



# **POLICY BOOK**

**as of July 21, 2023**

## **SUBJECT**

ACGA Administration	pg. 11
Agricultural Water Conservation Programs	pg. 11
Federal Land Resources	pg. 3
Fire Management	pg. 4
Food Safety & Disease Control	pg. 8
Labor & Immigration	pg. 8
Livestock	pg. 7
State Land Resources	pg. 6
Water	pg. 9
Wildlife	pg. 4

# FEDERAL LAND RESOURCES

## **Maintenance of Multiple Use**

(9/9/22) (Federal Lands)

The Arizona Cattle Growers' Association (ACGA) has observed and, for the following reason, opposes increased shifting of rural lands from private ownership into public ownership. Lands acquired by the federal government in such transactions have often been placed in single use status and not into multiple use. These lands have been removed from the county tax rolls to the detriment of local government services. This increases the tax burden on the remaining property owners and puts more pressure on the remaining multiple use lands; and

ACGA is opposed to any transfer of public land out of multiple use status and its reallocation to single use. If such a transfer causes a taking or cancellation of existing preference directly affecting the integrity of a permittees ranching operation, we recommend just compensation for the loss;

If such transfer to single use causes a taking or cancellation of any existing preference and such severance directly affects the integrity of the permittees ranching operation, we recommend just compensation for the damages.

## **Collaborative Conservation Efforts**

(9/9/22) (Federal Lands)

Voluntary collaborative efforts between livestock producers, private organizations and federal agencies can contribute to the continuation of livestock production, conservation of rural lands, forage productivity, prevention or resolution of conflicts, and the strengthening of traditional rural economies and communities. Such voluntary collaboration may be helpful in the prevention or resolution of conflicts. The Arizona Cattle Growers' Association encourages permittees to seek such voluntary collaborative efforts.

## **Enforcement of Federal Officer Ethics**

(9/9/22) (Federal Lands)

The federal ethics and conflict of interest code applies to employees of the U. S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior.

ACGA requires that federal officers recuse themselves from decision making in all circumstances where their personal views or their private advocacy group opposes the use they are empowered to regulate.

## **Land and Water Conservation Fund Reauthorization**

(9/9/22) (Federal Lands)

Approximately 87% of land in Arizona is currently owned by either the Federal, Tribal or State government; The Land and Water Conservation Fund allows the Federal Government to use eminent domain to purchase private land, ranches.

ACGA believes Land and Water Conservation Fund monies should be appropriated to the State Forester for the enhancement of firefighting efforts and the replacement of ranch infrastructure loss from wildfires. These monies should no longer be used to purchase any lands.

7/21/23

### **Fair Market Compensation**

(07-23) (Federal Lands) (State Land)

ACGA supports fair market compensation for producers from the project proponent when a construction project displaces a grazing operation on state or federal lands, including loss of AUMs, relocation or transportation of livestock, and other related expenses

## **FIRE MANAGEMENT**

### **Fire Management Coordination with State Forester**

(9/9/22) (State and Private Lands)

ACGA recommends the Incident Command Team work closely with local landowners, ranchers, and state forestry departments to better manage fire, suppression, and resources. When fire moves onto non-federal land, State forestry departments and local landowner priorities should take precedence. The State Forester must be consulted during the entire process regardless of level of incidence.

## **WILDLIFE**

### **Recovery Plan Considerations**

(9/9/22) (Federal Lands)

Range livestock production is the most sustainable, least energy consumptive food production in the United States. ACGA members are committed to applying the best science regarding genetically valid and genuinely threatened Arizona native species to long term range management.

The conservation of native Southwestern warm water fish, frogs and other listed species have been advanced by rancher's range management and water development.

ACGA supports the application of peer reviewed research in developing range management, water development and recovery plan policy as related to listed species.

### **Predator Hunts**

(9/9/22) (Wildlife)

All wildlife in Arizona belongs to the State, and by statute, the Arizona Game and Fish Department is charged with and has the expertise to manage wildlife.

ACGA opposes any legislation or ballot initiative that would put any limits on the Department's ability to manage wildlife by prohibiting the hunting of big game predators such as mountain lions or bears.

### **Wildlife Manager's Education Requirements**

(9/9/22) (Wildlife)(Education)

ACGA realizes the high priority the Game and Fish Department of Arizona places on education;

Diversity, vitality and numbers of wildlife populations are largely dependent on the quality and condition of rangeland resources we believe it is imperative that wildlife managers have a working understanding of rangeland ecosystems that wildlife are a part of.

ACGA believes it would enhance the high quality of education and skill Arizona Game and Fish Department supports and demands of its wildlife managers to include in its education requirements a minor in range management and rangeland ecology.

### **Mexican Gray Wolf**

(9/9/22) (Wildlife)

ACGA has examined the reintroduction of the Mexican Wolf and has determined the following:

1. Questions still have not been answered with scientific rigor regarding the genetic purity of the released wolves or wolves being raised for possible future release;
2. The existing release program places disproportionate economic and security burdens upon already depressed rural communities;
3. The current wolf population--to say nothing of an increased population-- endangers the survival of the unique, valuable and irreplaceable American cultural heritage of western family ranching dating to the settlement of the West by early Hispanic explorer-ranchers of the southwest Mission period in the 16th-17th-18th centuries and by American pioneer settler families dating to the 1860's, constituting a historic resource that pre-dates the American Revolution;
4. Wolves have compounded predation upon game wildlife and domestic stock, which are already being seriously affected by bears, mountain lions and coyotes;
5. Wolves straying out of the recovery area in Arizona and New Mexico need to be captured and returned to the recovery area and that those engaging in predation on livestock must be promptly and permanently eliminated;
6. Reimbursement for livestock losses from wolf predation needs to come from federal moneys appropriated to an agency of the United States;
7. The wolf reintroduction area should not be expanded nor should new wolf releases occur in any area without local approval;
8. ACGA should protect its members from harmful effects created by the Mexican Wolf;
9. The Mexican Wolf population reestablished in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) is one nonessential experimental population. Critical habitat cannot be designated under the nonessential experimental classification, 16 U.S.C. 1539 (J)(2)(C)(ii);
10. ACGA should cooperate with neighboring states of New Mexico and Colorado, and continue interdepartmental cooperation between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA-APHIS, and Arizona Game and Fish Department;

11. The program is socially and economically indefensible and unsustainable. The harmful effects of the existing Mexican Wolf Program support termination of the existing program rather than its expansion.

The Mexican Wolf Program in Arizona and New Mexico has more than achieved the 1982 Recovery Plan goal of 100 individuals in the wild, wolf introductions across the United States have reached or exceeded recovery goal numbers identified to the public at the time of initial federal actions to list the species. ACGA advocates the delisting and defunding by the Congress of the United States and Fish and Wildlife Services of all listed wolves throughout the nation, including subspecies and listed hybrid wolves. If the existing Mexican Wolf Program is not terminated, the expansion should no longer be supported or encouraged.

## **STATE LAND RESOURCES**

### **Vehicular Off Road Traffic**

(9/9/22) (State and Private Lands, Federal Lands)

Vehicular off road traffic has increased to the point where irreparable damage to natural resources has occurred.

ACGA recommends land management agencies assemble an updated map system that will designate specific "roads" for recreational use and provide a uniform method of enforcing off road vehicle regulations. Uses other than hunting would be allowed under appropriate permits; and

ACGA urges the Arizona Legislature to continue appropriate funding for the education and the enforcement of existing off road vehicle regulations, provide compensation to landowners for damage and criminal trespass.

ACGA supports setting a speed limit on all unimproved roads for all terrain (ATV) and off highway (OHV) vehicles. We support setting penalties high enough to deter violation of the law.

ACGA supports mandatory education of off-road vehicle use by the Arizona State Land Department, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Arizona State Forester, and Arizona Game & Fish Department.

ACGA supports redistributing ticket revenue so that counties benefit from environmental Off-Road Vehicle Tickets.

ACGA supports using all of the funding received from the OHV decal to be put toward the enforcement of OHV traffic.

ACGA encourages the manufacturers and advertisers to provide programs that will educate OHV users of the-potential for damaging the environment and of their responsibility to minimize such damage.

### **Recreational Vehicle Enforcement and Damage Restoration Funding**

(9//9/22) (State Land, Federal Land)

ACGA supports the implementation of a surcharge on recreational vehicle sale and rental at a federal, state, and/or county level to restore the resource damage on private, state trust and federal lands caused by these

vehicles and to pay for state law enforcement officers to enforce laws pertaining to proper use of these vehicles.

### **Loss of Grazing Leases on State or Federal Lands to Clean Energy Facilities**

(9/9/22) (State Land, Federal Land)

ACGA opposes the replacement of grazing on state or federal lands in favor of commercial leases such as clean energy facilities, solar or wind projects, unless the public authorities show they had no alternative to the area of the grazing lease for installation of the clean energy project. All new solar and wind power generation projects on public lands should take into consideration current grazing and its effect on said grazing. Any loss of improvements, AUM's or overall ranch value shall be paid for by the new project owners at market value. We believe clean energy facilities should only be established with the approval of the lessee or permittee

### **Wild/Unauthorized/Feral Horse & Burro**

(9/9/22) (Federal Lands)

Wild/unauthorized/ feral horse and burro populations on public lands should be managed to be kept at or below the appropriate management level (AML). Like all other uses of the public lands, wild horses and burros must share the available resources. Should public land agencies not be able to manage the populations to the AML, then the excess populations should be removed from the lands through any means necessary for bringing the number in line with AML.

Feral horses and burro are abandoned and/or unauthorized livestock and therefore should not be classified as wild horses and should not qualify as protected under the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act of 1971 as amended. ACGA does not support the use of public funds for the creation of any new feral horse sanctuaries on Arizona public lands. ACGA does not support the importing or transportation of feral horses for the purpose of release.

ACGA supports the prompt, efficient and humane disposal of feral burros and horses on public federal lands in the interest of sustainable land management, with sale authority granted to the management agencies for the disposal of unadoptable animals.

## **LIVESTOCK**

### **Livestock Illegal Seizure**

(9/9/22) (State Land, Federal Land)

ACGA opposes illegal seizure of livestock under the umbrella of federal or state law. We strongly support private property rights as they frame the right of ranchers to manage their own cattle in accordance with the law.

### **Cattle Marketing and Price Discovery/Transparency**

(9/9/22) (Ag Issues) (Traceability)

ACGA supports legislation that would result in more competition between major packers and more price transparency from the packing industry.

### **Negotiated Cash Trade**

(9/9/22) (Ag Issues) (Traceability)

ACGA supports establishing a minimum percentage of negotiated cash trade in the packing sector of the beef industry. The percentages should not to fall below current (July 23, 2022) levels.

### **Packer Concentration/Price Discovery/Transparency**

(9/9/22) (Ag Issues) (Traceability)

ACGA supports aggressive enforcement of laws that prohibit monopolies and assure fair competition and fair-trade practices in livestock marketing. These laws include the Sherman Antitrust Act, the Clayton Antitrust Act and the Packers and Stockyards Act.

ACGA supports actions that would prohibit packers from directly or indirectly owning a captive supply of beef cattle for slaughter.

ACGA supports the establishment of a cattle contract library.

ACGA supports increasing the window for fed cattle scheduled for delivery to the packer from 7 days to not more than 14 days after the date on which the agreement for purchase is made.

## **LABOR & IMMIGRATION**

### **Border Patrol Actions**

(9/9/22) (Border)

ACGA believes that the border patrol should be held accountable and required to report damage to fences, improvements, and livestock while engaged in the lawful operations of border security. Any damage to property while engaged in security operations should be reported and the individual rancher that incurred the damage compensated in a timely manner.

### **Border Security**

(9/9/22) (Border)

ACGA strongly supports all lawful methods to secure our nation's border with Mexico, including support federal or local law enforcement to stop violations of state law at the border.

## **FOOD SAFETY & DISEASE CONTROL**

### **Animal Health**

(9/9/22) (Ag Issues)

The Arizona livestock industry and the general public depend upon State government and the Department of Agriculture for assurances of animal health, public health, and issues of ownership of livestock for animal identification.



ACGA will work with the Department of Agriculture and the State Legislature to ensure that these vital public functions of health and livestock brand inspection remain viable.

### **Shortage of Food Animal Vets**

(9/9/22) (Education)

Arizona is experiencing a shortage of rural food animal veterinarians, therefore ACGA supports the University of Arizona's efforts to address the shortage of food animal veterinarians.

### **Screw Worm Control**

(9/9/22) (Ag Issues)

ACGA commends all of the cooperating parties in the Screw worm Eradication Program for their past efforts and success in ridding the United States of screw worms.

ACGA urges continued efforts to completely eradicate screw worms from Mexico and Central America and to establish a permanent barrier in Panama, the most cost-effective measure to forever protect the North American continent from re-infestation.

ACGA strongly requests adequate federal funding to accomplish this goal.

### **Bovine Trichomoniasis**

(7/23) (Ag Issues)

ACGA supports the enforcement of the existing trichomoniasis rule as of 7/21/23. We support voluntary testing of bulls on cattle operations. We support testing bulls at sale barns. We support educational efforts for ranchers related to trichomoniasis. Proposals for amendment to the current rule as of 7/21/23 should be evaluated by whether they are technically feasible for producers to implement and whether the proposal's benefit outweighs the cost of implementation.

## **WATER**

In the State of Arizona, a water right is an individual property right owned by the property owner. These rights are connected to the land and should be understood as such, not as part of larger water systems. Water owners should be able to use their water resources as they see fit, subject only to traditional background property restrictions and long-standing Arizona water regulations. This property is the owners to use or not. ACGA supports water policy that affirmatively protects existing ranching use of groundwater and minimizes regulation.

Water is tied to the land. Therefore, we believe the water should be left in rural areas to serve the agricultural and economic needs of those communities. Water farming or other schemes to transfer rural water to meet the water deficits of urban areas are dangerous practices and should be forbidden. They only serve to promote unsustainable growth and destroy rural economies. The central goal of future water policy in this state must be the modernization of all water infrastructure in the maintenance of a healthy and resilient watershed.

ACGA supports all efforts to augment the water supply through new sources from outside the State such as through desalinization plants, or from within the state, such as through water recycling.

7/21/23

## **Groundwater**

(9/9/22) (Water)

Groundwater is governed by the doctrine of “reasonable use.” This means that if a landowner makes efforts to access the water, they have the right to make reasonable use of that water.

ACGA supports grandfathered irrigation rights on lands with historic water use, including those within an Active Management Area (AMA). Further, there should be no withdrawal fee associated with the use of one’s own groundwater.

Groundwater should maintain its separate identity, whether used alone or in combination with another water resource.

## **Surface Water**

(9/9/22) (Water)

ACGA fully support a statutory prohibition on the transfer of any state river water entitlements away from communities along or near the respective rivers. This more specifically include entitlements to water from the Colorado and Gila Rivers. Allowing the transfer of this water outside the counties where it is found would compromise the availability of water to agricultural communities.

ACGA also supports a legislative remedy for those users negatively affected by adjudications which have designated their surface water as “sub flow”. Any water designated as “sub flow” should statutorily have the same original registration date as the surface water registration.

The allocation of water towards agricultural use should be the main priority of the Coolidge Dam. Thus, we support a statutory minimum requirement of water that must be released for agricultural use in the area prior to any other allocation.

Water rights for irrigation should take precedence over water claims for maintenance of “riparian” area or for the benefit of “endangered” or threatened species.

## **Water Farms**

(9/9/22) (Water)

ACGA opposes the practice of water farming and believes it should be banned in our state. Arizona’s traditional practice of leaving landowners in control of the water resources on their property is based on the understanding that they will have an incentive to use that water in a responsible way and preserve it for future generations. This has made our state a world leader in agricultural and beef production. Out-of-state companies have no such incentive. These corporations are purchasing rural land, sucking it dry of water, and moving on.

ACGA opposes the right of out-of-state corporations of buying rural land and selling the attached water resources. Entities that are not incorporated and that do not have their principal place of business in Arizona should be required to use any water rights attached to land owned in Arizona, on that land.

Furthermore, the sale of water, by any water right owner, beyond the place of use registered with the claim for a right with the state should be banned.

# AGRICULTURAL WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

## **Water Forfeiture**

(9/9/22) (Water)

ACGA opposes the current water forfeiture statute by which water unused for five years or more escheats to the state, enabling other users to take these water rights from the owners and divert them to some other use. ACGA supports any legislative efforts to completely repeal this law.

## **Metering Water Wells**

(07-23) (Water)

ACGA opposes the metering of all wells registered and owned by Arizonans, or entities which are registered and have their principal place of business in this state, and which are located outside of AMA areas (where metering is required).

We recognize that there is no good way to monitor groundwater levels and use without metering, but believe that the best way to promote responsible water use is to leave it in the able hands of Arizona ranchers who will use it responsibly, with an eye towards future generations.

We do support metering wells owned by out-of-state, non-resident or foreign corporations – those who have no incentive to protect Arizona's groundwater. This enables the monitoring of their use of Arizona's groundwater, and ultimately, the protection of our water resources.

## **Federal Jurisdiction Over Ephemeral Water Features in Arizona**

ACGA opposes federal assertion of jurisdiction over ephemeral features in the State.

## **Drilling New Non-Exempt Wells**

(9/9/22) (Water)

ACGA supports a limit on drilling new non-exempt wells or changing native soil into production in an area for a five-year period when the people in the affected area support the limitation by a vote.

# ACGA ADMINISTRATION

## **Five-Year Policies**

(9/9/22) (Ag Issues)

The policies herein remain in force for a period of five years unless amended or reaffirmed. The date following each policy statement is the year it originated, was amended or was reaffirmed as ACGA policy. ACGA policy books are made available to all members upon request.

## **Policy Development Committee Reports**

(9/9/22) (Communication)

We direct the officers and staff of the ACGA to publish the annual meeting policy report with committee recommendations for amendments, deletions and additions and send it to each member not less than fourteen days prior to the annual meeting.

## **Resolutions Process**

(9/9/22) (Ag Issues)

Any voting member, county organization, standing committee, or special called committee may propose new policy or policy amendments. Proposals must be submitted to the appropriate committee for review.

Committees will review and further policy recommendations to the resolutions committee prior to summer convention.

The Resolutions Committee will meet prior to Summer and/or Winter Conventions to review the policy additions and changes brought forth by each committee. The committee will review grammar, spelling, and confirm the policy report is ready for deliberation by the membership at Summer and Winter Conventions. Policy that is not ready for the membership meeting will be returned to the committee for further discussion.

## **Procedure for Late Resolutions**

(9/9/22) (Ag Issues)

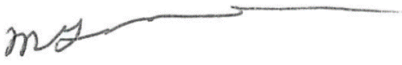
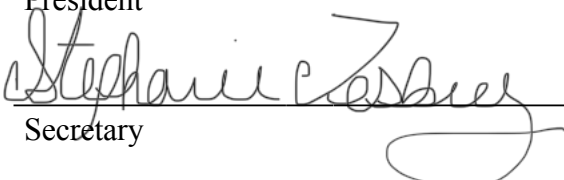
Late resolutions are those resolutions which address an issue that has surfaced in the time period between County Annual Meetings, committee meetings, and the State Annual Meeting.

A written copy of the resolution shall be furnished to the state resolutions committee.

After presentation of late resolutions, the State Resolutions Committee shall meet to determine if these resolutions meet the criteria of solving a problem which has surfaced late in the policy development process. Those resolutions that meet this test will be included in the Committee Reports and recommendations offered to the voting membership. The committee shall return those resolutions, which do not meet the test, to the sponsor.

Late resolutions may be introduced from the floor by a voting member at the committee meeting during the Summer Convention and/or Winter Convention. Upon adoption by the committee, late resolutions will be forwarded to the voting membership at the general membership meeting.

Adopted as of the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2023.

	09.05.2023
President	Date
	9/05/2023
Secretary	Date