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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: February 5, 2015

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **February 4, 2015 Response from the Arizona Game and Fish Department Regarding the Predator Masters Convention**

Attached is the Arizona Game and Fish Department's (AGFD's) response to my February 2, 2015 letter regarding our concerns with the Predator Master Convention. I have also discussed this matter with a representative of the AGFD.

The County will meet with the AGFD Director and his staff in the near future to discuss this matter further. The letter is encouraging; unfortunately, the Game and Fish Commission rules have not been implemented in Arizona that would prohibit hunting for predatory species in a formal "organized contest with prizes and monetary awards."

Pima County and the AGFD have been cooperative partners in a number of ventures, and we will continue to work with the Department to advance our common interests.

CHH/anc

Attachments



THE STATE OF ARIZONA  
**GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT**

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PHOENIX, AZ 85086-5000  
(602) 942-3000 • WWW.AZGFD.GOV

**GOVERNOR**  
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LARRY D. VOYLES  
**DEPUTY DIRECTOR**  
TY E. GRAY



February 4, 2015

C.H. Huckelberry  
Pima County Administrator  
Pima County Governmental Center  
130 W. Congress, Floor 10  
Tucson, AZ 85701-1317

Dear Mr. Huckelberry,

I received your letter yesterday, regarding the upcoming Predator Masters convention in Tucson this week. First let me share that the Department is not affiliated with this event, other than we were invited to speak to the group. Secondly, the Department recognizes the concerns of the Board of Supervisors and the citizens of Pima County.

Under current law and rule, coyote hunting is legal in Arizona with a yearlong season. There is no bag limit. Possession of a valid Arizona hunting license and adherence to all applicable laws is required. A valid hunting license authorizes a person to access state and federal lands to hunt. The Commission is authorized to close state land to hunting, but it does not have authority to close state land to predator hunting alone, unless it closes the season. Any closures or restrictions of access to federal land would have to be designated by the federal land management agency. The current Commission has not taken a stand on predator hunting contests.

We have asked Predator Masters representatives specifically if there is a scheduled or organized coyote hunting "contest." They have shared that some of their members may hunt coyotes individually or in small groups as a part of their convention experience but, there is no organized contest planned.

In September 1999, after two years of discussion, the Commission passed a rule to prohibit hunting for predatory species in a formal, organized contest with prizes and monetary awards. By Arizona statute, Commission rules are reviewed by the Governor's Regulatory Review Council (GRRC) before implementation. GRRC reviewed the original version of the rule and two subsequent versions and disapproved the proposed rule based on:

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1. Potential violation of both Arizona and U.S. Constitutions, particularly the right to freedom of speech and freedom of association.
2. Costs of implementation and impacts on local economies of such a rule were not accurately displayed in the economic small business consumer impact statement.
3. The Commission exceeded its statutory authority and the rule was inconsistent with legislative intent.
4. GRRC believed the rule to be discriminatory.

The proposed rule was never implemented.

We are proud of our involvement and participation with Pima County in the coordination and planning of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan as a holistic approach to recover and conserve rare and endangered species of plants and animals in Pima County. Pima County and the Department have previously worked together closely on the Tucson Mountain Park to resolve challenges regarding hunting. We look forward to working with you and your staff to explore areas where we find common ground and can then move toward consensus on issues regarding wildlife conservation. Please advise me when you and your staff might be able to meet with Department staff.

Sincerely,



Larry D. Voyles  
Director



## COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

PIMA COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL CENTER  
130 W. CONGRESS, FLOOR 10, TUCSON, AZ 85701-1317  
(520) 724-8661 FAX (520) 724-8171

C.H. HUCKELBERRY  
County Administrator

February 2, 2015

Larry D. Voyles, Director  
Arizona Game and Fish Department  
5000 W. Carefree Highway  
Phoenix, Arizona 85086-5000

Re: **Predator Masters Annual Conference and Hunt**

Dear Mr. Voyles:

As I am sure you are aware, Predator Masters, a group that promotes and organizes hunts of predator animals, has scheduled its annual conference in southern Arizona February 5 through 7, 2015. The organization in the past has conducted large-scale contest hunts for predators that generated significant public outcry.

Pima County is opposed to hunts of this type, especially on County park and open space lands, and I am asking your agency's cooperation in preventing such hunts on County conservation lands.

In 2001, after three years of research and dozens of community meetings, the Pima County Board of Supervisors adopted the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP) to preserve and protect Pima County's ecologically sensitive wildlands. Pima County voters in 2004 endorsed the SDCP by approving nearly \$200 million in bond funds for the acquisition and conservation of these lands. As a result, Pima County now owns or manages through state and federal grazing leases more than 200,000 acres of wildlands in the County.

In addition to our considerable public investment in open space and wildland preservation, the County's taxpayers, in order to protect their investment, pay for the annual cost of land managers and biologists to monitor and preserve the ecology of these lands. The wanton slaughter of bobcats, coyotes, coati and other predator animals on these lands

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would be counter to the conservation mission set by the Board of Supervisors and the people of Pima County. Moreover, while I realize hunting can be a key component of wildlife management and is often necessary to control some populations of wild animals, the intensive and indiscriminate killing in a small geographical area solely for purposes of competition is not a system or method of wildlife management, nor do I believe it is hunting the Game and Fish Commission would endorse.

I would hope your agency would be opposed to this type of hunting in general and seek to prevent it on a statewide basis. If such is not legally or politically feasible, I am asking that you work with Pima County in preventing this type of hunting activity on County-owned or managed lands in the future.

I look forward to hearing from you soon regarding this matter. Also, please feel free to contact Mr. Kerry Baldwin, our Natural Resources Superintendent, as a local contact if you desire additional background information on our concerns. Mr. Baldwin may be reached at [kerry.baldwin@pima.gov](mailto:kerry.baldwin@pima.gov) and 520.724.5216.

We will actively oppose access to our lands for this purpose. Thank you for any assistance you can offer regarding this matter.

Sincerely,



C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

CHH/mjk

c: The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors