

An Open Letter Arizona's Registered Voters – March 1, 2018

RE: Humane Society of the United States, aka Arizonan's for Wildlife, is sponsoring an unscientific "wild cat" ballot initiative that would replace good biology with misinformation

For almost 100 years scientists at the Arizona Game and Fish Department have managed all of Arizona's wildlife, including the "wild cats", for the benefit of all Arizonans! Over 800 species of both game and non-game animals fall into the statutory responsibility of the Department. In fact, the Department employs a staff of over 350 wildlife biologists to ensure those species are conserved according to good science.

You may have heard the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has formed a front group here in Arizona called Arizonans for Wildlife (AfW). This organization filed a ballot initiative with the Arizona Secretary of State on September 25, 2017. On the surface this initiative calls for the elimination of hunting for "wild cats".

A simple examination of some basic facts will show how unnecessary and misleading the ballot initiative is. AfW purports that mountain lions and bobcats are endangered, when in fact these native cats are expanding their range and their populations statewide are robust, healthy and increasing. Also named in the initiative language as needing protection are jaguars, ocelots and Canadian lynx, all three of which are federally protected species under the Endangered Species Act. You cannot hunt or kill any of these species. Since these species are already fully protected, further regulations can provide no additional benefit.

Here are some facts to consider that clearly refute the claims of the AfW:

- Arizona, the Grand Canyon State, has no regulation designating any "trophy hunt" for mountain lions, or any species of game hunted in the state.
- Trapping on public land was outlawed in Arizona in 1994.
- "Wild cats" in Arizona are not disappearing; their ranges are expanding and they are now seen in more places than they ever have been before.
- There have been six (6) jaguar sightings in Arizona in the last 50 years. Arizona is on the extreme northern edge of their range. All have been males and none of these federally protected animals have been hunted or accidentally killed by hunters in Arizona since the advent of the Endangered Species Act.

- Ocelots are similar to jaguars but smaller. Again, Arizona is on the northern edge of their range, four (4) have been spotted here in the last half century. They too are a protected species.
- Canadian Lynx do not call Arizona home! We don't have any! A number of years ago one lynx transplanted in Colorado wandered into Arizona, looked around and returned; it had a radio collar on its neck. We surmise that when it didn't find any snowshoe hares here, their preferred food, it realized it was in the wrong state.

Considering this information you might ask yourself, why does a Washington D.C. organization (an organization which along with co-defendants, paid out \$15 million to settle a law suit brought against it under the "Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act" in 2014) propose to jettison a successful science based approach to conservation? Is it really in the name of "protection"?

Let's leave science with the professionals in charge of all the species of wild animals that call our state home.

Support the science based conservation of wildlife by Arizona's nationally acclaimed wildlife conservation agency. Reject this misguided and disingenuous political initiative and this effort to politicize Arizona's wildlife conservation.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the facts!

Former Arizona Game & Fish Directors

Bud Bristow 1981-1987 Duane Shroufe 1989 - 2008 Larry Voyles 2008 - 2017

Please Support "**Conserve and Protect Arizona**", in their effort to stop the Humane Society of the United States from changing the way wildlife is managed in Arizona. Let's leave wildlife management in the hands of the professionals at the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

For more information go to: conserveandprotectaz.org