

Understanding Wildlife Conflicts in Human-Modified Arizona Landscapes: A NIPV Approach

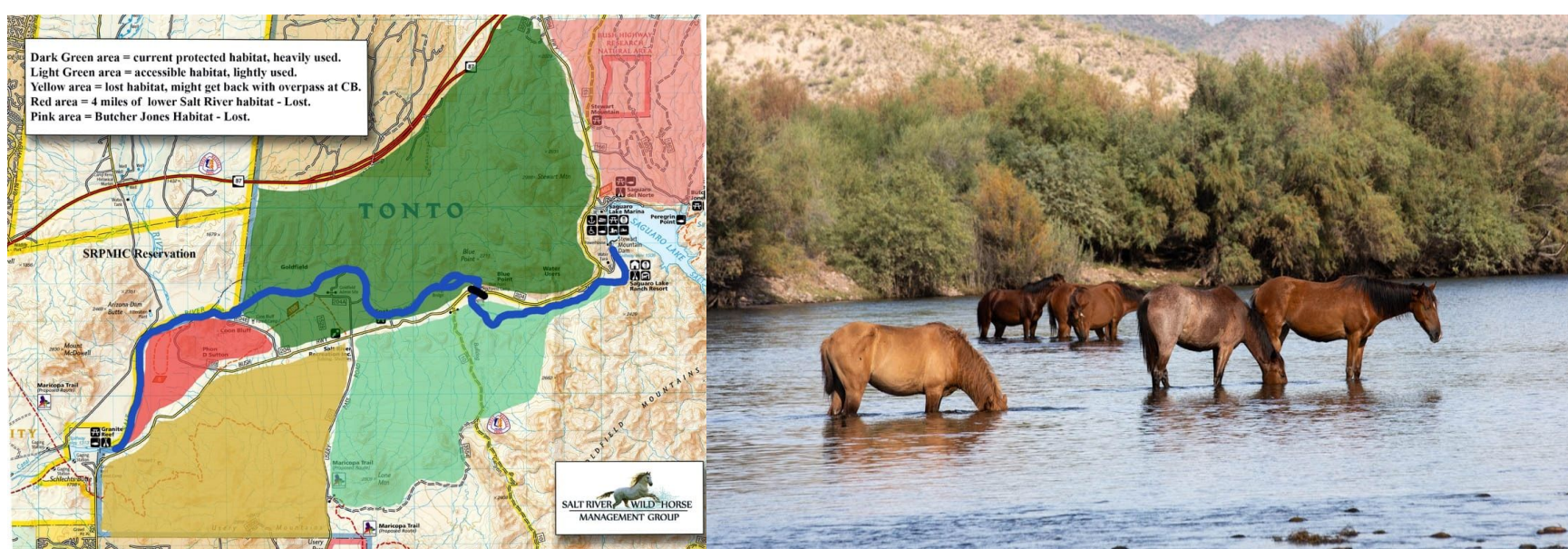
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Applying the NIPV (Needs, Interests, Positions, Values) model to understand conflicts around Mexican gray wolves and Salt River horses in human-modified landscapes.

Salt River Horses

- Feral descendants of historic livestock.
- Inhabit riparian habitats along the Lower Salt River.
- A prey species with few natural predators.
- Compete with with native wildlife for forage and water resources.
- Reproduce year-round resulting in steady population growth.
- Protected under Arizona's 2016 Salt River Horse Act



Human Stakeholders

- U.S. Forest Service
- Arizona Department of Agriculture
- Salt River Project (SRP)
- Salt River Wild Horse Management Group
- Salt River Pima - Maricopa Indian Community
- Ranchers & Grazing permit holders
- Recreation & tourism operations
- Conservation NGOs

Non-Human Stakeholders

- Native predators and scavengers
- Native herbivores & competitors
- Riparian vegetation
- Aquatic species

NIPV of human and non-human stakeholders

- **Needs:** Healthy riparian habitats, public safety, protection of cultural and recreational resources.
- **Interests:** Tourism and recreation opportunities, maintaining iconic landscape identity, livestock and rangeland management, ecological function of riparian zones.
- **Positions:** Advocates support the protection of horses, agencies seek population control, ranchers oppose resource competition
- **Values:** Cultural symbolism, animal welfare, ecological stewardship, respect for Tribal sovereignty.

Mexican Gray Wolves

- Apex Predator and keystone species.
- Social animals that live in packs.
- Critically endangered. Fragile recovery efforts
- Once widely inhabited the Southwest and regions of Mexico.
- Reintroduced in 1998 after being absent from the landscape for 30 years.



Human Stakeholders

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Arizona Game & Fish Department (AZGFD)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- Ranchers & livestock owners
- Hunters & hunting groups
- Conservation NGOs
- Rural Communities
- Regional Tribal Nations

Non-Human Stakeholders

- Native ungulate populations
- Small mammals & juvenile prey species
- Mesopredators
- Riparian ecosystems & forest vegetation
- Scavenger species

NIPV of human and non-human stakeholders

- **Needs:** Stable ecosystems, livestock protection and balanced predator-prey dynamics.
- **Interests:** Biodiversity, species recovery, hunting and recreation, rural livelihood security
- **Positions:** Ranchers & hunters resist wold expansion; agencies & NGOs support recovery; existing wildlife is affected by predator return.
- **Values:** Ecological integrity; cultural significance of wolves; rural identity; ethical responsibility toward endangered species.

Interdisciplinary Approach

As Interdisciplinary Studies researchers, we bring together methods from ecology, environmental humanities, policy analysis, conflict studies and documentary film. Complex wildlife issues cannot be addressed from a single discipline, and IDS offers a uniquely integrative framework for connecting science with cultural, economic and stakeholder perspectives.

Future Directions

- We plan to continue this research through the spring 2026 semester.
- Conduct key stakeholder interviews with governmental agencies, Tribal community leaders, ranchers, NGOs and recreation groups.
- Continue ecological field observations
- Examine and apply narrative frameworks
- Collaborate with a film director to produce an educational documentary centered around stakeholder perspectives and ecological context.
- Showcase the documentary at an Arizona State University seminar to raise public awareness and support dialogue toward culturally sensitive and ecologically informed mitigation pathways.

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