

# City Manager's Report

October 29, 2021

Council and Colleagues, greetings. These reports will be included in the City Council packet for regularly scheduled Council meetings, excluding Work Session meetings. The reports are intended to be informational, covering miscellaneous events and topics involving the City organization. This report will include our monthly reports from Water Services, City Engineering and Capital Improvements, and Sustainability. We will also be recognizing three significant awards received by City employees. Finally, we will call out for discussion the Resolution in Support of the Endangered Species Act. In no particular order,

## **Governor's Heritage Honor Preservation Award**

Lisa Deem was presented with a Governor's Heritage Honor Preservation Award on October 29<sup>th</sup> for her volunteer work with the Elden Pueblo Project. Lisa has served as program manager for nearly 20 years, securing funding and developing educational programs that connect learning and teaching with archaeology and culture. Lisa's efforts have connected thousands of students with the rich history of Elden Pueblo. We are incredibly proud of Lisa and her contributions! You can read more in this



Daily Sun article: [Elden Pueblo program manager receives Governor's Heritage Award | State-and-regional | azdailysun.com](https://www.azdailysun.com/elden-pueblo-program-manager-receives-governors-heritage-award)

Congratulations Lisa! This is an amazing accomplishment and so well-deserved.

## **Officer of the Year**

Officer Brian Smithart was presented with the prestigious award of "Officer of the Year" at the Flagstaff Exchange Club last week.

Officer Smithart previously attended Grand Canyon University where he graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Justice Studies. He was hired in October, 2019, and attended the Phoenix Regional Police Academy. Upon graduation he was assigned to Patrol. He is a member of the FPD Rapid Response Team, and recently took over as our downtown walking beat officer, where he excels at community policing.

There is no higher honor than one of your peers recognizing you for your hard work. A fellow officer completed this nomination and stated the following: "I want to nominate Officer Smithart for this award. He has consistently demonstrated his commitment to this department. He comes to work with a positive and humble attitude every day."



From his fellow peers to the criminals on street, Officer Smithart treats everyone with an equal amount of respect and dignity that is consistent with the 4 C's of this department (*Policing Correctly, Consistently, Constitutionally and with Compassion*). For his success in adhering to these values, he has been selected as the Exchange club Officer of the year.

Congratulations Officer Smithart! You represent our City so positively, as reflected by this amazing achievement. Thank you!

### **Firefighter of the Year**

City of Flagstaff Fire Department Fire Engineer Casey Gonzales is named the Flagstaff Fire Department Firefighter of the Year. Casey has been a Flagstaff Firefighter since August of 2014. He has served in the leadership of the United Flagstaff Firefighters as President for the last three years recently taking on the post of Secretary Treasurer.

“Casey’s leadership in the region was apparent in the early days of the pandemic impacts of 2020. His collaborative approach to working together allowed the fire department to quickly develop protocols and procedures to protect our firefighters so they could continue to serve the community. His service is characterized by that of the best examples of leadership, selflessness. He works tirelessly in service to others” – Chief Mark Gaillard.



Notably, Casey tirelessly worked to support the recent compensation plan transition to support the mission of the City Manager’s Office and the Human Resource Divisions implementation of the changes.

As Casey accepted the award at the amazing luncheon sponsored by the Flagstaff Exchange Club and Findlay Toyota, he directed the focus on the admiration and appreciation the firefighters have for our law enforcement brothers and sisters. He assured all the law enforcement officers present that “we have your back”.

Very humble and thoughtful, Casey. Thank you for your amazing contributions, and congratulations on this incredible achievement!

### **Resolution in support of Endangered Species Act**

It has been requested from two Councilpersons to consider the adoption of a resolution in support of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), in an effort to further the local support for a lone gray wolf that has taken occupancy in the national forests north of Williams and Flagstaff. I am copying an excerpt below from the Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project that provides much more detail, and the request for this resolution:

## ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT WON'T LET WOLVES BE WILD

FLAGSTAFF, *Ariz.* – Conservation groups are voicing opposition today to the Arizona Game and Fish Department's pursuit to capture a solitary Mexican gray wolf who has been living peacefully in the national forests north of Williams and Flagstaff for over a month. There have been no documented human or domestic animal conflicts with the wolf and the agency seems motivated simply by its insistence that wolves stay south of Interstate 40 for reasons that are wholly political rather than based in science. In addition, the agency's relocation efforts pose a grave risk to this wolf in the context of active fire danger in the area.

"Arizona Game and Fish Department is unwilling to let wildlife be wild, apparently," said Sandy Bahr, chapter director for Sierra Club's Grand Canyon Chapter. "This animal migrated into good habitat, is eating native prey, and is not causing any problems. Yet the agency is still determined to push the wolf back across an arbitrary political line."

"We have long known that this area provides excellent habitat for wolves, and the wolves are proving that themselves by choosing to move here of their own accord," said Emily Renn, executive director of Grand Canyon Wolf Recovery Project. "Our community appreciates the important ecological role wolves play and welcomes wolves back to our area. It is time for the agencies to acknowledge that wolves belong here and leave them alone."

The wolf, named "[Anubis](#)" by seventh graders in an annual pup-naming contest, was born in spring 2020 to the Dark Canyon Pack of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. It is natural for young wolves to disperse long distances and seek out new territories, and the habitat Anubis encountered north of I-40 contains abundant elk and good hiding cover. The Arizona Game & Fish Department has initiated and paid for the capture efforts underway so far, including expensive aerial efforts that entailed a plane and a helicopter last week.

"I would hate to see this wolf removed or relocated. My family and I understand that by living in the forest, we need to coexist with the animals who live here too," said Jeff Meilander, a Baderville area resident and founder of the Flagstaff EcoRanch. "We are thrilled that one of the few wild wolves in Arizona has taken up residence here and think it's incredibly cool that he is successfully hunting elk and adding to the biodiversity of Northern Arizona."

"The Department has engaged in Mexican wolf recovery for many years, but this action is heavy-handed and reflects an unwillingness to let wild wolves be free," said Cyndi Tuell, Arizona and New Mexico director of Western Watersheds Project. "Their management decisions here appear to be based on fear and politics rather than wolf behavior or science."

Scientists have concluded that establishing a population of wolves in the Grand Canyon region of northern Arizona is necessary for Mexican gray wolf recovery as part of the [larger recovery efforts throughout the Southwest](#). The agencies responsible for the reintroduction program have the opportunity right now under a [court order](#) to revise the management rule to allow dispersing wolves to move north of I-40 and contribute to recovery.

"This dispersing Mexican gray wolf has bravely ground-truthed much of a regional wildlife movement pathway that connects New Mexico's wild Gila, across the Mogollon Rim into northern Arizona, and up to Grand Canyon," said Kelly Burke, executive director of Wild Arizona. "He's showing us that the science is right on wolf recovery. Let's not set recovery back by this state agency's misguided effort to capture him."

The Coconino and Kaibab National Forests are currently closed to the public due to extreme fire risk. Violating national forest closures and fire restrictions carries a mandatory appearance in federal court, punishable as a Class B misdemeanor with a fine of up to \$5,000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or up to six months in prison, or both.

Mexican gray wolves are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Killing a Mexican wolf is a violation of the Federal Endangered Species Act and can result in criminal penalties of up to \$50,000, and/or not more than one year in jail, and/or a civil penalty of up to \$25,000.

Also, here is a story that was just published today in the Sedona Red Rock News about the wolf: <http://www.redrocknews.com/2021/06/25/wolf-anubis-roams-now-closed-national-forests/>.

There is just as much likelihood that the wolf would be hit by a car, shot, or close to humans in the current recovery area south of I-40 if they move him back there as he could encounter here, so we should focus on keeping him safe wherever he chooses to roam instead of putting him through the stress and risk of a capture effort. He has managed to make this ambitious journey so far without being seen, so AZGFD should give him some credit!

Thank you,  
Emily Renn

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The draft resolution is attached to this report, and this item will be called out for discussion. Should the Council elect to proceed with it, we will have it placed on the next agenda for ratification.

That is all for now Council. Appended hereto are the monthly reports from Sustainability, Water Services, and Capital Improvements. Enjoy!