



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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#### **Upcoming Restoration of Arizona Wetlands: Lifeline for At-Risk Wildlife**

*Restoration of Six Ponds to Benefit Chiricahua Leopard Frogs and Other Imperiled Species*

WHITE MOUNTAINS, ARIZONA, March 26, 2026 - Six ponds in Arizona's White Mountains will be restored beginning at the end of April to support the survival of wildlife species at risk of extinction, including the federally Threatened Chiricahua leopard frog. This project is being carried out in partnership between the Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy (ARC) and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Journalists and media professionals are invited to visit restoration sites during the active construction period, April 27 - May 17, to witness firsthand how degraded landscapes are being restored into thriving wetland habitats. This is a unique opportunity to capture the real-time impact of conservation in action and to tell the story of how collaboration and community involvement are giving imperiled wildlife a second chance.

Taking place on lands managed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Arizona State Land Department, the restoration will transform six former cattle tanks into viable habitat to hold more permanent water. The project includes reshaping the landscape with heavy machinery to repair the hydrology and installing pond liners to ensure long-term water retention, using designs by renowned wetland engineer Thomas Biebighauser.

Local volunteers will play a key role in the restoration effort, assisting with tasks such as reseeding native vegetation, placing pond liners, and digging and moving rocks to help shape the ponds.

"These ponds will be a lifeline for species teetering on the edge of extinction," said ARC Executive Director JJ Apodaca. "Much of the Southwest's historic wetlands have been lost or fragmented. By reconnecting these critical water sources, we're helping to give the Chiricahua leopard frog and other at-risk wildlife a real chance at recovery."

The effort is designed to reconnect fragmented habitats, connecting isolated populations and increasing genetic diversity across the region. The restored ponds are also expected to benefit a range of other wildlife species that rely on wetlands.

“Don’t let the size or relatively simple appearance of the wetlands here fool you; they’re biodiversity hotspots,” said Becca Cozad, ARC Southwestern Program Coordinator. “Every pond we restore increases the odds that these species will survive into the future.”

The work is part of ARC’s broader mission to restore key habitats in PARCAs (Priority Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Areas) nationwide. In the arid Southwest, where water is increasingly scarce and many species face mounting threats from climate change and land degradation, these restoration efforts offer critical support for long-term recovery.

“Restoring these ponds feels personal,” explained Cozad. “To me, this work represents a future where wildlife and people can thrive together, and it’s been incredibly rewarding to work alongside Arizona Game and Fish to bring this project to life.”

### **About Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy (ARC)**

Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy, or ARC, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on identifying and conserving the highest priority places for amphibians and reptiles in the United States. We protect endangered amphibians and reptiles through a strategic, scientific, and passionate approach. We believe the conservation of amphibians, reptiles, and the habitats they depend on is vitally important. To learn more, visit [ARCProtects.org](https://ARCProtects.org).

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