



PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

June 15, 2026

A public meeting of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission will be held on **June 26, 2026 at the Payson Public Library, 328 N McLane Rd, Payson, AZ 85541**. The public may attend the meeting in person, or view the meeting at www.azgfd.gov/commissioncam or may listen to the meeting by calling 404-397-1516, Access code: 280 046 234##. Members of the public may view the meeting from any Department Regional Office and the Department's Headquarters via video teleconference. Members of the public may only address the Commission by attending in person, from the Department headquarters or from any regional office. Copies of any presentations, documents, etc. discussed during the meeting will be available, when final, by contacting sprice@azgfd.gov. Unless expressly provided otherwise with any matter, the Commission may discuss and may vote to take action on the following matters:

Friday, June 26, 2026 **Meeting location opens at 7:45 a.m.**
 Meeting begins at 8:00 a.m
 Lunch Break at 12:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Welcome/Introductions

Awards and Recognition

Regional Highlights

- 1) Call to the Public.** Those persons wishing to speak on a matter not on the agenda should complete a speaker's card and present it to the host. No discussion or action will be taken by the Commission. Any items requiring further discussion or action will be included on a future Commission meeting agenda.
- 2) Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) Briefing. Presenter: Jeff Sorenson, Invertebrate Wildlife Program Manager.** The Department will provide an informational briefing on the Department's snail conservation efforts.
- 3) Consideration of Proposed Commission Order 29 for Special Big Game Tag Hunting**

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5000 W. CAREFREE HIGHWAY, PHOENIX AZ 85086

GOVERNOR: KATIE HOBBS **COMMISSIONERS:** CHAIR MARSHA PETRIE SUE, SCOTTSDALE | JEFF BUCHANAN, PATAGONIA | JAMES E. GOUGHNOUR, PAYSON
KURT KERR, PINETOP | JESSICA MANUELL, PARKS **DIRECTOR:** TOM P. FINLEY **DEPUTY DIRECTOR:** JOSHUA W. HURST

Seasons for Mule Deer, White-tailed Deer, Pronghorn, Elk, Turkey, Javelina, Bighorn Sheep, Bison, Black Bear, and Mountain Lion for the 2027-2028 Seasons. Presenter: Erin Butler, Big Game Management Program Supervisor. The Commission will consider and may approve Commission Order 29: Special Big Game Tag Hunts, establishing seasons and season dates, bag and possession limits, permit numbers, and open areas for 2027-2028 Special Big Game Tags Hunting seasons.

- 4) Authorize the Award of Special Big Game Hunt Tags to Wildlife Conservation Organizations for Pronghorn, Bighorn Sheep, Black Bear, Bison, Elk, Javelina, Mountain Lion, Mule Deer, Turkey and White-tailed Deer for 2027–2028. Presenter: Andrew Cavalcant, Natural Resources Planner.** The Commission will consider and may take action on applications from organizations to award 2027–2028 Special Big Game Tags as per R12-4-120.
- 5) Ben Avery Shooting Facility Master Plan, Range Protection Zone Update. Presenter: Mike Raum, R3 Branch Chief.** The Commission will be provided the quarterly update on the Department’s ongoing evaluation of future range protection zone planning as designated in the Ben Avery Shooting Facility Master Plan. The Commission may vote to take action on and provide the Department direction on this item.
- 6) The McDowell Sonoran Preserve and The Arizona Game and Fish Department: Partnership in Urban Wildlife Management. Presenter: Debra Groves, Wildlife Manager Senior.** The presentation will highlight the collaboration between the McDowell Sonoran Preserve in Scottsdale and the Department.

TIME CERTAIN AT 10:00AM

- 7) Hearings on License Revocations for Violations of Game and Fish Codes and Civil Assessments for the Illegal Taking and/or Possession of Wildlife. Presenter: Gene Elms, Law Enforcement Branch Chief.** The Commission will consider and take action on the license revocations and/or civil assessments for the individuals listed below.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Docket</u>	<u>Conviction</u>
Desiree Aragon	2026-0018	Possession of Unlawfully Taken Deer.
John Rittenbach	2026-0019	Possession of Unlawfully Taken Deer.
Graviel Valtierra	2026-0021	Take Deer by Unlawful Method. Possess/Transport Unlawfully Taken Deer Guide Without a License
Addison Goodley	2026-0023	Take Deer Without a Tag Possess/Transport Unlawfully Taken Deer

- 8) **Rehearing Request Regarding Previous License Revocation/Civil Assessment. Presenter: Gene Elms, Law Enforcement Branch Chief.** David Koury has requested a rehearing regarding the revocation of his license privileges.
- 9) **Rehearing Request Regarding Previous License Revocation/Civil Assessment. Presenter: Gene Elms, Law Enforcement Branch Chief.** Nicholas Debaca has requested a rehearing regarding the revocation of his license privileges.
- 10) **Rehearing Request Regarding Previous License Revocation/Civil Assessment. Presenter: Gene Elms, Law Enforcement Branch Chief.** Scott Bellamy has requested a rehearing regarding the revocation of his license privileges.
- 11) **Department Revenue Initiatives: Seek Commission direction related to increasing revenue to include but not limited to licenses, tags, stamps, applications and other fees. Presenter: Marianne Cox, Special Assistant to the Director.** The Department is seeking Commission direction for the next steps, including preparation of a draft rule, that would adjust fees to increase revenue needed to support strategic initiatives and Department core mission.
- 12) **State and Federal Legislation. Presenter: Ed Sanchez, Legislative Branch Chief.** The Commission will be briefed on the status of state and federal legislation and may take a position or provide direction to the Department for coordination, action, or proposed changes to legislation related to Department responsibilities.
- 13) **State and Federal Lands Planning Update. Presenter: Callie Cavalcant, Habitat, Evaluation and Lands Branch Chief.** The Commission will receive an update on Department activities and involvement with land management planning and other actions regarding state and federal lands in Arizona.
- 14) **Commission Priorities Update. Presenter: Luke Thompson, Special Assistant to the Director.** The Department will provide an update on the Commission Priorities and Metrics. Dan Sturla will provide an expanded report on Commission Priority: Public Access and Improve Landowner Relations.
- 15) **Proposed Dates and Locations of Arizona Game and Fish Commission Meetings for 2027 and January 2028. Presenter: Luke Thompson, Special Assistant to the Director.** The Department will ask the Commission to consider and select proposed meeting dates and locations for the year 2027 and for January 2028.
- 16) **Election of Commission Chair and Vice-Chair for July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. Presenter: Luke Thompson, Special Assistant to the Director.** The Commission will vote to elect a Commission Chair and Vice-Chair for July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027.
- 17) **Chairman, Commissioners and Director Comments.** The Chairman, Commissioners and Director may provide brief comments on current events and issues. This item is for

information only. Items requiring discussion, deliberation or legal action must be placed on a future Commission meeting agenda.

18) Future Agenda Items and Action Items.

19) Litigation Report. The Department's legal counsel may report on the status of the following litigation matters and the Commission may take action: *In re General Stream Adjudication for the Little Colorado River and Gila River*; *Center for Biological Diversity v. Burgum*, CV 22-303/453; *Desert Tortoise Council v. Burgum*, CV 25-00272-JGZ.

20) Executive Session. (The Commission will not vote to take on any action during the Executive Session).

- a) **Litigation and Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) and (4) for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal counsel for legal advice in order to consider its position and to instruct legal counsel regarding the Commission's position concerning: *In re General Stream Adjudication for the Little Colorado River and Gila River*; *Center for Biological Diversity v. Burgum*, CV 22-303/453; *Desert Tortoise Council v. Burgum*, CV 25-00272-JGZ; *Koury v. Marsha Petrie Sue, et al.*, CV 2025-030971.
- b) **Litigation and Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) and (4) for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal counsel for legal advice in order to consider its position and to instruct legal counsel regarding the Commission's position concerning the legal strategy recommendations from the Department's legal strategies team.
- c) **Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal counsel for legal advice regarding the Heber Wild Horse Territory Management Plan issued by the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.
- d) **Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(4) for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal counsel and staff in order to consider its position and instruct its legal counsel and staff regarding the Commission's pending application with ADWR for Type 2 grandfathered water rights for the new Crane Lake.
- e) **Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal counsel for legal advice regarding the Commission's authority to lock gates and close roads providing access to State Trust lands where there is reasonable alternative public access.
- f) **Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal

counsel for legal advice on the scope of the Commission's authority to issue special big game tags.

- g) **Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal counsel regarding trespasses and other unauthorized activities on Commission-owned lands.
- h) **Purchase or Disposal of Real Property and Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) and (7) for the purpose of discussion or consultation with Department staff in order to consider its position and instruct its representative regarding the purchase or disposal of real property and for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal counsel for legal advice.
- i) **Legal Advice.** The Commission may vote to meet in executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3) for the purpose of discussing and consulting with legal counsel for legal advice regarding Commission practices related to communication, agendas and public records.
- j) **Personnel Matters.** The Commission may vote to go into executive session in accordance with A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(1) to discuss personnel matters associated with the Director's duties, responsibilities and performance. The Commission may take action in the public session or defer any action to a later date.



Tom Finley
Director

The agenda may be revised and additional items may be added prior to the meeting as authorized by A.R.S. §38-431.02. In that event, an addendum to the agenda will be noticed and posted prior to the meeting at Department offices. Commission agenda items not noticed for a specific time may be taken out of order. During the public meeting, the Commission may afford any person, their duly authorized representative, or both, the opportunity to present statements relating to agenda items, with or without the opportunity to present them orally. The Commission may go into Executive Session for the purpose of obtaining legal advice from the Commission Attorneys on any of the above agenda items pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 (A) (3) & (4). One or more members of the Commission may appear and participate in the meeting telephonically or by other electronic means.

Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, or this document in an alternative format, by contacting the AZGFD Ombudsman, 5000 W. Carefree Highway, Phoenix, Arizona 85086, 602-942-3000. Requests should be made

as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is responsible for managing Arizona's fish and wildlife as a public trust resource. In addition, the Department is charged with promoting safe and responsible use of watercraft and off-highway vehicles. Funding is provided from the sale of licenses and permits; watercraft registration fees; federal excise taxes on firearms, fishing equipment, boats, and other sporting goods; State lottery revenues; donations on State income tax forms; and various contracts and grants. Department policy is set by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, whose five members are appointed by the Governor.

“Managing Today for Wildlife Tomorrow”