is more than a wide enough berth to give any rattlesnake you see on a hike. Rattlesnake instinct is not to unload their venom on something they cannot consume. Envenomation is a last resort to save their own lives from a seemingly predatory attack. Venom to them, is money to us; it has value, and they have to spend it wisely.

If, however, you are envenomated (bit), stay calm, control your breathing, ask for help (call 911), getting back to a safe spot, and get to the nearest hospital right away. Possible ID or picture of the snake could be helpful in determining anti-venom given. Keep the bitten limb immobilized and below the level of your heart. Sit calmly after being bit for about 20 minutes before walking back to your vehicle if out of cellphone service. An elevated heart rate can spread the venom faster. Sitting for approximately 20 minutes can help drop your heart rate and help your body localize the venom. If with someone, have them call 911 while you lay down. Avoid shock and regulate your body temperature. See below for more advice of what to do in case you have been bitten. Sometimes rattlesnakes “dry-bite” which means no venom was delivered into your body. Any size rattlesnakes can dry bite. The best way to avoid bites is to not hike at all stay in your house afraid of everything... ha ha. Other than that, wear loose fitting clothing that covers your ankles. If you are really afraid you can wear chaps or gaitors which are thick coverings which go around your ankles and shins. Also, be vigilant—watch where you place your hands and feet, keep your wits about you, turn your music off and enjoy listening to nature. For the vast majority of people, we enjoy hiking because we enjoy nature and what’s in nature is wildlife. You can enjoy these creatures as much as the ash throated fly catchers, chuckwallas, and cottontail rabbits. Rattlesnakes just deserve a little more respect, caution and some “social distancing.”
Finally, some MYTHS around rattlesnakes!

**BENADRYL SHOULD NOT BE USED!** Snake venom rarely causes allergic reactions, and Benadryl would not be effective in treating any snakebites. Neither should NSAIDs which can lead to more bleeding. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be used for pain management.

**YOU CANNOT SUCTION OUT THE VENOM.** You should never cut a snake bite wound. Snake bite kits do not work and are a waste of money!

**NEVER APPLY ICE, OR ALCOHOL TO A SNAKE BITE.** Never drink alcohol to alleviate any pain symptoms.

**BABIES ARE NO MORE DANGEROUS THAN ADULTS.** In fact, evidence towards the contrary is true. Venom sacks are much larger in adults; therefore, much more venom can be delivered. Additionally, venom is no more “potent” in babies than adults.

**BABIES CANNOT CONTROL THE AMOUNT OF VENOM THEY DELIVER.** False. Studies have shown both adults and neonates/juveniles can control the volume of venom during envenomation.

**RATTLESNAKES CANNOT “JUMP.”** A rattlesnake strike can be approximately 1/2 of their body length when coiled and ready to strike. Since rattlesnakes in Arizona can grow to almost 6 feet in length, a three-foot minimum distance should be adhered to.

**“A RATTLESNAKE CHASED ME!”** Although there have been several anecdotes received over the years, I am reluctant to believe true chases ever occur. Here is my experience where a chase could be perceived but wasn’t actually a chase. I once had a rattlesnake coming up a wash towards me while I was walking down the wash towards it. The snake seemed to want to go the way I was coming from and started rattling while continuing to come closer. For a moment I thought the snake was going to come right up to me, but I didn’t move but a couple steps, and he went up the wash wall. Maybe if I turned tail and ran, I too could have a story of how I got chased by a rattlesnake. Instead, I got some great photos of this black-tailed rattlesnake (Crotalus molossus).

**YOU CAN TELL A MOJAVE RATTLESNAKE FROM A DIAMONDBACK RATTLESNAKE BY THE RINGS ON THE TAIL OR BY THE GREEN HUE.** False. Individual rattlesnakes vary in color and pattern within the same species. The best way to tell a mojave from a diamondback is the number of scales between the eyes. Mojaves have 2 large scales while diamondbacks have 4 or more. Rarely, they do hybridize.

**“MOJAVE RATTLESNAKES ARE MEAN!”** Just like color and pattern, temperament is variable within species. Each rattlesnake is its own unique individual with tendencies and experiences in its own life.

Follow @andys_amazing_animals on Instagram for more animal info!
WANTED

The Arizona Elk Society—a nationally recognized, premier organization awarded for supporting habitat restoration for elk and wildlife—is accepting resumes for a Volunteer Chuckwagon Team Leader for year-round events throughout the state of Arizona.

We are looking for the right “Chuckie” that can make at least a 1-year commitment to facilitate meals for upwards of 150 volunteers and guests during an Arizona Elk Society event. There are usually 8 to 10 events per year, on weekends.

You will also:

• Supervise, train, and coordinate kitchen staff
• Create and budget menus
• Hone your culinary skills
• Give back to your community through volunteerism
• Experience to sharpen your resume

To submit your resume or for a more detailed description of Chuckwagon Team Leader duties please contact Arizona Elk Society at 623-444-4147 or info@arizonaelksociety.org
After putting in for archery bull elk for the last 5 years my father and I finally drew our first tag. To add to the excitement my mother drew her first muzzleloader bull tag in a different unit that started the day after our hunt. I couldn’t wait until September.

On day six of our archery bull elk hunt my dad and I woke up early to head out. After an hour we could hear bugles and they were getting close. A couple cow calls later a 4x4 bull came in chest forward at 35 yards. I drew my bow back and lined up what felt like a perfect shot. Right when I pulled the trigger on my release I heard a loud click. My arrow fell to the ground at my feet and my string came off. Of all the times for my bow to break! My dad quickly handed me his bow, which I had never practiced with. I took my first shot and barely hit the tree next to the bull spooking him just enough for him to turn broadside and give me a better shot. The second arrow had perfect shot placement and he went down right away.

I had gone to the range 2-3 times a week and shot hundreds of arrows this year leading up to the hunt so needless to say I was shocked the malfunction happened when it did. A few days later on day ten my dad tagged out on a nice bull we had been chasing since the first day leaving us just enough time to pack up camp, process a lot of meat, and get camp set up again for my mom’s hunt. Five days into her hunt my mom tagged out on her muzzleloader bull. We tagged out 3-for-3 on our first September bull elk hunt. After so many close calls it was awesome to get my first bull, but how it happened is a story I’ll be telling forever.
Volunteers play a vital role at Arizona Elk Society, working alongside partner organizations, agencies, staff members and other volunteers to jointly achieve our goals. Through our Volunteer Recognition Program, we highlight the contributions of our volunteer workforce. We select a Volunteer of the Quarter from volunteers currently in the field that are performing above and beyond the baseline of excellence. During our annual banquet, we recognize our top volunteers with our Presidents awards.

Although we were not able to have our banquet this year due to COVID-19, it is still very important that we continue highlighting our volunteers. This quarter we would like to recognize Mike Herbert and Chris Godbehere.

**MIKE HERBERT**

Mike first became involved with the Arizona Elk Society in 2017. It started out with a call from Mike to AES. Mike had relocated from Montana and had never hunted in Arizona before, so he reached out for hunting guidance. From there on, he was hooked and has been an invaluable volunteer ever since. Mike volunteers on several of our programs, most notably he volunteered to cook during this past Thanksgiving holiday (foregoing his own time with family and friends) on a Heroes Rising Outdoors Hunt to assist other Veterans. When I asked Mike why he likes to volunteer for AES his response was, “Everybody is there for the mission”. Spoken like a true Air Force veteran.

A few comments about Mike from fellow volunteers:

“Mike is always positive, has a smile on his face and is passionate about volunteering.”

“Mike is an enthusiastic volunteer --- as well as an accomplished cook on both AES and Heroes Rising Outdoors (HRO) outings, and as an Air Force veteran he is a tireless promoter of the HRO program.”
The Arizona Elk Society is fortunate to have passionate and diverse volunteers. Our volunteers’ passions, tenacity, and commitment to the Arizona Elk Society pushes the organization to help more youth, veterans, and increase elk viability. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the Arizona Elk Society, please visit the website at www.arizonaelksociety.org or scan the QR code at left using your smartphone camera.

Chris has been a volunteer with AES for more than 15 years. When I asked Chris how she first got involved Chris stated, “It’s a family affair, we are a family that volunteers together,” but I love the outdoors and giving back to nature. Chris is a true native of Arizona and developed her love for the outdoors at a young age starting when her father taught her desert-survival skills. Chris went on to a career with the Phoenix Parks Department where she worked for 23 years. She has since retired but is very active in the outdoors and volunteers at all our youth camps. Additionally, she is one of the volunteers that designs and makes the beautiful baskets for the annual banquet as well as other events.

A few comments about Chris from fellow volunteers:

“Chris Godbehere is an inspiration...creative, fun, caring person always fun to be around.”

“Chris is amazingly patient with the littles but is also an awesome mentor. You can tell she truly enjoys her time volunteering.”
This past winter was a bit lacking as far as moisture in the high country north of Flagstaff. After last years’ “non-soon”, and with the spring rains missing most of Region II, the Arizona Elk Society Water for Wildlife water haulers were ready to get busy. AES started hauling water to and around the high country early again this year.

In addition to hauling water, the same volunteers are part of the AES Catchment Repair Squad and they found a variety of old water catchments that needed repairs and restorations to make them functional again. In reality this is what they really love to do—fix old drinkers and have more water available for the wildlife. It is amazing how soon after fixing and filling old drinkers the wildlife, big and small, return to the water. If you follow AES Water for Wildlife on Facebook, the guys post lots of pictures of their “clients” waiting for them to fill the tanks. We have installed trail cameras on some of the tanks to show how quickly the wildlife find these new waters.

The Arizona Elk Society partners with the Arizona Game and Fish Department in all it does for wildlife. The Wildlife Managers help direct the AES volunteers on where the water is needed. All the information on where to haul is dictated by where the elk are at the time and where they are going in their yearly migrations. Funding is provided by many sources including AES Banquets and fundraising donations, grants from outside sources, and other organizations such as the Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation, the AZGFD Habitat Partnership Committee and more.

Now to the HEART of the Arizona Elk Society Water for Wildlife program – THE VOLUNTEERS! The AES relies on a team of dedicated volunteers that travel thousand of ROUGH miles to supply life-giving water to the elk...
and other wildlife. These volunteers are also our front line in repairing and restoring the water catchments across elk range in Arizona. If they are not hauling, they are in the woods fixing catchments. They are known as the Catchment Repair Squad. This team, THE HEART, is made up of great volunteers, some that use their own trucks on some of the roughest roads in Arizona daily. It is difficult to name them all, but the core team includes, Dan Bradford, Michael Anderson, Tim and Barbara Comstock along with Ruger and Gunner (the water testers), Roger and Ilene Hailey along with Molly. To the core team and all of the volunteers that help the AES provide water for wildlife

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!

If you want to help out the Water for Wildlife team, please consider donating to the program. There are many expenses each year, most of which are maintaining the trucks and trailers after thousands of ROUGH miles. Your dollars will go a long way in providing water for all the wildlife. If you have the resources to donate three-quarter-ton 4x4 trucks, we are always in need of trucks and updated vehicles. Many times we have new volunteers that want to come out and help but soon realize that this program and the miles we drive is rougher than they thought and it is hard on vehicles. We could always use water-hauling trailers or water trucks if you have one you would like to donate or sell at a discount.

Check out how to donate or volunteer at arizonaelksociety.org. Thank you.
I had not heard from my good buddy Big Bull (BB) in a few months and was beginning to get a bit worried. I decided in early June to take a ride up to 3C in order to look around and see if he was hanging out in the same area. So, armed with my new backpack and plenty of water, I headed for the mountains. As I worked my way up through Payson and Christopher Creek, I was amazed at the number of people that were camping in every area possible. I had been turkey hunting in early May and was stunned to see how many people were abandoning the Valley in order to get out of their homes to avoid going stir crazy. Most people had been cooped up with the “stay at home” orders placed by Governor Ducey and the COVID-19 issues. I was a little miffed that the turkeys were long gone with so many people there, but figured the trade off of people once again discovering the outdoors was worth it.

The Prius bumped along the dirt and gravel roads at a snail’s pace. Having 275,000 miles on the odometer meant not pushing it. As I came up to our old meeting spot, I saw what looked like a small parking lot. People were everywhere and most of them had their cell phones out. It looked like a darn paparazzi festival. I pulled over and joined the mass of people trying to look like I knew what was going on. The murmur in the crowd started to grow and I looked up the trail into some thick cover. Even at a distance, I could make out velvet tines meandering through the trees. Sure enough, as the bull drew closer, I could make out the ugly mug of BB. He strode out into a small clearing and posed head on to the crowd. The camera clicks started going off like crazy. BB then moved a bit and posed sideways, lowering his head gear in a way that showed the promise of another beautiful rack. Finally, after about five minutes of posing, he turned and began his ascent back up the hill.

The crowd began disperse and I had to find out what the hell was going one. As I walked towards my car, I nodded to a masked lady and asked her through my mask what had just happened. “Oh” she said, “it is so way cool. Every day that really strange animal comes out and poses for pictures. Someone left us a note that all we had to do is leave some alfalfa there and he would show up.” I guess my eyebrows must have given away my disbelief. “You know miss, that’s a bull elk.” Now the lady stared at me and said, “Really, we all thought he was a really big deer. My girlfriends all said he was almost an endangered species.” Not wanting to get into any form of argument, I asked her politely where she was from. “I’m from Scottsdale. I photograph horses...
all the time and wanted to see this really unique endangered animal.” I bid her a good day and watched as all the SUVs roared out of the area.

I waited until the dust settled and I was sure no one else was around. I walked back to the Prius and pulled out a cow call and gave it a little mew. From in the timber I could hear BB chuckling as he came back down the hill. As he got closer he started that darn braying laugh of his that ended in chuckle. “Oh boy” he said, “you should have seen the look on your face when you came in here. I wish I could have had my own camera to snap a few shots at the look on your face.” I nodded to BB and asked, “What’s the scam you have going on now BB?”

BB took a few seconds and then got what I would almost call a sheepish look on his face. “Well boy, it started the end of April. We normally only see a few turkey hunters up here but this year it was like EVERYONE from the Valley came up here. They were all wearing masks and they stayed and stayed and stayed. It was like the world stopped and they all decided to come up here. Every day I could see them snapping pictures of the uhm…feral livestock. So, knowing that every self-respecting elk was in hiding by the time they got up, I decided to see what they would do with a real wild animal…if they saw one. So, I scribbled out this little note about leaving alfalfa, and sure enough, I let one of those city families get a good sight of me and it just built from there. These poor folks have no idea what a wild animal is, and I just wanted to let them know that there are other things than just…feral livestock.” I have a hard time knowing when BB is pulling my leg, and I just kept staring at him without saying a thing. Finally, he said, “Okay, okay. Maybe I just felt I deserved a little extra alfalfa if I was going to educate these city slickers, ya know?”

As I thought about it I was suddenly struck by how ironic it had become. For years, I had bundled my kids into the car and headed up north to catch a glimpse of elk. We would be up at the crack of dawn and hike at least a couple of hours before breakfast. All of that effort was to see elk—bulls, cows and calves, and to learn about their habits and what their tendencies were. BB however had gone the next step and made a small living out of teaching the slickers. “So, BB, how long do you think you can keep doing this? I mean sooner or later, someone who knows about wildlife will be showing up.” BB smirked at me. “Isn’t that what you are boy? You can write about how a big smart animal pulled the wool over some city slickers. By then it will be fall and…wait just a minute! Did you get drawn this year for an archery tag?” It was my turn to play just a little bit coy. “Why BB, surely you don’t care who gets drawn do you?” BB snorted, “Of course I do! I have to plan on avoiding you if you’re out here with those pointy sticks again.” I simply smiled and said, “BB, I do have another archery tag, but you can rest easy. I’ll be over in 4B, across the highway 260 away from horses and you.”

BB started chuckling again. (I hate it when he does that out of season). “Boy, you are so mistaken! Those feral livestock have crossed the 260 and are all through the southern half of 4B. You should spend a little more time up here!” Now it was my turn to get a little miffed. “Are you telling me that there are a bunch of horses or only one or two that have crossed over?” BB shook his big head and said, “Sorry boy, there are probably at least 50 to 100 head that have crossed over. They love the Forest Lakes subdivision food and the little meadows just north of the subdivision. From that point, they just keep moving where new food and water is. My great cousins from my daddy’s side have told me that they keep moving north because there are no fences along the 260 there and that with all the new little ponies from the spring, there are bound to be even more next year. You may be out of my area, but you haven’t avoided the feral livestock.”

I was disappointed to hear that the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest had done again nothing to slow the migration of horses from their designated Wild Horse Territory. “Well BB, I said, “it’s only been 18 years now that the forest personnel
have done nothing to prevent this. I remember asking questions of the Black Mesa Ranger district office back in 2006. All the people who work there change jobs like I change underwear and they have no accountability.” BB started smirking at me. “I knew all I had to do was start talking about the feral livestock and you would go off boy. As sad as it may be for you, try and be me! There is so little food by the end of summer and with all the water being slurped up by those critters, I have more problems than you do!”

Of course, BB was right. The magnificent elk of many areas of Arizona are being forced out of their natural habitats by the explosion of feral livestock that no one has the cajones to remove. City slickers keep making them their cause, even though all the biology they know could be placed in a small tea cup.

BB sadly smiled and said, “So boy, if you don’t mind, let me enjoy my hard-earned alfalfa here and why don’t you go back and try and raise some hell about this?” It was my turn to sadly smile. BB, you have no idea how many words have been written and how many times I have tried to explain nature’s balance to city slickers. They just don’t get it. I know that come fall maybe the forest service will start doing something, but I wouldn’t hold my breath. They just don’t want the fight from the slickers who send emails and call politicians. Perhaps a lawsuit filed on your behalf would work. Until then my friend, keep snookering the slickers. They deserve every bit of it.”
Everyone leaves footprints on the sands of time. Our prints are made by the imprints of our lives on others. A person is remembered for the weight of their character. For marks of accomplishment. For shapes of kindness. For length of compassion. For width of personal warmth. For generosity. For values. How do you want to be remembered?

When we leave positive impressions behind, we enhance the lives of our friends and loved ones. We give them footprints to follow.

Thoughtful estate planning is one way we have to leave our footprint in the sand, to help others recall our priorities. For example, consider the effect of a plan that includes provision for not only family members but also resources for charitable organizations like the Arizona Elk Society (AES).

An estate gift makes a positive statement - When you include AES in the final disposition of your estate, you declare to your family and friends that you believe in and care about the mission of the Society. Your parting gift becomes a clear declaration of your values in protecting Arizona’s elk habitat.

An estate gift provides needed funding - Estate gifts are especially valuable, not only because they tend to be larger than annual gifts, but because they often come at critical times. They provide that extra boost to the budget that can make the difference between program advancement and program retrenchment.

An estate gift encourages imitation - There’s something about a well-planned estate gift that influences others to “go and do likewise.” As friends and family members plan their own estates, they may recall your generosity and thoughtfulness. Your gift may unlock resources for the Elk Society from other estates.

As a consultant to the AES, I am available to provide you, confidentially, with the information and materials you need to include charitable giving in your overall estate plan.

To arrange for a personal visit, or to simply request complimentary printed material, complete and return the coupon below.

_____ Please send me free literature about making a planned gift to Arizona Elk Society.

_____ Please contact me about a personal visit.

The best time to call me is:

_____ I have already provided for Arizona Elk Society in my will or other estate-planning document (eligible for AES Legacy Society).

_____ Please send information about the AES Legacy Society (for those who have made provisions in their estate plan for Arizona Elk Society).

Name: ____________________________ Address: ____________________________

City: ___________________ State: __________ Zip: ____________________________

Phone: __________________ Email: ____________________________

Mail form to: Arizona Elk Society, 7773 W. Golden Lane, Peoria, Arizona 85345
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Prior to March 17, 2002, AES Founding Memberships were available. These individuals and couples came forth to show their support for the AES in its early stages of development. During the formation of the AES, administrative funds were needed to pay for organizational costs that led up to the first fundraising banquet on March 16, 2002. Founding Members paid a premium membership fee to help make the first year a success. For their support and dedication, the following Founding Members will receive permanent recognition by the AES.

+ Membership upgraded  * Deceased
$1,000.00 Donated to “HEROES RISING OUTDOORS” Program

Arizona's Essential Realty Team has Partnered up with Arizona Elk Society

If you are passionate about assisting our Veterans, as we are, take a minute to visit this web site www.azessentialrealty.com to learn how YOU can support our Veterans. This important program is specifically designed to benefit our Veterans, the Arizona Elk Society members base and their families. All you have to do is tell us "I want to assist a Veteran" or simply send us a message. Together WE will make a difference!

For each successful transaction greater than $250,000, whether buying or selling, on residential or commercial, Arizona's Essential Realty Team will donate $1,000.00 of our personal proceeds to “Heroes Rising Outdoors”

This program affords the opportunity for a veteran to experience nature through AZ Elk Society’s outdoor camps, taking part in ECotherapy! Contact Michelle or Darrell today.

Let's give our Veterans the support and appreciation they deserve!
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BOARD MEETING 8/19
6:30 pm

BIG BANGS FOR FREEDOM 9/12
Ben Avery Clay Target Center

JUNIOR ELK CAMP 10/8-10/11
Mormon Lake

AES ANNUAL MEETING 10/21
6:30 pm

VETERANS APPRECIATION DAY PARADE 9/12
Flagstaff, Heroes Rising Outdoors
represented in parade

DESERT FANATICS FLAG RUN 10/31
at Westgate,
in support of
AES Heroes Rising Outdoors

Check our website for details on events & projects at www.arizonaelksociety.org