

Desert Tracks

"Helping conserve the natural resources of the Chihuahuan Desert Borderlands through research, education, & outreach."



RESEARCH IN ACTION:

Pronghorn Restoration 2013: The Marathon Experience

Taylor Garrison, Louis A. Harveson, and Shawn Gray (TPWD)

For 5 years, the Borderlands Research Institute has been partnering with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and west Texas landowners to help restore pronghorn populations to their former glory. In December 2012, the northeastern sector of the Marathon Basin was chosen for this restoration effort because of suitable habitat, good range conditions, and landowner cooperation. In fall 2012, the Marathon Basin herd unit supported only 40 pronghorn which is 20% of its long-term average (~200-300).

In January 2013, we translocated 125 pronghorn from the Panhandle to Marathon. Fifty-nine of the 125 (110 F, 15 M) pronghorn were outfitted with GPS-collars that allowed us to monitor movements, survival, and productivity.

Ten months later, we have documented 80% survival of the translocated pronghorn, with only 12 radioed pronghorn dying from natural causes (e.g., predation and lightning strike) and capture myopathy.

We also documented high fawning rates, with over 80% of adult does producing 1-2 fawns in spring 2013. Pronghorn also had above average fawn crops averaging over 70%. Fawn survival was also high with 50% of fawns surviving through the fall.

We are proud to report that the northeastern Marathon Basin herd unit presently supports almost 200 pronghorn.



The success of the 2013 pronghorn translocation effort to the Marathon Basin will serve as a model for future restoration efforts.

The success of this restoration effort can be attributed to many factors, but foremost in that list is the whole-hearted cooperation of the landowners in the region. Not only did they allow for the restoration and monitoring project to occur, but they instituted a variety of changes to prepare the habitat for pronghorn. Specifically, landowners made substantial fence modifications, water improvements, and implemented proper grazing management that promoted quality forage production.

The success of the Marathon Basin translocation will serve as a model for future restoration efforts for pronghorn in west Texas.

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BRI Researchers:

Dr. Louis A. Harveson, Dan Allen Hughes, Jr., Endowed Director and Professor of Wildlife Management
• *Specialization:* Big Game Ecology and Management

Dr. Patricia Moody Harveson, Associate Professor of Conservation Biology
• *Specialization:* Population Ecology and Spatial and Systems Analysis

Dr. Robert J. Kinucan, Professor of Range Management
• *Specialization:* Disturbance Ecology and Population Plant Biology

Dr. Ryan S. Luna, Assistant Professor of Wildlife Management
• *Specialization:* Upland Gamebird Ecology and Management

Dr. Bonnie J. Warnock, Professor of Range Management
• *Specialization:* Restoration Ecology and Rangeland Hydrology



An appreciation and understanding of nature is a pre-requisite to conservation. The BRI helps conserve the Chihuahuan Desert Borderlands through research, education, and outreach.

From the Director—“Who Inspires Conservation in You?”

Conservation is not an innate practice; it is something that is learned. For most of us, we can likely identify who played that pivotal role of inspiring conservation.

For me, my father was my first inspiration for conservation. Not only did he initiate me to the deer blind and fishing pole, but he also introduced me to more passive outdoor pursuits using field guides, binoculars, and a camera.

Through the years, many have reinforced my conservation underpinning. Teachers, scout

leaders, college professors, hunting buddies, and even my children catching grasshoppers in the pasture have influenced my conservation ethic.

But today, my inspiration comes from you—the landowners, resource managers, and wildlife enthusiasts that value wild places and wild things. You truly are an inspiration to us at the Borderlands Research Institute!

Thank you for all you do for conservation!

—Louis A. Harveson

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Thompson and Potts Join BRI Advisory Board

It is our pleasure to welcome Mr. Robert J. Potts and Mr. Kelly R. Thompson to the Advisory Board of the Borderlands Research Institute.

Robert Potts has been involved in natural resource conservation for more than 20 years. Robert earned his Juris Doctorate from Columbia University in 1984 and a B.A. from Baylor University in 1980. From 1993-2004 Robert held various positions with the Nature Conservancy, including State Director of Texas. Robert also served as General Manager of the Edwards Aquifer Authority from 2004-2007. Robert presently serves as President and CEO of the Dixon Water Foundation, a private foundation supporting sustainable watershed management. The Dixon Water Foundation owns and operates several cattle ranches in Texas that demonstrate sustainable ranching practices. Robert also serves on a variety of committees including the Trans-Pecos Pronghorn Working Group. Robert and his wife Lana are residents of Fort Davis.

Kelly R. Thompson manages a family office engaged in public and private investments, including publicly-traded investments, oil and gas, real estate, and agriculture. He formerly served as a principal of Crates Thompson Capital, a private equity firm, formed in 1996. Kelly has served as a director of privately-held companies engaged in manufacturing, distribution, retail, financial services, and energy. Kelly serves on several non-profit boards, including chair of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation and chair of the Upland Game Bird Advisory Committee for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Mr. Thompson is the mayor pro tem of the Town of Westover Hills. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1981 with a B.B.A. in Finance. Kelly owns and operates a cattle ranch in Culberson and Reeves counties. He and his wife, Carla, have 2 daughters.

The Advisory Board provides guidance and advisement on the mission, goals, and strategies of the BRI.

Donor Spotlight: Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) along with their charitable arm, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) is actively fundraising \$1.4 million toward the pronghorn restoration and monitoring program in west Texas. Funding from this gift will allow TPWD and the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI) to restore up to 1,000 pronghorn over a 5-year period.

TPWD and BRI have been coordinating with private landowners on the large-scale recovery for pronghorn since 2009.

TPWD declared the unprecedented pronghorn decline a state priority and has since dedicated significant resources into their recovery and management.

To date, the TPWF and TPWD have received over one half of the pledges needed to fund this project. To find out how you can help with this herculean restoration effort, please contact Louis Harveson with the BRI at 432.837.8488 or Anne Brown with the TPWF at 214.720.1478 or go to <http://www.tpwf.org/>.

Over 90% of our funding comes through private donations!

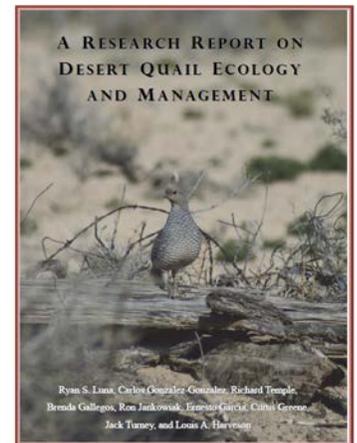
Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Borderlands Research Institute.

Desert Quail Research Report Available Online

The Borderlands Research Institute (BRI) recently posted the *Desert Quail Ecology and Management Research Report* to our website. The report highlights our efforts to better understand scaled quail, Gambel's quail, and Montezuma quail. Projects include the effects of supplemental feeding on scaled quail, habitat management, movements, and survival of all 3 quail species.

The Desert Quail Report can be found at <http://ww2.sulross.edu/brinrm/pubs.htm>.

The BRI is also seeking additional ranches to further our research studies on scaled quail. For more information on how you can enroll and support the Desert Quail Program, please contact Dr. Louis Harveson (harveson@sulross.edu) or Dr. Ryan Luna (rluna@sulross.edu) at 432.837.8488.



SALE Supports Graduate Scholarships at BRI

One of the fundamental goals of the Borderlands Research Institute is to educate and train future wildlife biologists and resource managers. The Institute relies heavily on private donations and scholarships to meet this goal.

The San Antonio Livestock Exposition, Inc. (SALE) has been a staunch supporter of the educational mission of the BRI and Sul Ross State University (SRSU). Since the mid 1980s, SALE has donated over \$1 million to

SRSU to support student scholarships, and the rodeo program.

SALE recently provided 2 graduate scholarships to support James Martin (Burleson, Texas) and Taylor Garrison (Corpus Christi, Texas) during their pursuit of a Master's degree. James and Taylor are graduate students with the Borderlands Research Institute researching feral hog control methods and pronghorn restoration techniques, respectively.



Because of a San Antonio Livestock Exposition scholarship, Taylor Garrison recently joined the BRI research team to help with the pronghorn restoration project.



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Harveson Elected 2nd VP of Texas Wildlife Association

Dr. Louis Harveson, Director of Borderlands Research Institute, was recently elected as Second Vice President of the Texas Wildlife Association. As Second Vice President for Programs, Harveson will serve as an officer contact and representative for all organizational education program efforts, and he serves as an organizational liaison and resource in matters relating to wildlife and/or natural resource research at the university and college level and with state and federal agencies. The Second Vice President position is reserved for professional biologists that hold an academic post. Harveson will serve a three year term.

property rights, hunting heritage, and the conservation efforts of those who value and steward wildlife resources (<http://www.texas-wildlife.org/>).



TWA Officers include (l-r): Greg Simons (President), Marco T. Barrett IV (Vice President), Dr. Louis A. Harveson (Second Vice President), and J. David Anderson (Treasurer).

The Texas Wildlife Association is a statewide membership organization that serves Texas wildlife and its habitat, while protecting