

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND COMMISSION

Business Meeting – March 18, 2026

Arizona Department of Water Resources
Middle Verde Conference Room
1110 W. Washington St., Ste. 310
Phoenix, AZ 85007

&

Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex
Meeting Number (Access Code): 2536 706 9976
Meeting Password: ehKze323xJM
1-415-655-0001 US Toll

Final Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Commission Voting Members Present

Rodney Held – Chairman
Stephen Turcotte – Vice-Chairman
Shelley Blackmore
Pat Jacobs
Frank Krentz
John Ladd
Tina Thompson

Arizona Water Protection Fund Staff

Lizette Fuentes
Reuben Teran

Commission Voting Members Absent

Rolando Flores
Brian Biesemeyer

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodney Held called the meeting of the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF) Commission to order at 10:06 a.m.

COMMISSIONER MEMBER ROLL CALL

Mr. Reuben Teran called the roll of the Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission (Commission). Commissioners present at the time of roll call included Chairman Rodney Held, Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte (via Webex), Commissioner Shelley Blackmore (via Webex), Commissioner Pat Jacobs (via Webex), and Commissioner Frank Krentz (via Webex), Commissioner John Ladd (via telephone), and Commissioner Tina Thompson (via Webex). A quorum of the voting Commission members was present.

There were no non-voting Ex-Officio Commission members present but Mr. Teran did introduce Mischere Kawas, who is the new Deputy Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources and attended the meeting.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chairman Held made a call to the public. No public comments were made.

Review and Consideration of Action to Approve the November 5, 2025 & November 19, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Pat Jacobs made a motion to approve the November 5, 2025 meeting minutes, with a second from Commissioner Tina Thompson. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Pat Jacobs	Aye
Frank Krentz	Aye
John Ladd	Aye
Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte made a motion to approve the November 19, 2025 meeting minutes, with a second from Commissioner Jacobs. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Pat Jacobs	Aye
Frank Krentz	Aye
John Ladd	Aye
Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

Arizona Water Protection Fund Program Updates

Legislative Update

Mr. Teran informed the Commission that the Governor’s Executive Budget has identified an appropriation of \$750,000 for the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF) through the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) budget. He also stated that as part of the budget session law there was a provision to continue to allow the Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission to grant to the Department of Water Resources up to \$336,000 to be used for administrative costs.

Non-Voting Advisory Members Appointment Update

Mr. Teran stated that the AWPF Commission has two Legislative advisory member vacancies which include a member of the Arizona Senate and a member of the Arizona House of Representatives. He also stated that notification letters were sent to the appointing officials, whom are the Senate President and Speaker of the

House of Representatives, on February 4, 2025 and again on February 10, 2026, and to date no official appointments have been made.

Status Updates for Active Grant Award Contracts and Fiscal Year 2026 Grant Awards

Mr. Teran stated that a document with status updates on all active AWPf grants and fiscal year 2026 grant awards has been provided to Commission members. Chairman Held inquired if Commissioners had questions about the project status updates. Commissioner Frank Krentz commented that staff has reached out to the grantee for grant 22-214WPF: Habitat Restoration in the Gila River Riparian Corridor with no response, and that the grant was awarded in 2022 and the project is set to expire in 2026. He inquired if there were any concerns with that grant. Mr. Teran responded that this grant is listed on the meeting agenda for discussion and possible action later today.

Financial Update

Mr. Teran presented an update of the AWPf fund balance from July 1, 2025 to February 28, 2026. The beginning fund balance as of July 1, 2025 was \$3,143,011; total revenues were \$629,837; and total expenditures were \$705,462. The fund balance as of February 28, 2026 was \$3,067,385. Existing grant obligations are \$1,907,305 with an uncommitted fund balance of \$1,160,081. Mr. Teran stated that the financial table does not identify the full fiscal year 2026 appropriation and the AWPf is still expecting a deposit of \$187,500 for the last quarter of the fiscal year. He also stated the table does not include the fiscal year 2026 grant awards made by the Commission as obligated funds since the contracts are not yet executed but that amount is \$994,564. Chairman Held inquired if the Commission had any questions on the financial statement. Vice-Chairman Turcotte inquired what has been the average expense for program administration costs. Mr. Teran responded that projected administration costs for the program have been approximately \$218,000 per year over the last several fiscal years. Mr. Teran also stated that the funds identified for program administration costs on the table are expected to last until the end of fiscal year 2026. Vice-Chairman Turcotte commented that with an appropriation of approximately \$700,000 and administration costs of about \$220,000 he anticipated about \$400,000 - \$500,000 available for the coming year. Commissioner Jacobs inquired if the Executive Director concurred with that estimate. Mr. Teran responded that in general he is anticipating approximately \$500,000 as uncommitted funds if the AWPf gets an appropriation for the next fiscal year. Chairman Held stated that this item will be added to the next Commission meeting agenda with an invitation to ADWR finance staff to help answer questions. Commissioner Tina requested clarification on the outstanding deposit amount that was not yet identified in the budget table. Mr. Teran responded \$187,500.

23-216WPF: Timberline-Upper Little Colorado River Watershed Improvement Project

Mr. Daric Knight, Chairman of the Apache Natural Resource Conservation District stated that due to weather events they were not able to complete work on the project site and the hired contractor moved to another work location. Of 1,800 acres proposed for the project approximately 1,200 acres have been treated and the contractor is now able to return to the project site to complete the remaining 600 acres of work. Mr. Knight stated they are requesting an extension of the grant agreement to the end of August 2026. Mr. Teran added that the grant agreement is currently set to expire on April 30, 2026. Chairman Held inquired if there were any questions from the Commission on the grant extension request. There were no questions and Vice-Chairman Turcotte made a motion to approve the request of the grant agreement extension to August 30,

2026, with a second from Commissioner Thompson. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Pat Jacobs	Aye
Frank Krentz	Aye
John Ladd	Aye
Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

22-214WPF: Habitat Restoration in the Gila River Riparian Corridor

Mr. Teran stated that a project summary update on the project was provided to the Commission members as part of the meeting materials and he provided a brief update on the actions that have taken place over the last three years of the project. Chairman Held stated that it appears they have made progress on the project. Mr. Teran responded his understanding is that they have been working on the project using other funding sources and have not billed the AWPf. Commissioner Krentz requested clarification if they have received archaeological clearance in accordance with AWPf requirements. Mr. Teran responded that from the permitting side of the project staff was waiting for issued permits or validation that they did not need permits for the Endangered Species Act; 404 Army Corp of Engineers permit, if necessary; 401 Certification from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), if necessary; ADEQ Pesticide General Permit and filing of Notice of Intent for herbicide use; Open Burn permit; verification or current documentation that the water right for irrigation of the revegetation sites is available from Graham County Electric Cooperative, Inc; access agreements between Grantee and landowner(s); and if there were any subcontract agreements, if applicable. Mr. Teran further stated that State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) clearance was the only permit that AWPf had on file. Chairman Held stated that the grantee has been implementing this project out of compliance with the contract requirements, and technically they are not eligible for reimbursement of expenses since they are in violation of the provisions in the contract that state they cannot start until the permits are in place. Chairman Held's recommendation was that staff reach out to the grantee and notify them that they are not eligible for reimbursement and to stop work until they have the appropriate documentation in place if they are actually doing any on-the-ground work. Commissioner Krentz stated that if they are moving forward with project work and funding it with other funding sources it means that they are in violation of the terms of the AWPf grant process and that would essentially make the AWPf contract null and void because they are already at phases beyond the implementation of the AWPf requirements. Chairman Held concurred with Commission Krentz's statements and stated that they should be notified that they are in violation with the contract and may not be eligible for reimbursement. Commissioner Krentz inquired if the Commission is at a point where the contract needs to be terminated or does the Commission want to give them one more step of latitude to come into compliance. Chairman Held responded that is up for discussion by the Commission, and his feeling is that the Commission should provide them the opportunity to provide that documentation and if they don't then this issue can be taken up again at the next Commission meeting for consideration of termination, but that is up for discussion by

the Commission. Vice-Chairman Turcotte stated that if they are really embedded into this project why aren't they talking to our staff, and because the grantee is in violation of the contract does that necessitate action on behalf of the Commission to cancel or to do other reparations. He suggested the Commission get a legal opinion to determine if the Commission would be in violation of their own bylaws and statutes if the Commission did not cancel the agreement, also to protect the Commission and the message it would send to the community about the requirements to follow the contract, to do what they need to do, and do it appropriately. He further stated if the grantee is doing ground disturbance without permits there are legal issues with that and he questioned if the Commission could be culpable in that. Chairman Held stated he agreed with those comments and believed the Commission did need to take action. He recommended the grantee be told to cease and desist work until they are in compliance with the contract, and stated the Commission would also need to review whether the grantee is eligible for reimbursement. He suggested the Commission get a legal opinion regarding the reimbursement part of this issue. He further stated that the Commission needs to take action today and that would either be to have the grantee cease and desist work or to terminate the contract. Commissioner Blackmore agreed with getting legal advice on these issues. Commissioner Blackmore made a motion to get legal advice to see if the Commission should start proceedings of terminating the contract. Chairman Held responded he doesn't think the Commission needs legal advice on whether or not to terminate the contract and the Commission can make that determination now since the contract is out of compliance, and stated the legal opinion the Commission would need is how to determine if the grantee is eligible for any reimbursement under the contract if the agreement is terminated. Commissioner Blackmore made a motion to terminate grant award contact 22-214WPF: Habitat Restoration in the Gila River Riparian Corridor, with a second from Commissioner Thompson. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Pat Jacobs	Aye
Frank Krentz	Aye
John Ladd	Aye
Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

AWPF Program Grant Application Guidelines Triennial Review Process

Mr. Teran provided the Commission an overview of the public outreach actions taken as part of the Triennial Grant Applications Guidelines review process which included:

- Mailing out approximately 160 Notice of Public Hearing and Arizona Water Protection Fund Grant Application Guidelines Request for Comments (Notice) letters to entities identified in Statute, including grant applicants who applied in the last 5 years;
- Sending the Notice to the AWPF email distribution list (~1,300 members);
- Posting the Notice on the AWPF website and Arizona Department of Water Resources public notice board;

- Publishing the Notice as a legal ad in the Arizona Republic statewide;
- Publishing a press release of the Notice in coordination with the ADWR Communications team;
- Hosting a formal public hearing at the ADWR office on February 10, 2026; and
- Facilitating the 45-day public comment period.

Mr. Teran stated that the Commission received public comment letters from the Hassayampa Lake Recreation Association and the City of Phoenix – Office of Environmental Programs, with copies of those letters provided to the Commission as part of the meeting materials. Chairman Held asked the Commission if they had any comments or responses to the comments provided. Commissioner Thompson stated in response to the Hassayampa Lake Recreation Association letter that she always reads the staff summaries and the full application and the applicants have the opportunity to comment or refute the staff summary during the grant application presentation time and felt that was adequate. Chairman Held asked for clarification if the applicants receive a copy of the staff summary. Mr. Teran responded that copies are sent to both the Commission and the applicant. Chairmen Held agreed with Commissioner Thompson's statement and thought there was a lot of inaccurate information in the Hassayampa Lake Recreation Association letter. He stated there isn't a scoring criteria, there was no scoring of applications, the Commission did a ranking and evaluation based not only Mr. Teran's summaries but also on the Commissioner's own individual backgrounds and that was why the Commission had the roundtable discussion before the voting began so they could all discuss those opinions and get clarifications and then do a ranking of the applications. He stated the comments that the applications the Commission funded were not in line with AWPf statutes were, in his opinion, completely inaccurate and that they fall directly in line with the Commission's statutory mandate as well as the grant application guidelines. He further stated he thought there was a lot of misunderstanding on their behalf based on their comments and felt this could be cleared up if they would like a response. Commissioner Thompson stated that she wasn't present at the last voting meeting but wanted to address the comments when a Commissioner has to abstain from the vote that that the ratio of the ranking does not give an applicant a disadvantage in the ranking. Chairman Held stated that the Commission will need to double check on that and directed Mr. Teran to review this, and further stated that this was a good comment from the Hassayampa Lake Recreation Association. Commissioner Blackmore commented that from several concerns identified from the Hassayampa Lake Recreation Association it appeared they didn't have an understanding of what the AWPf is, for example "the applicant's did not appear to have received high scores from the Governor appointed Commissioners" and "they weren't aligned with the priorities of the State legislation that established the Water Protection Fund", and was wondering if they had a completely different idea or read it differently than what the regulations are. Chairman Held agreed with Commissioner Blackmore's comments and thought it was a big misunderstanding on their part. Chairman Held stated in regards to the City of Phoenix's comments he believed they had a recommendation that AWPf expand their grant category, but the grant categories are established in State statute and doesn't think the Commission can expand upon what is authorized in statute and not legally able to do that. Commissioner Thompson agreed with Chairman Held's comments and stated that the Commission is limited to how much can be spent on research, and also stated that the request to prioritize one specific area of the State was a big ask given the Commission has to work on issues statewide. She further stated that it would take an act of the Legislature to prioritize research, and empathized with the comments because it is a challenge to find funds for research but the Commission is

bound by statutes to focus on capital projects. Chairman Held thanked Mr. Teran for his work on facilitating the Triennial Review process.

Grant Cycle Planning

Chairman Held stated that based on the last financial report he is hoping the Commission gets an appropriation for the next fiscal year to even consider having a grant cycle and recommended that as in past years the Commission should consider moving forward with a grant cycle even though it is unknown if there will be funding. He also stated that when the State budget is finalized, the Commission can react accordingly. Mr. Teran presented a proposed grant cycle schedule for fiscal year 2027 and indicated that it essentially mirrors the schedule that was used for fiscal year 2026. Mr. Teran stated that specific Commission meeting dates in November 2026 would be needed for the grant application presentations and grant award selections to be able to plan the rest of the grant application process schedule and develop the grant application manual. The Commission selected Wednesday, November 4, 2026 for the grant application presentation meeting, and November 17, 2026 for the grant award selection meeting. Commissioner Krentz made a motion to authorize planning a fiscal year 2027 grant cycle, with second from Commissioner Thompson. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Pat Jacobs	Aye
Frank Krentz	Aye
John Ladd	Aye
Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

CALL FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Held requested a discussion on the grant application screening review process that could give staff the authority to identify and make a determination on grant applications that are not eligible for funding, with the caveat that the applicant has the option to come before the Commission to appeal that screening determination.

Chairman Held also requested a financial update, to include ADWR’s financial staff, on the AWPf administration account to help determine how to move forward with program administration funding.

FUTURE MEETING DATE(S)

The next Commission meeting dates were set for:

- Wednesday, June 10, 2026
- November 4, 2026
- November 17, 2026

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chairman Held made a call to the public. No public comments were made.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Thompson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with a second from Commissioner Krentz. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion.

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Pat Jacobs	Aye
Frank Krentz	Aye
John Ladd	Aye
Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Commission Members

Rodney Held, Chairman
Stephen Turcotte, Vice Chairman
Brian Biesemeyer
Shelley Blackmore
Rolando Flores
Pat Jacobs
Frank Krentz
John Ladd
Tina Thompson

Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission

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Ex-Officio Members

Thomas Buschatzke
Director
AZ Department of Water Resources

Robyn Sahid
State Land Commissioner
AZ State Land Department

Executive Director

Reuben Teran

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02, notice is hereby given that there will be a meeting of the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF) Commission on **Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.** Meeting room doors will open at 9:30 a.m. This meeting is open to the public, and in person or virtual attendance options are available. The meeting location and agenda are described below.

Meeting Location

Arizona Department of Water Resources Middle Verde Conference Room 1110 W. Washington St., Ste. 310 Phoenix, AZ 85007	To ensure appropriate meeting space, please RSVP to lfuentes@azwater.gov if you would like to attend in person.
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Cisco Webex Meeting Information

Link: http://bit.ly/4bhDCfp Meeting Number (Access Code): 2536 706 9976 Meeting Password: ehKze323xJM

or

Join by Phone

1-415-655-0001 US Toll	Access Code: 2536 706 9976
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Dated this 10th day of March 2026

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA

- I. Call to Order –Chairman Rodney Held
- II. Commission Member Roll Call – Executive Director
- III. Call to the Public – Chairman Rodney Held
 - Comments from the public will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.
- IV. Review and Consideration of Action to Approve the November 5, 2025 & November 19, 2025 Meeting Minutes – Chairman Held

Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission
Notice of Public Meeting and Wednesday, March 18, 2026 Meeting Agenda (continued)

- V. Arizona Water Protection Fund Program Updates – Executive Director
- Legislative Update
 - Non-Voting Advisory Members Appointment Update
 - Status Updates for Active Grant Award Contracts and Fiscal Year 2026 Grant Awards
 - Financial Update
- VI. 23-216WPF: Timberline-Upper Little Colorado River Watershed Improvement Project – Arizona Association of Conservation Districts
- The Commission will be updated on the project status and may take action to approve a grant award contract extension.
- VII. 22-214WPF: Habitat Restoration in the Gila River Riparian Corridor – Executive Director
- The Commission will be updated on the project status and may take action to terminate the grant award contract, or provide direction to staff on how to proceed.
- VIII. AWPf Program Grant Application Guidelines Triennial Review Process – All Commission Members
- The Commission will review comments received during the 45-day public comment period, and may discuss, take action, or direct staff regarding updates to the Arizona Water Protection Fund program grant application guidelines and manual.
- IX. Grant Cycle Planning – Chairman Held
- The Commission will discuss and may take action or provide direction to staff on planning a grant cycle for fiscal year 2027.
- X. Call for Future Agenda Items – All Commission Members
- XI. Future Meeting Date(s) – Chairman Rodney Held
- XII. Call to the Public – Chairman Rodney Held
- Comments from the public will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker.
- XIII. Adjourn – Chairman Rodney Held

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- *The Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission may elect to go into Executive Session for the purposes of obtaining legal advice from its attorney on any of the listed agenda items pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03(A)(3). Executive sessions are not open to the public.*
 - *Agenda items may be taken out of order. No action may be taken on items unless specifically noted on the agenda.*
 - *Members of the Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission may appear virtually or by telephone.*
 - *Agenda and backup/supporting documents can be obtained by contacting Lizette Fuentes at 602-771-8472 or lfuentes@azwater.gov.*
 - *People with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations such as interpreters, alternate formats, or assistance with physical accessibility. If you require accommodations, please contact Lizette Fuentes at 602-771-8472 or by e-mailing lfuentes@azwater.gov. Please make requests as soon as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.*

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND COMMISSION

Business Meeting – November 5, 2025

Salt River Project
Mohave East Conference Room
1500 N Mill Ave.
Tempe, AZ 85288
&
Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex
Meeting Number (Access Code): 2538 152 2015
Meeting Password: PMkk8s3HVS8
1-415-655-0001 US Toll

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Commission Voting Members Present

Rodney Held – Chairman
Stephen Turcotte – Vice-Chairman
Brian Biesemeyer
Shelley Blackmore
Rolando Flores
Pat Jacobs
John Ladd
Tina Thompson

Arizona Water Protection Fund Staff

Lizette Fuentes
Reuben Teran

Commission Voting Members Absent

Frank Krentz

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodney Held called the meeting of the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF) Commission to order at 9:03 a.m.

COMMISSIONER MEMBER ROLL CALL

Mr. Reuben Teran called the roll of the AWPF Commission. Commissioners present at the time of roll call included Chairman Rodney Held, Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer, Commissioner Rolando Flores, Commissioner Pat Jacobs (via Webex), and Commissioner Tina Thompson. A quorum of voting Commission members was present.

Commission members in attendance but arrived after the initial roll call were Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte (via Webex), Commissioner Shelley Blackmore, and Commissioner John Ladd (via telephone).

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chairman Held made a call to the public. No public comments were made.

Commissioner John Ladd joined the meeting.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF ACTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 17, 2025, MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Pat Jacobs made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 17, 2025, with a second from Commissioner Tina Thompson. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made and Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion.

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Commissioner Rolando Flores	Aye
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner John Ladd	Aye
Commissioner Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

24-222WPF – VERDE RIVER ACCESS POINT RESTORATION

Mr. Teran introduced Elaine Nichols, Restoration Program Manager with Friends of the Verde River, who presented a proposed change to the scope of work for the project to the Commission. The Grantee proposed to exclude the installation of an erosion rock mat at the Homestead Verde River access site and instead install two rock mats at the Beasley Flat Verde River access site due to the Homestead site being used very little by the public currently, while the Beasley Flat site is heavily used by the public. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments from the Commission. Commissioner Thompson inquired if the State Historic Preservation Office clearance was complete. Mr. Teran responded that this clearance was complete in addition to the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit for the project sites. Commissioner Thompson made a motion to approve the change to the scope of work, with a second from Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made and Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion.

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Commissioner Rolando Flores	Aye
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner John Ladd	Aye
Commissioner Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND PROGRAM UPDATES

22-213WPF – Dye Ranch Erosion and Wetland Restoration

Mr. Teran informed the Commission that the AWPf Executive Committee met to discuss and take action on a one-year grant award contract extension for the project. He also stated all on-the-ground restoration work has been completed for the project and the only restoration action left to complete was the release of Northern leopard frogs at the project site. Given that suitable habitat conditions were not yet favorable for a release at the project site, and the grant award contract was set to expire in December 2025, the Grantee was requesting a one-year contract extension to be able to complete the project as proposed. He further stated that the AWPf Executive Committee did approve a one-year contract extension to December 31, 2026.

Commissioner Conflict of Interest Notice

Mr. Teran stated that a Conflict of Interest notice memo was previously provided to all Commission members, and if any Commissioners believe they do or may have a conflict of interest with any of the grant applications submitted for the FY 2026 grant cycle, to please submit a Conflict of Interest memo form for the grant application file. He also stated that he has received Conflict of Interest forms from Chairman Held and Commissioner Biesemeyer.

AWPF fiscal year 2026 Projected Fund Balance Update

Mr. Teran stated that he has been working with the Arizona Department of Water Resources finance team and presented the fiscal year 2026 projected funds balance out to June 30, 2026. Projected fund revenues for fiscal year 2026 are \$4,020,011; projected fund expenditures for fiscal year 2026 are \$2,518,861 which includes \$1,992,499 of existing grant obligations; and the projected ending fund balance for fiscal year 2026 is \$1,501,150. The projected unobligated fund grant fund balance is \$1,408,821; the projected fiscal year 2027 administration and support costs is \$224,888; and the staff funding recommendation for fiscal year 2026 grants is \$1,180,000.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 GRANT APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS

WPF2603 - Cordelia Water and Forest Resiliency Project

Mr. Teran introduced Elvy Barton, Water and Forest Sustainability Senior Manager with Salt River Project, who provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held stated that because he does represent Salt River Project and has a conflict of interest he will not be participating in any of the discussions regarding this grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. Commissioner Biesemeyer inquired why the Cordelia project was submitted for funding consideration given the many other projects Salt River Project can implement. Ms. Barton responded this project was selected because 1) there is a stream that runs through the project area so there is a tie to the AWPF program, 2) the project is such large scale that it will require a lot of partners and with a lot of acres to treat there is also increased water benefits from treating those acres, and 3) there are benefits to protecting to the Town of Payson water supply since their infrastructure is located within the project area. Commissioner Thompson inquired if slash from the mastication will be left on the ground. Ms. Barton responded that it will be left on the ground, and observations from other projects indicate that it acts as an erosion barrier and allows for more moisture to be retained in the soil to support understory vegetation and grasses, and at a later time the US Forest Service will be able to come back to treat the area with prescribed burns. Commissioner Biesemeyer inquired if the tree material can be taken to a power plant for burning. Ms. Barton responded that because most of trees are juniper and brush species, traditional timber mechanical thinning is not practical and the only way to remove it is to knock it down and scatter it or masticate it. She further stated that when there is ponderosa pine thinning that is when material can be taken to a power plant or lumber mill, but for juniper species there is just not the economic value to do that.

Commissioner Shelly Blackmore joined the meeting.

WPF2602 - Allen Lake Wet Meadow Restoration Project

Katie Vold, Southwest Watershed Coordinator and Kaitlin Girtin, Institutional Giving Coordinator, both with the National Forest Foundation, provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. Commissioner Shelley Blackmore inquired how much success there has been restoring clay layers in soil that were lost when dynamite had been used. Ms. Vold responded that they have experts with the US Forest Service, Grand Canyon Trust,

and Arizona Game and Fish Department that have looked at the design specifications and had a certified engineer that did the designs for the project, and they are very confident that once the clay layer is sealed that it will be effective and sustained long term. Commissioner Blackmore inquired how long it is expected to take to seal those clay layers. Ms. Vold responded right after the planned fall implementation activities are completed. Commissioner Thompson stated that the monitoring plan mentioned possibly fencing out grazing animals and noted the grazing lessee was not mentioned as one of the project partners. She also commented that in her experience grazing animals can help with something like this and the foot traffic from cattle and elk would help in the re-sealing process. Ms. Vold stated that a new permittee has taken over the grazing allotment and the US Forest Service range staff has a good working relationship with the permittee and they are in full support of the restoration work and project; the fencing and exclosures will be temporary, two years maximum, just to help get the vegetation established and then they would be opened up; and long term fencing would include log-worm fencing to mainly keep people out. Commissioner Biesemeyer inquired if there will be an assessment of the wetlands to determine if there are any leaks, and what would be done if leaks were found. Ms. Vold responded that outside of this project timeline the Coconino Forest has committed to monitoring that includes piezometers, vegetation transects and photo points, and that will tell them how the landscape is recovering when it comes to water availability. She also stated that there has been extensive analysis and a lot of previous work completed by outside entities that has been used for the engineering design report for this project.

Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte joined the meeting.

Mr. Teran called roll again for Commissioners that were not present during the initial roll call to verify their attendance. Commissioners identified at this roll call were Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte (via Webex), Commissioner Shelley Blackmore, and Commissioner John Ladd (via telephone).

WPF2613 - Bodaway/Gap Colorado River Riparian Restoration Project

Mr. Teran introduced Lynne Westerfield, Director, with Grand Canyon Wildlands Council (Wild Arizona). Ms. Westerfield provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. Commissioner Thompson inquired if heavy equipment will be used for the project and transported across the Colorado River. Ms. Westerfield responded that after further evaluation they don't believe there is enough slash material to justify needing to use heavy equipment and those funds can be reallocated for other restoration uses. Commissioner Blackmore inquired why the tamarisk is so easy to kill out with fire. Ms. Westerfield responded that the tamarisk is mostly dead already due to the tamarisk beetle.

WPF2601 - Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Holistic Management for Watershed and Riparian Health

Mr. Ricardo Aguirre, Project Principal and Executive Director with Drylands Alliance for Addressing Watershed Needs; Karen Riggs, Holistic Management Trainer; Kieran Skidar, Project Manager and Volunteer; and Hunter Moore, Stakeholder Engagement Consultant provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. Commissioner Blackmore inquired how they are slowing water down, and if it was with rocks or berms. Mr. Aguirre responded it is slowed down through soil carbon. Ms. Riggs added that with this project there will be some structures in the riparian area. Commissioner Blackmore inquired if they were going to use the Alan Savery system to slow down water to repair the cut near the freeway or were they going to fix that first. Mr. Aguirre responded they are using the Savery system as a decision making framework along with other tools for restoration. Commissioner Thompson requested an explanation of the recharge basins and inquired if they were funded through a grant. Mr. Aguirre responded they were awarded an Arizona Water

Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) grant to test devices to accelerate surface water infiltration. Commissioner Thompson inquired if soil types have to be a certain consistency or a certain type for the returns. Mr. Aguirre responded no and stated they only dug test holes to verify what type of subsurface formation existed but there but nothing special was done or needed. He added that they are trying to determine if these can be credible recharge devices and not just infiltration. Commissioner Thompson inquired if mesquite removal was going to be mechanical. Mr. Aguirre responded no and they would like to show that putting pressure on mesquite through animals is a viable approach. Commissioner Thompson requested clarification if water conservation practices are planned to be implemented with AWPf funds. Mr. Sikdar responded there was an editorial error in the application and that all work and AWPf funding requested will be focused on riparian restoration and none of the budget and scope focus on any water conservation practices. Chairman Held requested clarification about the drainage plan for a nearby building that was included with the grant application. Mr. Sikdar responded that was the drainage plan for the head cut on the property to the north, and the drainage plan was only included in order to show the magnitude and impact of the head cut they want to address through some of the proposed practices, and they plan to engage with the Arizona Department of Transportation and adjacent properties to get funds to leverage these AWPf funds. Ms. Riggs added that there are no buildings involved with this project. Commissioner John Ladd stated that Cochise County and CCRN have been at the front of all their conservation efforts, this program works and fits the ticket for everything that they have been trying to do, and he was impressed with it and thinks it's a good one.

WPF2606 - Hassayampa Lake Riparian Restoration and Enhancement

Deanna Randall with the Hassayampa Lake Recreation Association, and Jason Elliot from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. Commissioner Thompson inquired what their plan was for public outreach. Mr. Elliot responded they would like to organize community meetings, distribute flyers, use message boards, go to other community meetings, engage face to face and electronically with emails, organize things like trash pickups, and actually just try to help educate the public and let them know about what their projects are about so that community can see the results of this project. He also stated that low impact development really lends itself to community participation because they were not involving heavy equipment. Commissioner Thompson inquired if they are bringing in rock for the Zuni bowl construction and how they came up with the with the budget amount for that activity. Mr. Elliot responded they would have to bring in rock, and the funding amount for the Zuni bowls was based on work previously done on similar types of erosion control projects. Commissioner Thompson inquired how the budget was developed for the chip wattles. Mr. Elliot responded the pricing was derived from work with other landowners and the materials used are of higher quality, more robust, resist UV much better, and are longer lasting than the typical model you would see on the side of the road for a typical stormwater control feature. He also stated the source material would be wood chips instead of straw which would use local resources to reduce fuel loads and not introducing straw which also has the potential to introduce invasive species, and there is a company in Paulden, AZ that will create the biochar with local materials for the wattles. Commissioner Blackmore inquired if the project will be adjacent to Hassayampa Lake. Mr. Elliot responded no and stated that it is less than ¼ mile away. Commissioner Blackmore inquired if the other local landowners in the area are involved with the project. Ms. Randall responded that all the landowners were on board. Commissioner Blackmore stated the US Forest Service has been doing controlled burns and brush control and inquired if they were involved with the project. Ms. Randall stated that she would like to get them on board since they are in the Firewise Community, but no work has ever been done there. Commissioner Blackmore inquired about the use of pine dams. Mr. Elliot responded that they would be using local pine logs from forest thinning efforts and be able to create temporary check dams that could retain silt and sediment and create an area for riparian habitat to develop. He further stated that

the Zuni bowls were protect the head cuts from advancing upstream and check dams would protect the Zuni bowls and retain that sediment. Commissioner Biesemeyer stated he is recusing himself from this discussion. Chairman Held commented that monitoring efforts were limited to the biochar area and inquired why it excludes the wattles and Zuni bowls and why there is no monitoring for those components. Mr. Elliot apologized for any confusion and responded that they would be monitoring all the features including the wattles, the silt captured behind the check dams, and the effectiveness of the Zuni bowls, in addition to the grass transects.

WPF2612 - Flow Study to Inform Riparian Restoration in Phoenix

Tricia Balluff and Chase Torrence both with City of Phoenix Office of Environmental Programs provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. Commissioner Blackmore inquired if they are visualizing running water through the whole 19 miles. Ms. Balluff responded no and that it will be like Rio Salado Phoenix where they have more habitat in some areas and some areas where they have a little bit less and the project will help inform what riparian restoration will look like with the altered flow regime of the river. Commissioner Blackmore inquired if the sand and gravel companies are affecting this effort. Ms. Balluff responded that they are trying to avoid impacting any active mining as much as possible and the Oeste project will be a long-term ecosystem phased project so the phasing of it is going to be very important when discussing the mining aspect. Chairman Held requested clarification that there were no actual on-the-ground restoration work or capital improvements proposed for this project. Ms. Balluff responded there would not be any on-the-ground restoration work as part of this project, but there is restoration work happening around the project but not part of the grant application. Chairman Held stated that this application will need to be considered by the Commission whether or not it qualifies for funding under the program because it is listed as a capital project, but does not fit as a capital project or feasibility study, and because it is only studying the flows it does not qualify as research project either. He further stated that the Commission cannot take action at this meeting since it is not listed on the agenda for that type of consideration and this will need to be discussed at the November 19th meeting to determine if this project actually qualifies for funding under the program.

WPF2607 - Upper Aravaipa Creek Watershed Restoration Demonstration Project

Garland Speight with the Arivaipa Watershed Conservation Alliance provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. There were no questions or comments from the Commission.

WPF2604 - Enhancing Rangeland and Riparian Health Along the Babocomari River

Elizabeth Boettcher with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and Catlow Shipeck with Watershed Management Group provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. Commissioner Biesemeyer stated that the grant application identified \$8,349 in volunteer labor was going to be provided by the Watershed Management Group but a letter of support was not included in the application and inquired if this funding was actually committed to the project. Mr. Shipeck responded that not providing a letter of support for the application was an oversight on his part but Watershed Management Group is committed to providing this match through volunteer labor from their regular engaging volunteers and other restoration practitioners. Commissioner Biesemeyer inquired on the unknown status of the \$20,000 grant that was identified to be used as match for this project. Ms. Boettcher responded that those funds were through an ADEQ 319 grant and they are still working on an agreement. Commissioner Blackmore inquired if the rock and the transport

equipment to get the rock to the project sites are part of the grant application budget. Mr. Shipeck responded yes. Commissioner Blackmore requested clarification on the issues and proposed treatments for the upper floodplain of the Emmerson Ranch. Mr. Shipeck responded that due to a historic diversion the channel is no longer in the historic valley bottom in one section so they would be installing a post vane to help spread out the water and get it to spill back into the valley bottom and that helps to take that concentrated flow and spread it over a larger area. He also stated that further downstream there is constrictive berm that was built in an old agricultural field so they would be putting notches into that burn to allow the flood waters to spill through the berm and back into historic flood plain areas. He further stated that all the floodplain areas have been overtaken by mesquite so they would be doing mesquite removal and grubbing and applying native grass seed mix to facilitate the restoration. Chairman Blackmore inquired if they would be using heavy equipment for this. Mr. Shipeck responded yes. Commissioner Blackmore there will be issues with planting sacaton plugs. Mr. Shipeck responded that the area was historically sacaton floodplain and it has become more dissected and the flow has become more concentrated in fewer channels versus being spread out across that valley bottom. He also stated they will be taking some of these sacaton clumps, breaking them up and using them as plugs to help get that water to spill back into adjacent flood plain area to wet more of that valley bottom. He further stated the goal is to slow that flow, spread it out, and have a longer wet period through the dry season to help with vegetation establishment and long-term health. Commissioner Blackmore inquired if they think that sacaton will spread too much in the future. Mr. Shipeck responded that in his experience sacaton is pretty limited to a certain soil type and valley bottom and they are great at erosion control, and their focus is reducing sediment from impacting the Babocomari River.

WPF2611 - Lower TAPCO River Access Point Tamarisk Removal and Monitoring

W. David Gressly, Executive Director, with Friends of the Verde River provided a verbal presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. There were no questions or comments from the Commission.

WPF2605 - Importance of Riparian Habitat to Wildlife in Relation to Wildfire Across the Sonoran Desert in Arizona: Opportunities for Conservation and Restoration

Jesse Lewis with Arizona State University provided a presentation on the grant application. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. There were no questions or comments from the Commission.

WPF2609 - Restoring the Gila River: Tamarisk Removal

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WPF2610 - Reclaiming the Gila: Invasive Removal for River Health

Cassandra Thomas provided a presentation on both grant applications at the same time since both projects are closely related but were submitted as two separate applications. Chairman Held asked for any questions or comments on the application and presentation. Commissioner Thompson inquired what would be required as part of the endangered species consultations. Mr. Teran responded that as part of implementing an AWP project there should not be any adverse effects to endangered species or designated critical habitats and staff has requested as part of the contract conditions to include consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service since the project area since endangered species may be present. Chairman Held commented that there can still be a taking of endangered species on privately owned lands and it would be better to go through consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for their guidance on project implementation. Commissioner Biesemeyer requested clarification if the Arizona Conservation Corp costs could be used as a cost share for the project. Mrs. Thomas responded no since they will be paid for their

work and are not volunteers. Commissioner Blackmore stated she read the comments provided by the San Carlos Apache Tribe asked Mrs. Thomas if she has spoken to the Tribe or if they have said anything about providing any in-kind help with this project. Mrs. Thomas responded that she has not but it was on her list to reach out to them. Chairman Held stated that his only real concerns about this project were that there is not a revegetation effort proposed which could lead to erosion issues or leaving the land open to additional invasive species. Mrs. Thomas stated that in discussions with a local nursery they informed her that it would require a lot of water maintain native vegetation on such a large acreage in a desert area, and she stated that they do not have a surface water right or the authority to pull that amount of water out of their personal wells to support it. Chairman Held stated that just planting native vegetation would not require a water right if the plants were not being irrigated or have surface water specifically diverted to sustain it. Commissioner Blackmore inquired if the project was located within an Arizona Department of Water Resource Active Management Area. Chairman Held responded no.

CALL FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Held called for any future agenda items. Chairman Held requested an agenda item to discuss grant application WPF2612 - Flow Study to Inform Riparian Restoration in Phoenix and requested an agenda item to discuss if *E. coli* would be considered an environmental containment under AWPf Commission policies. Mr. Teran requested an agenda item to discuss the upcoming AWPf grant application guidelines triennial review process.

FUTURE MEETING DATE(S)

The next Commission meeting was set for November 19, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. at the Arizona Department of Water Resources.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chairman Held made a call to the public. No public comments were made.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Blackmore made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with a second from Commissioner Biesemeyer. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion.

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Commissioner Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Commissioner Rolando Flores	Aye
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner John Ladd	Aye
Commissioner Tina Thompson	Aye

The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND COMMISSION

Business Meeting – November 19, 2025

Arizona Department of Water Resources

Thunder River Conference Room

1110 W. Washington St., Ste. 310

Phoenix, AZ 85007

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Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex

Meeting Number (Access Code): 2532 981 7505

Meeting Password: A4hPGqtd22

1-415-655-0001 US Toll

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Commission Voting Members Present

Rodney Held – Chairman

Stephen Turcotte – Vice-Chairman

Brian Biesemeyer

Shelley Blackmore

Pat Jacobs

Frank Krentz

Arizona Water Protection Fund Staff

Lizette Fuentes

Reuben Teran

Commission Voting Members Absent

Rolando Flores

John Ladd

Tina Thompson

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodney Held called the meeting of the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF) Commission to order at 10:01 a.m.

COMMISSIONER MEMBER ROLL CALL

Mr. Reuben Teran called the roll of the AWPF Commission. Commissioners present at the time of roll call included Chairman Rodney Held, Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte (via Webex), Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer, Commissioner Shelley Blackmore (via Webex), Commissioner Pat Jacobs (via Webex), and Commissioner Frank Krentz (via Webex). A quorum of voting Commission members was present.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chairman Held made a call to the public. No public comments were made.

PROJECT CLOSEOUT PRESENTATION. AWPf GRANT 20-207WPF: HARRENBURG WASH ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Liz Krug, Assistant Director, and Geoffrey Gross, Construction Manager, both with Coconino County Parks and Recreation, and Cathy Scudieri with Natural Channel Design, provided a presentation on the results of the project. Chairman Held asked for any comments or questions from Commission members.

Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer stated that he appreciated the clarification regarding what the County was going to continue doing related to this project and thanked them for the presentation.

PROJECT CLOSEOUT PRESENTATION. AWPf GRANT 20-202WPF: GILA VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT SYSTEM OPTIMIZATION PHASE I

Amy Herbert with the Gila Valley Natural Resource Conservation District provided a verbal presentation of the project results. Chairman Held asked for any comments or questions from Commission members. Commissioner Shelley Blackmore offered condolences for the project contractor who passed away.

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND PROGRAM UPDATES

Commissioner Conflict of Interest Notice (Chairman Held moved up this agenda item)

Mr. Teran provided a reminder that if any Commission members have or believe they may have a conflict of interest with any of the grant applications submitted for the fiscal year 2026 grant cycle that will be discussed at today’s meeting to please submit a conflict-of-interest memo to staff. Mr. Teran stated for the record he has received two conflict of interest memos, one from Chairman Held and one from Commissioner Biesemeyer.

FY 2026 GRANT APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

The Commission will review and discuss AWPf Commission Policies and AWPf Grant Application Manual guidelines to determine if projects proposed within waters, or in the vicinity of waters, containing E. coli are eligible for funding with AWPf funds.

Chairman Held indicated that he had misinterpreted staff’s review about *E. coli* as a potential issue as an environmental contaminant. He stated at the last meeting he requested the Executive Director get direction from AWPf legal staff if *E. coli* was considered an environmental contaminant. He further stated that legal guidance referred to *E. coli* as a biological contaminant and not an environmental contaminant and asked the Commission if they felt there were any concerns or if any action needed to be taken. No Commissioners expressed any concerns and there was no further discussion or action taken.

AWPF Commission Policies and AWPf Grant Application Manual guidelines discussion to determine if application WPF2612 - Flow Study to Inform Riparian Restoration in Phoenix is eligible for AWPf funding under the Capital Project category.

Chairman Held stated the project was submitted under the Capital Projects category, and capital projects are those that are doing some type of on the ground activity with some exemptions such as a feasibility study project. He further stated that the proposed project is just data gathering and therefore was not eligible for funding, and in addition does not qualify as a research project. Chairman Held called for any comments or discussion on the agenda item. Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer stated that he does not believe this application qualifies as a capital project, with concurrence from Commissioner Shelley Blackmore. Commissioner Frank Krentz made a motion to disqualify grant application WPF2612 – Flow Study to Inform Riparian Restoration in Phoenix, with a second from Commissioner Blackmore. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Commissioner Shelley Blackmore	Aye

Commissioner Pat Jacobs Aye
Commissioner Frank Krentz Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND PROGRAM UPDATES (continued)

Projected Funds Available to Grant Update

Mr. Teran stated at the last meeting he provided a fiscal year 2026 projected funds balance out to June 30, 2026 and wanted to go over it one more time in case there were any questions. Projected fund revenues for fiscal year 2026 are \$4,020,011; projected fund expenditures for fiscal year 2026 are \$2,518,861 which includes \$1,992,499 of existing grant obligations; and the projected ending fund balance for fiscal year 2026 is \$1,501,150. The projected unobligated fund grant fund balance is \$1,408,821; the projected fiscal year 2027 administration and support costs is \$224,888; and the staff funding recommendation for fiscal year 2026 grants is \$1,180,000. Chairman Held asked for any questions from the Commission. There were no questions. Commissioner Krentz made a motion to set the fiscal year 2026 grant awards funding limit to \$1,180,000, with a second from Commissioner Biesemeyer. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. Commissioner Krentz stated that while the Commission is setting this funding limit, he recommended the Commission try their best to use all those funds in this grant cycle to show representation that they are putting this money out the door.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 GRANT CYCLE AWARDS

Chairman Held stated as was done last year he would like to have a round table discussion on each application before the final individual Commissioner ranking priorities were provided for the tracking spreadsheet and asked if any Commissioners were opposed to this. There was no opposition. Commissioner Biesemeyer requested clarification that the Commission would not be discussing application WPF2612 – Flow Study to Inform Riparian Restoration in Phoenix. Chairman Held responded yes.

WPF2601 - Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Holistic Management for Watershed and Riparian Health
Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Blackmore stated she supports their intent to use this project as demonstration and that it is a very good project but did have concerns about the amount of funding requested and why the cost was so high. Commissioner Jacobs stated the subject matter of this project is important to him and stormwater control will be a very important subject to understand and address, and commented that this has been done in a very proficient manner with a number of different agencies and professional organizations involved. Commissioner Biesemeyer stated the subject very is appropriate but was not sure of the location. He also stated that when he prioritizes things given the limited amount of funds his priorities always go to actual work to restore and protect our wetlands and riparian health. He also stated that in his prioritization anything that was a demonstration or such, given the limited funds were just put lower, not because they aren't needed, but because there are limited funds and thinks the Commission owes it to the public to do as much to restore and protect as we can. Chairman Held stated that he shares Commissioner Blackmore's concerns about the project labor costs because in the application the labor costs range from \$200 to \$315 per hour which is more than double and triple the labor hours for other projects. He also stated that in comparison to other applications the actual labor costs are extremely high for this project, which were concerning for him, and that he also ranked this one lower because there are other projects that actually have direct benefits to rivers and riparian habitats and wetlands.

WPF2602 - Allen Lake Wet Meadow Restoration Project

Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Blackmore stated she has a real problem with this project because they made a huge mistake on the initial project done years ago and was amazed that they dug down into the lakebed. The other issue she had was they really didn't know if they were going to be able to restore that clay layer or if it was going to hold water, and commented that the federal government needs to fix this on their own and not have Arizona fix their mistake. Chairman Held stated that he also shares concerns that the Forest Service and Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) initially created the problem but did note that AGFD was contributing \$475,000 to the project as match which gave him some comfort. He commented he wasn't sure if there was a guaranteed fix but in the applicant's presentation they seemed fairly confident. His other concern with the project was that it did not have a monitoring component to demonstrate the benefits of the project.

WPF2603 - Cordelia Water and Forest Resiliency Project

Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Blackmore stated this work is something that needs to be done sooner than later, the area is really overgrown and it's a wreck waiting to happen, and that she would give this project a really high mark. Chairman Held stated that he is recused from this project so he won't be making any comments. Commissioner Biesemeyer concurred that this was a needed project and commented that he really like the large amount of matching funds that are being put into it, it is a good investment of taxpayer funds when you have many other sources of revenue coming in to do a lot of work, and he likes this project.

WPF2604 - Enhancing Rangeland and Riparian Health Along the Babocomari River

Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Blackmore commented that this kind of work is needed all over the state on different ranches, it's hard to get funding to do this kind of work to keep things from degrading, they are wanting quite a bit of money for it, it's something that would take a few years to restore itself but projects like this are a good thing, this project would help the San Pedro River, and likes this project. Chairman Held commented that he also likes this project, it does support the AWP core mission, and thinks this project has the potential to improve water quality conditions in the San Pedro River.

WPF2605 - Importance of Riparian Habitat to Wildlife in Relation to Wildfire Across the Sonoran Desert in Arizona: Opportunities for Conservation and Restoration

Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Jacobs stated he always like research projects, but was not clear on the connection to the conservation they mentioned in the title and how this would be applied to surface water conservation and restoration. Commissioner Blackmore commented that this is something that should be common sense and people should know this, and she didn't see how this directly relates to our water protection fund qualifications at this point. Commissioner Biesemeyer stated that he echoed Commissioner Blackmore's comments and this study just doesn't meet his priorities to getting things done.

WPF2606 - Hassayampa Lake Riparian Restoration and Enhancement

Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Krentz commented that towards the end of the staff review document makes reference to Commission policy 55.2. section 3 because of potential contaminants and legal issues that might arise towards the Water Protection Fund and he was wondering if there was any resolve to that in order to move forward, and if there wasn't any resolve to that it would not

be in the best interest of the Water Protection Fund to not rank this on as high as other projects available. Chairman Held stated that the Commission held a discussion at the November 5th meeting and the gentleman from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality stated the mine tailings were fully remediated and the Commissioners present at that meeting were comfortable with that and did not request any further review action at that time. He stated he would be happy to have that discussion again now if there are others that are uncomfortable with moving forward knowing the mine tailings have been fully remediated. Commissioner Krentz stated that he believes there are other projects that would have less potential future impacts that could move above this in the ranking process and just wanted to revisit his position on that. He stated that his main issue is that even though the mine tailings could be cleared, funding opportunities for other projects would make more sense for potential prevention of future issues for the Water Protection Fund. Commissioner Blackmore commented that this project consists of several private landowners and commended them for trying to save their properties, the Prescott National Forest has been doing controlled burns on different kinds of project all around the Prescott area, and while it's a good project she believes it needs to be ranked lower at this point.

WPF2607 - Upper Aravaipa Creek Watershed Restoration Demonstration Project

Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Krentz commented that he liked this project, the fund request is reasonable for the outcomes and is pretty good on the matching funds side of it, the on-the-ground educational component is a good return value for the Water Protection Fund dollar, and thinks this a very good project to fund and is highly supportive of this project. Commissioner Blackmore commented it is a simple project and will teach people to do something simply and it works, concurred with Commissioner Krentz that the matching funds are there and the project was not expensive, and thinks this is very good project. Chairman Held commented that he really like this project since it is low cost and meets the program's core mission and there is a lot of value for this project.

WPF2609 - Restoring the Gila River: Tamarisk Removal

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WPF2610 - Reclaiming the Gila: Invasive Removal for River Health

Chairman Held stated these two projects are directly related and both have the same applicant, with WPF2609 as a single landowner and WPF2610 is the same project but it's expanded onto multiple properties with similar work across a larger area. He also stated that the Commission can talk about both these projects at the same time. He then asked for comments on both applications. Commissioner Krentz commented that his biggest concerns for both projects were the comments provided by the San Carlos Apache Tribe requesting that there not be any burning and to haul out the materials. He also inquired if this was brought up during the application presentation. Chairman Held stated he believed the question was asked but wasn't sure there was any acknowledgement that they wouldn't move forward with the burning. Commissioner Biesemeyer commented that his recollection was that they would try to meet those requirements, and Mr. Teran added that it may have been cost-prohibitive or a concern if they had to haul out the materials as part of the existing budget. Chairman Held stated that the applicant intended to meet with the Tribe, but didn't know who asked that question or recall their specific answer. Commissioner Blackmore stated she asked the question and the applicant's response was that the next thing they were going to do was to approach the Tribe about this. She also commented that the tamarisk has pretty much ruined their properties but they are trying to fix it, the Tribe's letter had quite a few requests, and had a question if the Tribe is going to help in some way. She further commented that she would put these projects way down on the list. Commissioner Krentz commented that he likes both these projects because tamarisk is invasive to our watersheds, but does realize that both projects are requesting a high amount that could take funds from other good projects in this application process. He further stated that he would like to see

one or both of these projects at least start moving forward, and if one gets started there is potential for further outreach and other people could get involved to expand beyond the visible window of the current funding. Chairman Held clarified that the applicant did state that they were only seeking funding for one of these projects, because WPF2609 is on the individual landowner's property and WPF2610 includes the same property as WPF2609 plus other private landowners' property. Commissioner Krentz stated he was not aware of that and appreciated the clarification. Chairman Held stated that he likes these projects because they meet the program's core mission, but his concern is that they are both very large-scale projects and there are no revegetation efforts. He also expressed concern about bulldozing tamarisk and just leaving bare ground without any type of vegetation, and had hoped that they would have consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on this project as their input would have been helpful and given him more comfort on spending state dollars to clear that many acres of tamarisk which could impact threatened and endangered species habitat.

WPF2611 - Lower TAPCO River Access Point Tamarisk Removal and Monitoring

Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Biesemeyer commented that this is the type of funding AWPf has supported in the past, agreed with Commissioner Krentz that tamarisk removal was an important feature to restore our rivers, and thought this was a good and valid project. Chairman Held noted that he believed this one had environmental contaminants and the Commission was told that the slag pile was from Clarkdale smelter and 500 meters downstream from the treatment area, and there weren't any concerns that were raised at the November 5th meeting by the Commissioners who were present, but did want to bring this up again in case there are other concerns from Commissioners who were not present at that meeting. Commissioner Blackmore commented that Friends of the Verde River really have their ducks in a row, they work really hard on the Verde River, and this is a good project. She also commented that they have been awarded funds numerous times, the fact that Freeport McMoran owns the property they can very easily pay for this, and she would rank this project lower down to get other projects a hand up in this case, and expressed concern that the Town of Clarkdale does not put anything into it. Chairman Held commented he believes this project is on leased land. Commissioner Blackmore stated that Freeport McMoran owns the property, but the Town of Clarkdale has a lease on it. Chairman Held commented that this is a really good project that meets the AWPf core mission and thinks it will help with water quality issues, but expressed concern that they didn't do a good description of their revegetation efforts and only gave a statement that they were going to spread native seed at the restoration sites.

WPF2613 - Bodaway/Gap Colorado River Riparian Restoration Project

Chairman Held asked for comments on the application. Commissioner Biesemeyer commented that he ranked the last project and this one high since it is about restoring native habitat through the Colorado River, AWPf has funded these projects in the past and they have been successful, and this project fits in next to places that have already been restored. Commissioner Jacobs commented that he echoes Commissioner Biesemeyer's comments and thinks it is a worthy and needed project. Chairman Held commented that this project was submitted last year for consideration and felt that the applicant took all of the Commission's comments seriously, incorporated them, and made adjustments to the application this year and he was very impressed with that. He also commented that he thinks this project meets the AWPf core mission and ranked this project as his top priority for this grant cycle.

Chairman Held requested each Commission member to provide an individual project ranking of the applications from 1 to 11 to help establish an overall priority list of the Commission’s support for each application and reminded Commissioners with recusals to not provide any ranking for those projects. Mr. Teran stated that two Commissioners who were not able to attend today’s meeting did provide their individual rankings before the meeting, and inquired if those should be considered as part of today’s meeting. Chairman Held responded no since they were not going to be voting today, and inquired if any Commissioners disagreed with that decision. No comments were made.

Mr. Teran proceeded with tracking each Commission member’s individual application support ranking, then those totals were sorted to reflect the collective priorities of the Commission members present. The results of the ranking identified the applications in the following priority order:

- WPF2613 - Bodaway/Gap Colorado River Riparian Restoration Project
- WPF2603 - Cordelia Water and Forest Resiliency Project
- WPF2604 - Enhancing Rangeland and Riparian Health Along the Babocomari River
- WPF2607 - Upper Aravaipa Creek Watershed Restoration Demonstration Project
- WPF2609 - Restoring the Gila River: Tamarisk Removal
- WPF2606 - Hassayampa Lake Riparian Restoration and Enhancement
- WPF2611 - Lower TAPCO River Access Point Tamarisk Removal and Monitoring
- WPF2601 - Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Holistic Management for Watershed and Riparian Health
- WPF2602 - Allen Lake Wet Meadow Restoration Project
- WPF2610 - Reclaiming the Gila: Invasive Removal for River Health
- WPF2605 - Importance of Riparian Habitat to Wildlife in Relation to Wildfire Across the Sonoran Desert in Arizona: Opportunities for Conservation and Restoration

Chairman Held stated the Commission will start with the project that was ranked highest, he would entertain a motion to approve and a second, they will have a discussion, and then a vote through verbal count. He also stated that any staff recommendations made in the administrative review will be added to the grant award contracts.

Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte made a motion to approve application WPF2613 - Bodaway/Gap Colorado River Riparian Restoration Project, with a second from Commissioner Jacobs. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Frank Krentz | Aye |
| Commissioner Pat Jacobs | Aye |
| Commissioner Shelley Blackmore | Aye |
| Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer | Aye |
| Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte | Aye |
| Chairman Rodney Held | Aye |

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Biesemeyer made a motion to approve WPF2603 - Cordelia Water and Forest Resiliency Project, with a second from Commissioner Blackmore. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Commissioner Frank Krentz	Aye
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Chairman Rodney Held	Recused

The motion passed and one Commissioner recused himself from voting.

Commissioner Biesemeyer made a motion to approve application WPF2604 - Enhancing Rangeland and Riparian Health Along the Babocomari River, with a second from Vice-Chairman Turcotte. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Commissioner Frank Krentz	Aye
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Chairman Rodney Held	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Krentz made a motion to approve application WPF2607 - Upper Aravaipa Creek Watershed Restoration Demonstration Project, with a second from Vice-Chairman Turcotte. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Commissioner Frank Krentz	Aye
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Chairman Rodney Held	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

The Commission's remaining available to grant fund balance at this time was \$185,436. The Commission reviewed the following grant applications and determined there were not enough funds available to support any of the following applications:

- WPF2609 - Restoring the Gila River: Tamarisk Removal
- WPF2606 - Hassayampa Lake Riparian Restoration and Enhancement
- WPF2611 - Lower TAPCO River Access Point Tamarisk Removal and Monitoring
- WPF2601 - Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Holistic Management for Watershed and Riparian Health
- WPF2602 - Allen Lake Wet Meadow Restoration Project
- WPF2610 - Reclaiming the Gila: Invasive Removal for River Health

Commissioner Biesemeyer made a motion to approve application WPF2605 - Importance of Riparian Habitat to Wildlife in Relation to Wildfire Across the Sonoran Desert in Arizona: Opportunities for Conservation and Restoration, with a second from Commissioner Krentz. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Commissioner Frank Krentz	Nay
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner Shelley Blackmore	Nay
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Nay
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Nay
Chairman Rodney Held	Nay

The motion failed.

Grant applications funded for fiscal year 2026 were:

WPF2603 - Cordelia Water and Forest Resiliency Project	\$350,000
WPF2604 - Enhancing Rangeland and Riparian Health Along the Babocomari River	\$372,979
WPF2607 - Upper Aravaipa Creek Watershed Restoration Demonstration Project	\$ 43,541
WPF2613 - Bodaway/Gap Colorado River Riparian Restoration Project	<u>\$228,044</u>
Total Awarded: \$994,564	

ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND LOGO

Mr. Teran stated at the June 2025 Commission meeting he presented two updated versions of the AWPf program logo and the Commission had requested that they be presented again for review and approval at a subsequent meeting. Mr. Teran then presented an updated version of the full color AWPf logo developed by Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) Communications team that had very minor graphic changes and also presented a monochromatic version of the AWPf logo also developed by the ADWR Communications team. Chairmen Held asked for any comments from Commissioners. No comments were made. Commissioner Biesemeyer made a motion to adopt both 2025 versions of the AWPf logo, one full color and one monochrome, with a second from Commissioner Blackmore. Chairman Held called for a discussion on the motion. No comments were made. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion:

Commissioner Frank Krentz	Aye
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Chairman Rodney Held	Aye

The motion passed unanimously.

AWPF PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES TRIENNIAL REVIEW PROCESS

Mr. Teran informed the Commission that per State Statute the AWPf is required to go through a public review process of the grant application guidelines every three years, and the next one should be taking place in calendar year 2026. He also informed them of the statutory notifications required, the guidelines for

items requiring comments, and what actions were taken during the last review cycle. Commissioner Biesemeyer requested adding the last five years of grant applicants to the notification list. Chairman Held called for any other comments or suggestions from the Commission. Chairman Held inquired when the process would be completed. Mr. Teran responded that there is a 45-day public comment period and with all other activities he anticipated the outreach portion would be completed by mid-March 2026.

CALL FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chairman Held requested an update on the Triennial Applications Guidelines review process.

FUTURE MEETING DATE(S)

The next Commission meeting was set for Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at the Arizona Department of Water Resources office.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Chairman Held made a call to the public. Mr. Ricardo Aguirre addressed the Commission and stated that his grant application WPF2601 - Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Holistic Management for Watershed and Riparian Health ranked high with some Commissioners and low on with others, and they would be happy to clarify any concerns and lower their funding request in the spirit of Commissioner Krentz’s desire to spend grant funds and get them out the door.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Jacobs made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with a second from Commissioner Biesemeyer. Chairman Held called for a vote on the motion.

Chairman Rodney Held	Aye
Vice-Chairman Stephen Turcotte	Aye
Commissioner Brian Biesemeyer	Aye
Commissioner Shelley Blackmore	Aye
Commissioner Pat Jacobs	Aye
Commissioner Frank Krentz	Aye

The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

STATUS OF ACTIVE AWPf GRANTS

as of March 10, 2026

22-213WPF: Dye Ranch Erosion Control and Wetland Improvement Project

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department
AWPF Grant Award: \$76,945
Total Paid to Date: \$69,669.67
Contract Expiration Date: December 31, 2026

The project started as planned with all permitting, authorizations, project related subcontract agreements, and project work plans (erosion control, wetland restoration, and monitoring) being complete and pre-construction monitoring completed by May 2022. However, due to active monsoon seasons continuing into the fall during both 2022 and 2023, ground conditions were too wet for any work to take place. A grant award contract amendment was completed in September 2023 that extended the contract expiration date to December 2025 and accounted for possible field work delays as part of the scope of work. Restoration activities were finally implemented in the summer of 2024. The Grantee had initially proposed 9 headcuts for repair, but upon inspection in June 2024, new headcuts had developed at the downstream end and they ended up repairing 13 headcuts total. After each erosion control structure was installed, native seed was spread and raked over all disturbed soil and in between rocks. The Grantee had proposed to maintain 4 wetlands but ended up with 2 bonus wetlands (associated with headcuts #4 and #5) for a total of 6 wetlands. Following the restoration activities, monitoring site visits were conducted in September 2024 and April 2025 to assess the improvements. The inlets and outlets of each wetland continue to be monitored annually and armored with rock to address headcuts and prevent erosion, and to protect each wetland from being damaged by the many elk that use the area. In addition, fence work maintenance continues in multiple areas along the perimeter which includes replacing bent stays, repairing the fence where it is down, and cutting and removing downed trees. In June 2025, the Grantee seeded about 13lbs of a native grass seed mix to the disturbed soil at the channel along headcuts 2, 3, 4, 5, and wetlands 1-4. All planned restoration work has been completed. Due to unfavorable habitat conditions Northern Leopard frogs could not be translocated in 2025 and the Grantee requested a 1-year contract extension to December 2026 to support this action being implemented during the agreement's timeframe. If habitat conditions are favorable, the Grantee intends to translocate and release Northern leopard frogs at the project site in 2026.

22-214WPF: Habitat Restoration in the Gila River Corridor

Grantee: Gila Watershed Partnership of Arizona
AWPF Grant Award: \$97,455
Total Paid to Date: \$0
Contract Expiration Date: October 31, 2026

The overall status of the project is not clear, and the grant award contract is out of compliance with 20 past due deliverables. State Historic Office Preservation clearance has been obtained, but the Grantee has yet to provide copies of any other necessary or applicable permits, authorizations, and/or clearances for the project. Deliverables submitted to date include a public outreach plan and riparian restoration and monitoring & adaptive management plans for 2022-2023. The Grantee was not able to implement any work activities during the 2022 or 2023 work seasons due to the unclear status of environmental compliance and permits, monitoring and restoration plans being submitted late, and the departure of the project manager from their organization. Due to delays in the project, the Commission authorized a 1-year grant award contract extension to October 31, 2026. The review and signature process for this amendment started in March 2023 with no reply or comments on the draft agreement from the Grantee until September 2023. After several more communication delays and issues with mailing hard copies of the amendment out for signature, a grant award contract amendment was finally executed in February 2024. Since the contract extension was authorized there still have been no deliverables submitted. Staff was finally able to communicate with the Grantee per email correspondence dated February 6, 2025, and they stated they have been moving forward with implementing

invasive species treatments and planting native vegetation with other funding sources. As of February 14, 2025, staff has not been able to speak directly to or had any further communication with the Grantee to better understand the situation or gather more information than what has been provided in this update. Staff reached out again to the Grantee via telephone/voicemail and email the first week of October 2025 and again on February 18, 2026, with still no phone or email responses from the Grantee.

23-216WPF: Timberline-Upper Little Colorado River Watershed Improvement Project

Grantee: Arizona Association of Conservation Districts
AWPF Grant Award: \$261,000
Total Paid to Date: \$156,000
Contract Expiration Date: April 30, 2026

The Grantee completed the permitting process for the project, the vegetation monitoring plan, pre-treatment monitoring activities, and the Treatment Area 1 & Treatment Area 2 brush thinning activities. Per email from the Grantee on December 18, 2025, the remaining post-treatment monitoring report and the Treatment Area 3 report had not yet been completed due to project delays, and the message indicated their intent to request a contract extension. Staff reached out to the Grantee via email on March 3, 2026, and again via telephone to get any additional details regarding the project delays or contract extension request. On March 10, 2026 the grantee provided a brief update on project status indicating that project delays were due to regional fire restrictions and subsequent weather conditions and they also made a request for a contract extension to August 30, 2026. The agreement is set to expire on April 30, 2026, so any approved contract amendment will need to be completed ASAP before the expiration date.

23-217WPF: Becker Lake Wildlife Area: Little Colorado River Habitat Improvement Project

Grantee: Arizona Game and Fish Department
AWPF Grant Award: \$388,075
Total Paid to Date: \$369,349.20
Contract Expiration Date: March 31, 2027

Permitting and development of the project monitoring plans were completed by September 2023 and construction on the project began in October 2023. Restoration activities including streambank soil bioengineering, recreational trail decommissioning/re-alignment, floodplain enhancements, and revegetation actions including riparian sodmat placement and willow pole plantings in the streambank restoration sites have been completed. As of February 2024, the project construction and restoration actions were complete, and the Grantee has begun the post construction annual monitoring program for the remainder of the project agreement term. To date all restoration practices are functioning as intended, deliverables and reports are up to date, and the last deliverable to be submitted is the project final report due December 2026.

23-218WPF: Protecting and Restoring Habitat and Surface Flow in Tanque Verde Creek

Grantee: Watershed Management Group
AWPF Grant Award: \$195,246
Total Paid to Date: \$147,861.62
Contract Expiration Date: December 31, 2026

Permitting and project planning was completed by July 2023. Summer and fall 2023 - 2025 activities have continued to focus on removing invasive Arundo utilizing project staff and volunteers and implementing project monitoring activities. The Grantee has also completed construction of four stormwater and erosion control projects through volunteer workshops in the Forty Niner Country Club area and Lakes at Castle Rock neighborhood, in partnerships with local resident volunteers, the 49er HOA, Pima County Regional Flood Control District and organizational volunteer members. Other activities completed during the stormwater and erosion control projects included invasive weed removal and native tree and seed plantings. Things are on

track to complete the project and submit the final report by October 2026.

24-219WPF: Big Sandy NRCd Improving Watersheds Through Restoration Projects

Grantee: Big Sandy Natural Resource Conservation District
AWPF Grant Award: \$229,698
Total Paid to Date: \$0
Contract Expiration Date: February 28, 2027

The Grantee gathered information requested by the Commission as part of the grant award contract conditions to specifically identify and justify 10 locations where water storage tanks will be replaced, and a grant award contract was executed in August 2024. AWPf staff was notified in December 2024 that 2 of the 10 project locations identified already had the necessary water storage tanks in place, so an amendment to the agreement was executed to identify 2 new project locations. Correspondence from the Grantee in May 2025 indicated that Task 1 has been completed and reports were going to be submitted. No other deliverables were submitted until March 10, 2026, and the progress report submitted included a copy of the executed project subcontractor agreement; however, the date the agreement was executed was not clear. Based on the recently submitted progress report it appears the grantee has ordered the tank replacement supplies but has not yet begun construction activities. Past due deliverables currently include a pre-tank replacement monitoring report, a detailed tank construction report, and a post tank replacement monitoring report.

24-221WPF: Pine Canyon Restoration and Watershed Protection Project

Grantee: National Forest Foundation
AWPF Grant Award: \$350,000
Total Paid to Date: \$180,625.70
Contract Expiration Date: October 31, 2026

A grant award contract was executed in June 2024, and the Grantee has completed the permitting process, selected a contractor to implement hazardous fuel reduction and watershed restoration plans, and is currently implementing the project. In February 2025 AWPf staff was notified by the Grantee that they have only been able to complete approximately 143 acres of the planned 177 acres of hazardous fuel thinning and were not able to finish treating the remaining approximately 34 acres until fall 2025 near the time when grant award contract would expire. The Grantee requested a contract extension to October 2026 that would allow time to complete the proposed treatments and reporting requirements for the project. An interim progress report for activities from July 2025 to December 2025 indicated that the acres treated are still the same (AWPF supported acres treated: 95.6 acres; matching funds acres treated: 47.7 acres = total acres treated: 143.3 acres), with the remaining acres to be treated during winter 2025-2026. The last progress report deliverable documenting hazardous fuels reductions for the project is due at the end of March 2026, and the project final report is due in July 2026.

24-222WPF: Verde River Access Point Restoration

Grantee: Friends of the Verde River
AWPF Grant Award: \$555,000
Total Paid to Date: \$50,000 (advance payment)
Contract Expiration Date: January 31, 2029

A grant award contract was executed in June 2024. To date the Grantee has submitted the 2024 & 2025 Riparian Restoration Monitoring, Invasive Vegetation Treatment and Native Plant Revegetation, and River User Outreach and Volunteer Plans, and has started implementing invasive vegetation treatments at the Beasley project site. Partial Recreation Management and Erosion Reduction Plans have been submitted and the project designs for the Skidmore Access Point have been completed. In November 2025 Commission approved a change in the scope of work to remove the access point restoration at the Homestead site and

instead add another recreational access restoration point at the Beasley project site. The designs and engineering for the three remaining rock mat access points still need to be developed by the US Forest Service.

24-223WPF: West Turkey Creek Watershed Resiliency Project

Grantee: Cuenca Los Ojos
AWPF Grant Award: \$246,750
Total Paid to Date: \$49,350 (advance payment)
Contract Expiration Date: June 30, 2027

Although there was a delay getting the project started due to a change in project personnel and a grant award contract being executed, the Grantee has hired a project manager to administer the grant and project activities. The Grantee has been coordinating with the US Forest Service archaeologist to ensure the scope of work for the archaeological survey is in accordance with regulations and GIS work has been implemented to create the data layers necessary for the cultural resources survey. The Grantee will be obtaining bids from qualified contractors to complete the archaeological survey, but the planned Lidar Analysis part of the project is currently behind schedule. The Grantee has also begun coordination with Watershed Artisans, the contractor that will be leading the training and educational workshop to identify areas for hands-on demonstrations at the San Bernardino Ranch.

25-224WPF: Verde River and Oak Creek Riparian Restoration

Grantee: Friends of the Verde River
AWPF Grant Award: \$249,373
Total Paid to Date: \$49,874 (advance payment)
Contract Expiration Date: January 31, 2028

The Grantee has completed the invasive plant monitoring plan, invasive plant treatment plan, public outreach plan, and monitoring implementation report for 2025. Invasive plant removal actions are underway for the three restoration sites with deliverables for those actions due in April 2026.

25-225WPF: WNRCD Lower San Pedro Restoration Project

Grantee: Winkelman Natural Resources Conservation District
AWPF Grant Award: \$79,963
Total Paid to Date: \$0
Contract Expiration Date: March 31, 2028

There were delays getting a grant award contract executed due to coordination between the Grantee, AWPf staff and the Arizona Department of Water Resources to determine the status of the existing well and any appurtenant water rights associated with the project location properties, what steps may be necessary if a water right will be needed for this project, and how this may be incorporated into the scope of work for a grant award contract. A grant award contract was finally executed in August 2025, and project implementation plans and a pre-treatment vegetation monitoring report have been submitted. Deliverables for the invasive species treatments are not due until May 2026; however, it is not clear if any on-the-ground restoration actions are currently being implemented since subcontract agreements for invasive species removal, native revegetation establishment, and a water use agreement for water to be used for native plant irrigation have not yet been submitted.

25-226WPF: Little Green Valley Fen Restoration Phase 2 Implementation

Grantee: National Forest Foundation
AWPF Grant Award \$250,530
Total Paid to Date: \$0
Contract Expiration Date: June 30, 2027

A grant award contract was executed in May 2025, and all permitting requirements are complete. The grantee initiated a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to procure a project subcontractor for the restoration activities, and the site restoration plan design deliverables were submitted as part of that RFP process. The Grantee had to navigate varying start dates after having to reschedule their intended Fall 2025 start date due to the federal government shutdown, but the restoration activities are scheduled begin on March 16, 2026.

***26-227WPF: Cordelia Water and Forest Resiliency Project**

Grantee: Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District
AWPF Grant Award \$350,000

As part of the grant application submission the Grantee did request to have modified general provision agreement language. The proposed modifications were received on February 27, 2026, and staff is moving forward with assessing the proposed changes and drafting a grant award contract. No other information to report at this time.

***26-228WPF: Enhancing Rangeland and Riparian Health Along the Babocomari River**

Grantee: Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
AWPF Grant Award \$372,979

Staff is currently negotiating a grant award contract with the Grantee. No other information to report at this time.

***26-229WPF: Upper Aravaipa Creek Watershed Restoration Demonstration Project**

Grantee: Aravaipa Watershed Conservation Alliance
AWPF Grant Award \$250,530

Staff is currently negotiating a grant award contract with the Grantee. No other information to report at this time.

*** 26-230WPF: Bodaway/Gap Colorado River Riparian Restoration Project**

Grantee: Grand Canyon Wildlands Council
AWPF Grant Award \$ 228,044
Total Paid to Date: \$0
Contract Expiration Date: June 30, 2027

The Grantee submitted a project access and authorization agreement with the Navajo Nation as part of a contract condition for the grant award, and the grant award contract language was finalized on February 26, 2026. Shortly after the agreement was sent out for signature, staff was notified that the grantee's Executive Director and signatory for the agreement was no longer with the organization. When a grant award contract signatory is identified staff will resume the agreement signature process.

Arizona Department of Water Resources
Water Protection Fund

FY 2026 Fund Activity
For the period July 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026

Description	1302-WPF Grants	1303-WPF Administration	Total
Beginning Fund Balance - 7/1/2025	\$3,022,194	\$120,817	\$3,143,011
Revenues:			
Interest Income	\$64,571	\$2,765	\$67,337
In-Lieu Fee Deposit	\$0	\$0	\$0
General Fund Appropriation	\$562,500	\$0	\$562,500
Transfers - Administrative Expenses	(\$109,400)	\$109,400	\$0
Total - Revenues	\$517,671	\$112,165	\$629,837
Expenditures:			
Salary Expense	\$0	\$148,656	\$148,656
Grantee Payments	\$556,009	\$0	\$556,009
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0
Operating Expenses	\$0	\$798	\$798
Total - Expenditures	\$556,009	\$149,453	\$705,462
Fund Balance - February 28, 2026	\$2,983,856	\$83,529	\$3,067,385
Less: Existing Grant Obligations	(\$1,907,305)	0	
Uncommitted Balance	\$1,076,552	\$83,529	\$1,160,081



Reuben Teran <rteran@azwater.gov>

23-216 Extension Request

1 message

Deborrah Smith <director@aacd1944.com>
To: Teran Reuben WPF <rteran@azwater.gov>

Tue, Mar 10, 2026 at 11:55 AM

Dear Reuben,

The Arizona Association of Conservation Districts is requesting a timeline extension for Grant No. 23-216WPF, *Timberline – Upper Little Colorado River Watershed Improvement Project*.

During the previous field season, our contractor was required to leave the project site due to regional fire restrictions. As a result, work was shifted to other locations and the remaining treatment work could not be completed during the planned field window. Subsequent weather conditions also limited our ability to safely return to the site and complete the remaining mechanical brush treatments.

To ensure the remaining work can be completed properly and under appropriate field conditions, we respectfully request an extension of the project timeline through **August 30, 2026**.

This additional time will allow the contractor to return to the project area and complete the remaining treatment work and associated reporting requirements.

Please let me know if any additional information is needed to process this request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborrah

Deborrah Smith
AACD Director

Follow us on social media @aacd1944

"Keep Calm and Carry On"
Sir Winston Churchill

Hassayampa Lake Recreation Association

Mr. Ruben Teran, Executive Director
Arizona Water Protection Fund
1802 W Jackson St. Box #79
Phoenix, AZ 85007

February 23, 2026

Re: Response to request for public comment

Dear Mr. Teran:

This letter is written in response to the Arizona Water Protection Fund (WPF) request for written comments concerning its grant application and evaluation processes. The grant application process was straight forward. WPF staff were responsive to questions. Submission through the E-Civis portal was seamless. It is the process to evaluate grant applications after submission that is of concern.

We want to be clear. Our concerns are not the result of a negative funding decision, they involve the the evaluation and funding selection process for all of the applicants. WFP's grant application guidance does not appear to provide clear scoring criteria; it is qualitative, not quantitative. When reviewing all applications submitted during the 2026 grant application period, the applications selected for funding did not appear to have received high scores from the governor-appointed commissioners. Also, projects that received grant funding were not those most closely aligned with priorities in the state legislation that established the WPF. Those priorities were listed in the grant application manual.

Comments below specifically address the current evaluation process including suggestions for remedies, as requested in the letter dated January 7, 2026 from the WPF Executive Director.

Concerns

1. It appears the public process for selecting grant recipients had little actual impact on the funding decision-making. Scores awarded by governor-appointed commissioners had no bearing on the choice of grant recipients. Applicants committed resources to developing

presentations and attending public meetings with the assumption that this was the “last chance” to make their case to commissioners, answer questions, and provide clarification. The outcome suggests that the applicant’s presentations had little to no bearing on the funding decisions.

2. It was obvious during public meetings that some of the commissioners had not read the applications and may not have understood the scoring criteria.
3. The grant application manual does not appear to provide clear and specific scoring criteria.
4. Our understanding is that WPF staff develops grant proposal summaries for commissioners to review. Those summaries are then distributed to the commissioners and become the basis for the commissioner’s decision making. The summaries may, or may not, accurately summarize the proposals. Applicants have no opportunity to comment on the grant summaries prior to their distribution.
5. This year, some commissioners chose not to score an application because he or she was concerned that their scoring could be affected by a conflict of interest. From the outside looking in, there does not appear to be any formal process for recalibrating the score of applications negatively impacted by a commissioner’s withdrawal.. The applicants should not be penalized for an ethical decision on the part of a commissioner.
6. Grants awarded appear to be skewed toward well-funded organizations regardless of their scores.

Grants Awarded

Applicant	Points awarded by commissioners (out of a possible 60)	Grant amount
Salt River Project	21 (one conflict of interest)	\$350,000
AZ Dept. of Environmental Quality	23	\$372,979
Aravaipa Creek	23	\$43,541

Colorado River project	10	\$228,044
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7. Funds remaining, after the initial funds were awarded, were not awarded based on the scores of the unawarded applications. It is our understanding after attending the meeting online that the award of the \$228,000 that was “leftover” monies to be awarded was designated to the applicant with the lowest scored points.

Suggested Remedies

1. If the opinions of and scores by commissioners are inconsequential to the final selections of grant recipients, this must be clearly communicated to applicants. It is our opinion this is not the intent of state legislation, and the opinions of and scores by commissioner should be weighted heavily in the grant selection process, along with how closely the project is aligned with state legislative priorities, the project plan and appropriateness of the budget.
2. A quantitative scoring criteria should be designed, typically a point system, and clearly defined in the grant application manual.
3. Applicants should have an opportunity to comment on staff summaries of their applications prior to distribution of those summaries to commissioners.
4. Someone should be appointed to provide knowledgeable oversight to assure that grants awarded align with the intents of the legislators, and the published application process and decision making criteria.
5. If a commissioner chooses not to score a particular application due to conflict of interest, the application’s score should not be reduced in comparison to the scores of applications where no commissioner had a conflict of interest. The score of the affected application should be recalculated based on the revised number of points available.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [REDACTED] or

[REDACTED]. You can also contact our consultant Melody Reifsnyder at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Richard Randall

Richard Randall, President
Hassayampa Lake
Recreation Association

DeAnna Randall

DeAnna Randall, Treasurer
Hassayampa Lake
Recreation Association



City of Phoenix
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

February 24, 2026

Arizona Department of Water Resources
Arizona Water Protection Fund
1802 W Jackson St. Box #79
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Attn: Reuben Teran

Dear Mr. Teran:

The City of Phoenix (Phoenix) is pleased to provide comments in response to the Arizona Water Protection Fund (AWPF) request for comments dated January 7, 2026. Phoenix is providing comments on the AWPF's grant application structure and suggesting specific Arizona river reaches that should be prioritized by the grant committee.

Some proposed river and riparian restoration projects can require significant research and data to successfully plan and implement, especially for larger restoration projects. Critical restoration projects can languish in planning and even stall without appropriate data. For example, many Arizona rivers operate under altered hydrologic conditions that have impacted the quantity, timing, and even source of water in the river. For riparian restoration to succeed, data and modelling efforts may be needed during the planning phase. Whether it be measuring flows, gathering water quality or soil data, or watershed modeling, funded data collection in direct support of a Capital Project can be a crucial part of successful riparian restoration projects. Unfortunately, few grants are available to support this essential planning step. AWPF has an opportunity to fill this critical funding gap and allow more riparian restoration projects to move out of the planning phase and into implementation, while increasing the potential for project success long-term.

Phoenix recommends that the AWPF either expand the Capital Project funding category to include data collection/modeling in support of a future capital restoration project or create a new funding category specifically for data collection measures in support of future restoration projects. The new category should not be as restrictive as the research category. Because each riparian restoration project is unique, the category description should be broad enough to encompass a variety of methods and approaches to gather the key data or complete important modelling for a specific planned capital riparian restoration project.

Phoenix also recommends the AWPF prioritize projects within the Rio Reimagined project area. Rio Reimagined is the vision of the late Senator John McCain and late Congressman Ed Pastor and represents a coalition of multiple cities and communities along an approximately 55-mile stretch of the Salt and Gila Rivers through the Phoenix Metro area. These communities, with many agencies and non-profit partners, have come together in support of river restoration and the revitalization of neighboring communities. Rio Reimagined has been designated an Urban Waters Federal Partnership project area by

the Environmental Protection Agency, underscoring the support and shared vision of a restored Rio Salado held by not only Arizona residents but by the EPA and Federal Government. These rivers have been burdened for decades due to upstream regulation and uses that have degraded the rivers and riparian areas. Focusing restoration work in the Rio Reimagined area would bring significant benefits to millions of Arizona residents. Through the AWPf, the state can be a significant partner in moving the restoration work of this coalition forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our comments further, please contact Chase Torrence at chase.torrence@phoenix.gov.

Sincerely,

Nancy Allen

Nancy Allen

Environmental Programs Administrator

**ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND
GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES
2026**

Public Comments Received

DATE	SENDER	DOC #
2/23/2026	Hassayampa Lake Recreation Association	1
2/24/2026	City of Phoenix – Office of Environmental Programs	2

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Doc #1

- The grant application process was straight forward; staff were responsive to questions; submission through the E-Civis portal was seamless.
- The grant application manual does not appear to provide clear and specific scoring criteria; it is qualitative, not quantitative. A quantitative scoring criteria should be designed, typically a point system, and clearly defined in the grant application manual.
- Our understanding is that WPF staff develops grant proposal summaries for commissioners to review. Those summaries are then distributed to the commissioners and become the basis for the commissioner’s decision making. The summaries may, or may not, accurately summarize the proposals. Applicants have no opportunity to comment on the grant summaries prior to their distribution. Applicants should have an opportunity to comment on staff summaries of their applications prior to distribution of those summaries to commissioners.
- It appears the public process for selecting grant recipients had little actual impact on the funding decision-making. Scores awarded by governor-appointed commissioners had no bearing on the choice of grant recipients. The applications selected for funding did not appear to have received high scores from the governor-appointed commissioners. Grants awarded appear to be skewed toward well-funded organizations regardless of their scores. If the opinions of and scores by commissioners are inconsequential to the final selections of grant recipients, this must be clearly communicated to applicants. It is our opinion this is not the intent of state legislation, and the opinions of and scores by commissioner should be weighted heavily in the grant selection process, along with how closely the project is aligned with state legislative priorities, the project plan and appropriateness of the budget. Someone should be appointed to provide knowledgeable oversight to assure that grants awarded align with the intents of the legislators, and the published application process and decision making criteria.
- This year, some commissioners chose not to score an application because he or she was concerned that their scoring could be affected by a conflict of interest. From the outside looking in, there does not appear to be any formal process for recalibrating the score of applications negatively impacted by a commissioner’s withdrawal. The applicants should not be penalized for an ethical decision on the part of a commissioner. If a commissioner chooses not to score a particular application due to conflict of interest, the application’s score should not be reduced in comparison to the scores of applications where no commissioner had a conflict of interest. The score of the affected application should be recalculated based on the revised number of points available.

Doc #2

- For riparian restoration to succeed, data and modelling efforts may be needed during the planning phase. Whether it be measuring flows, gathering water quality or soil data, or watershed modeling, funded data

**ARIZONA WATER PROTECTION FUND
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collection in direct support of a Capital Project can be a crucial part of successful riparian restoration projects. Unfortunately, few grants are available to support this essential planning step. AWPf has an opportunity to fill this critical funding gap and allow more riparian restoration projects to move out of the planning phase and into implementation, while increasing the potential for project success long-term.

- Phoenix recommends that the AWPf either expand the Capital Project funding category to include data collection/modeling in support of a future capital restoration project or create a new funding category specifically for data collection measures in support of future restoration projects. The new category should not be as restrictive as the research category. Because each riparian restoration project is unique, the category description should be broad enough to encompass a variety of methods and approaches to gather the key data or complete important modelling for a specific planned capital riparian restoration project.

- Phoenix also recommends the AWPf prioritize projects within the Rio Reimagined project area.

Arizona Water Protection Fund Commission

PROPOSED Fiscal Year 2027 Grant Application Process Schedule

Proposed FY2027 Grant Application Process Schedule	Timeline
Grant Application Manual Available	No later than May 2026 (on-going)
Application Workshop	June 2026 (webinar only)
Pre-application Consultations (depending on staff availability)	May - August 2026
eCivis Online Grant Application Submittal Portal Available	No later than June 2026 (on-going)
Final Date and Time to Submit Applications	August 2026
45-Day Public Comment Period for Applications	September – October 2026
Staff Review Comments to Applicants / Commission	No later than October 2026
Applicant Presentations to the Commission	November 2026
Clarifying Questions to Applicants and Applicants' Responses in Writing (if necessary)	November 2026
Commission Grant Selections	November 2026
Applicants Notified of Funding Status	December 2026
Staff Begins Writing Grant Award Contracts	December 2026 / January 2027

**The Commission reserves the right to adjust this schedule if necessary*