

Chevelon Butte Ranch

Winslow, Arizona

2017 Environmental Stewardship Award Application

Nominated by Arizona Cattle Growers Association



ACGA

ARIZONA CATTLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

1401 NORTH 24TH STREET, SUITE #4
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85008 • (602) 267-1129
www.azcattlemensassoc.org

March 7, 2017

National Cattlemen's Foundation
Environmental Stewardship Award Program
9110 East Nichols Avenue, Suite 300
Centennial, Colorado 80112

RE: James O'Haco

Dear Selection Committee:

The Arizona Cattle Growers' Association is pleased to nominate the Chevelon Butte Ranch, owned by Mr. James O'Haco for the Environmental Stewardship Award Program. Mr. O'haco is an outstanding member of the Association and is currently serving the second half of his two-year term as President. His willingness to serve in such a capacity speaks volumes to his character and overall commitment.

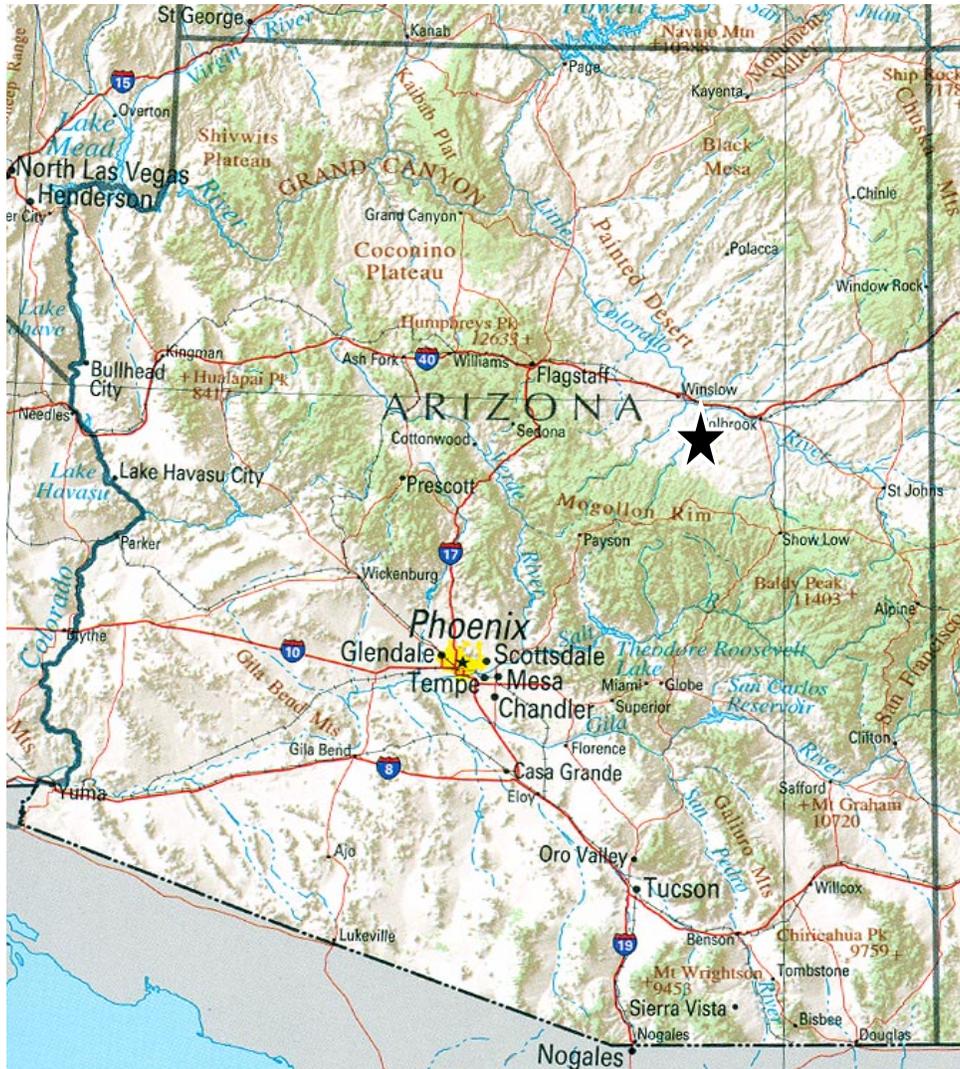
His passion runs deep for the ranching community. He has spent a lifetime pursuing this passion by operating Chevelon Butte Cattle Co & Chevelon Canyon Cattle Co. These are family operations that are generations old and continue to play a critical role for the O'Haco family, their community, and even for the state. Jim has worked alongside several different state and federal agencies to improve the habitat of the ranch for cattle grazing and the wildlife. His work has won him several distinguished awards from the Arizona Game and Fish and United States Fish and Wildlife, but this is not the reason he does this great work. I had the opportunity to visit O'Haco's ranch and receive a personal tour. This humble and quiet man beamed with pride as he showed me all of his improvements from landscape restoration to water infrastructure. He was so proud of all the other things his ranch provided that he forgot to tell me about his cows, the real economic engine of the operation.

This same frame of mind is evident in his leadership in the cattle industry. Jim is always working toward what is better for the industry as whole. He is a quiet leader but steadfast in his principles and decision making. It is a pleasure to serve under Jim's Presidency of the Cattle Growers'. He has dedicated his life to this passion he loves and he has done it well. He serves others to help grow an industry and that type of leadership is priceless for agriculture. I could not think of a individual more deserving of this award. On behalf of the leadership of the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association, it is an honor to nominate James O'Haco of the Chevelon Butte Ranch for the Environmental Stewardship Award.

Sincerely,

Patrick Bray
Executive Vice President
Arizona Cattle Growers' Association

CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH



OWNED BY: Chevelon Butte LLP

BUSINESS NAME: Jim O'Haco Cattle Company

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 910 - Winslow, AZ 86047

PRIMARY CONTACT: Jim O'Haco

PHONE: 928 587-4526

EMAIL: jjohaco@yahoo.com

CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH



The Chevelon Butte Ranch is a family owned, Legacy Ranch, located 30 miles south of Winslow, Arizona, elevation 6200-7000 feet with an adjoining Forest Service Permit. The ranch is about 40 miles southeast of Flagstaff, Arizona / I-40. It is in a transition zone from juniper to pine, but is a grassland area. Land tenure is 26,000 acres of private, 8,000 acres of State, and 27,000 acres Forest Service.

Our story begins in 1898, when my grandfather, Michel Ohaco came to this country from the Basque Pyrenees in Europe. He immigrated, at the age of 14, landing at Ellis Island in New York, making his way cross country to Phoenix. He had an uncle, who was a sheep man around Wickenburg, who promised him work when he arrived. He saved his money while working as a herder, and eventually bought his own sheep, and thus the Ohaco Sheep Company was started. For many years he acquired land and continued to increase his sheep numbers and ranches. In 1946, he was the largest sheep man in Arizona, with properties all over the state, including summer ranges in the northern plateau and winter pastures in the Salt River Valley around Phoenix, Arizona.

My grandfather had 4 children, but only 1 son, MJ Ohaco, (my father), who was attending the University of Arizona when World War II broke out. He was assigned to the last cavalry unit but ended up in the infantry when the horses sank at sea; he served with honors as a Captain. At Nuremburg, Germany, MJ was shot twice in the back by a sniper while saving the life of a commanding officer, which left him paralyzed and unable to walk. At this point, my grandfather began dissolving his holdings, as he figured his only son would never be able to ranch. He kept his best properties, the Chevelon Butte Ranch and the Divide Ranch in Wickenburg.

After five long years, my father regained his health, and married his Army nurse (my mother) in 1946, eventually having 8 children. My father returned to Chevelon Butte, and slowly began the transition from sheep to cattle. MJ continued to ranch until his death in 2001.

Fast forward and a short history of Jim O'Haco. He was born and raised in Winslow, attended University of Arizona with a degree in Animal Science, and a minor in Range. Accepted into Veterinary School, but returned home and started running the daily operations of the ranches, which at one time consisted of four ranches and a small farm. Jim's entire life has been devoted to the outdoors and agriculture.



Jim O'Haco

CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH

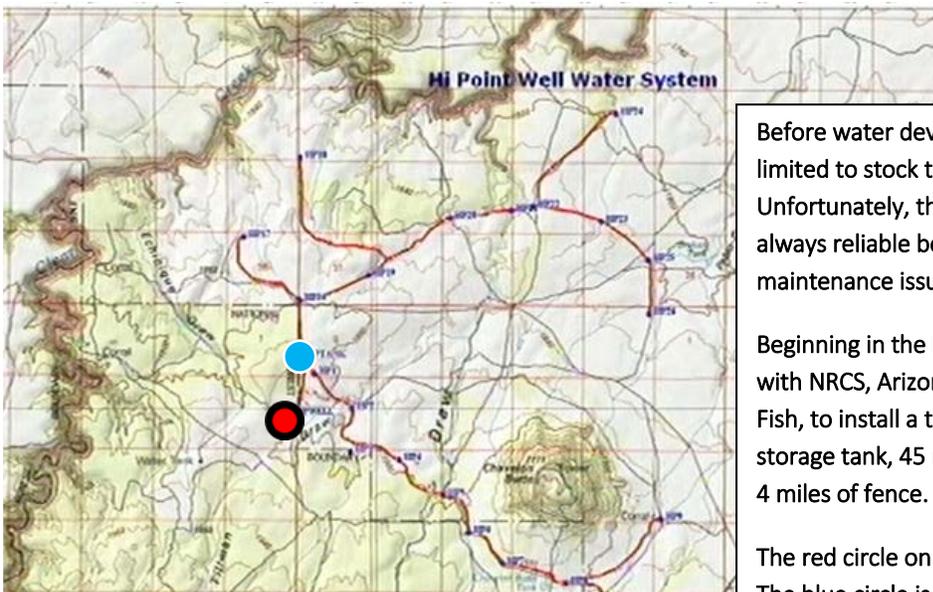
Section II:

Range conservation projects have been a part of our outfit for as far back as I can remember. My father switched from sheep to cattle in entirety in 1948 -1950; he fenced the perimeter, then cross fence pastures, as well as build earthen tanks.

In 1958-1962, he cabled and chained approximately 20,000 acres which was done by two dozers, with a chain between them to knock over the juniper trees. The carcasses were burned, followed by aerial seeding with cool season grasses, which surprisingly took hold. This project made a big difference in our grazing spring and fall, since the ranch is predominantly blue grama grass for summer grasses.

In 1973, we started a farm on the Little Colorado River from inception. The NRCS did the engineering of the fields. Tamaracks were ripped with a dozer to root level to remove them from the area. Rocks and debris were picked up by hand. As rivers flow where they may, the farm was washed out three different times: 1988, 1989, and 1993. It was at this time, the decision was made not to rebuild due to the extensive damage to the irrigation system, silt in the fields, fences washed out and damage to machinery. The man hours to rebuild and cost were too prohibitive.

In 1995-1997, the ranch started discussions with the Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD), the United States Forest Service (USFS), the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), and the Natural Resource Conservation Service on a water project we now call High Point. A severe drought had been in existence for several years, and the concept of developing a well that could gravity flow water lines to several different pastures and open up country that had no water was the vision and goal of Jim O'Haco. Management agreements with the Arizona Game & Fish Department, Arizona State Land Department and United States Forest Service were finalized, and the project began in 1998 when a well was drilled that would supply 40 gallons a minute from the depth of 1,350 feet, operated off a 35KW Generator with a submersible pump.



Before water development projects, water was limited to stock tanks throughout the uplands. Unfortunately, these water sources were not always reliable because of limited rainfall and maintenance issues associated with stock tanks.

Beginning in the late 1990s, we started working with NRCS, Arizona State Lands, Arizona Game and Fish, to install a the High Point well, a 100,000 gal storage tank, 45 miles of pipeline, 35 drinkers, and 4 miles of fence.

The red circle on the map is the High Point well site. The blue circle is the storage tank. The red line represents the pipeline. It's hard to see, but the smaller blue text represent locations of individual livestock drinkers.

CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH

A 100,000 gallon storage tank was erected on a state section, on the highest point on the ranch, and connected to 1 ¼" and 2" New Mex black plastic lines (500 foot rolls) that were trenched with a bulldozer and buried. As time and money permitted, over the following ten years, more lines were trenched, with drinker troughs strategically placed in pastures that needed additional water. To date, with gravity flow, approximately 35 drinkers, (steel troughs holding between 750-1000 gallons of water), and 42 miles of buried pipeline, supplies water to 60,000 acres; the last trough is 25 – 30 miles from the storage tank, all watered by gravity flow. Lately, when a steel trough begins to leak, it is being replaced with the rubber implement tire trough which works well in winter, as they thaw quicker with the sun on black tires. While doing this project, we fenced a 30 section pasture with 4 miles of fence to implement a rest rotation for cattle. The NRCS was instrumental with helping with this fencing project.

By providing more water throughout the ranch, it has improved range conditions with distribution of animals not walking to the same water daily and killing vegetation. The water is cleaner, as it comes out of a storage tank, then to the water drinkers. The average rainfall in the area is between 12-18 inches per year, with an average being 16 inches. All earthen tanks are still cleaned regularly and maintained for rain water and run off. We have not had to haul water since 1998, thus eliminating an employee hauling water and maintaining water trucks.

The north end of the United States Forest Service Allotment is watered with a line running from High Point, which has opened up some of the summer allotment.

And last but not least, water is provided year around for all animals and critters. After our cattle are removed, the lines are not shut off. Arizona Game & Fish Department helps maintain High Point Well; O'Haco provides the daily operation of starting and maintaining the lines, AGFD helps with the fuel expense and replacement of generator when needed.

Grassland habitat restoration has taken place across 15,000 acres through mechanical mastication of invasive juniper and other brush to enhance grass growth and restore habitat restoration by at least 30%. Supported by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Black Mesa District, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Arizona Elk Society, Arizona Antelope Foundation, and Winslow Elk Habitat Partnership Committee, Jim O'Haco has restored, enhanced and/or improved livestock management practices on more than 20,000 acres of private, state, and federal lands.



Since 2006,
over 20,000
acres of
grasslands
have been
restored.



CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH

Echinique Draw Grassland Restoration Project



Here are some before and after photos of the project. All of the dark green in the bottom right is Mormom tea. Chevelon Butte is pictured in the background.



CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH

In northeastern Arizona, the air quality is superb. On a sunny day, you can see as far as the eye allows. On a clear night, the heavens are full of stars. In fact, Chevelon Butte was once a prospective site for an observatory, as there are no surrounding lights to interfere with the telescopic views.

Dominic Barrett, of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service states “Working with Jim O’Haco makes you wish there were more people like him around. He takes pride in his property, and he is dedicated to sustainable ranching. He has assuredly made his ranch better for future generations, livestock, and wildlife.”

Today the ranch runs mostly Black Angus, and black baldy cattle, as a cow calf operation. Jim’s father had a registered Hereford herd, but due to diminished demand, the herd was slowly witched over to Angus cattle. Jim sells first calf heifers and bulls, along with calves in the spring and fall.



Section III:

Chevelon Butte Ranch is located in hunt unit 4A in Arizona and is a favorite to all hunters, bird enthusiasts, hikers and rock climbers. The ranch is bordered to the west by Clear Creek Canyon which has steep canyon walls, but trails that lead into the canyon.

Rock climbers and hikers enjoy the quiet and serene beauty of the canyon. The eastern side of the ranch is Chevelon Canyon, which is easier to access for fishing and day trips. The southern border is the United

States Forest Service, which attract people for camping and family outings.



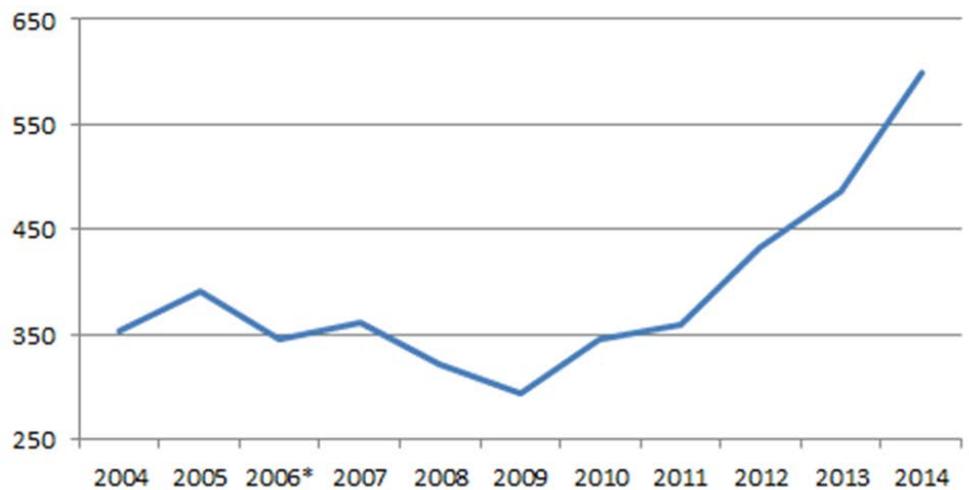
CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH

Wildlife Response

- More burrowing owls, hawks, and grassland birds
- Aerial surveys conducted by Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Other variables probably contributed to increase in antelope.



Unit 4A Antelope Population Estimates



Because of the water available, it is not uncommon to see large herds of elk (300-500), along with herds of antelope that have been on the increase the past few years. A world record antelope was killed on the ranch in 1985, with many others making the Boone and Crocket

Record book. The ranch is a hunter's paradise. Mule deer and havalina are also seen around the ranch. The pinyon-juniper woodlands and high desert grasslands include habitat for IWJV Priority Species, such as Swainson's hawk, ferruginous hawk, and Brewer's sparrow; focal species, like burrowing owl, and numerous other migratory species, such as black-throated gray warbler, and juniper titmouse.

Working cattle and branding is an event where family, friends, and neighbors help to get the calves branded and moved to the forest pasture. During the fall it takes several weeks together all



HIGH POINT WELL BENEFITS

- Provides year-round, reliable water to approximately 50 sections (over 30,000 acres)
- Improves livestock distribution and supports rest-rotation
- Eliminated water hauling

CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH

the pastures, working cattle to wean calves that are shipped to Colorado, Texas or ranches in Arizona.

It is not uncommon to have an organization gather atop Chevelon Butte, to view the ranch below, where the view is spectacular and you are able to see for miles. Events have been organized by the NRCD office; Arizona Cattle Growers and Navajo County Cattle Growers have visited the ranch along with all the agencies

we have partnered with. The sportsmen's groups have work days and overnight campouts, for a day of building fence, rolling up old fence wire, cleaning tanks, branding, installing gates, or whatever extra hands can do to help.

A video was filmed for the Arizona Lottery, along with a video for the Arizona Cattle Growers Association at the ranch.

Photographers, Kathy McCraine and Scott Baxter have spent time taking photos of the working cowboy.



- Local conservation groups have helped with conservation projects:

Arizona Antelope Society

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Arizona Elk Society (Adopt a Ranch Program)

Local groups come to the Ranch and repair fence damaged by elk, install wildlife friendly fencing, and repair storage tanks.

The ranch participates in the Adopt a Ranch – Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation twice a year along with the Arizona Game & Fish Department Land Owner Lessee Program. We have signed up for the Landowner Compact Program, and work with the Arizona Antelope Society, Arizona Elk Society and Elk Habitat Partnership Committee on their projects. Jim O'Haco was inducted into the Wildlife Outdoor Hall of Fame in 2015 for all the work he has done with the critter groups and others over his lifetime.



Section IV:

Jim O'Haco does not just focus on his own operation; he shares his knowledge and experiences with his community. He acts as the President of Arizona Cattle Growers Association, is a member of the National Cattlemen's Association, as well as the Navajo County Cattlemen's Association. He is a member of the Arizona Hereford Association, being recognized last year as Cattleman of the Year. He actively participates in the Navajo County

Natural Resource Conservation District as a supervisor, and has for the past 25+ years. He is Chairman of the Arizona Game & Fish Sportsman Landowner Lessee Committee. And serves a governor's appointment to the Arizona Livestock Loss Board, where concerns of wolf depredation are being addressed.



CHEVELON BUTTE RANCH

In March 2017, Jim was inducted into the Arizona Ranch Hall of Fame, where his story was told. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Region 2 selected Jim to represent Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program cooperators at the Private Lands Partners Day in Mississippi,



2014. He has since traveled to North Platte, Nebraska, representing Arizona, in recognizing the importance of sustainable ranching. He has been a presenter, explaining projects and accomplishments, with the help of all groups mentioned, making it a win-win situation for all involved and a role model for the future.

A leader in conservation practices and hard work to maintain them, Jim has been recognized for his efforts with Stewardship Awards from the Navajo County Farm Bureau, the State Farm Bureau, the Arizona Game & Fish Wildlife Habitat Stewardship Award, and the prestigious National Wildlife Federation Private Land Stewardship Award, 2012 in Hilton Head South Carolina. He is a voice, letting others know that livestock, wildlife, and people can co-habitat and prosper on one parcel of land together.

Speaking to groups and traveling the southwest, Jim is a leader in his industry, and a promoter of agriculture. He knows less than 2% are providing food and fiber for the population, which is worrisome. When people are dependent on foreign countries for their food supply, we are putting ourselves at great risk.

Although Jim is a quiet spoken man, he is proud of his heritage, and has strived to accomplish two things in life, "One being able to produce good, quality livestock. The other is to improve the habitat I have been blessed with, leaving it better for the next generation".



Jim O'Haco's hands on the cover of 100 Years 100 Ranches by Scott Baxter.



ARIZONA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

March 7, 2017

National Cattlemen's Foundation
Environmental Stewardship Award
9110 E. Nichols Ave., Suite 300
Centennial, CO 80112

RE: Environmental Stewardship Award – Jim O'Haco – Chevelon Butte Ranch Letter of Recommendation

Dear NCF:

We proudly and enthusiastically recommend Jim O'Haco of the Chevelon Butte Ranch for the Environmental Stewardship Award. His long dedication to stewardship and conservation is only rivaled by his love of the land, livestock and wildlife which thrive on it.

Jim O'Haco's effort in conserving natural resources has been from sunup to sundown, from Winslow to Washington, from gate to gate and from shovel to symposiums. His implementation of multi-faceted efforts to reduce land impacts, develop and enter landowner agreements, restoring range lands from invasive species encroachment and in leading statewide conservation efforts is as impressive of an effort as we have ever witnessed in a successful ranching and livestock landscape.

Jim's family has over 100 years of experience in managing and caring for landscapes in northeastern Arizona and the special place named "Chevelon Butte Ranch." It is special to the livestock, sportsmen, wildlife, community, culture and watershed it shares -- because of his dedication to unique stewardship practices.

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Arizona's organization of
cattle growers and
cattle feeders



March 7, 2017

Environmental Stewardship Recommendation

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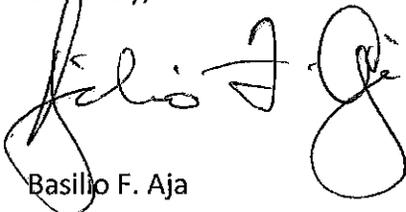
Jim's leadership has been demonstrated in the Arizona Game & Fish Department's Landowner-Lessee/Sportsmen Relations Committee where he served as Chairman; in the Elk Habitat Partnership Committee as a member; Little Colorado River Levee Committee; Natural Resource Conservation District as Supervisor; United States Fish & Wildlife Partners for Conservation as a member; and in nearly every one of Arizona's agricultural organizations as exemplified by his current title as President of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association.

But it doesn't end there – Jim O'Haco's efforts have been recognized with the Arizona Game & Fish Department's State Wildlife Habitat Stewardship Award in 2009; Navajo County Farm Bureau Stewardship Award 2010; Arizona Farm Bureau State Stewardship Award 2010; National Wildlife Federation Private Land Stewardship Award 2012; United States Fish & Wildlife Service Partners for Conservation Private Land Partnership Day 2014; Arizona Outdoors Hall of Fame 2015; and Arizona Farm & Ranch Hall of Fame 2017.

If it involves conserving natural resources on a working landscape – Jim O'Haco has done it or is trying to find a way to show how it can be done. He lives it...he breathes it...and the callouses on his hands show it.

Please accept this recommendation for the best conservationist and steward we know in the Southwestern United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Basilio F. Aja'. The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and a prominent 'A'.

Basilio F. Aja



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region



MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. Box 25486, DFC
Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

STREET LOCATION:
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1807

February 28, 2017

To: National Cattlemen's Beef Association

From: Dominic Barrett, Deputy Regional Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6
Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Subject: Nomination of Jim O'Haco for the Environmental Stewardship Award

Please regard the following as nomination of Mr. Jim O'Haco, Chevelon Butte Ranch, for the Environmental Stewardship Award. Below is a brief summary of his efforts involving collaborative conservation partnerships to restore and enhance high elevation grasslands along the Colorado Plateau near Winslow, Arizona.

As landowner and third generation rancher, Mr. O'Haco has initiated landscape-level, conservation efforts to improve his family's ranch for wildlife and range values. With one of the largest working cattle ranches in Arizona, the O'Haco family operation stretches across more than 111,000 acres. Mr. O'Haco has restored, enhanced, and/or improved livestock management practices on more than 20,000 acres of private, state, and federal lands. Mr. O'Haco has restored approximately 14,000 acres of grasslands through mechanical mastication of invasive juniper and other brush. To improve livestock management, Mr. O'Haco has installed multiple water wells, a 20,000-gal storage tank, 42 miles of buried water lines, 35 drinkers, cross fencing, and implemented a rotational grazing system. Mr. O'Haco's land management practices support sustainable ranching while providing habitat for migratory birds such as Brewer's sparrow, Swainson's hawk, ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl and resident wildlife such as pronghorn, elk, and mule deer.

To achieve landscape-level success, Mr. O'Haco worked with numerous agencies and local conservation groups to successfully plan, implement, monitor, and maintain improvements to the ranch. Mr. O'Haco has successfully completed numerous conservation projects with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, NRCS (Landowner Incentive Program, Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program, and Environmental Quality Improvement Program), Arizona Game and Fish Department (Landowner Relations Program, Access Program, Adopt-A-Ranch Program, Landowner Respect Program), Arizona State Lands Department, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Black Mesa Ranger District, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Arizona Elk Society, Arizona Antelope Foundation, Winslow Habitat Partnership Committee, and others. Mr. O'Haco's collaborative efforts increased support for conservation actions and furthered his impacts on private and public lands.

Mr. O'Haco is a steward of the land who believes in maintaining working landscapes to support rural economies and wildlife habitat. Mr. O'Haco works hard to further sustainable ranching and conservation by currently serving as the President of the Arizona Cattlemen's Association and actively participating in the Navajo County NRCD and the Landowner, Lessee, Sportsman Relations Committee (organized by the Arizona Game and Fish Department). Because of Mr. O'Haco's commitment to conservation, Mr. O'Haco has received the following awards in recognition: National Private Lands Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Award (Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), Wildlife Habitat Stewardship Award (Arizona Game and Fish Department), and Arizona Farm Bureau Environmental Stewardship Award.

If you have any questions regarding Mr. O'Haco's nomination, please contact me at 303-236-4341 or dominic_barrett@fws.gov.

Thank you for considering Mr. O'Haco for the Environmental Stewardship Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Barrett", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dominic Barrett



THE STATE OF ARIZONA
GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TY E. GRAY



March 2, 2017

National Cattlemen's Foundation Environmental Stewardship Selection Committee
9110 E. Nichols Ave., Suite 300
Centennial, CO 80112

Dear Selections Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of Jim O'Haco's nomination for your Environmental Stewardship Award. Jim has been an outstanding partner with the Arizona Game and Fish Department for over 25 years. Over time the Department has worked well with agricultural community and at other times we have had our share of differences with the agriculture community. Jim has long been a strong advocate for agricultural interests being able to co-exist with wildlife management interests, and has been a strong supporter for the Department by sharing his personal experiences with the Department to ranchers that have been hesitant to talk with us about issues ranging from allowing hunter access to improving habitat for wildlife populations ranging from burrowing owls and black footed ferrets to elk and pronghorn antelope. Through his efforts the Department's credibility within the agriculture community has improved substantially over that past 10+ years. I credit this to Jim's influence within the agriculture community and his strong value for conservation of that land to benefit future generations of ranchers and wildlife populations.

Examples of Jim's dedication to supporting wildlife and sustainable ranching include:

- He chairs and has been a committee member of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission's Landowner Lessee, Sportsmen's Relations Committee for at least 15 years. This committee is designed to resolve issues between the Department and the agricultural community, and Jim's presence and leadership has helped resolved several issues over the years.
- He has been recognized by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the National Association of Fish and wildlife Agencies with a state and national award for his stewardship of the land and his ability to improve habitat for wildlife while continuing to operate a large scale ranching operation.
- He is currently the President of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association, working with legislature and the Department to find solutions to complex issues related the wolves and other endangered species. Additionally, Jim has been appointed by the Governor to represent the ranching community on a state authorized Livestock Loss Board, again working to resolve complex issues with wolves and ranching.

It is the feeling of the Arizona Game & Fish Department that Jim has been a true leader for conservation and good stewardship of the land, an outstanding partner who represents both agricultural interests and wildlife interests at the highest level, and someone that is willing to listen, which is a characteristic of exceptional



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TY E. GRAY



leadership. Due to his willingness to donate his time on committees that work on complex issues of the highest priority and his willingness to take a few risks while to improve his ranch for wildlife and cattle, the Department fully supports Jim's nomination for the Environmental Stewardship Award.

If you would like to speak to me about Jim, I would be happy to talk to you about all he has done for wildlife on his ranch. I can be reached on my cell phone at (602) 513-6360.

Sincerely,

Al Eiden
Landowner Relations and Habitat Program Manager