



Arizona Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting Minutes:

Attendees: *In attendance both days, unless otherwise noted.*

Resource Advisory Council Members [Table]:

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Bill Brake (Chair)	Sharma Torrens	Robert Broscheid
Steve Trussell (virtual)	Michael Quigley	Julie Engle (virtual)
Allison Ellingson (not in attendance)	Eileen Baden	Paul David
Paul Baumgardt	Jill Bunnell	Patrice Horstman
John Sanders (not in attendance)	Aaron Divine	Larry Howery, Ph.D.
Commercial/Commodity Interests	Environmental, Dispersed Recreation, Archaeological/Historic, Wild Horse & Burro Interests	Elected Officials, Native American, Public-at-Large, Academia, State and Local Government Officials
Governor's Representative: Clay Crowder, AZGFD	Designated Federal Official: Raymond Suazo, Arizona BLM State Director	BLM Arizona's RAC Coordinator: Dolores Garcia

BLM Staff: *In attendance both days unless otherwise noted.*

Raymond Suazo	Wayne Monger
Gera Ashton	Leon Thomas
Amber Cargile	William Mack
Mark Morberg	Scott Feldhausen
Gerald T. Davis	Dolores Garcia
Art Goldberg	Michelle Ailport
Kelly Castillo (2/29 only)	

Public/Other: *No public signed in-person on either day.*

Visitor:	Representing:	City:
Cindy Tuell	Western Watersheds	Virtual attendance

Day 1 - Arizona Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting Minutes:

February 28, 2024

08:15 **Housekeeping and Introductions**

08:25 **Opening Remarks**

Raymond Suazo:

- States importance of folks involved in public service and members of the public for their involvement. Reiterates his thanks to members of the BLM team. Thanked the public and potential viewers for their time and involvement.
- Public lands matter because they belong to Americans and impact all of us.
- We are looking to provide stakeholders with information and for the RAC members and their represented stakeholders to provide BLM with their input.
- RAC members can bring up topics through the chair or going through BLM Comms department.
- Ray also serves as Interior Region 8 Field Special Assistant; he is working along with Interior executives across the region to address common challenges and opportunities.
- Ray discusses his leadership philosophy, working together and seeing different perspectives from the views of others.

Q: Larry Howery: *We appreciate your philosophy and outreach; will we be able to hear a presentation or see a written document of the Outreach and Engagement Framework?*

A: *We will be able to provide that to you via Amber Cargile. Amber offered to provide a presentation at a future meeting later this year.*

Q: Paul David: *In my personal experience, I have worked with ADOT's influence on decisions and getting public lands returned to state. What is the BLM's ability to affect policy through lobbying? How does BLM manage different groups of people?*

A: *All BLM employees in Arizona are career civil service employees, not political appointees. As such, we have legal and ethical restrictions on lobbying. As to managing different groups of people, there are always diverse opinions about how to manage public lands. Over the years we have acknowledged different perspectives; people raise issues and concerns. We give space during comment periods to share perspective. The public has full ability to express their concerns.*

- Amber Cargile Discusses legal appropriateness for State Director to answer questions for the legislature. As Federal employees we are subject to ethics guidance, and we are held to very stringent guidelines.

- Dolores Garcia and Bill Brake reiterated that every meeting has a public comment period built in. During that period, the public provides input, but the RAC/BLM do not respond like a Q&A session. The comment period is there for the BLM and the RAC members to listen to public input for consideration.

09:30 **BLM Arizona 101: Managing the Balance Point**

- Amber Cargile discusses the history of BLM including its origin and FLPMA.

Q: Paul David: *Does mining include subsurface water? Does federal policy allow transportation and water take?*

A: *BLM does not regulate groundwater; we have to go through Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). We have the same process for permitting wells and groundwater as other proponents, including mining.*

Q: Sharma Torrens: *Is there follow-up with the burros to ensure that folks are properly taking care of them?*

A: *There is oversight. Most adoptions are occurring through private placement programs or rescues with which we are partnered. In the past we have work with TIP trainers. Through the placement program we do perform follow-ups. Before actual titling we do a welfare check.*

Q: *Specifically with ATVs/OHVs and their effect on the air quality -- does this have an impact on your policy here in the state?*

A: *We have to comply with air quality standards. As an example, at Table Mesa we had a lot of dust on OHV trails, so we took steps to address that.*

Q: Larry Howery: *Where do BLM Federal standards/guidelines fit into BLM Arizona 101 and how you manage the land here in Arizona?*

A: Gerald Davis: *It depends on what standards you are asking for specifically. For rangeland, we specifically monitor the health of the land, the habitat. The Arizona standards for rangeland health are used here by BLM, including what aspects need to be incorporated. We use the IDT (Interdisciplinary Team) process for variety of needs. The general approach for projects and land use planning is that we want a full IDT that can assess issues across the board for the landscape being assessed.*

Q: Jill Bunnell: *With the land ownership map, we see a checkerboard with Arizona and BLM land, is there any push to consolidate lands for resource management? Like land swaps/exchanges.*

A: Raymond Suazo: *I am not aware of any land exchanges that are currently under review. However, checkerboard land management does create challenges. We reach out to partners for addressing issues across those boundaries...for example, vegetation treatments to improve wildlife habitat, or to improve recreation access across boundaries. We recently met with the State Lands commissioner and both of us committed to working together regarding boundaries/borders.*

11:00 Federal Ethics for Advisory Committee Members Presentation

- See attached PowerPoint slides.
- Ray discusses importance of reaching out to Mr. Shifrin. When in doubt, please reach out!

Q: Julie Engell: *Earlier you mentioned about self-recusation – is that correct?*

A: Daniel Shifrin: *It is great to self-recuse, but if it is truly a specific party matter for yourself or if a party you represent could benefit from business being presented - you will be recused.*

Q: Paul David: *What is the ruling on someone with a potential conflict attempting to contact another member during the time of deliberating/discussing topics?*

A: Daniel Shifrin: *When you as RAC member know you have a conflict of interests, the ethics rules say you cannot participate in deliberation/voting. An extension of that would be swaying others during the deliberation process.*

- Bill Brake emphasized on the importance of continuously communicating with each other for general awareness, but not on each other's recommendations during deliberation.

12:45 Public Comment Period

RAC Coordinator stated that any member of the public who identifies that they wish to speak will be given an opportunity to do so. If no one identifies, we will continue with the agenda and monitor for anyone from the public wishing to speak within the allotted time on the agenda.

13:00 Opened Public Comment Period

Continued with agenda while monitoring virtual attendees.

No public in attendance in-person, and those in virtual attendance have not identified today to speak publicly.

13:00 RAC FLREA Training

- See attached PowerPoint slides.

Q: Julie Engell: *Are entry fees separate from other charged fees?*

A: Ryan Means: *Entry fees would be for access to sites. Camping fees are specifically for campgrounds use. We are currently working new fee structures. Primarily these would be for campgrounds and other day use.*

Q: Aaron Divine: *Coconino Forest has twice the raw visitor numbers, but Tonto Forest collects significantly more revenue in fees, can you elaborate?*

A: Ryan Means: *Each National Forest has various recreating opportunities, but some forests have campgrounds or other day use areas and using our data we do monitor all of those recreation fees. That higher number of 5.5 million in Coconino Forest may have a significant number for fee-free visits. We are not in a business to charge for everything when visitors are on site. We are assessing numbers and types of fees that we are allowed to charge. We are not in the business of profit. To clarify, in terms of fees for entry, we do not charge entry fees. We charge rec fees, which include amenities.*

Q: Patrice Horstman: *Does the Forest Service have an obligation to spend the fees collected on those sites back into the sites they were collected at?*

A: Ryan Means: *Any time we charge a recreation fee it is for reinvestment into that specific program. In terms of projects, we can split the reinvestment, but it is based on needs. In the Forest Service, the intention is focused on those specific sites where the fees were collected. So, we do primarily invest back into those sites where the fees were collected.*

A: Maile Adler: *For BLM, our fee goal is that 100% of fees collected will go back into those sites. We do have ability to use them in other areas as needed, but the goal is that they are reinvested into those specific sites.*

Q: Paul Baumgardt: *For the fees, do you know the percentages spent on maintenance vs other site improvements?*

A: Maile Adler: *Do not have the numbers memorized, but we do have annual reports. We can provide a link to those reports for percentages.*

Link: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees/flrea-revenue>

Q: Paul David: *In the sense of any sites being completely self-sustaining, how would you develop pricing points to achieve this?*

A: Maile Adler: *BLM does a cost recovery calculation. We do have to combine funding via cost support across the board. The goal is 95% reinvested into the local site.*

Q: Bill Brake: *Previously the Forest Service met with the RAC and we provided them suggestions and feedback before we could recommend enacting fees. We had a discussion and waited until we agreed on numbers, am I remembering that correctly?*

A: Raymond Suazo: *There is an importance of working with the RAC for their guidance. However, the RAC is still an advisory function, not a decision-making body.*

Q: Eileen Baden: *Is there a NEPA document put together with a fee proposal?*

A: Maile Adler: *In the BLM recreation business plan, we will discuss what services we are providing and need to justify.*

Gerald Davis: *The document would be separate from standard NEPA process, but still contain environmental impacts. This is strictly for financial impacts and socioeconomic and Environmental Justice purposes. A NEPA package would be addressed separately.*

- RAC may NOT make recommendations on commercial use permits, reservation services, and adding units to existing sites.

14:40 **Recreation Fees Business Planning**

Maile Adler, BLM Arizona Recreation Branch Chief and Ryan Means, U.S. Forest Service Regional Recreation Fee Coordinator

- See attached PowerPoint slides.

Q: *As you look at market analysis and comparable fees, how do you know the markets haven't been artificially low and BLM isn't actually losing money?*

A: Maile Adler: *We are looking at other providers of similar services. It can be easier to find similar providers for things like campgrounds, but some of our BLM fee sites are more unique.*

Q: *After 14 years without fee increases, what percentage or profit in total would you estimate that the BLM missed out on?*

A: Maile Adler: *That is hard to say, but I will try to get back to the RAC with an estimate at a future meeting.*

Q: Clay Crowder- *Am I understanding correctly that according to the recreation blueprint, each individual proposed business plan will have 30-day public comment period?*

A: Maile Adler: *Yes, and there was public comment on creating the blueprint itself. To implement and achieve the vision, BLM will continue to work with stakeholders. We will be holding a state summit to look at recreation program in general and gather input.*

- Raymond Suazo discussed balance of having visitors in the state and the corresponding economic benefit, but also creating impacts such as trail overuse and landscape degradation.
- Gerald Davis mentions opportunities available to Arizona and the needed development of resilient recreation.
- Bill Brake mentions concerns with Quartzite LTVA and the RV'ers dumping human waste. Should BLM land be used as a competing site for cheap RV spots?
- Raymond Suazo emphasizes the need to manage and address recreating at this specific site and being proactive. We should be charging fair market value and providing fair pricing for services provided. Raymond Suazo mentions his required adherence to Environmental Justice impacts to local communities. We need to balance fees so local communities can enjoy, without putting other local enterprises out of business.
- William Mack mentions a downside to increased amount of camping, in that there is a lot of clean-up required. With no fees charged for us to support cleaning, we must task the taxpayer. We need to think about the balancing act. There is a significant cost to provide amenities and we cannot sustain current rates. We need to ensure it is affordable in totality.

15:20

Forest Service Recreation Fees Proposals

Ryan Means, U.S. Forest Service Regional Recreation Fee Coordinator

- See attached PowerPoint slides.

Q: Patrice Horstman: *Are there limitations on what the concessionaire can charge for?*

A: Ryan Means: *This decision depends on management and sites and working through the recreation permitting process. There is a specific limit and guidance they need to follow to create rates.*

- Raymond Suazo mentions the reality of potential for closures of our recreation sites if they are not properly managed or sustainable.
- Jill Burnell expresses concern with ‘land grabs’ by renewable energy projects and pushing recreation into smaller areas.

15:55 **Closing remarks**

Raymond Suazo thanks members of the RAC for their service

Bill Brake mentions the value of diversity among the RAC members and looks forward to future work together.

16:00 **Adjourn**

Day 2 - Arizona Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting Minutes:

February 29, 2024

08:10 **Meeting called to order by Chairman Bill Brake.**

08:20 **BLM/Interior Priorities Presentation**

Introduction - Mark Morberg, BLM Deputy State Director for Land, Minerals and Cadastral Survey, and Gerald Davis, BLM Deputy State Director for Resources and Planning

- See attached PowerPoint slides.

Q: Paul David: *What are the potential consequences of the project applicants?*

A: Mark Morberg: *We have to vet applications for economic viability. There are a lot for startup companies. There is a process developed. The process includes public involvement and environmental analysis under NEPA.*

A: Gerald Davis: *We have something called the variance process. BLM can look at the issues and determine on moving forward with the NEPA process. The best way to get to an outcome is for all stakeholders to engage in NEPA process.*

Q: Sharma Torrens: *Does BLM provide alternative areas as suggestions?*

A: Mark Morberg: *It is part of the planning process. We have done step-down planning from the national planning effort. We have a tiered approach with yes/no/maybe areas.*

Q: Jill Bunnell: *Is “variance” part of a pre-screening?*

A: Mark Morberg: *Variance is specifically for solar projects. It is a pre-screening process specifically for solar. We ask, “Is this project in an area that makes sense?”*

District Initiatives:

[DM/DSD Report attached to minutes provides information presented by District Managers, Program Leads and Deputy State Directors in the sections below.]

Arizona Strip District River District Office (ASD)

District Manager Wayne Monger reviewed the District’s updates.

Bill Brake commented on previous RAC discussions regarding access to The Wave.

Q: Aaron Divine: *In the case of each District Manager, do you each serve in each location you are the DM for physically?*

A: *We all live in the districts we serve.*

Q: Patrice Horstman: *What address are you moving to in St. George?*

A: *We are Just moving a few exits away to a new site close to the airport.*

Q: Jill Bunnell: *Do you maintain Paria Canyon?*

A: *Yes*

Q: Clay Crowder: *Relating to Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni National Monument, can you please work through the development process with Arizona Game and Fish?*

A: *Yes, we will.*

Gila District Office (GDO)

District Manager Scott Feldhausen, reviewed the District’s updates.

Q: Paul David: *With direct impacts on the border such as foot traffic/travel, are any federal funds earmarked for restoration and increasing efforts to manage increased border patrolling?*

A: *Yes, we receive some specific funding and money for this. We have the ability to use youth interns as help for border cleanups. We also work with U.S. Customs and Border Protection on doing other restoration work across public lands within the identified borderlands regions.*

Raymond Suazo: *Yes, we do have funding for this.*

Phoenix District Office (PDO)

- District Manager Leon Thomas reviewed the District's updates.

Paul Baumgardt states that most people shoot responsibly, but back in 2020 there had been transmission lines damaged by shooters. He expressed support for boundaries as these consolidate more responsible shooters, bringing a level of consciousness and responsibility.

Q: Eileen Baden: *On Table Mesa Road, the road is rough, and I would like to see if the road can be implemented as a fire break. Is the road currently a maintained fire break?*

A: *I will be glad to look into that with the District Fire Management Officer.*

- Raymond Suazo mentions the Rec Business Plans and using those funds for assisting in restoration of the Table Mesa Road.

Q: Aaron Divine: *The Church Camp Site is free, is that correct? But it may be part of a business plan to alter in the future. With shooting facilities, is there discussion on fees attached, maybe pushback or displacement or people who are familiar with them free and going back to dispersed locations, therefore creating new illegal shooting sites?*

A: *This is a shift in paradigm. The community is used to pay-to-play. These people have funding for weaponry and licenses. Most shooters want to be around responsible users. The actual shooting area has a recreation boundary surrounding the area as a buffer.*

Colorado River District (CRD)

District Manager, William Mack, reviewed the District's updates.

Q: Michael Quigley- *What happens at the boundary between the Colorado River District, and the Yuma Proving Grounds and Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) as it relates to the changes in recreation management and activities allowed in those areas?*

A: *The boundaries are clearly marked.*

Q: Aaron Divine: *In the last years there is a significant increase in visitors on the NWR. Is there any collaboration between Kofa NWR and BLM on managing visitors?*

A: *There is a lot of recreation activity across the area, and we do work with Kofa and Havasu NWR. We work more in burro management together rather than on the public's impact to lands. We do coordinate a significant amount.*

11:45 Break for lunch

12:55 Public Comment Period

RAC Coordinator stated that any member of the public who identifies that they wish to speak will be given an opportunity to do so. If no one identifies, we will continue with the agenda and monitor for anyone from the public wishing to speak within the allotted time on the agenda.

13:00 **Opened Public Comment Period**
Continued with agenda while monitoring virtual attendees.

No public in attendance in-person, and those in virtual attendance have not identified today to speak publicly.

BLM State Office Division and Program Initiatives:

[DM/DSD Report attached to minutes provides detailed information presented by District Managers, Program Leads and Deputy State Directors in the sections below.]

13:00 **Division of Lands, Minerals and Cadastral Survey**

Mark Morberg, Deputy State Director of Lands Minerals and Cadastral Survey reviewed the Division update.

Q: Eileen Baden- *How can we incorporate bikeway paths within project areas? Is there a way people can use the land? Can counties apply for Recreation and Public Purpose Act leases for bikeways?*

A: *As long as it is used, no problem in applying. We cannot leave vacant land. There needs to be an intended purpose for land to be incorporated.*

Q: Paul Baumgardt- *Solar installations have sterile hard pan floor. At the expense of structural capacity and height, could you allow for vegetation to grow or small animals to be able to go underneath? Would it increase the cost?*

A: *There are some newer methods for solar that enables increased use for wildlife underneath the solar panels.*

13:20 **Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Program**

State Fire Management Officer Kelly Castillo reviewed the Fire Program's update.

- Patrice Horstman mentions that Coconino County has a high public land percentage, and the fires often drag over into county land. She stresses the importance of partnerships and her happiness in the increased number of full-time fire employees.

Q: Jill Bunnell: *With fire management, it seems that an equally important component is revegetation after fires with reseeding. Is there a collaboration on seed mixes between ADOT and other agencies working on revegetation? Is this currently being pushed?*

A: *You do see a cycle. In a way it puts the spotlight on wildfire crisis. We started looking at the seed mixes pre and post fires. BIL/IRA put investment of millions into seedbanks and rehabilitation. We do coordinate with partners and agencies on consistency for burned area rehabilitation.*

Gerald Davis: *There is crossover into resources, in the restoration program more directly. The BLM does have a national seed strategy, we receive funding to further implement it. We have a warehousing system that supplies local units for seeds based on habitat. We continue to push for fire adaptive species. Fire is as a natural piece of the landscape.*

- Patrice Horstman expresses how beneficial the prescribed burns are.

13:55 **Division of Business and Support Services**

Deputy State Director for Business and Support Service, Art Goldberg reviewed the Division's updates.

Q: Eileen Baden: *Earlier you mentioned (Americans with Disabilities Act) ADA improvements. In NEPA documents, ADA viable access is mentioned. Are you able to speak more on that?*

A: It is a part of facility design. ADA law is always taken into account on new projects. We want to provide specific ADA details to the public We are not at this point yet but want to keep pushing this moving forward.

Gerald Davis: We are aware this is a need and recreation program is working on providing information. We have gone to existing sites and performed improvements for existing facilities to better serve the public.

Amber Cargile: BLM currently has a national initiative to add accessibility information to our main Visitation page on the BLM website.

14:10 **Division of Communications**

Deputy State Director for Communications, Amber Cargile, reviewed the Division's updates.

- Bill expressed his thanks to Amber for acting as a "thread piece" by connecting the Bureau and the public.

Q: Michael Quigley: *You mentioned the increase in polarization, can you address another challenge of smaller editorial reporting and recent shifts in media?*

A: *We go through all the factors. We started to see media change with internet and digitalization. Where we really start to see change was with news consolidation and corporatization. At same*

time, social media and independent journalism took off. It is important to build relations with good reporters. It is key we work to build trust with reporters, establishing and building credibility.

14:30 Division of Resources and Planning

Deputy State Director of Resources and Planning, Gerald (Jerry) Davis reviewed the Division's updates.

Q: Patrice Horstman: *How do you intend on sharing resources and budget requirements for the new Monument with the U.S. Forest Service?*

A: *Too soon to determine specifics at this moment. Each agency will use funding in their authority for co-management. Fee sharing agreement potential in future. Could be a joint office staffed between agencies.*

Wayne Monger: *Our visitation and resources are different. We want to stress the rugged terrain of the new monument. The public is not familiar with a large part of the area and access is limited.*

Q: Sharma Torrens: *What does BLM plan to do with lands in the vicinity of White Tank Mountains?*

A: Leon Thomas: *About three weeks ago we met with White Tank Conservancy, we plan on listening in with Arizona Game and Fish Department on future plans.*

15:15 Closing remarks

Raymond Suazo closes by emphasizing the importance of work ahead of the council and thanks all for attending.

Bill Brake stresses the importance of having a quorum and importance of attending in-person when possible.

Next meeting April 24-25, 2024.

15:30 Meeting Adjourned

DAY 1 Meeting Presentations



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

BLM Arizona 101: Managing the Balance Point

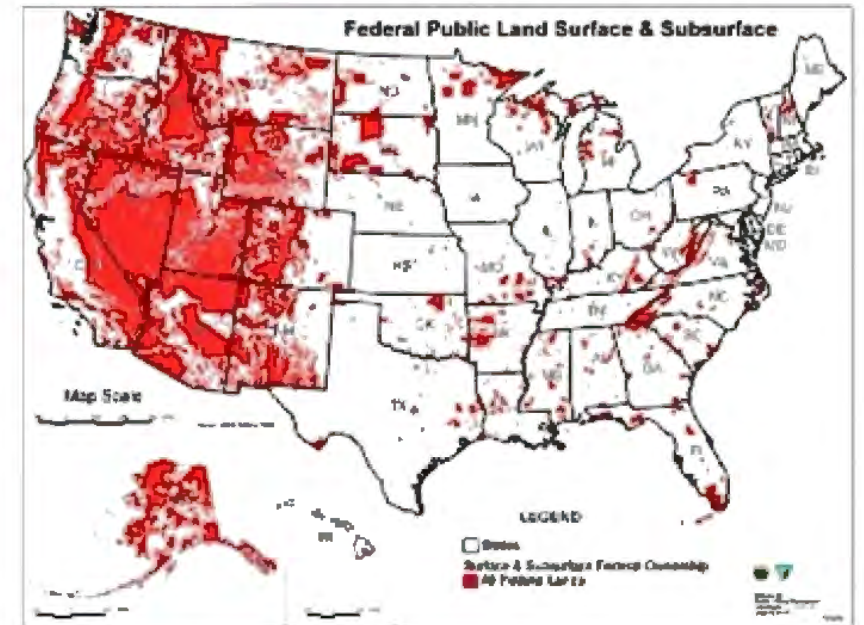
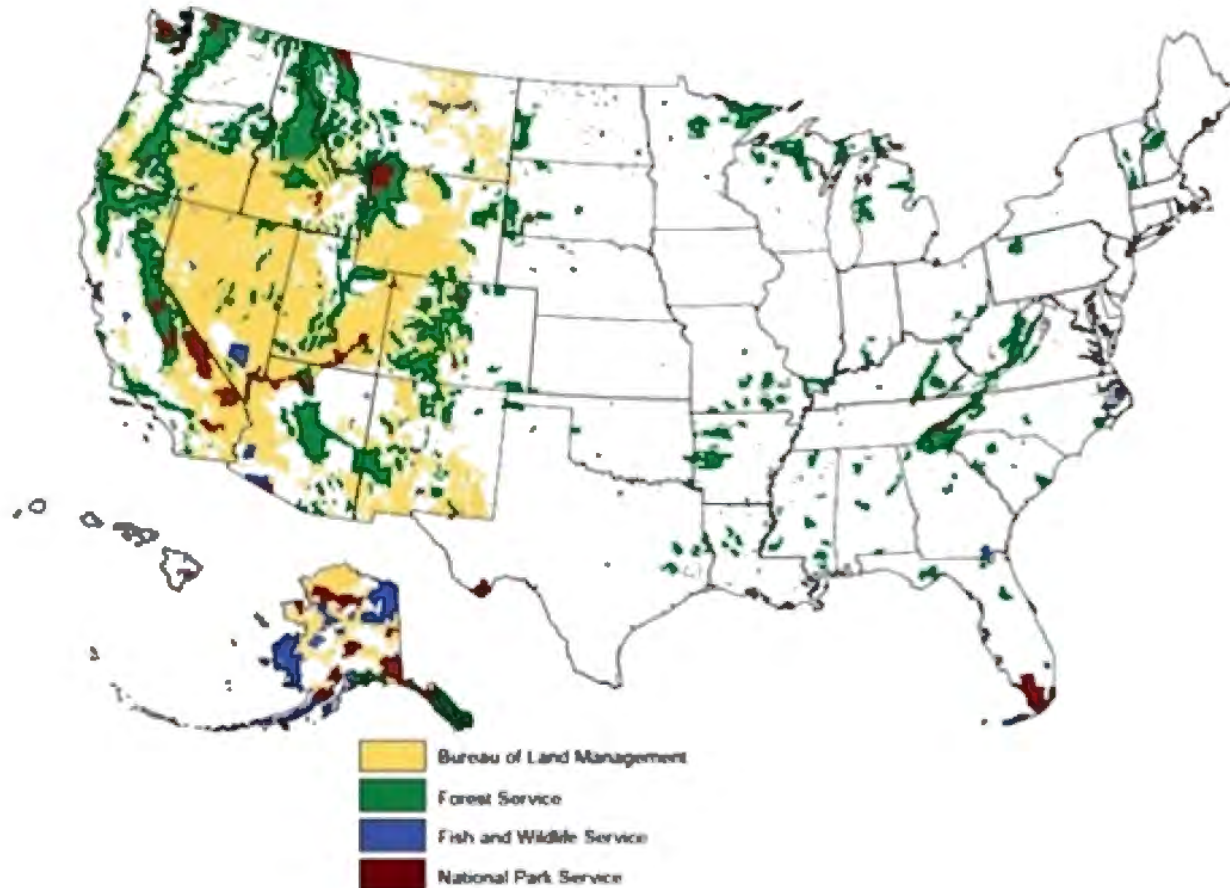
Conservation, Restoration & Working Landscapes for Arizona & America





America's Public Lands

The BLM manages 245 million acres of land in the U.S.—10% of America's land base—and approximately 30% of the nation's minerals.





Federal Land Policy & Management Act



- The BLM has roots in the General Land Office and the Taylor Grazing Act, which established the U.S. Grazing Service. In 1946, these two agencies were combined to form the BLM.
- In 1976, the Congress passed FLPMA, our guiding document and road map for managing public land into the future.
- FLPMA proclaimed multiple use, sustained yield, and environmental protection as the guiding principles for public land management and established the critical importance of land use planning and public involvement in the process.

The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.



Public lands help make America beautiful and strong

The public lands managed by the BLM generate significant and quantifiable benefits for the nation by providing energy and mineral resources, grazing, and more recreation opportunities than lands managed by any other federal agency.

Through balanced management, the BLM develops these resources while preserving cultural resources and iconic landscapes and maintaining healthy ecosystems that provide clean air, clean water, and healthy habitat for plants and wildlife.

In Fiscal Year 2022, BLM Arizona supported more than \$800 million in total economic output and nearly 6,000 jobs.

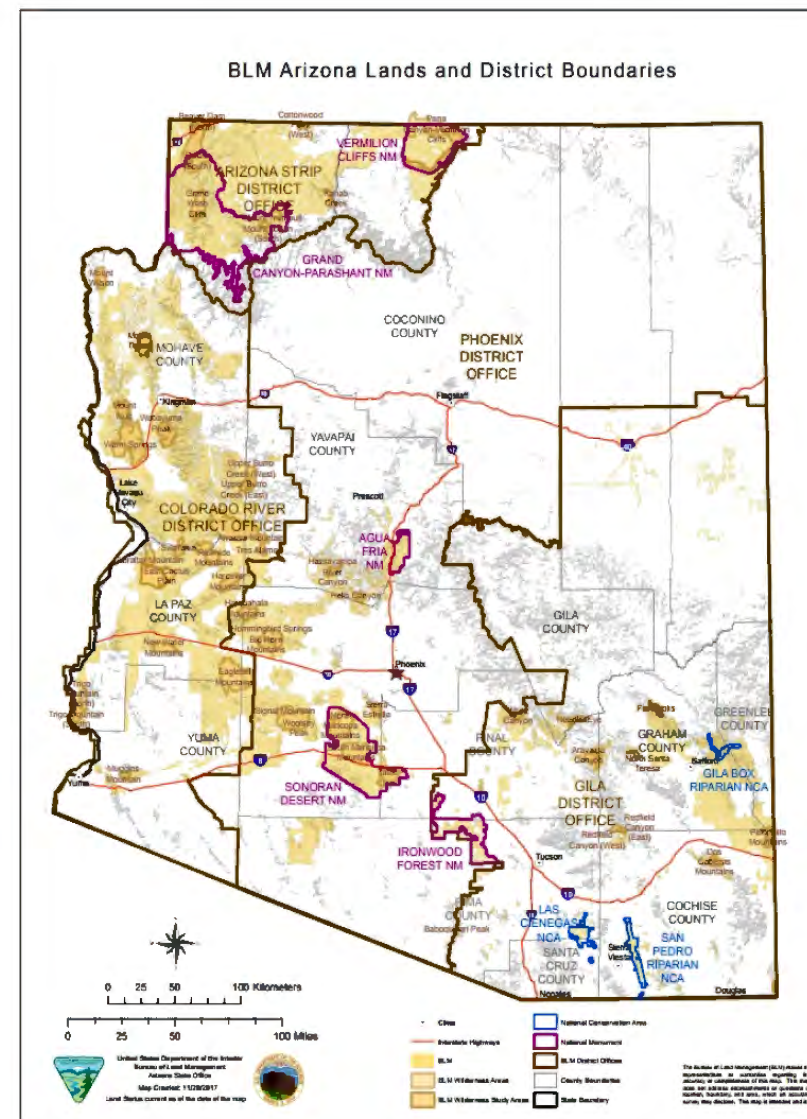




Arizona's Public Lands

BLM Arizona manages 12.1 million acres of public land and 17.5 million subsurface acres in Arizona. This includes:

- 60,000+ active mining claims
- 2 Restoration landscapes (Yanawat & Sky Islands)
- 744 grazing permits/leases on 825 allotments
- 3.8 million acres within 100 miles of the US/Mexico border
- 39 utility scale solar energy applications
- 8 wind energy test applications and 2 wind development applications
- 1 approved solar; 2 approved wind energy facilities
- 2 500kV transmission lines under construction (Ten West and SunZia). Dozens permitted and operational.
- 1 230/345kV transmission line in development (Southline)
- 1 fiber infrastructure project
- 1 water pipeline, 1 ammonia pipeline projects
- 6 national monuments, 3 national conservation areas, 3 national scenic and historic trails, 47 wilderness areas
- 6 wild burro herd management areas





Our Priorities

BLM Arizona prioritizes our work in alignment with the Director's priorities:

- Clean Energy:** We will help lead the way to a clean energy future, leaving no communities behind.
- Restoration:** Nature is our planet's best engineer. As the effects of climate change increase, we will restore our lands and waters to create healthy, resilient landscapes and to allow nature to better store carbon.
- Recreation for All:** We will work to ensure that all families now and into the future have equal opportunity to hunt, camp, fish, hike and play on our public lands.
- Conservation:** As part of our multiple use and sustained yield mandate, we will address climate change and conservation in all we do.
- Rebuild the Agency:** To achieve the above and create an agency the future is relying upon, we will fix staffing shortages and build a team that represents all of America.



Clean Energy

BLM Arizona works with applicants and federal, state, Tribal, local and NGO partners to advance the nation's clean energy goals. Some examples are:

- Leasing our Solar Energy Zones, a national planning effort, for development of up to 1,000 MW of clean energy.
- Accepting applications for solar and wind facility rights-of-way on public lands. Currently, we have over four dozen projects under consideration statewide.
- Consider transmission line rights-of-way to link energy projects on state and private land to the state and national grid.





Restoration & Conservation

BLM Arizona works with federal, state, Tribal, local and non-governmental partners to support the nation's climate goals and ensure healthy landscapes for generations to come. Some examples are:

- Management of wildlife habitat, migration corridors, riparian/wetland areas and fisheries
- Threatened and endangered species recovery
- Arizona Burro Partnership
- Sentinel Landscapes
- 2 Restoration Landscapes
- Cultural preservation
- Integrated vegetation teams
- Active grazing management
- Landscape inventory, monitoring and restoration





Recreation

BLM Arizona proactively engages with Tribes, local communities, NGOs, outfitters and guides, outdoor recreation retailers, local tourism offices, and other stakeholders to improve equitable recreation access to public lands and foster greater well-being and economic benefits within communities. Some examples are:

- Implementing the BLM's Recreation Blueprint
- Travel Management Planning
- Developing first-ever BLM shooting sports sites
- Managing BLM's only Long-Term Visitor Areas (350K site visits in FY2023)
- Partnering with academia (ASU and NAU) on data to inform BLM's recreation decisions and priorities
- Seeking public input biennially to identify priority areas for improving access to public lands





Rebuild the Agency

BLM Arizona is working on programs to enhance recruiting, hiring and retention. Some examples are:

- REDI Team
- Welcome Aboard new employee orientation
- Semi-annual Awards Program
- Diversity Recruitment Strategy
- Arizona Recruiting Team/Outreach
- Annual EEO/Diversity training
- BLM Internships





Rural Communities

BLM-managed public lands are critical to Arizona's rural communities for many reasons:

- Grazing/agricultural economies
- Mining and energy jobs
- Recreation gateway opportunities

Many opportunities exist to work with Congress, state and local governments, Tribes and industry to promote economic development such as:

- Renewable energy development
- Land tenure and siting for recreation
- Rural broadband deployment





Urban Interface

Arizona is home to some of the fastest-growing cities in America. The Phoenix and Tucson metro areas, both surrounded by public lands, have 6 million+ residents and continue to grow. This creates increased demand for:

- Transportation/energy/utility infrastructure projects
- Mineral material permits
- Land leases, sales and exchanges
- Increased recreation access and development
- Fire management of the wildland-urban interface (WUI)

BLM Arizona works with communities and stakeholders to support infrastructure and economic growth while managing land use conflicts and promoting conservation and restoration.





Outreach & Engagement

Public and stakeholder engagement is at the core of what we do in the BLM. We believe partnership and inclusion are vital to sustainable and productive public lands.

Our approach includes:

- Citizen engagement via NEPA, FLPMA, and other laws/regs
- Tribal consultation
- Resource Advisory Councils
- Partnerships – NGOs and academia
- Volunteers
- Youth / Veteran outreach
- Congressional / Intergovernmental outreach
- Centering equity & environmental justice
- Responsive—not reactive—approach

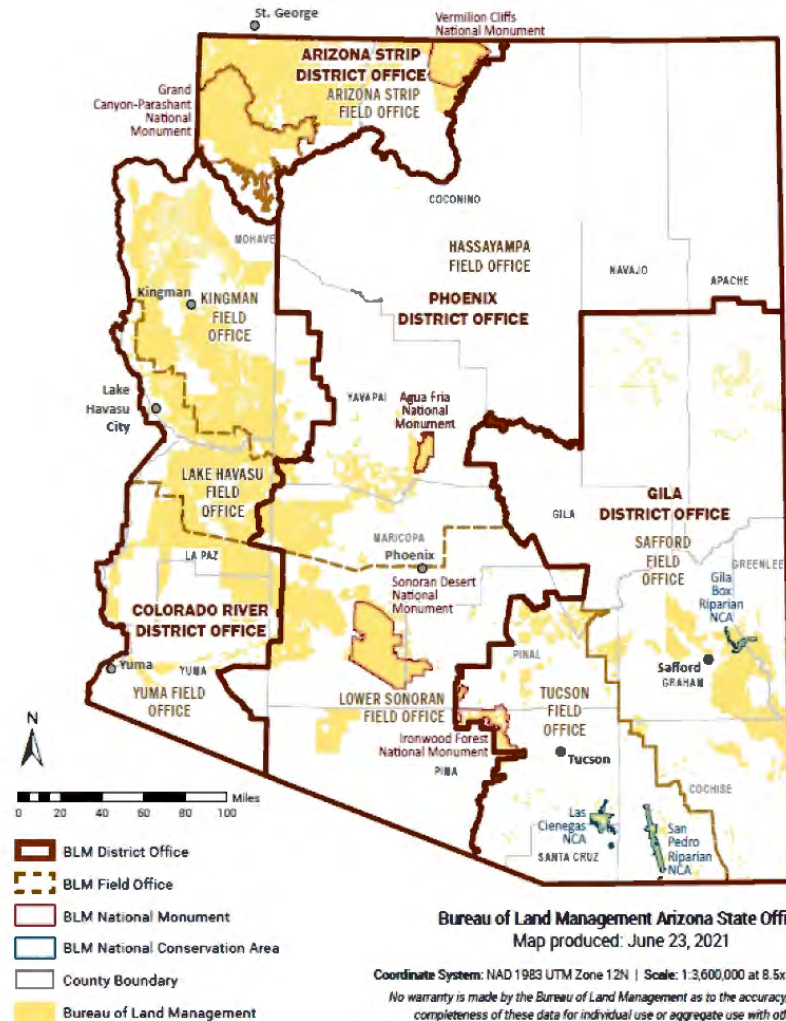




Our Organization

BLM Arizona's team consists of ~ 500 employees working from the State Office, 4 Districts & 8 Field Offices:

- Arizona State Office (Phoenix)
- Arizona Strip District (St. George, UT)
 - Arizona Strip Field Office
 - Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument
- Colorado River District (Lake Havasu City)
 - Kingman Field Office
 - Lake Havasu Field Office
 - Yuma Field Office
- Phoenix District (Phoenix)
 - Lower Sonoran Field Office
 - Hassayampa Field Office
- Gila District
 - Tucson Field Office
 - Safford Field Office





Questions?





Federal Advisory Committees and Ethics Responsibilities of Representative Members



FACA Advisory Committees and BLM Advisory Committees

- ▶ Members of Federal Advisory Committees Act advisory committees may come from both the public and private sectors.
- ▶ These individuals provide the Government with needed expert advice and diverse views.
- ▶ Composition of BLM Advisory Committees shall:
 - Be structured to provide fair membership balance, both geographic and interest-specific, in terms of the functions to be performed and points of view to be represented, as prescribed by its charter.
 - Be formed with the objective of providing representative counsel and advice about public land and resource planning, retention, management and disposal.

BLM Advisory Committees Purpose and Objective

Purpose - Advise the Secretary of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management on matters relating to public lands and resources under the administrative jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management

Objective - To make available to the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Land Management the expert counsel of concerned, knowledgeable citizens and public officials regarding both the formulation of operating guidelines and the preparation and execution of plans and program for the use and management of public lands, their natural and cultural resources, and the environment.

Representative Members

- ▶ Council members and members of general purpose subgroups shall be representative of the interests of the following 3 general groups:
 - ▶ Persons who: Hold Federal grazing permits or leases within the area for which the council is organized; represent interests associated with transportation or rights-of-way; represent developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users, or commercial recreation activities; represent the commercial timber industry; or represent energy and mineral development.
 - ▶ Persons representing: nationally or regionally recognized environmental organizations; dispersed recreational activities; archeological and historical interests; or nationally or regionally recognized wild horse and burro interest groups.
 - ▶ Persons who: hold state, county or local elected office; are employed by a State agency responsible for management of natural resources, land, or water; represent Indian tribes within or adjacent to the area for which the council is organized; are employed as academicians in natural resource management or the natural sciences; or represent the affected public-at-large.
- ▶ The Federal ethics rules that apply to Federal employees do not apply to representatives.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CHARTER

1. **OFFICIAL DESIGNATION:** Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Advisory Committee (Committee).
2. **AUTHORITY:** This Committee is established pursuant to Presidential Proclamation 8332, "Modifying the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (Monument) (2017), and is consistent with section 309 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), as amended (43 U.S.C. 1739). The Bureau of Land Management has established standards and procedures for the creation, operation, and termination of advisory committees. Refer to the 1995 amended BLM regulations (43 CFR 1784.2-1); specific regulations regarding composition (1784.2-1); avoidance of conflicts of interest (1784.2-2); calls for nominations (1784.4-1); notice of meetings (1784.4-2); (1784.4-3); records (1784.5-3); course of instruction for members (1784.6-1(g)); requirements (1784.6-1(h)). The Committee is regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2).
3. **OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES:** The Committee shall provide recommendations and advice to the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) regarding the implementation of management plans for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, the Kaiparowits Plateau, and the Kaiparowits Plateau Canyons Units and, as appropriate, management of the Monument.

Committee Charter Language

The U.S. Department of the Interior addresses potential conflicts of interest of its advisory committee representatives through the inclusion of certain ethics responsibilities in the committee charter.

Current Ethics Requirements in Charters

Non-Federal Members. Non-Federal members of the Committees and subcommittees appointed as representatives are **not subject to Federal ethics statutes and regulations.**

However, **no non-Federal Committee or subcommittee members will participate in any Committee or subcommittee deliberations or votes relating to a specific party matter before the Department or its bureaus and offices including a lease, license, permit, contract, grant, claim, agreement, or litigation, in which the member or the entity the member represents has a direct financial interest.** [Emphasis added.]

Committee Charter Language Specific to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Committees

- ▶ As provided in 43 C.F.R. §1784.2-2, all members of the Committee shall be required to disclose their **direct or indirect interest** in leases, licenses, permits, contracts, or claims that involve lands or resources administered by BLM, or in any litigation related thereto.
 - ▶ **For the purposes of this paragraph, indirect interest includes holdings of a spouse or dependent child. [Emphasis added.]**



Specific Party Matter

- ▶ A specific party matter typically involves:
 - a specific proceeding affecting the legal rights of the parties: or
 - an isolatable transaction or related set of transactions between identified parties.
- ▶ Examples include leases, licenses, permits, contracts, claims, grant, application, controversy, charge, investigation, arrest, enforcement action, request for ruling or other determination and related litigation which involves lands or resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Specific Party Matter

- ▶ “Specific party matter” does not include matters of general applicability, such as:
 - rulemaking;
 - legislation;
 - the formulation of general policy, standards, or objectives; or
 - other actions of general application.



Direct and Indirect Financial Interests

- ▶ “Direct financial interest” means one’s own personal financial interest.
- ▶ “Indirect financial interest” includes holdings of a spouse or dependent child.
- ▶ “Financial interest” means the potential for gain or loss as a result of governmental action on the matter.
- ▶ Direct or indirect financial interest might arise from:
 - A permit on public land being discussed by the committee.
 - An oil or gas lease on public land.
 - Litigation involving lands or resources administered by the Bureau of Land Management.
 - Any similar interest that may be affected by the matter.

Direct and Predictable Effect on Financial Interest

You are prohibited from participating in a specific party matter only if the matter will have a direct and predictable effect on your direct financial interests, or the holdings of a spouse or a dependent child or the direct financial interests of the entity you represent.

Direct Effect on Financial Interests



- ▶ A specific party matter will have a direct effect on a financial interest if there is a close causal link between any decision or action to be taken in the matter and any expected effect of the matter on the financial interest.
- ▶ An effect may be direct even though it does not occur immediately.

What is NOT a Direct Effect on Financial Interest

The chain of causation is attenuated or is contingent upon the occurrence of events that are speculative or that are independent of, and unrelated to, the matter.

The impact on financial interest occurs only as a consequence of the specific party matter's effects on the general economy.

Predictable Effect on Financial Interest

There is a real, as opposed to a speculative, possibility that the matter will affect the financial interest of the member, spouse or dependent child, or the entity the member represents.

The magnitude of the gain or loss doesn't need to be known.

The dollar amount of the gain or loss is immaterial.

Only Advisory Duties are Restricted

You may act, outside of advisory duties, on behalf of self or others, in a specific party matter before DOI that affects your financial interests.

You may not act, as part of advisory duties, on that specific party matter.

Notification to Your Committee



▶ If you find yourself in a position to take any advisory action regarding a specific party matter that would affect your direct financial interest, or the holdings of a spouse or dependent child, or the direct financial interest of the entity you represent, you must:

- ▶ notify the Designated Federal Official; and
- ▶ recuse yourself from participating in that action.

▶ Look at the agenda prior to the meeting to see if there are matters listed from which you may need to recuse. Contact the BLM Ethics Team if questions.

The Bottom Line

- ▶ FACA Committees and BLM Advisory Committees are put in place because the government needs your expertise, experience, and insight.
- ▶ Don't let an ethical problem derail the good work you are doing here.



Questions?

- ▶ Contact the BLM Ethics Team]
- ▶ General inquiries: blm_wo_ethics_office@blm.gov



1849 C Street NW, MS 5311
Washington DC 20240



Phone: 202-208-7960



DOI_Ethics@sol.doi.gov (general inquiries)
DOI_FDOnline@sol.doi.gov (financial disclosure only)



Website: www.doi.gov/ethics
Mobile App: Search for “DOI Ethics” in app store

RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FLREA 101 TRAINING



Photo is from the Share the experience and is copyrighted

Understanding the Federal Lands Recreation
Enhancement Act





TOPICS

**Recreation Overview
(Forest Service and
Bureau of Land
Management (BLM))**

**Federal Lands
Recreation Enhancement
Act (FLREA)**

**Public Involvement and
Your Role**

RECREATION OVERVIEW

Forest Service and BLM offers a huge array of recreation opportunities

Forest
Service and
BLM Offers a
huge array of
Recreation
opportunities

- Auto Tour/Drive for Pleasure
- Bike
- Boat
- Camp (Tent or RV)
- Climb
- Historic/Cultural Sites
- Educational/Interpretive Programs
- Fish
- Hike
- Hunt
- Learn at Visitor Centers
- Rent a Cabin
- Ride Horses
- Ride Quads/OHV
- Ski
- Snowmobile
- View Wildlife
- Target Shooting
- Water Sports/Swimming



RECREATION OVERVIEW

Did you know...

Overview (National)	Forest Service	BLM
Visits per year	168 Million	82.3 Million
Acres managed	193 Million	245 Million
Miles of trails	158,070	27,627

Overview (Arizona)	Forest Service	BLM
Recreation visits per year	11.6 Million	6.8 Million
Recreation Fees Collected Annually	\$7.7 Million	\$1.9 Million



ARIZONA RECREATION VISITATION AND RECREATION FEE REVENUES:

Forest Service	Annual Visitation	BLM	Annual Visitation
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest	829,900	Arizona Strip District	559,645
Coconino National Forest	5,531,500	Colorado River District	4,060,939
Coronado National Forest	1,738,600	Gila District Office	1,208,138
Kaibab National Forest	226,400	Phoenix District Office	952,365
Prescott National Forest	737,300		
Tonto National Forest	2,580,000		

Forest Service	Fee collected annually (avg)	BLM	Fee collected (FY22)
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest	\$56K	Arizona Strip District	\$284K
Coconino National Forest	\$1.4 Million	Colorado River District	\$1.2 Million
Coronado National Forest	\$1.1 Million	Gila District Office	\$124K
Kaibab National Forest	\$130K	Phoenix District Office	\$195K
Prescott National Forest	\$694K		
Tonto National Forest	\$4.4 Million		

Outdoor Recreation Values Added, Employment, and Compensation as a Percent of Total, 2022

	Total Outdoor Recreation Value Added (Thousands of Dollars)	Percent of total value added	Total outdoor recreation employment	Percent of total wage and salary employment	Total outdoor recreation compensation (thousands of dollars)	Percent of total compensation
United States	\$563,704,657	2.2	4,978,516	3.2	\$262,151,347	2.0
Arizona	\$11,703,617	2.5	106,571	3.3	\$5,706,854	2.4

FOREST SERVICE/BLM- ARIZONA RECREATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- 2022, Outdoor recreation contributed:
 - \$1.1 trillion in Economic Output (2.2% of GDP)
 - 5 million jobs across the United States (3.2% of US employment)
 - 2021-2022, the outdoor recreation economy grew at a rate of 4.8% compared to 1.9% for U.S. economy.



Did you know...

The Forest Service has :

- 154 National Forests (6 in Arizona)
- 20 National Grasslands
- 20 National Recreation Areas
- 6 National Monuments
- 448 Designated Wilderness Areas

The Bureau of Land Management has :

- 47 District Offices (4 in Arizona)
- 30 National Monuments
- 20 National Conservation Areas
- 673 Recreation Management Areas
- 260 Designated Wilderness Areas



FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT (FLREA OR REA)

Authority for National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Forest Service (FS). Currently extended to March 2025.

Permits these agencies to retain fees at recreation sites such as:

- **campgrounds**
- **rental cabins**
- **day-use sites**
- **Areas requiring individual Special Recreation Permits**



FEE FREE DAYS AND PASSES (REA)

National Fee Free Days:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 15, 2024)
- Juneteenth Day (June 19, 2024)
- National Public Lands Day (September 28, 2024)
- Veterans Day (November 11, 2024)
- Local/agencies designated Fee Free days.

Interagency & Local (Forest/District) Passes



BLM FEE-FREE DAYS 2024

RESPECT | CONNECT | PROTECT YOUR PUBLIC LANDS

JANUARY 15 (BIRTHDAY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.)
 JUNE 19 (JUNETEENTH NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE DAY)
 JULY 16 (BLM'S BIRTHDAY)
 SEPTEMBER 28 (NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY)
 NOVEMBER 11 (VETERANS DAY)

For more information on BLM's Recreation Program
www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees

On Fee-Free Days, recreation standard amenity and day use fees on Bureau of Land Management lands are waived.

Tonto National Forest Passes

DAILY PASS
Daily Pass \$8

Discovery Vehicle Sticker
(for open top vehicles only)
Watercraft Sticker \$4

Discovery Pass
\$80

Senior & Access Discovery Pass
\$60

RED ROCK PASS
PASS ON YOUR NATURAL LEGACY

WEEKLY PASS

PLEASE REMAIN ON DESIGNATED TRAILS

DISPLAY IN WINDSHIELD WHEN PARFED - THIS SIDE FACING OUT -

VALID BEGINNING: RANGH TO VALIDATE

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
0	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31				

Expires: DEC NOV OCT SEP AUG JUL JUN MAY APR MAR FEB JAN 2024

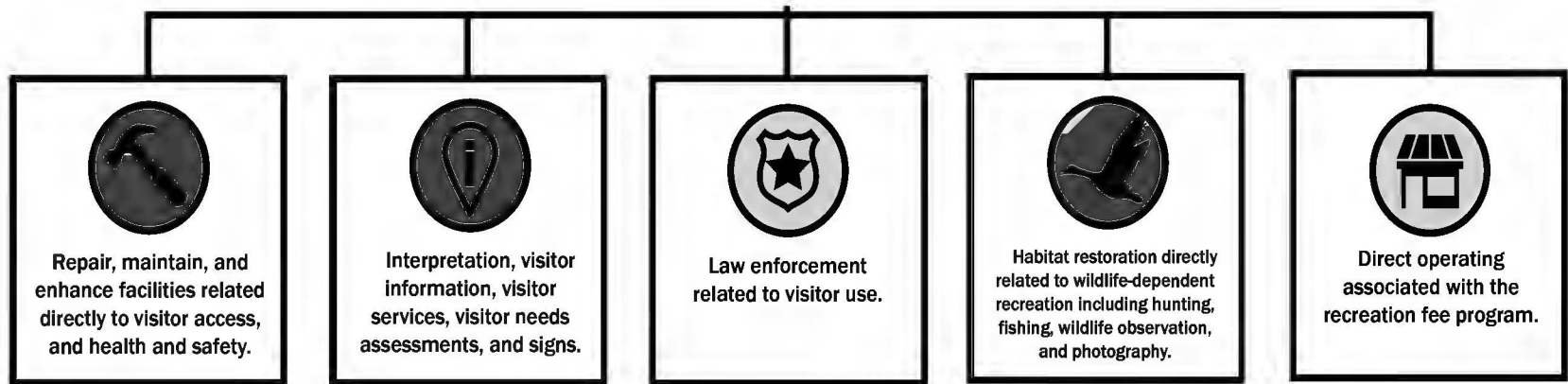
Enchantment
National Forests of New Mexico
2023-24 Annual Pass



Why are fees charged?

- Authorized in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (REA). Majority of recreation fee revenue is retained and reinvested at recreation sites where fees are charged to the visitor.
- Only charged at recreation sites that meet criteria under REA for amenities and visitor services.
- Provide valuable source of funding to help maintain high quality recreation sites and opportunities.
- Program managers use a variety of resources to operate and maintain developed recreation sites in concert with the REA fee program, including appropriated funds, partnerships contributions, and volunteer labor.
- Fee revenue allows us to directly reinvest into the recreation site deferred maintenance and complete additional modernization projects.





HOW FEES ARE USED



RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT

Types of Fees Authorized for the FS & BLM:

- **Standard Amenity Fees**
- **Expanded Amenity Fees**
- **Special Recreation Permits**



AMENITIES AND SERVICES REQUIRED TO CHARGE A FEE UNDER THE FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT (REA).

Standard Amenity Fee

Day-use fees where certain services and facilities must be in place.

Day Use Sites (all below):

- Designated Parking
- Toilet Facility
- Garbage Collection
- Interpretive Sign/Kiosk
- Picnic Tables
- BLM/Forest Service Presence

Expanded Amenity Fee

Examples Include: Developed campgrounds, highly developed boat launches, cabin rentals, Hook-ups and dump stations, Enhanced interpretive programming, and Transportation services

Campgrounds (majority listed below):

- Tent/Trailer Space
- Picnic Tables
- Drinking Water
- Access Roads
- Fee Collection
- BLM/Forest Service Presence
- Garbage Collection
- Toilet Facility
- Fire rings for Campfire



AMENITIES AND/OR SERVICES EXPECTED TO CHARGE A FEE UNDER THE FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT (REA).

Permit for specialized recreation uses of Federal recreational lands and where extra measures are needed for natural and cultural resource protection, the health and safety of visitors, to allocate capacity or disperse recreation use.

Examples include:

- Wilderness Areas
- Specialized trails
- Motorized recreational vehicle use

Special Recreation Permits (Specialized Services such as):

Interpretive Sign/Kiosk
Increased Patrols
Maps/Brochures
Increased Visitor Contact
Site Cleanup
Volunteer Program
Environmental Monitoring
Safety Advisories
Maintenance Portal Facilities
Support Emergency Services



Fee Restrictions or Prohibitions for the FS & BLM:

Entrance fees

Standard amenity fees for people under 16

Activities such as:

- Parking along roads or trails with no facilities
- Stopping at overlooks or scenic pullouts
- Pass-through travel

FEDERAL LAND RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT



FEDERAL LAND RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT

- Requires most of the revenue to be reinvested in fee sites
- Identifies eligible and ineligible expenditures of recreation fee revenues
- Requires agencies to honor the suite of “America the Beautiful” (aka Interagency) passes.
- Requires public involvement for new fees & fee change proposals.
- Requires established and use of Advisory Committee to make recommendations on recreation fee proposal.



HOW ARE DEVELOPED RECREATION FEES SET?



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



MARKET ANALYSIS



WHAT IS IN THE RECREATION FEE PROPOSAL DOCUMENT PRESENTED TO RAC

Forest Service Rec Fee Proposal Report

- Description of Existing or new proposed site/area and Fee types
- Proposed Fee Rate
- Market Analysis of Fee Rates
- Operating and Maintenance, Deferred Maintenance, and Projected Development Cost
- Revenues (Actual and projected)
- Planned Accomplishments from Additional Recreation Fee Revenues.
- Recreation Fee Change Justification
- Public outreach Efforts and Results
- Public Participation Analysis

BLM Business Plan

- Background & Authorities
- Intro to Field Office Rec Fee Program
- Description of Existing or proposed Fee Site/Area
- Proposed Fee Rates
- Operating Costs
- Revenues (Actual and projected based on proposal)
- Priorities for Future Expenditures
- Analysis of Fee Rates
- Impacts from Changing and not Changing Fee Rate
- Public outreach



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND YOUR ROLE

RACs are part of a larger public involvement effort:

- Public must have opportunity to participate before agencies establish new fees or change existing fees
- Must conduct public involvement when making recreation fee changes. These include steps like newspaper articles and posting notices on-site.
- Forest Service interactive story map:
<https://federal-lands-recreation-enhancement-act-hub-usfs.hub.arcgis.com>
- BLM posts business plans for public review at: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees/business-plans>
- Forest Service required post in local Legal Notice newspaper.
- Notice to be published in the Federal Register 6 months in advance prior to implementing a new fee site.
- Identifying general public support is part of the recommendation process.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT YOUR ROLE

A RAC may make recommendations to the Secretaries on:

Implementing or **eliminating** standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and non-commercial individual special recreation (special use) permit fee;

Expanding or limiting the recreation fee program;

Implementing fee level changes.



A RAC MAY NOT MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING:

Commercial
Use Permit,
competitive,
and groups

Use of
reservation
services/e-
commerce

Adding units to
an existing fee
site



RAC PROCESS/YOUR ROLE

- RAC members will receive fee proposal packet prior to meeting as instructed by RAC Coordinator
- At meeting hear fee proposal in a presentation
- At meeting hear public comments received during “comment period”
- Ask any final questions on fee proposal, if time allows
- Vote on fee proposal:





10/15/14 11:00 AM 10/15/14 11:00 AM

***We look forward to the
advice and assistance
you provide on
Recreation Fees!***

**Understanding
the Federal Lands
Recreation
Enhancement Act**





Recreation Business Plans

Arizona Resource Advisory Council Presentation, February 2024



Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area

Fees:
 Overnight Use - \$8.00/site (every two vehicles)
 - \$4.00/site with Senior or Access Pass
 Day Use - \$2.00/vehicle
 - free with any America the Beautiful - the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass

- 1) Take and fill out fee envelope.
- 2) Insert required fee and tear tab from envelope.
- 3) Seal envelope and drop in fee tube's slot.
- 4) Display tab on site's post or vehicle's dashboard.

Fees used to maintain and improve this site's facilities.

43 CFR § 2832.3 (g) Prohibited acts and penalties. You must not -
 (1) Fail to obtain an easement or pay any fees required.
 36 CFR § 2.31 (2) Tampering, Tampering or attempting to tamper with property.

You are Responsible for Your Own Safety
 911

Arizona Ship Field Office

Reservations Welcome!

Recreation.gov is accepting reservations for 25 select sites up to a month in advance. For the Upper Loop, you can reserve these sites for stays up to 2 weeks. For the Lower Loop, you can reserve sites for single night stays. If the site has the label "Recreation.gov Reservations Only" you can only claim the site through a reservation. The accompanying maps show the reservable sites with large yellow circles.

You can access recreation.gov on the web, through the app, or by calling (877) 444-6777 10 am to 12 am.

Using recreation.gov will help reduce costs of cash handling, increase accountability, and provide greater fee convenience.

No Cash, Try Scan and Pay

You can pay for first come, first serve sites(s) using the scan and pay feature in recreation.gov.

1. Ensure that the campground you intend to pay for are available and not posted "recreation.gov reservation only"
2. Open the recreation.gov app and sign in.
3. Click the "scan" icon in the bottom menu options. (if prompted allow camera access.)
4. Scan this QR code and follow the on-screen instructions.
5. Take and attach a fee stub to the site's number post to hold site.

First Come, First Serve Sites \$2 per night

SCAN & PAY

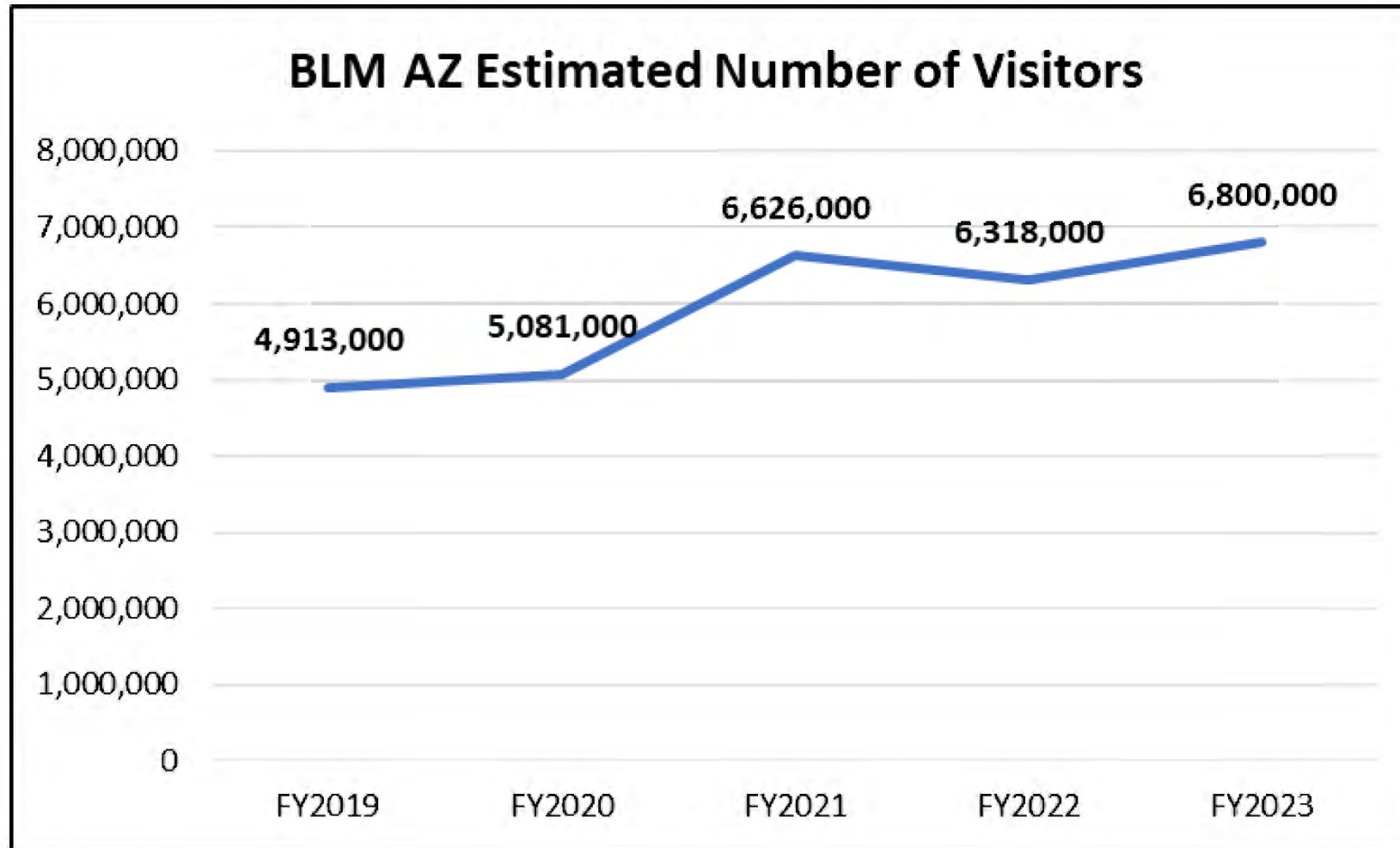
RECREATION.GOV RESERVATION ONLY

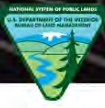
Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area

Arizona Ship Field Office



Increased Visitation to Public Lands in AZ





Increased Operating Costs

Costs of goods and services to operate and maintain our fee sites/areas has increased

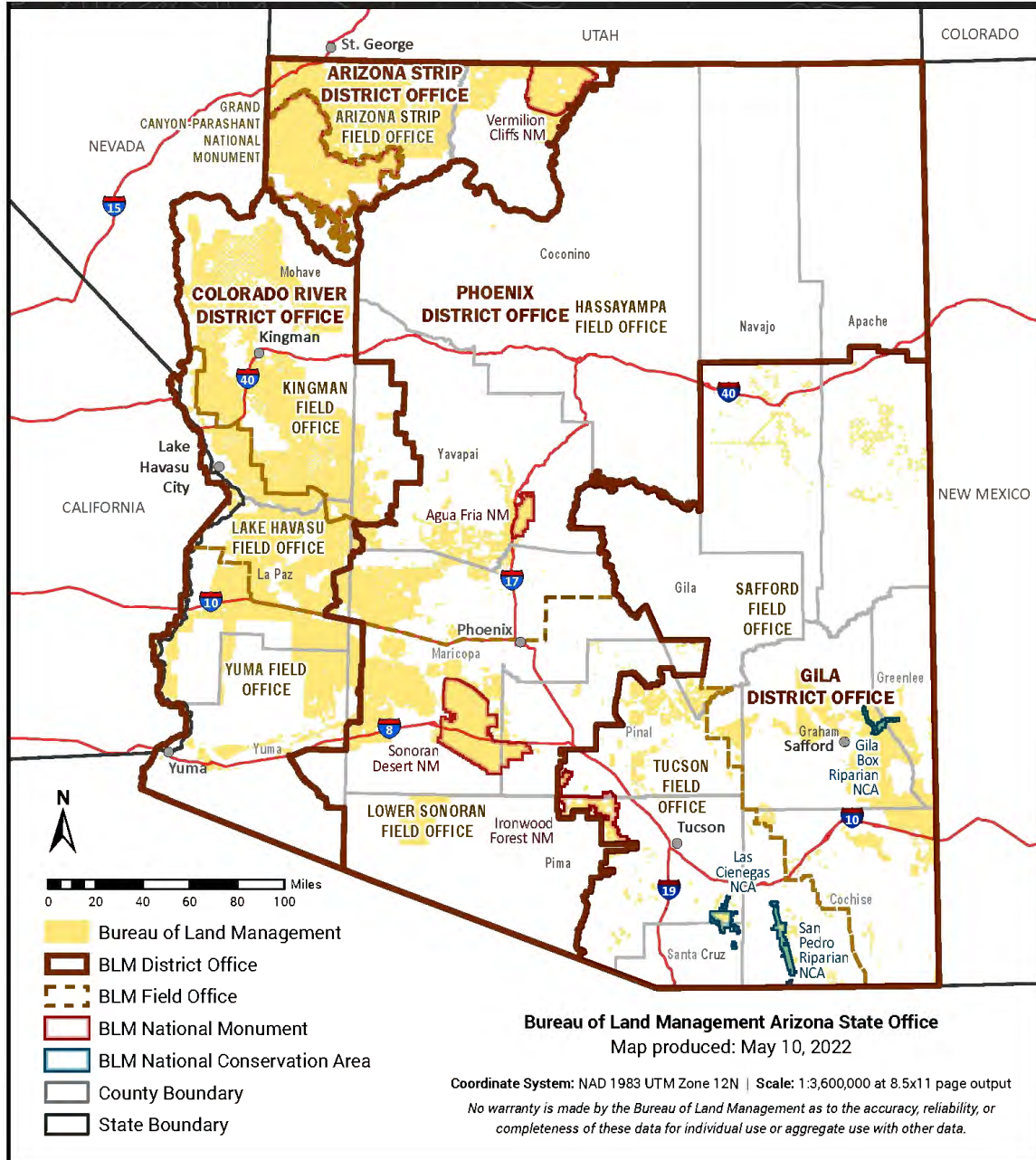




BLM's Recreation Funding & Staffing

- ❖ While visits have increased, appropriated funding per visitor has decreased over the last decade
- ❖ Staffing levels have declined over the last five years

BLM Arizona has not raised recreation fees since 2009.



The vast majority of BLM Arizona’s 12.1 million acres of public lands are available to enjoy fee-free



Why are Business Plans a Priority?

Purpose: to ensure we are providing and receiving a fair value for outdoor recreation opportunities.



Background & Authority

“BLM sets recreation use fees and adjusts them from time to time to **reflect changes in costs and the market**, using the following types of data:

- (a) The direct and indirect cost to the government;
- (b) The types of services or facilities provided; and
- (c) The comparable recreation fees charged by other Federal agencies, non-Federal public agencies, and the private sector located within the service area.”

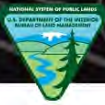
- 43 CFR 2933.22



Background & Authority

Recreation fees shall be established in a manner that **considers comparable fees charged elsewhere** and by other agencies and by nearby private sector operators.

- FLREA, Basis for Recreation Fees, 16 USC 6802(b)(3)



Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation

To provide exceptional and one-of-a-kind recreational experiences that invite all to share in the enjoyment and stewardship of their public lands.

Grow and Diversify Resources for BLM Recreation

Prioritize and Embrace Partnerships

Expand Outreach and Establish a Culture of Inclusion

Meet the Demand, Protect Resources, and Improve Access



Overview of AZ's Recreation Fee Program



6.8 Million Visitors to AZ's Public Lands in FY23



Over 300 Active Special Recreation Permits



29 Recreation Fee Sites/Areas



\$1.9 Million in Recreation Fees Collected
Annually



Step 1: Market Analysis of Recreation Fees

Comparability Analysis completed to assess whether differences exist in current or proposed fees when compared to similar facilities and services in the area/region

Where the market analysis (comparability analysis) revealed current fee rates match the fees at similar sites in the area, no fee modification proposals (business plans) are being developed.



Step 2: Business Plan Training

Business Plan training was delivered statewide to ensure we are meeting the requirements of FLREA in developing our fee proposals, including providing the public with the opportunity to participate in the fee proposal development.



Step 3: Conduct Public Outreach

Once the draft business plans are completed, we will be conducting public outreach using a variety of methods to solicit input.

All draft business plans will be posted online for at least a 30-day public comment period at:

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/permits-and-fees/business-plans>



What's in a Business Plan?

- Background & Authorities
- Intro to Field Office Rec Fee Program Description of Existing or Proposed Fee Site/Area
- Proposed Fee Rates
- Operating Costs
- Revenues
- Priorities for Future Expenditures
- Analysis of Fee Rates (Market Analysis and Cost Recovery Calculation)
- Impacts from Changing and Not-Changing Fee Rates
- Public Outreach



Questions?



Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area Restroom



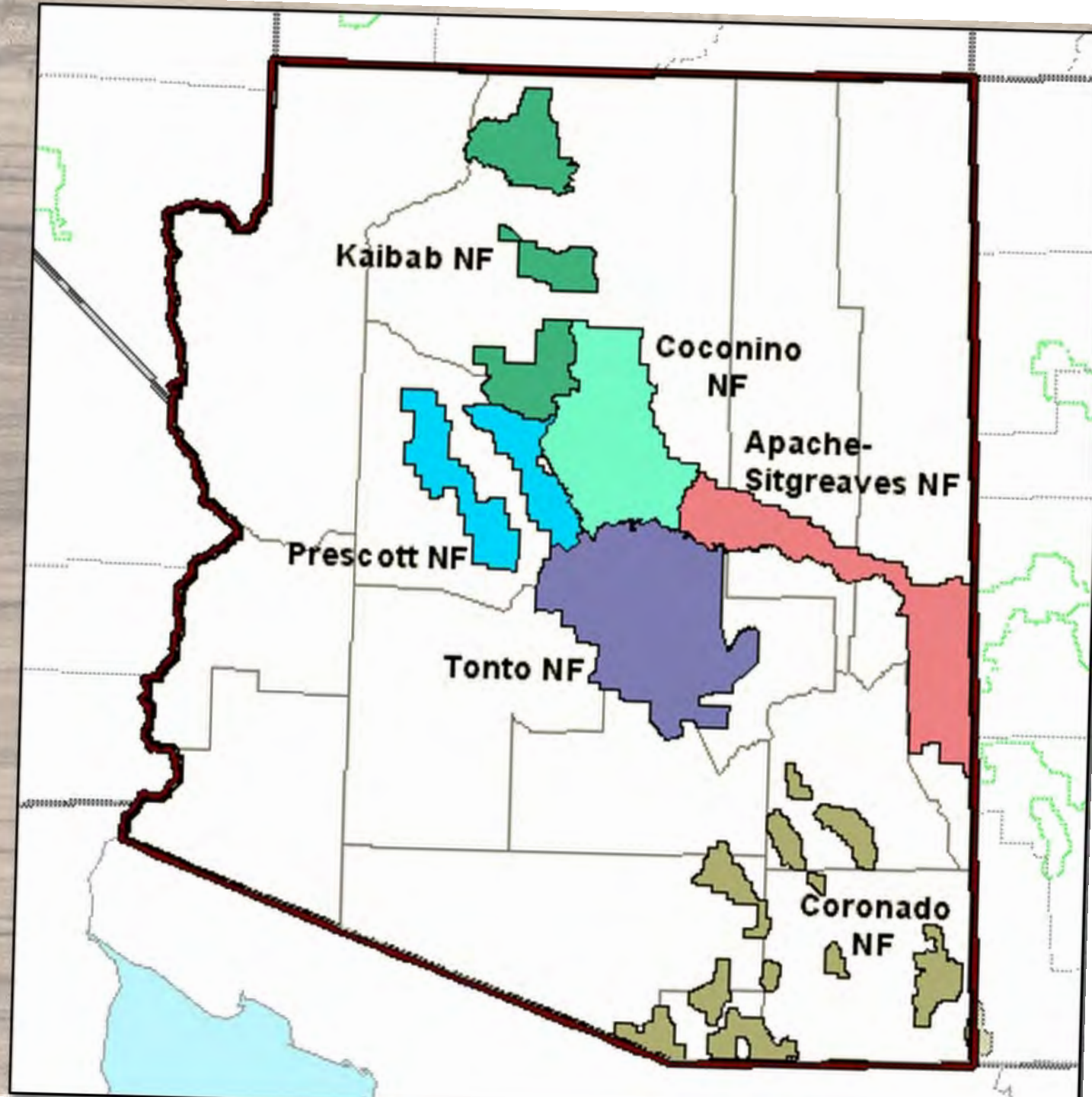
Forest Service Recreation Fee Proposals Briefing

Arizona BLM RAC-February 27, 2024

Ryan Means, Regional Recreation Fee Coordinator



**Southwestern Region
(Arizona)**

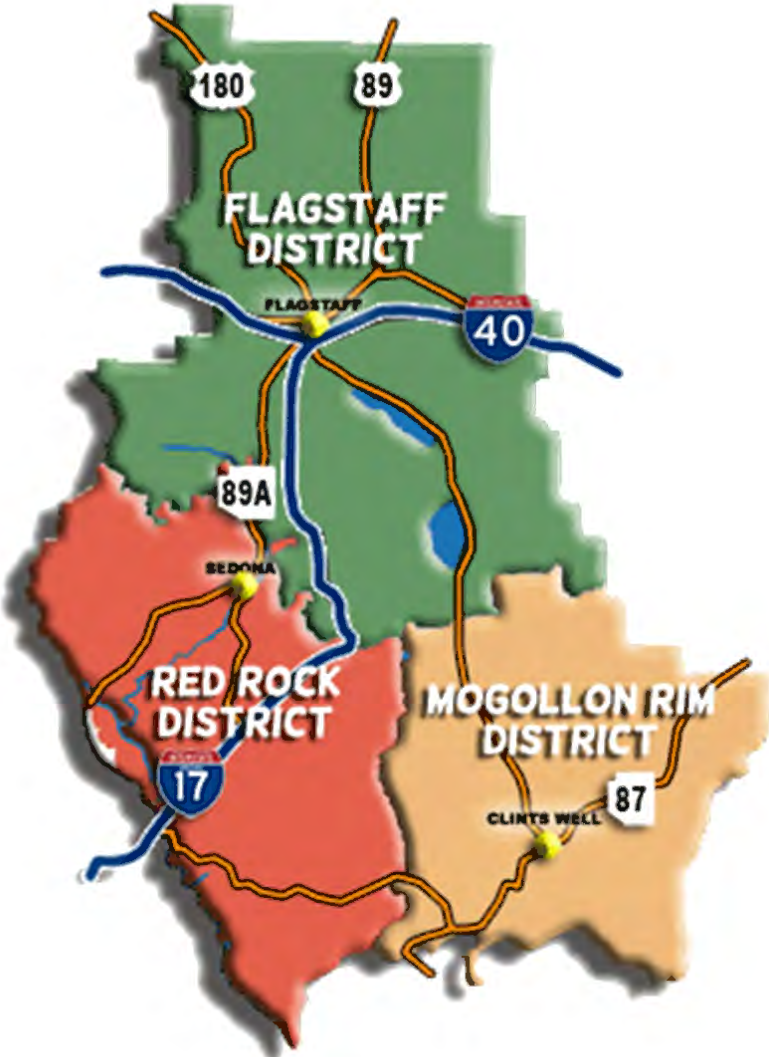




Forest Service Recreation Fee
Proposals on the table for discussion:

Forest Unit	Public Engagement season
Coconino National Forest	2021
Coronado National Forest	2022
Prescott National Forest	2022
Tonto National Forest	2021 2022/2023

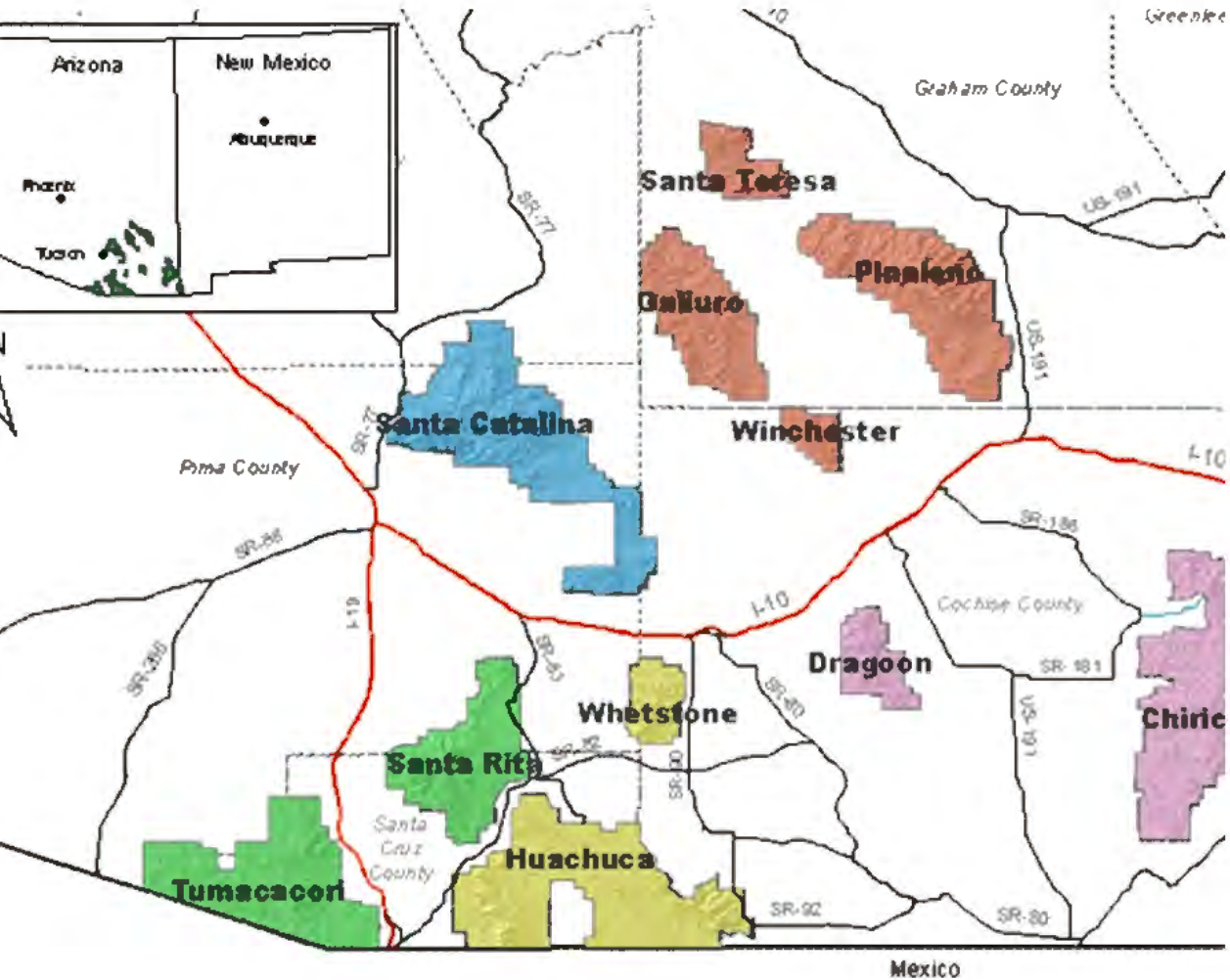
Coconino National Forest



- Overview of Fee Proposal

Proposed Site Type(s)	Fee Type	Ranger District
6 Day Use sites	Standard Amenity	1 Flagstaff 5 Red Rock

Coronado National Forest



Overview of Fee Proposal

Proposed Site Type(s)	Fee Type	Ranger District
2 Picnic Sites	Standard Amenity	2 Safford

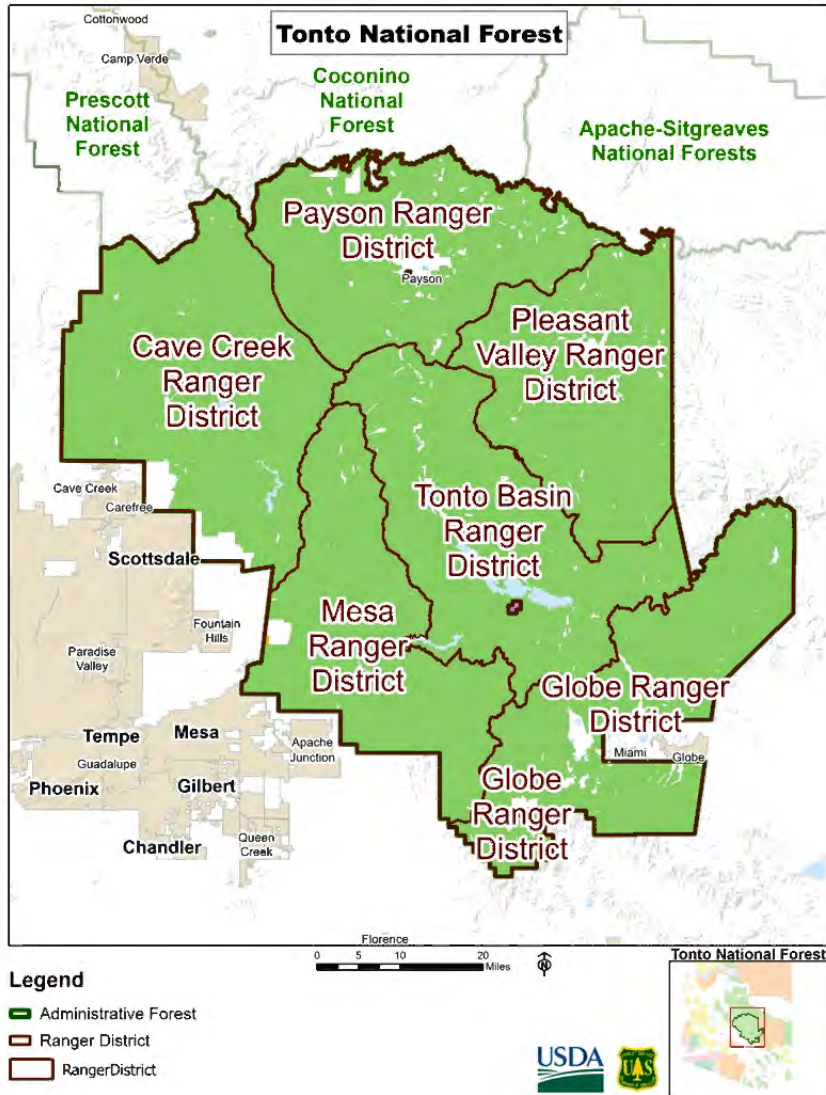
Prescott National Forest



Overview of Fee Proposal

Proposed Site Type(s)	Fee Type	Ranger District
2 Day Use Sites	Standard Amenity	2 Verde
4 Campgrounds	Expanded Amenity	2 Verde 2 Bradshaw
1 Group Campground	Expanded Amenity	1 Verde
2 Cabin Rentals	Expanded Amenity	1 Verde 1 Bradshaw

Tonto National Forest



Overview of Fee Proposal

Proposed Site Type(s)	Fee Type	Ranger District
2 Day Use Sites	Standard Amenity	2 Payson
OHV Special Recreation Permit	Special Recreation Permit	5 Cave Creek and Mesa Ranger District



Next Step:

1. The Forest Service Southwestern Region will provide copies of the Forest Unit Recreation Fee Proposal Report to the RAC Coordinator for distribution to the members of the RAC at least 30 days prior to the meeting in April.
2. Members of RAC will have the opportunity to review the proposal, detailed information for each site, market and public comment analysis, as well as raw copies of public comments.
3. Four national forests present the proposal and a summary of public comments at the April meeting.

DAY 2 Meeting Presentations



BLM/Interior Priorities

- **Clean Energy:** We will help lead the way to a clean energy future, leaving no communities behind.
 - Solar/wind
 - Transmission
- **Restoration:** Nature is our planet's best engineer. As the effects of climate change increase, we will restore our lands and waters to create healthy, resilient landscapes and to allow nature to better store carbon.
 - Restoration Landscapes—Yanawant and Sky Islands
 - Fuels Treatments
 - Habitat Restoration
- **Recreation for All:** We will work to ensure that all families now and into the future have equal opportunity to hunt, camp, fish, hike and play on our public lands.
 - Recreation Blueprint
 - Recreation Business Plans
 - Travel Management Planning
 - Active Recreation Management



BLM/Interior Priorities, cont.

- **Conservation:** As part of our multiple use and sustained yield mandate, we will address climate change and conservation in all we do.
 - Monitoring
 - Wild Horse & Burro program
- **Rebuild the Agency:** To achieve the above and create an agency the future is relying upon, we will fix staffing shortages and build a team that represents all of America.
 - Recruitment and Outreach
 - Employee Engagement
- **Investing in America – Inflation Reduction Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**
 - These bills contain several provisions that invest in Department initiatives and benefit the communities and areas we directly serve.
 - This historic funding is helping restore critical habitats, address the drought crisis, strengthen wildland fire management, address legacy pollution, invest in Tribal communities and create good-paying union jobs.



BLM/Interior Priorities, cont.

- ***Major Projects/Infrastructure***
 - Pipelines
 - Broadband
- ***Strengthening the government-to-government relationship with Tribal Nations***
 - Tribal liaisons
 - Tribal consultation
 - Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument Tribal Council
- ***Centering equity and environmental justice***
 - Environmental Justice Action Plan

District Manager, Deputy State Director
and Program Reports

BLM Arizona
District and Divisions Report
Resource Advisory Council Meeting
February 2024

Arizona Strip District

Wayne Monger, District Manager, dmonger@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)**

SUMMARY: The Yanawant Restoration Landscape spans three million acres in northern Arizona, including lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service. There are additional opportunities to partner with the Kaibab and Hualapai Tribes on their adjacent tribal lands. This Restoration Landscape contains a diverse array of vegetation communities ranging from Mojave Desert mixed scrub, chaparral, great basin blackbrush, sagebrush, pinyon-juniper woodland, ponderosa pine forest, shadscale/saltbush, grassland, the Kanab Creek riparian corridor, the Colorado River (Grand Canyon National Park), and numerous vegetation transition zones.

- The Restoration Landscape also contains the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni-Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument, Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument (jointly managed by BLM and NPS), seven designated wilderness, five ACECs, four Arizona Game and Fish Game Management Unit Boundaries and designated critical habitat for Mojave Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). Other threatened and endangered species within the Landscape include southwestern willow flycatcher and California condor. The Landscape also contains habitat for over a dozen sensitive wildlife species, including the pinyon jay which has been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act, and six sensitive plant species. The Restoration Landscape includes the Priority Big Game Paunsaugunt to Kaibab Plateau Migration Corridor, identified under Secretarial Order 3362, which includes critical winter range/habitat for mule deer herds on the North Kaibab Plateau in Arizona and Paunsaugunt Plateau in southern Utah. Other mule deer concentrations occur on Poverty Mountain, Mt. Trumbull, Black Rock, and in the Kanab Creek area. Desert bighorn sheep and pronghorn also occur within and adjacent to the Restoration Landscape.
- The proposed projects have been developed through BLM Arizona's collaborative, interdisciplinary Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)

process by Arizona Strip District resource specialists with input from external stakeholders such as Arizona Game and Fish Department and Quail/Pheasants Forever. External partners are contributing funding for IVM projects and related efforts, such as wildlife waters/catchments within the Landscape, further multiplying BLM's IRA landscape restoration investments. This funding will enable partners to focus their funds on their priority areas located on federal lands as well as adjacent non-federal lands.

Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni-Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument

Wayne Monger, Monument Manager (acting), dmonger@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Designated approximately 917,000 acres on August 8, 2023, by Presidential Proclamation**

SUMMARY: Following the designation and various ad hoc coordination meetings, the BLM and USFS leadership stood up an interagency "Core Team" of key management and attorney advisors to identify, discuss, and facilitate the actions necessary to implement the directions in the proclamation. Currently, the BLM has designated the Arizona Strip District Manager as the acting Monument Manager and the USFS has designated the District Ranger as the acting Monument Manager.

The Core Team members along with BLM and USFS leadership will continue outreach to the Coalition members and tribal leadership and remain available to work with and support the Coalition members while being respectful of tribal sovereignty and their individual government processes.

- Fiscal Year 2024:
 - Continue the bi-weekly Core Team coordination meetings to work through implementation actions.
 - Once we reach a quorum of Coalition member tribes with approved co-stewardship agreements and tribal designees, move forward with scheduling the first (and subsequent) tribal committee meetings to start gathering input on management of the Monument.
- Fiscal Year 2024/2025:
 - Establish and seek nominations for the Federal Advisory Council Act (FACA) committee required by the Monument proclamation.
 - Begin the interagency land use and travel management planning process for the Monument.

Arizona Strip Field Office (ASF0)

Lorraine Christian, Field Manager, lmchrist@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Virgin River Canyon Campground Update**

SUMMARY: The [Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area](#) is transitioning to a cashless fee system, where all payments will be made through recreation.gov either by *scan and pay* or by reservations.

- *Scan and Pay* can only be used onsite by scanning a QR code within the recreation.gov app. *Scan and Pay* can be used without data service, but the visitors must have the recreation.gov app installed. Site reservations will still be available for 25 sites out of the 111 total sites. Reservations can be made up to a month in advance and can also be onsite if the visitor has data service available. Overnight use is \$8 per night (up to 14 nights) and day use is \$2 per vehicle. *Scan and pay* has an additional \$1 per night fee and \$0.50 for day use, while the reservation fee is \$8 per reservation. Reservations also have a phone-in option that would be an additional \$1 fee for the call center service.
- To help with the transition to the cashless system, we are installing a commercial cellular booster to improve coverage at the fee station and in the Upper Loop of the Recreation Area. We are also updating the fee instructions and improving our site markings. We are working to go cashless before visitation begins to pick up for spring 2024.
- A cashless fee system is very important in improving efficiencies. For example, to collect, count, and deposit cash, four employees are required as well as security measures including “iron ranger” fee boxes, security cameras, safes, and required fee training for staff. Recreation.gov eliminates collection and counting costs, cash-lost liability, and improves fee paying compliance and usage statistics. Using recreation.gov also aligns with national direction for using a one-stop fee payment system.
- Additional project work at the Virgin River Canyon Recreation Area centers on construction contracts budgeted at \$3.5 million to provide needed updates to the 45-year-old infrastructure at this site. Contract work will include replacement of the septic systems at each of the three restrooms which is targeted to begin in the spring. Another contract will improve the campsites by adding shade shelters, repairing picnic tables, and replacing fire pits and grills. Funding for this contract arrives this year and we will soon be working out the specifics for the contract.

Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (VCNM)

Robert Bate, Monument Manager, bbate@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Condor Site Improvement**

SUMMARY: Vermillion Cliffs National Monument sponsored its annual Public Lands Day service project on September 23, 2023. The purpose of this project was to improve the California condor (condor) viewing site.

- Due to the effects of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza on the Arizona/Utah condor flock, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Peregrine Fund, Bureau of Land Management, Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, and other Southwest Working Group condor partners, determined, for the health of the condors, not to hold the annual release but instead BLM and partners hosted a site improvement project. The event was a service project that allowed public land and condor enthusiasts to work with biologists and field staff from the Southwest condor working group to improve the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument condor release viewing site in preparation for the highly anticipated 2024 condor release.
- Despite a cold and rainy day, we had over 40 participants who assisted in pulling weeds and constructing a patio using flagstone from the area. The results were over 150 bags of weeds and the construction of an approximate 600 square foot patio.

Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument (GCPNM)

Brandon Boshell, Monument Manager, bboshell@blm.gov

Ben Roberts, NPS Monument Superintendent, ben_roberts@nps.gov

- **SUBJECT: Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument Science Plan**

SUMMARY: GCPNM completed its first ever Science Plan in 2023. National Monuments are part of the BLM system of National Conservation Lands (NCL) where there is an expectation of “identifying science needed to address management issues, communicating those needs to science providers, and incorporating the results into the decision-making process” (BLM 2007).

- GCPNM and our partners conduct a wide variety of scientific research on both the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management portions of the Monument including weather, climate, air quality, soundscapes, light pollution, cultural

resources, paleontology, recreation, soils, geology, vegetation, water, and wildlife. Each meeting we will highlight one topic or research project.

- This meeting we want to recognize one of our longest contributing researchers, Dr. Sachiko Sakai from California State University, Long Beach (CSU-LB), who has conducted an archeological field school in the Mt. Trumbull area since 2010. Her research has focused on examining an intensive trade connection between the Mt Trumbull region and sites near the confluence of the Virgin and Muddy Rivers in Nevada. Though initially focusing on inventory and limited testing, CSU-LB began larger scale excavations of two sites in 2018, which continue to the present. These six-week field schools focus on training the next generation of archeologists in critical field techniques including excavation, surveying, site mapping, record-keeping, and laboratory analyses, including artifact recognition, recording procedures, and analytic methods. Dr Sakai continues to make both important scientific discoveries as well as mentor and train hundreds of diverse students over the years. Monument staff have also recently begun working with her students on resumes and the intricacies of the federal hiring system to bring these dedicated individuals into public service.

Colorado River District

William Mack, Jr., District Manager, wmack@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Law Enforcement (Public Safety)**

SUMMARY: The Colorado River District (CRD) Law Enforcement (LE) Rangers assisted with multiple high-use activities and recreational events. These events included the Parker 250 and 425 “Best in The Desert” off-road high-speed races, holiday boating events and lake recreation, BLM Long Term Visitor Area, Parker Strip commercial lease areas, and local/national wildland fires.

- Rangers supported the El Centro Field Office in covering the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area during high use.
- CRD Rangers across the District assisted Arizona Game and Fish Department with OHV patrols on public land to protect natural resources. Rangers also teamed up with La Paz County Sheriff’s Office during OHV events and coordinated with Mohave County in investigating dump sites on BLM-administered lands. Rangers assisted the Mohave County Sheriff’s Department, San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department, Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lake Havasu Police Department, and the U.S. Coast

Guard with boating activity on Lake Havasu. Rangers also assisted the departments' SCUBA dive operations with recovery operations on several occasions.

- **SUBJECT: Renewable Energy**

SUMMARY: The Colorado River District (CRD) continues to process renewable energy projects.

- Ten West Link
- Jove EIS
- Ranegras Plains EIS: Scoping for this project ended on Dec. 15, 2023.

Kingman Field Office

Amanda Dodson, Field Manager, adodson@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Black Mountain Herd Management Area Wild Burro Gathers**

SUMMARY: The Kingman Field Office (KFO) continues to implement the Black Mountain Wild Burro gathers and implement fertility control as analyzed in the BLM's Black Mountain Herd Management Area Wild Burro Gather and Population Control Plan Environmental Assessment (EA). The BLM gathered and removed approximately 3,800 wild burros since 2020. Recently during the month of January 2024, the BLM gathered and removed 1,150 burros with approximately 40 females to be treated with the fertility control vaccine "PZP" and released back into the HMA. The BLM plans to conduct a population survey, to determine the remaining excess burros over the appropriate management level of 478.

- **SUBJECT: Truxton Habitat Enhancement Project**

SUMMARY: The BLM in partnership with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts are improving habitat for pronghorn antelope and mule deer by conducting vegetation treatments to restore and maintain Plains and Great Basin grassland and pinyon-juniper woodland on the Crozier Canyon Allotment near Truxton, Arizona. Manual, mechanical, and prescribed fire treatment methods are being used to reduce juniper tree densities and interior chaparral species and increase native perennial grass cover. Currently, juniper and woody shrub species encroachment has degraded these vegetation communities and wildlife habitat. Vegetation treatments would improve habitat quality and forage conditions for wildlife species over a total 41,000 acres. The project is occurring in phases, with over 2,000 acres to date and another 2,000 acres planned for implementation this year. Cultural

resource inventories are on-going through an agreement with the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts. Arizona Game and Fish was presented with the 2023 Rangeland Stewardship Award – Collaborative Team Category. The Rangeland an Innovation Stewardship Awards are presented annually to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of grazing permittees and collaborative teams involved with public rangeland management.

Lake Havasu Field Office

William Mack, Acting Field Manager, wmack@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Fisheries Program**

SUMMARY: The Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) is completing upgrades to Partner’s Point, a collaborative site managed by 11 agencies that works with local and national volunteer groups to manage recreation, fisheries, and educational projects at Lake Havasu. The project is a deferred maintenance project funded in part by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) funding. Upgrades will improve lake access, provide a safer working environment, and provide for on-site office space to manage our extensive partnership program. The fisheries program volunteer habitat program has resumed and habitat additions to the lake coves are underway. The \$2.4-million-dollar upgrades will include:

- Covered/Enclosed boat storage
- Concrete boat ramp/lake access
- Building office space to support Volunteer coordination
- Addition of sewer/water/power to the facility

- **SUBJECT: Recreation Program**

SUMMARY: The LHFO Recreation Program continues to see an increased demand for recreation opportunities on public lands. The Lake Havasu SRMA has seen a 20% increase in visitation since 2014 with the bulk of that increase being in the last 4 years. The Lake Havasu SRMA is not just the premier recreation lake destination in Arizona, Lake Havasu works with the two largest off-road clubs in America to ensure sustainable, responsible, and challenging Off-Road opportunities continue to thrive.

- LHFO’s Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program authorized on average 20 SRPs over the last three years to include permitting three high speed high profile competitive off-road races. All three race promoters were new in 2023 and thus far have had some of the safest and most secure off-races in the

Southwest. The recreation team has worked diligently to make safety and security a top priority for these events, and this has been well received within the race community.

- The 73 campsites LHFO has within the Lake Havasu SRMA produces roughly 110,000 visitors annually. Due to the increase in visitation and costs to manage these sites, the LHFO will be revamping the business plan to help offset current and future costs for site management and to better align the fee structure with our partners with similar sites within the SRMA.

Yuma Field Office

Ray Castro, Field Manager, rcastro@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Ten West Link Transmission Line**

SUMMARY: Ten West Link is a 500 kV transmission line from Tonopah, Arizona to Blythe, California. The project will improve transmission system efficiency and reliability, while facilitating development of new renewable energy and energy storage resources in Arizona and California. The YFO issued the right-of-way (ROW) grant on August 4, 2020, for the transmission line on BLM administered public lands in Arizona and California. As of January 2024, the construction of this project has been completed with only the rehabilitation portion still underway. Completion of all activities for this project is expected this spring, and activation by May 2024.

- **SUBJECT: Fee Amenity and Long-Term Visitor Areas (LTVAs) Business Plan Update**

SUMMARY: The Long-Term Visitor Areas (LTVAs) were created in 1983 to fulfill the needs of winter visitors and to protect local desert ecosystems from over-use. There are eight LTVA's located in both Arizona and California. The Yuma Field Office (YFO) manages the two largest areas within the program - La Posa and Imperial Dam LTVAs. The 11,400 acre La Posa LTVA is located approximately two miles south of Quartzsite and is divided into four sections, La Posa North, La Posa South, La Posa West, and La Posa Tyson. The 3,500-acre Imperial Dam LTVA is located approximately 24 miles north of Yuma on the California side of the Colorado River.

LTVA permits are split into short-term permits and long-term permits. The short-term permit which costs \$40 allows access to any LTVA location and use of the facilities within that LTVA for up to two-weeks. The long-term permit which costs \$180 allows access to any LTVA location and use of the facilities from September 15th through April 15th. These fees only cover approximately 66% of seasonal expenditures directly related to the LTVAs.

The BLM uses business plans to manage recreation fee sites and periodically updates them to propose changes in the Recreation and Visitor Services program or to comply with changes in Federal authorities to collect fees on Federal lands managed by BLM. The Yuma Field Office intends to update their business plans to address services for our day-use sites, two-week camping areas, LTVA's and annual passes. The goal is to ensure that the sites are as fiscally self-sustaining as possible and are not undercutting local businesses. Outreach is being conducted in collaboration with the relevant California BLM offices. Socioeconomic data is being collected to incorporate into the draft.

- **SUBJECT: Renewable Energy**

SUMMARY: The Yuma Field Office has received great interest in renewable energy projects. Primarily related to the construction of solar arrays and supporting infrastructure. This includes power lines and communication sites in support of projects on non-federal lands as well.

- Ranegras Plains Energy Center: Ranegras Plains Energy Center, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Savion, LLC, has applied to construct, operate, and maintain an electrical generation facility, the Ranegras Plains Energy Center Project. The Project would have a generation capacity of up to 700 megawatts alternating current of photovoltaic energy (solar array) and an associated battery energy storage system. The Project would span over 6,020 acres and would be located approximately 30 miles east of Quartzite, Arizona within the Yuma Field Office of the Colorado River District of the Bureau of Land Management. The Project would include an approximate 11-mile single circuit 500kV generation interconnect that would connect the Project to the Delaney Colorado River Transmission Ten West Link Series Compensation Station. The Project would be constructed in two phases of 350MWac each. Currently the baseline studies for this project are under review by the BLM.
- Jove Solar Project: Jove Solar is a wholly owned subsidiary of 174 Power Global. The Applicant requested a 30-year right-of-way to construct, own, operate, maintain, and decommission a utility-scale solar photovoltaic energy generating facility and to use roads for construction, operation, and maintenance of the Jove Solar Project on Federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management Arizona, Colorado River District, Yuma Field Office. As proposed, the Project would generate 600 megawatts, connect to the Ten West Link 500 kV transmission line via a proposed 1.5-mile generation

transmission line, and require 3,495 acres of BLM-managed land and 38 acres of La Paz County land. Currently the DEIS is under review by the BLM.

- **SUBJECT:** Travel Management Plans (TMPs)

SUMMARY: Draft Environmental Assessment is being completed by the contractor for the Lower Colorado River TMP. Route Inventory public comment period is currently open for the Yuma East/Gila River TMP.

Gila District

Scott Feldhausen, District Manager, afeldhausen@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Energy and Mining Projects**

SUMMARY: The Gila District is currently processing a right-of-way application from Chuparosa Solar LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Primary Solar LLC, for a solar energy project within a designated solar variance area in unincorporated Navajo County. Chuparosa Solar LLC is proposing to construct, own, operate, and decommission a 300-megawatt facility located on approximately 3,600 acres of BLM-managed lands about four miles south of Holbrook. The Gila District is also developing an Environmental Assessment to analyze the impacts of an exploration plan submitted by Redhawk Copper, Inc. The exploration plan consists of 67 drill pad sites and associated access roads within the Copper Creek Mining District in Pinal County where mineral exploration and extraction has previously occurred.

- **SUBJECT: Integrated Vegetation Management**

SUMMARY: The Gila District continues integrated vegetation management coordination with partners to improve watershed health, enhance wildlife habitat, reduce the risk of large and severe wildfires, and promote healthy, functioning ecosystems. In 2023, the Tucson Field Office approved a landscape level vegetation management plan for a 216,732-acre project area that includes the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and adjacent public, private, and state lands. The plan provides for erosion control activities and vegetation treatments within the project area and will enable the BLM to better support partner efforts to improve watershed health condition, enhance wildlife habitat, and promote healthy and functioning ecosystems. The Safford Field Office is awaiting completion of Endangered Species Act consultation on a landscape level vegetation management plan that, when completed, will provide for treatments on 1.4 million acres, including potential new

vegetation treatments in Apache, Graham, Greenlee, Cochise, and Pinal Counties and continued treatments in Navajo County. The Tucson Field Office will be using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds to develop a similar integrated vegetation management plan for the San Pedro watershed, south of I-10.

- **SUBJECT: Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Partnership**

SUMMARY: Sentinel Landscape Partnerships are coalitions of federal agencies, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that work with willing landowners and managers to advance sustainable land management practices around military installations and ranges. The primary goals of the Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape Partnership, which was established in 2015, are to use collaborative, community-driven strategies to address issues such as water conservation, agricultural viability, wildlife habitat restoration, and military mission protection. To date, through many conservation and restoration projects, the Partnership has protected more than 65,000 acres within the landscape and enrolled an additional approximately 300,000 acres for future projects. Since its inception, Fort Huachuca Sentinel Landscape partners have invested approximately \$50 million within the landscape footprint to support efforts such as the Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network, the [Palominas Stormwater Recharge and Flood Control Project](#), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service's [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#).

- **SUBJECT: Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)/Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) Funding and Projects**

SUMMARY: Over the last three years, the Gila District has received a combined total of more than \$20 million in IRA and BIL funding to complete fuels, vegetation management, and ecosystem restoration and resilience projects as well as \$14.5 million in GAOA funding to conduct recreation facility and road maintenance and enhancement projects. All of the IRA funding, and a portion of the BIL funding, is being invested in the Sky Islands Restoration Landscape to build upon ongoing efforts such as improving ecosystem health, implementing an adaptive management process for water in the San Pedro River drainage, protecting critical wildlife migration corridors, and supporting recovery of threatened and endangered species. BIL funding is also being used in other areas on a variety of projects including improving vegetation community climate resiliency and watershed conditions, mechanical mesquite thinning for grassland restoration, early detection surveys for invasive and non-native plant species, and restoring aquatic ecosystem function and habitat for rare and sensitive fish species. The GAOA funding is being used to complete three large-scale projects to

replace aging recreation facilities, improve road systems, and reduce deferred maintenance within the Gila Box National Conservation Area and the Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area.

- **SUBJECT: San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) Water Partnerships**

SUMMARY: Over the past 25 years, the BLM has partnered with local, state, and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and volunteers, to develop collaborative science and projects to protect and sustain the limited water supplies of the SPRNCA. The Upper San Pedro Partnership was the first of these partnerships, building the needed hydrologic science to inform decision-making. The Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network later formed to acquire adjacent lands and build water management projects, based on science, to provide enough water most effectively for local communities, Fort Huachuca, and the SPRNCA. The SPRNCA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Adaptive Management was signed by the Gila District, Cochise County, the City of Sierra Vista, and Fort Huachuca, in 2021, to ensure that long term operation of water management projects is sufficient to meet the goals of the SPRNCA Resource Management Plan into the future, through a robust monitoring and adaptive management approach. Implementation of the MOU is guided by an Adaptive Management Committee of the four signatory agencies and executed by a coordinator. A web-based information portal has been developed (<https://uppersanpedrowhip.org>) to provide transparency to the adaptive management process.

- **SUBJECT: Tucson Field Office Artist-in-Residence**

SUMMARY: Alan Nyiri is the Tucson Field Office's first artist in residence. He is a photographer who resides in Bandon, Oregon and serves as a site host at the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The BLM Artist-in-Residence program offers opportunities on public lands for artists to promote deeper understanding of, and dialogue about, the significance of natural, cultural, and historic sites on public lands the BLM manages. Until late April, Nyiri will travel throughout the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, and possibly other landscapes that BLM Arizona manages, capturing images through his excellent photography skills.

Phoenix District Office (PDO)

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Angie Meece, Associate District Manager, ameece@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Recreational Shooting Sports Project**

SUMMARY: Recreational shooting sports activities are long-standing and appropriate uses of BLM lands. PDO continues to explore opportunities for recreational target shooting on public lands. PDO's efforts in managing for this activity through developed sites will inform the development of national policy to provide a suite of management options for use throughout the BLM.

- PDO planned five sites around the greater Phoenix area in Maricopa and Pinal counties, suitable for recreational shooting sports on public lands. Four sites are now complete and open for operations. Church Camp Road and Saddleback Mountain sites opened in late 2022. Baldy Mountain and Box Canyon sites opened in 2023. In fiscal year 2023, the Church Camp Road site received an estimated 47,811 visits, with 16,330 visits at Saddleback Mountain and 5,021 visits at Baldy Mountain.
- A fifth site, Narramore Road, will be constructed when funding is secured. The Hassayampa Field Office's Table Mesa Recreation Area project (see below) is expected to provide additional developed recreational target shooting opportunities on BLM-managed public lands.

Hassayampa Field Office (HFO)/ Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM)

Irina Ford, Field Manager, iford@blm.gov

James Holden, Monument Manager/Assistant Field Manager, jwholden@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Table Mesa Recreation Area Recreation Planning**

SUMMARY: The Table Mesa area is approximately 11,000 acres of predominantly BLM-administered lands west-southwest of Black Canyon City. The area is heavily used by target shooters, campers, and off-highway-vehicles. It also provides nonmotorized (hiking, equestrian, mountain bike) recreation opportunities, including the Black Canyon National Recreation Trail. Several special recreation permittees use the area for guided tours. The BLM is in the late phases of a long-term recreation site plan for the area.

In the summer of 2020, the BLM began assessing areas that would offer safe target shooting opportunities while also minimizing conflict with existing powerlines and other infrastructure. Maintaining target shooting opportunities while balancing the other uses in the area has been the primary focus of early planning efforts.

A public scoping period began in January 2023, and a draft environmental assessment was released for a 45-day comment period in August 2023. The final environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact is expected to be finalized by the end of February. The proposed action would expand recreational facilities in the area by establishing recreational shooting sites, developed and primitive camping areas, and interpretive sites. Enhancements would also include business planning and site remediation.

Lower Sonoran Field Office (LSFO) / Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM)

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Sirita Benally, Assistant Field Manager, sbenally@blm.gov

- **SUBJECT: Goldfield Recreation Area**

SUMMARY: The Goldfield area northeast of Apache Junction includes about 1,100 acres of BLM-managed lands adjacent to the Tonto National Forest and Lost Dutchman State Park. Other state trust lands are also nearby. The area has been regularly used for dispersed camping but has also experienced a large amount of camping overstays. Nearby residents have observed trash, human waste, drug use, and abandoned vehicles in the area. BLM staff have completed several clean-ups in the Goldfield area, removing about 10,000 pounds of trash and 12-15 abandoned vehicles.

The Lower Sonoran Field Office recently completed an environmental assessment to develop a non-motorized, day-use recreation area on the 1,100 acres at Goldfield. The purpose of the Goldfield Recreation Area is to establish compatible recreation use in the area, protect natural and cultural resources, reduce conflict between recreational users and surrounding residential areas, and increase public safety. Planned facility improvements include equestrian staging areas, fences, kiosks, and toilets. A temporary public lands closure went into effect on Feb. 5. The closure will last up to two years for worker and public safety while the area is cleaned and developed.

Division of Lands, Minerals, Energy, and Cadastral Survey

Division Leadership

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- **SUBJECT: Renewable Energy and Other Realty Actions**

SUMMARY: BLM Arizona has an unusually active Lands and Realty program to meet the needs of rapidly growing communities in the Desert Southwest. The most common realty applications are rights-of-way (ROW) for transmission lines, access roads, highways, and other infrastructure. With passage of the *Energy Policy Act of 2020* and Executive Order 14008 (January 2021), Renewable Energy is a high priority for this Administration. When authorized, BLM issues ROWs for non-competitive renewable energy development projects and 43 CFR 2920 lease for competitive projects on the public lands.

- **Renewable Energy:** With increasing industry interest in Renewable Energy development opportunities, BLM Arizona is working in collaboration with Headquarters, other BLM State Offices, Tribal and local governments, and interested members of the public to provide opportunities for renewable energy development on the public lands and to facilitate renewable energy on adjacent private lands, while conserving high-value natural and cultural resources. A count of the ongoing projects and pending applications to date follows:
 - 39 Solar projects
 - 9 Wind testing and development projects
 - 4 Transmission Lines (\geq 345 kV)
 - 5 Gen-Ties (smaller transmission lines connecting solar/wind projects on private land to substations/major transmission lines across public lands.
- **Communication Sites:** The Mobile Now Act of 2021 along with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) made access to reliable high-speed internet service an important priority. The BLM expects a significant increase in applications over the next three years. As an agency BLM is proposing updates to its regulations that would make it easier for broadband communication sites to locate new infrastructure on public lands. BLM Arizona anticipates hiring additional staff to help meet this developing need.

- **SUBJECT: Land Tenure**

SUMMARY: In accordance with the *Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976*, as amended (FLPMA), the BLM is authorized to make land tenure adjustments to fulfill a variety of multiple-use, sustained-yield management objectives. The goal of the program is to enhance public use and enjoyment of the public lands, by providing legal public access and consolidating public land ownership to facilitate effective management and conservation of natural and cultural resources. Per FLPMA, the BLM may conduct land exchanges, acquire lands through purchase, accept land donations, and dispose of land through land sales. The BLM occasionally disposes of public lands to meet the needs of local governments through direct sales (FLPMA) or Recreation and Public Purposes Act leases and patents. The *Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926* (R&PP Act), most recently amended in 2022 to provide parity to Tribes as R&PP applicants, is used to make public lands available to local jurisdictions and non-governmental organizations for public purposes, for example, schools, parks, fire stations, etc. Per FLPMA, withdrawal is a method of both reserving surface management authority and protecting lands for use by another Federal agency, such as military reservations, US Forest Service National Forests, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refuges, and Bureau of Reclamation projects. A count of the ongoing land tenure projects and pending applications follows:

- 16 proposed Withdrawal actions (new, extensions, or revocations)
- two pending R&PP Act patent requests
- two ongoing land sales
- three ongoing FLPMA or legislatively directed land exchanges
- two Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) acquisitions in progress, one proposal in development

- **SUBJECT: Minerals Program**

SUMMARY: BLM Arizona supports environmentally responsible mineral development on the public lands in accordance with Federal law. Statewide, Arizona contains over half of the Secretary of the Interior's 35 minerals deemed critical to national security and the economy.

- **Mining Claims:** BLM Arizona currently administers over 60,000 active mining claims (2nd only to BLM Nevada) and collects over \$8.7 million in fees. The BLM reviews all reclamation bonds filed for mining operations, totaling \$31 million. For the past several years, BLM Arizona has been scanning the mining law case

files and making them available to the public by posting on the internet currently at: <https://www.blm.gov/az/MiningClaimCaseFiles/index.php>.

- **Mineral Materials:** BLM Arizona manages the bureau's second largest saleable minerals program, permitting over 3.8 million cubic yards of sand, gravel, and crushed stone worth about \$4.7 million annually to the economy and supports regional infrastructure needs.
 - **Native American Minerals Program:** BLM has trust responsibilities for mining activities on Indian lands, which include providing technical assistance to Federal agencies and Tribal governments, as the *mining supervisor* for the Department of the Interior. Tasks include mine inspection, production verification, approval of exploration, mining, and reclamation plans, as well as providing recommendations on bond decisions. The BLM Arizona State Office works collaboratively with agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement (OSMRE), the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and tribal government mineral departments. Mining on Indian trust lands is handled through mineral leases administered through the BIA.
 - **Oil and Gas Leasing (Helium):** Although there is no oil and gas production on BLM managed public land in Arizona, there is some interest in leasing for helium resources within the Holbrook Basin and Little Colorado River Valley, in Navajo and Apache Counties, Safford Field Office. In 2021 BLM Arizona completed a Reasonable and Foreseeable Development report for helium, oil and gas, which will support ongoing NEPA analysis for leases offered in 2018 and the three expressions of interest (EOIs) for additional leases in the area.
 - **Critical Minerals:** The rapid buildout of a clean energy economy is fueling a significant increase in demand for responsibly sourced critical minerals. Demand for hardrock minerals, and critical minerals in particular, is growing. Though BLM Arizona has received a lot of speculative inquiry, there is only one exploration level notice on BLM lands and no operation plans to date.
- **SUBJECT: Cadastral Survey - Management of Federal Land Boundaries**
SUMMARY: The Cadastral Survey group performs all duties pertaining to the identification and survey of the public lands of the United States, as delegated by the Secretary of the Interior. The Cadastral Survey retains and preserves the original survey plats and field notes for the Secretary, which are the base documents for most legal descriptions used to issue original patents. Cadastral Survey provides technical direction on the management of land boundary issues to other federal agencies, Indian

tribes, States, counties, municipalities, and other interested parties through surveys and/or Standards for Boundary Evidence (SBE) products. Cadastral Survey responds to congressional, Solicitors and other public inquiries on complex survey issues.

Division of Resources and Planning

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- **SUBJECT: Rangeland Management**

SUMMARY: In Arizona, most grazing allotments have preference tied to base water properties and terms and conditions for yearlong grazing use, with opportunities for ephemeral forage use (annual grasses and forbs) during wet years, in accordance with the applicable Land Use Plan. In addition to the flexibility associated with using ephemeral forage, many BLM Arizona offices have begun including Adaptive Management in grazing authorizations. Adaptive Management includes additional flexibilities for the BLM and livestock operators to adjust livestock numbers and season of use within authorized levels and establishes monitoring thresholds that identify when adjustments in livestock management (both increases and decreases) can be made in real time based on resource conditions. In 2021, BLM Arizona issued Permanent Instruction Memorandum (PIM) 2021-004 to provide guidance on how to streamline the Land Health Evaluation (LHE) process and expand the use of adaptive management in the grazing administration program.

BLM Arizona has been working closely with livestock operators when processing renewable energy right-of-way applications. Consultation, cooperation, and coordination is used to limit and mitigate impacts to grazing operations and to compensate livestock operators for unavoidable loss of range improvements. In 2023, BLM Arizona issued Instruction Memorandum 2023-007 to provide guidance on how to comply with the grazing regulations during the renewable energy right-of-way application process.

- **SUBJECT: Wild Horse and Burro (WHB) Management**

SUMMARY: The BLM Arizona is committed to achieving AML on all Herd Management Areas (HMAs) to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance on public lands. In furtherance of this goal, during FY20 the BLM Arizona Colorado River District (CRD) completed NEPA analysis to gather wild burros in the Black Mountain HMA to achieve AML. Based on these efforts, the CRD began conducting bait and water trapping gather in late September 2020. So far, this effort has resulted in more than 3800 burros removed from the HMA. CRD is currently working to complete NEPA on the “3 Rivers”

complex of HMAs and the Phoenix District and Arizona State Offices are collaborating on the NEPA analysis for the Lake Pleasant HMA.

- In FY23, the BLM Arizona has removed approximately 793 excess wild burros from private, public, and state land. The BLM Arizona has also directly placed 920 WHB into private care through the adoption/sales program based at the Florence WHB Training and Holding Facility and shipped an additional 515 WHB for private placement through other facilities and events.
- The BLM Arizona has partnered with one national organization to place 3,000 WHB over the next five years and another local organization to place 300 WHB within 2024.
- The BLM Arizona is currently participating in two research projects. These projects include a fertility management pilot project in partnership with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in which 77 female wild burros were treated and released. The PDO continued a research collaring project with 55 collars being tracked. The partners in this project will continue to monitor movement of burros in the Lake Pleasant area using a combination of radio telemetry and GPS.

- **SUBJECT: Landscape Restoration/Conservation**

SUMMARY: BLM Arizona's cross cutting landscape restoration/conservation portfolio includes projects completed under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and BLM's statewide efforts to accomplish shared resource and vegetative objectives through Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) conducted at the landscape level. In April 2021, BLM Arizona issued Permanent Instruction Memorandum (PIM) 2021-007 which provides guidance and policy on blending IVM into the core work of each participating program, prioritizing, and funding IVM projects. The BIL was signed on November 15, 2021, and the IRA was signed on August 16, 2022. These two historic investments have provided over \$38 million in combined funding to support conservation, resilient ecosystem restoration, wildfire fuels reduction, and resilient recreation. The IRA invests in two Restoration Landscapes within Arizona; Yanawant in the northwest portion of the state, north of the Grand Canyon, and Sky Islands in the southeast portion of the state; along with a variety of statewide activities supporting critical minerals, renewable energy, and recreation. The BIL supports IVM treatments across the State that provide benefits for wildfire fuels reduction, habitat restoration, and associated resources.

As this work takes place at the landscape level, BLM Arizona continues to focus on building, expanding, and actively participating in partnerships such as those like,

Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Service, grazing permittees, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Arizona State Land Department.

- **SUBJECT: Tribal Relations/Co-Stewardship/Co-Management**

SUMMARY: BLM Arizona has recently designated a full time State Tribal Liaison. The primary purpose of this position is to assist in providing support and guidance to both BLM staff and leadership on conducting effective consultation and the establishment and maintenance of productive relationships with Arizona tribes as well as descendant communities that are now located outside of the state. This includes supporting the development and implementation of co-stewardship/co-management agreements with tribal partners pursuant to the recent Joint Secretarial Order 3403 on *Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters*. Examples of successfully executed agreements include those established for the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni-Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument's Tribal Commission. Under these agreements, participating tribes have agreed to work with both the BLM and the USFS to provide indigenous ecological knowledge (IEK) and other expertise about areas within the Monument. This information, coupled with federal management prescriptions, will ensure that the Monument is protected in a respectful and culturally appropriate manner. Co-stewardship/co-management will also play an important role in landscape restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, cultural resource protection, and other resource projects.

- **SUBJECT: Recreation and Visitor Services**

SUMMARY: On August 31, 2023, the BLM released the new [Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation](#) to guide decisions to respond to current demand and chart a course to meet future needs. BLM Arizona is prioritizing work to advance the Blueprint's four pillars:

1. Grow and Diversify Resources for BLM Recreation
2. Prioritize and Embrace Partnerships
3. Expand Outreach and Establish a Culture of Inclusion
4. Meet the Demand, Protect Resources, and Improve Access

Next steps: Arizona will be completing the assessment questions to support the BLM's national roll up of recreation program resource data needs. The assessment will help guide and plan for a State Recreation Summit. The summit will bring together state

and local government representatives and partners to inform BLM Arizona's state action plan to implement the Blueprint.

To date, BLM Arizona has implemented the Blueprint through the following actions:

- Arizona recently completed a market analysis of current recreation fee rates statewide to ensure BLM is providing and receiving a fair value for outdoor recreation opportunities. Where findings indicated our fee rates are below local market prices and as directed in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act and in [OMB Circular A-25](#) to set fees at local market prices, Arizona offices are developing fee increase proposals in the form of business plans.
- BLM Arizona has invested \$750,000 of IRA funding to increase the Recreation and Visitor Services Program permanent workforce over the next four years at the local level. The focus of their work is to meet the demand for increased visitation while protecting resources (Pillar 4) and to grow and diversity additional funding sources (Pillar 1). We have already hired one Outdoor Recreation Planner position and will be hiring two new park ranger positions shortly.
- The BLM will invest \$472,000 of BIL funding in the proposed Table Mesa Recreation Area, which would establish appropriate recreational uses in specific areas to avoid user conflict, ensure visitor safety, and protect natural and cultural resources (Pillar 4). In addition, \$146,000 of BIL funding is being used to prevent damage to the resources, objects, and values for which the Sonoran Desert National Monument was designated while assuring that recreational use of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail Recreation Management Zone continues. Lastly, \$350,000 of BIL funding is being used to complete the recreation site management adaptations for the Lower Sonoran Field Office's Goldfield Recreation Area to meet demand while protecting the resources.
- Travel Management Plans (Pillar 4) currently underway include:
 - Lower Colorado River TMP
 - Middle Gila South TMP
 - Gila-San Simon TMP
 - Kingman TMP
 - Yuma East/Gila River TMP

- **SUBJECT: Cultural and Paleontological – District Archaeological Technician Program and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

SUMMARY: In 2024, the BLM Division of Resources and Planning approved the DATP to train District Archaeological Technicians (DAT) for use by BLM offices to aid in the identification and documentation of cultural resources, facilitate monitoring of cultural resources, and to provide general cultural heritage program support. The DAT was prepared as a means to expand cultural program capacity and flexibility for field work on lower complexity projects as well as to provide alternative means of accomplishing certain core work.

Cultural - Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Final Rule – BLM is addressing the September 2023 Directive from the Department of Interior (DOI) to prioritize and facilitate repatriation of Native American human remains and cultural items (funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony). While still in the planning stages, work is proceeding in the following areas:

- Reviewing available National/State databases to identify holdings which have been reported to the National NAGPRA Program and preparing an inventory of holdings/collections which include Native American human remains and cultural items which have not been previously reported to National NAGPRA Program.
- Preparing a needs assessment and action plan for outstanding and unreported holdings/collections, response to anticipated museum/repository inquiries, and preparing guidance for new discoveries. The plan will identify parties responsible for the collections and holdings and identify and address known issues barring or delaying repatriation.

Division of Business and Support Services

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- **SUBJECT: Fairbank Historic Townsite Trail Replacement**

SUMMARY: The Engineering Branch is working with the Gila District, Tucson Field Office to implement approximately 2-1/2 miles of trail improvements to the Fairbank Trail. The material to be used for the trails will be decomposed granite with 95% compaction and proper cross slopes to ensure adequate drainage. The non-motorized recreational trail is used for hiking, equestrian use, and mountain biking. The Fairbank Trail provides access for viewing the natural landscape and riparian habitat, bird watching, viewing historic buildings and interpretive signs, and other recreational trail activities within the National Conservation Area.

- **SUBJECT: La Posa Wastewater Lagoons Project**

SUMMARY: The Engineering Services Branch is collaborating with the Colorado River District, Yuma Field Office to upgrade facilities at the La Posa Long Term Visitor Areas (LTVA), North, South and West to adequately keep up with increasing visitors to the LTVAs. The project will replace the existing septic system with aeration equipment and lined evaporation lagoons to treat wastewater produced from a recreational vehicle dump station. The influent conveyance system will be replaced to serve a four stall RV dump station and will include a manual screen structure and two 5,000-gallon septic tanks. The existing water source will be replaced to produce 15 gallons per minute to increase water production in the area. A water distribution system will be installed consisting of distribution lines from a water treatment plant and pump house to the RV dump station and RV fill stations. The project will also include the construction of a 50,000-gallon bolted steel water tank to provide an adequate water supply at peak demand, as well as the installation and connection of necessary electrical components required for system operations.

- **SUBJECT: Virgin River Campground Septic Tank Replacement – Construction Phase**

SUMMARY: The Engineering Branch worked with the Arizona Strip Field Office on a site improvement project to remove and replace three concrete septic tanks within a recreation area that receives over 70,000 visitors per year. The design phase was completed in January of 2023 and the construction phase is currently in the solicitation stage of the construction contract. The existing septic tanks (2000 gallons each) were installed in 1976 and exceed the recommended useful life of 30 years per the NTC Condition Assessment Handbook. The existing septic tanks will be replaced with 2500-gallon septic tanks and new wastewater leachate fields with gravel trenches, filter fabric and diversion valves to existing fields will be installed at each of the three restrooms to accommodate increased demand.

- **SUBJECT: Gila Box Campground Improvements Project**

SUMMARY: The Engineering Branch is working with the Gila District, Safford Field Office on a project to renovate the Camp Site Host Facilities, Owl Creek Campground, and the Riverview Campground. The site host provides invaluable services to the BLM Safford Field Office by assisting visitors and maintaining facilities. At the camp host site this project will replace an aged diesel generator that requires repairs and consumption of fuel with a photovoltaic power system and battery array that will provide more reliable power while significantly reducing maintenance and operation costs. At the Riverview and Owl Creek Campgrounds the project will consist of

replacement of camp site amenities including ramada, concrete picnic table, site number post, fire ring and grill at each of the twenty camp sites. The access roads will be repaired and re-graded at various locations and drainage issues will be addressed by installing multiple corrugated metal pipe culverts at wash crossings along the access roads. The campsites will be re-graded and stabilized and the information kiosks will be replaced.

Division of Communications

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- **SUBJECT: Outreach**

SUMMARY: The small but dedicated Communications Division is actively engaged in external outreach on a number of projects. In FY 2023, the team planned and managed a press event with the [Secretary of the Interior at the Sonoran Solar site](#); supported a press event with the Vice President, Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Energy, Arizona Governor and other officials at the [Ten West Link groundbreaking](#); planned a public meeting (approximately 300 people in attendance) in Flagstaff to hear public input on the proposed [Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni—Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument](#). The team also planned the BLM Director's field visit to Arizona as well as a visit by the Board of Directors for the [Foundation for America's Public Lands](#), which was focused on showcasing collaboration opportunities. Working side-by-side with the BLM Arizona districts and BLM Headquarters, the Division team hosted or assisted with numerous other public meetings, national rollouts, and local events, such as two wild burro gathers, two wild horse and burro adoption events, co-hosted the first-ever "BLM and Friends" summit with our Friends groups, represented BLM on a public lands panel hosted by a local land trust, and hosted a public lands forum with the State Department-sponsored Washington Mandela Fellows.

In FY2023, the statewide Communications team supported more than 80 media engagements, developed 65 press releases, wrote blog posts, developed website content, curated content for multiple social media accounts, assisted with intergovernmental correspondence, and compiled 16 Federal Register notice packages. The team hosted two Congressional field visits, multiple calls and meetings with Congressional staffs, reviewed a variety of proposed legislative bills introduced in Congress, prepped a Department of the Interior witness for Hill testimony, and supported numerous legislative map requests. With the Resource Advisory Council out of a quorum, the team conducted significant outreach for Arizona's largest call for nominations in at least a decade (14 of 15 positions were vacant). As a result of that

outreach, we had a full slate of 30 nomination packages to send to the Department for consideration and in September 2023, the Secretary appointed 14 new Arizona RAC members.

- **SUBJECT: Employee Engagement/Recruiting**

SUMMARY: The Communications team is actively supporting employee engagement and BLM Arizona’s recruiting efforts. Staff developed a new employee orientation program called “Welcome Aboard” that is provided to new employees during their first six months with the organization. Additionally, the Communications team hosts a monthly “Lunch and Learn” virtual program for employees highlighting different programs and topics of interest. The program averages around 70 participants each month. Last year, the statewide team published 32 “BLM Daily” stories to the internal national employee portal, highlighted the BLM intern program in various communications products, and is assisting with a national Recruiting video series. Staff members have participated at recruiting outreach events such as the Phoenix Pride Parade and the Recruit Military job expo. Three members of the Division serve on the new BLM Arizona Recruiting Team, which also consists of Human Resource specialists and other employees. The team just completed its draft charter. Team members regularly work with HR, Fire, and other program staff to highlight job opportunities on Arizona and national social media accounts.