



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

BLM Tucson Field Office Recreation Fee Sites and Areas Business Plan



September 2024

BLM Tucson Field Office Recreation Sites and Areas Business Plan

Recreation Fee Accounts:

Recommendations, Reviews, and Approvals

Recommended by:

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Date

Reviewed by:

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Date

Approved by:

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Date

This business plan was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management's Tucson Field Office pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (16 U.S.C. 6801-6814) and BLM recreation fee program policies. It establishes future management goals and priorities for the Gila River Recreation Sites, Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, Ironwood Forest National Monument and San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area within the Tucson Field Office.



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Tucson Field Office
3201 E Universal Way
Tucson, AZ 85756



In Reply Refer to:

2932 (LLAZG02000)

Dear Reader,

The areas analyzed in this business plan are managed by the Tucson Field Office (TFO), Gila District Office, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered public lands located in Pinal County of Arizona's 2nd Congressional District (Gila River Recreation Sites), Pima County of Arizona's 6th Congressional District (Las Cienegas National Conservation Area), Pima County of Arizona's 7th Congressional District (Ironwood Forest National Monument) and Cochise County of Arizona's 6th and 7th Congressional District (San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area Recreation Sites and Backcountry).

The authority to collect fees is established by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended).

New fees or modifications to existing fees are proposed at the Gila River Recreation Sites (GRRS), the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA), the Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM), and for day-use at the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) Recreation Sites.

Currently, SPRNCA charges a \$2 per person per night backcountry Individual Special Recreation Permit (ISRP) fee; through this business plan, the BLM proposes to increase this fee to \$10 per person per night at the San Pedro House, Fairbank Historic Townsite, Millville, Terrenate, Hereford, Palominas, and Murray Springs. The BLM is also proposing to initiate a day use standard amenity fee, per vehicle, of \$10 in SPRNCA, as well as an annual San Pedro Pass for \$40 for all day use sites only.

The GRRS currently has no fee. TFO is proposing to initiate a \$7 per vehicle day use standard amenity fee, a \$10 per site expanded amenity fee for camping, a \$75 per day or night group site expanded amenity fee for up to 50 visitors, a \$150 per day or night group site expanded amenity fee for 51 or more visitors, and an annual local area pass (the Gila River Pass) for \$40 for day use only.

The LCNCA currently has no fees. TFO proposes \$10 per vehicle day use standard amenity fee at the Empire Ranch Headquarters and the Airstrip Day Use Site, a \$15 per vehicle per night camping ISRP for the designated camp areas located in LCNCA Resource Management Plan Recreation Zone 2 and backcountry camping located in LCNCA Resource Management Plan Recreation Zone 3 within the designated recreation fee zone (See Appendix 2), a \$100 per day or night group site expanded amenity fee for up to 75 visitors, a \$200 per day or night group site expanded amenity fee for 76 or more visitors, and an annual local area pass (the Empire Pass) for \$40 for day use sites only.

The IFNM currently has no fees. TFO proposes a \$15 per vehicle per night camping ISRP for the IFNM ISRP Recreation Fee Zone in the Silverbell Loop Rd., Pump Station Rd., Ragged Top Rd., Manville Rd., and Cocoraque Rd. areas.

You may submit comments between September 6, 2024, and October 21, 2024, through email at TFObusinessplan@blm.gov, or by mail at 3201 E. Universal Way Tucson, AZ 85756.

Sincerely,

Colleen J. Dingman
Field Manager
BLM Tucson Field Office

DRAFT

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1 Executive Summary

This business plan was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Tucson Field Office (TFO) pursuant to the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004 (P.L. 108-447, as amended) and BLM recreation fee program policy and manual direction (Manual 2930). FLREA allows the BLM jurisdiction to establish, modify, charge, and collect recreation fees on federal recreational lands and waters. The FLREA (16 U.S.C. 6802(b)(1)) does not grant the authority for BLM to provide discounts or reduced recreation fees for local residents or other groups.

This business plan describes the existing and proposed fee sites, proposed establishment and/or changes in fees to these sites, associated operating costs, planned expenditures of fee revenue, a financial analysis utilizing a regional comparative market study, and the impacts of proposed fee changes.

The Gila River Recreation Sites (Christmas and Shores campgrounds), Ironwood Forest National Monument, and the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area currently do not charge any fees. The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area has an overnight backcountry Individual Special Recreation Permit (ISRP) fee of \$2.

Proposed new fee sites and rates and existing fee site changes are as follows:

- Gila River Recreation Sites (GRRS) to establish fees of \$7 standard amenity day use fee per day per vehicle, \$40 annual pass (eligible for day use fees only per vehicle), \$10 expanded amenity camping fee per night per site, \$75 expanded amenity fee per day or night for the group site up to 50 visitors, \$150 per day or night for the group site for 51 or more visitors. FLREA Authorities: Standard Amenity (16 U.S.C. 6802(f)(4)), Expanded Amenity (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2) (A & C)), and Site-Specific Passes (16 U.S.C. 6804(c)).
- Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM) to establish fees of \$15 per vehicle per night camping ISRP for areas within the designated IFNM ISRP Recreation Fee Zone (See Appendix 1) including areas around the Silverbell Loop Rd., Pump Station Rd., Ragged Top Rd., Manville Rd., and Cocoraque Rd. FLREA Authority: Individual Special Recreation Permit (16 U.S.C. 6802(h)).
- Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA) to establish fees of \$10 standard amenity day use fee per day per vehicle, and \$40 for an annual pass (day use fees only per group), that would permit access to the following locations: the Empire Ranch Headquarters and the Airstrip Day Use Site. LCNCA would also establish a \$100 per day or night expanded amenity fee for developed group sites for groups up to 75 visitors, \$200 expanded amenity fee per day or night for developed group sites groups of 76 or more visitors. A \$15 per vehicle per night camping ISRP fee for the designated camp areas located in LCNCA Resource Management Plan Recreation Zone 2 and backcountry camping located in LCNCA Resource Management Plan Recreation Zone 3. The areas that fall within the designated LCNCA ISRP Recreation Fee Zone (See Appendix 2) will be subject to the ISRP fee. FLREA Authorities: Standard Amenity (16 U.S.C. 6802(f)(4)), Expanded Amenity (16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(C)), Site-Specific Passes (16 U.S.C. 6804(c)), and Individual Special Recreation Permit (16 U.S.C. 6802(h)).
- The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) backcountry fee to increase from \$2 per person per night to \$10 per person per night camping ISRP. In

addition, SPRNCA would establish a \$10 standard amenity day use fee per vehicle per day and a \$40 annual pass (valid for the day use fees only per group) that would permit access to the following locations: the San Pedro House, Fairbank Historic Townsite, Millville, Terrenate, Hereford, Palominas, and Murray Springs. FLREA Authorities: Standard Amenity (16 U.S.C. 6802(f)(4)), Individual Special Recreation Permit (16 U.S.C. 6802(h)), and Site-Specific Passes (16 U.S.C. 6804(c)).

FLREA authorizes the BLM to collect special recreation permit fees for specialized recreation uses of BLM-administered lands (16 U.S.C. 6802 (h)). Under 43 CFR §2931.2, BLM may establish a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) and fee system for the use of special areas. SRPs for individual recreation use in a special area are referred to as Individual Special Recreation Permits (ISRPs). Modification of the SPRNCA backcountry fee, and establishment of the IFNM and LCNCA camping permit fees all fall under the ISRP fee category and will be discussed in this business plan.

The GRRS, LCNCA, and SPRNCA meet the FLREA standard and expanded amenity fee requirements and conditions with amenities including access roads, camp sites, group sites at GRRS and LCNCA, security presence by BLM staff, permanent trash receptacles, vault toilet restrooms, picnic tables, fire rings, and drinking water at SPRNCA and LCNCA. Fees at the GRRS and LCNCA have never been established, however the associated sites have gone through significant development over time as well as maintenance to facilities such as roads and restroom facilities.

The IFNM provides amenities such as an established group site, dispersed camp units, access roads, and security presence by BLM staff. Improvements to these and additional amenities are planned if the proposed fees are approved.

The LCNCA, IFNM and the SPRNCA experienced a significant jump in visitation, and thus maintenance and monitoring needs, while staff has continued to operate at similar funding levels as past years. Since 2016 visitation has significantly grown at all sites within the TFO based on traffic counter data (See Table 1). Under the current funding levels provided through appropriated funding, the TFO does not and will not have the capacity to continue to keep up with the current maintenance needs.

As visitation has grown (Table 1), the TFO has seen a significant increase in both resource damage from overcrowding and maintenance needs such as trash disposal and restroom maintenance. These have caused the recreational opportunities and the quality of those opportunities to degrade in the units identified in this business. Through enacting the fees changes proposed in this business plan, the TFO looks to more effectively manage recreation use and improve infrastructure to add capacity and enhance the quality of recreation experiences at these sites.

Table 1: TFO Visitation 5-Year Trend at the Proposed Fee Sites

Fiscal Year	SPRNCA	LCNCA	IFNM	GRRS	Total
2019	69,567	39,754	30,692	21,700	161,713
2020	61,690	28,115	24,385	28,690	142,880
2021	129,394	60,611	59,417	24,400	273,822
2022	170,256	107,096	67,142	31,720	376,214
2023	261,041	160,422	125,647	Unavailable ¹	547,110
Total	691,948	395,998	307,283	106,510	1,501,739
Average	138,390	79,200	61,457	26,628	300,348

If established, fees would supplement appropriated funding to maintain and enhance recreation facilities, services, and opportunities at the fee sites. Planned expenditures include operations directly supporting the fee sites such as all site maintenance, contracts, and capital improvement projects as well as employee labor (Park Rangers, Facility Managers, Outdoor Recreation Planners, Law Enforcement Officers). With the significant increase in recreational visitation there has been considerable degradation to the recreational sites and surrounding environments that have been difficult to keep up with due to the limited resources available. Fees would allow TFO to bridge that gap in improving and ensuring quality recreational opportunities are preserved. Additional analysis of fee implementation can be found in Section 10.

The BLM conducted a market analysis to consider the fees charges elsewhere by other nearby public and private sector providers of comparable services or resources, as required by FLREA, to inform the fee proposal. The comparison is discussed in more detail in the “Analysis and Comparison of Fees” in Section 9.

2 Background and Authorities

This business plan has been prepared to meet the criteria defined in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-447; Title VIII, Section 801; 16 U.S.C. 6801–6814). The authorities and regulations for this business plan are:

- **The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976** (Public Law 94-579; 43 U.S.C. 1701–1787), contains BLM’s general land use management authority over the public lands, and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses of those lands. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to regulate through permits or other instruments the use of the public lands. Section 303 of FLPMA contains BLM’s authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties.
- **The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2004** repealed applicable portions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and replaced BLM’s

¹ Site was undergoing maintenance during 2023.

authority to collect recreation fees. This current law authorizes BLM to collect recreation fees at sites that meet certain requirements, allows BLM to keep the fee revenues at the local offices where they were collected, and directs how BLM will manage and utilize these revenues. FLREA also established the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Pass Program. The FLREA (16 U.S.C. 6802(b)(1)) does not grant the authority for BLM to provide discounts or reduced recreation fees for local residents or other groups.

- Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2930 (43 CFR 2930) Permits for Recreation on Public Lands contains the regulations governing BLM’s recreation permitting program.

This business plan has also been prepared pursuant to all applicable BLM recreation fee program policies and guidance, including:

- BLM Manual 2930, *Recreation Permits and Fees*, Rel. 2-296 dated October 22, 2007
- BLM Handbook 2930-1, *Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook*, Rel. 2-300 dated November 17, 2014

The BLM strives to manage recreation and visitor services to serve the diverse visitor outdoor recreation demands while helping to maintain sustainable setting conditions needed to conserve the public lands, so the visitors’ desired recreation choices remain available. The BLM’s goals for delivering recreation benefits from BLM-administered lands and waters to the American people and their communities are to:

- Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities,
- Ensure a quality experience and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources, and
- Provide for and receive fair value in recreation.

2.1 Special Area Permits and Fees

FLREA authorizes the BLM to collect special recreation permit fees for specialized recreation uses of federal recreational lands (16 U.S.C. 6802 (h)). Under 43 CFR §2931.2, BLM may establish a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) and fee system for the use of special areas. Special areas include any area officially designated by statute or Presidential order including national monuments and national conservation areas (43 CFR 2932.5). SRPs for individual recreation use in a special area are referred to as ISRPs.

When a field office determines that a new ISRP system to manage individual use of a special area is desirable, implementation of the permit system requires public notification with a *Federal Register* notice (43 CFR 2932.13). ISRP fee rates are set by the BLM State Director based on several considerations in order to ensure a fair return for the use of public lands. These considerations include: management costs related to the special area, costs of operating the permit system, and comparison with fees charged in similar areas. Fees charged in a special area apply to all users of the area, including private, non-commercial visitors; clients and guests.

3 Introduction to the Tucson Field Office Recreation Program

3.1 Area Description

The areas analyzed in this business plan are managed by the Tucson Field Office (TFO), Gila District Office, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered public lands located in Pinal County of Arizona's 2nd Congressional District (GRRS), Pima County of Arizona's 6th Congressional District (LCNCA), Pima County of Arizona's 7th Congressional District (IFNM) and Cochise County of Arizona's 6th and 7th Congressional District (SPRNCA Recreation Sites and Backcountry). See Figure 1 for a map of the Tucson Field Office.

The TFO planning area encompasses over 600,000 acres across Pima, Pinal, Cochise, Gila, and Santa Cruz counties. This includes the San Pedro Backcountry Camping Permit (an ISRP) recreation fee site, as well as popular fee-free recreation opportunities including Middle Gila Canyons OHV Area, and other National Conservation Lands. National Conservation Lands managed within the TFO are the Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM), Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA), San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA), Arizona National Scenic Trail, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, and four Wildernesses (White Canyon, Needles Eye, Baboquivari, and Coyote Peak), all of which are distinct from the GRRS and see moderate to heavy recreational use.

TFO manages over 600,000 surface acres of public lands across five counties in southeast Arizona near the two largest metropolitan areas in the state (Phoenix and Tucson), including:

- The Ironwood Forest National Monument (129,060 acres). (Proposed Fee Site)
- Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (42,117 acres). (Proposed Fee Site)
- San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (56,183 acres). (Proposed Fee Site)
- Gila River Recreation Sites (50 acres). (Proposed Fee Site)
- wilderness areas (247,084 acres).
- 7 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), totaling 205,496 acres.
- 8 miles of the Arizona National Scenic Trail on BLM administrative lands and 14 miles on Bureau of Reclamation administrative lands as well as the Kelvin-Riverside Portal.
- properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Diverse wildlife and plant species, including 61 special status and 36 Threatened & Endangered species as well as 15 critical habitats.
- Significant cultural (historic & prehistoric) resources dating back over 12,000 years.
- Paleontological resources, some dating back over 300 million years.

The TFO planning area provides recreational opportunities such as hiking, backpacking, biking, camping, rock climbing, off-highway vehicle use, sightseeing/birding, interpretation/education, and horseback riding. These uses are diversified throughout the lands managed by TFO with opportunities at both the sites identified in this business plan and areas without fees.

Nearby developed recreation opportunities not managed by the BLM include: the Tonto National Forest (USFS), Coronado National Forest (USFS), Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (NPS), Saguaro National Park (NPS), Lost Dutchman State Park, (AZ State Parks) McFarland State Historic Park (AZ State Parks), Catalina State Park (AZ State Park) and Besh Ba Gowah Archaeological Park and Museum (City of Globe), among others.

The TFO takes a proactive approach in managing its recreation sites to meet these priority objectives:

1. Minimize conflicts with adjacent private landowners.
2. Minimize conflicts between recreation user groups.
3. Minimize conflicts with other resources and uses.
4. Provide for visitor safety and interpretive needs.
5. Provide for a quality developed recreation experience compatibly with other uses.
6. Provide for quality primitive and semi-primitive recreation experience in a manner compatible with other uses.

3.2 Tucson Field Office Estimated 5 Year Total Visitation

The TFO has experienced a significant increase in visitation since 2017. Table 2 shows visitation to the field office. Numbers were gathered through traffic counter systems and in-field observations/counts. The COVID-19 pandemic is believed to have contributed to this, as more people recreated outdoors; however recreational use was trending up on public lands beforehand as well. While we cannot know for sure why recreation on public lands has increased, we can surmise that this is partly due to advances/improvements in outdoor marketing, gear type and availability, and cultural diversity. This is evidenced by data collected through traffic counters and staff observations. TFO did see a dip in visitation in 2019 and 2020; however, this change in numbers was likely due to a transition to new traffic counters that required some time to learn.

The TFO is committed to making improvements to facilities to provide better services for visitors, to keep up with the growing visitation needs, and to assist in protecting sensitive habitats, especially within our National Conservation Lands. The increase in fees collected will be instrumental in funding these enhancements. TFO believes that visitation trends will likely continue to grow due to 1) inflation prompting people to seek lower-cost recreational opportunities and 2) the anticipated draw of improved developed recreation infrastructure, which has become increasingly popular among visitors seeking these types of experiences. The additional revenue generated from fees will enable TFO to invest in these necessary infrastructure upgrades and resource protection measures, thereby improving the overall quality of the visitor experience and ensuring sustainable management of these valuable lands.

Fiscal Year	Estimated Number of Visitors
2017	251,000
2018	326,000
2019	240,000
2020	176,000
2021	416,000
2022	540,000
2023	976,000

Table 2: Estimated Number of Visitors reported in RMIS for all Tucson Field Office managed lands, Fiscal Years 2017-2023.

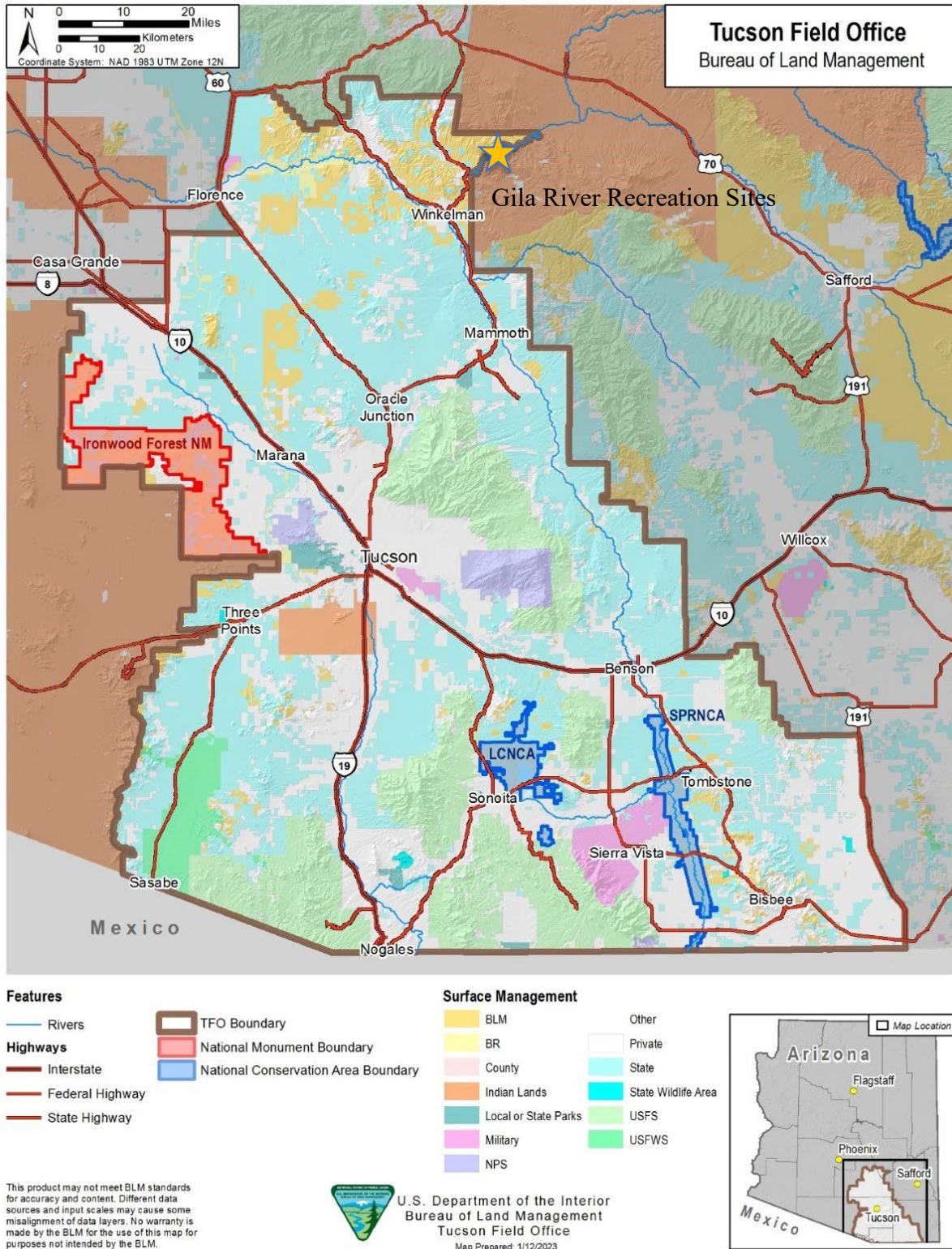


Figure 1: Map of the Entire Tucson Field Office

3.3 Visitor Demographics

The BLM Tucson Field Office conducted visitor satisfaction surveys for LCNCA and SPRNCA (WSU, 2017 and 2018).

The SPRNCA Visitor Survey was completed in 2017. The survey found:

- The division of gender of visitors was about 50% male and 50% female.
- The most common age of respondents was between 51-60 years old. The most common age group was adults, though visitors from all ages were represented.
- 59% of respondents were from Arizona. 31% respondents were from Cochise County.

The LCNCA Visitor Survey was completed in 2018. The survey found:

- The division of gender of visitors was about 66% male and 34% female.
- The most common age of respondents was between 31-40 years old. The most common age group was adults, though visitors from all ages were represented.
- 71% of respondents were from Arizona. Most respondents were from Pima and Cochise counties.

The BLM Visitor Surveys did not report socioeconomic, race/ethnicity or individuals with disabilities data. The Coronado National Forest (CNF), a close neighbor with similar recreation and visitor qualities, conducted a separate visitor satisfaction survey in 2017 (U.S. Forest Service, 2017). The 2017 CNF Visitor Use Report offered demographic samples of the general area surrounding the LCNCA and SPRNCA. The survey found:

- The division of gender of visitors was about 55.2% male and 44.8% female.
- The most common age of respondents was just between 60-69 years old. The most common age group was adults, though visitors from all ages were represented.
- 21.7% of visitors came from within 50 miles of the recreation sites.
- The most common race/ethnic groups represented was White at 94.6% with 12.3% being ethnically Hispanic.
- The most socio-economic group recreating around the CNF had an income level of \$25,000 to \$49,999.
- 5.4% of visitors surveyed identified as having a disability.

The Tonto National Forest (TNF), a close neighbor with similar recreation and visitor qualities, conducted a visitor satisfaction survey in 2016 (U.S. Forest Service, 2016). The 2016 TNF Visitor Use Report offers a demographic sample of the general area surrounding the Gila River Recreation Sites and IFNM. The survey found:

- The division of gender of visitors was about 64.2% male and 35.8% female.
- The most common age of respondents was just between 20-29 years old. The most common age group was adults, though visitors from all ages were represented.
- 74.2% of visitors came from within 50 miles of the recreation sites.
- The most common race/ethnic groups represented was White at 96.8% with 13.1% being ethnically Hispanic.
- The most socio-economic group recreating around the TNF had an income level of \$50,000-\$74,999.
- 7.3% of visitors surveyed identified as having a disability.

Through the establishment and increase of fees TFO can reinvest the monies collected to support the maintenance and enhancement of amenities, improve accessibility features, and protect sensitive habitat. In doing so we ensure a high-quality, inclusive visitor experience and sustainable management of our recreational areas, aligning with the preferences for developed recreation identified in the surveys.

3.4 Partnerships and Volunteers

BLM seeks engagement and partnerships with local stakeholders to accomplish mutual objectives for public access and recreation. To do this, TFO currently has three friends groups, which include the Friends of the Ironwood Forest, Friends of the San Pedro River, and Empire Ranch Foundation. The friends groups assist the TFO in a variety of ways, including providing volunteers for project work, monitoring lands, assisting with recreational planning efforts, developing and paying for interpretive displays, and giving educational programs.

Through the partnerships with friends groups, TFO is able to accomplish a substantial amount of volunteer-based projects. In 2023 alone, the friends groups provided over 30,000 hours of volunteer work on BLM lands with over 400 volunteers donating their time.

The TFO manages a site host program at the SPRNCA and LCNCA. The site hosts perform diverse tasks, including but not limited to visitor engagement and education, trash cleanup and site maintenance.

TFO also manages an Adopt a Trail program that assists with volunteer recruitment and retention for a large portion of TFO's trails program. These partners assist with monitoring trail conditions and conducting trail maintenance as needed. In addition, the Arizona Trail Association provides much of the monitoring and maintenance of the Arizona Trail that passes through BLM lands via its trail steward program. The TFO has an assistance agreement with this group to achieve management goals of the trail in its entirety.

By increasing fees, the TFO can further support these invaluable programs. The additional revenue will enable TFO to provide better resources and tools for volunteers, enhance training and educational programs, and support more substantial project work. This will ensure that the collaborative efforts of friends groups, site hosts, and trail adopters are maximized, leading to improved visitor experiences and better management of recreational areas in alignment with the goals outlined in the relevant management plans.

3.5 Applicable Management Plans Guiding TFO's Recreation Fee Program

- San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan, 2019
- Ironwood Forest National Monument Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan, 2013
- Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan and Approved Record of Decision, 2003
- Phoenix Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, 1988

4 Description of Each Existing or Proposed Fee Site/Area

4.1 Gila River Recreation Sites (SRMA): Christmas and Shores Campgrounds

Description: Christmas and Shores Campgrounds make up the Gila River Recreation Sites (Figures 2-4). This area is designated as a special recreation management area (SRMA). The GRRS sees its largest volume of visitors at the sites from fall through spring, as the weather is most pleasant for general day-use and overnight camping. Recreational use in the summer is based primarily on day-use river access for floating and swimming. Throughout the year, the average group size is 4-5 people with an average length of stay of two days, generally over weekends. The GRRS are used primarily by “local” visitors from an approximate two-hour travel radius, as opposed to out-of-state visitors.



Figure 2: Entrance to the Christmas Campground

The Gila River Recreation Site (Christmas and Shores) is one of the few locations in the Arizona Desert set aside that allows for camping along a river suitable for wild and scenic river status. The sites are developed to provide access for a variety of river-related recreation opportunities such as camping, picnicking, swimming, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, fishing, and small craft floating (Figures 5-6). The site has gravel surfaced driveways, moderately improved campsites with picnic tables, fire rings, and tent pads, trash collection, day-use parking, and three outhouses comprising of 6 toilets (2 per outhouse). The site is in the riparian area in mesquite-willow and cottonwood woodland, in a Sonoran Desert canyon with saguaro, mesquite and palo verde covered hills.



Figure 3: The Gila River running through the greater GRRS area.

The area surrounding the Gila River Recreation Sites provides considerable opportunities for recreational users including OHV operations, rock-climbing (Homestead climbing area), historic and geological sightseeing including rockhounding. A considerable number of historic features are in the area, including paleontological fossils from the

Mississippian period, abandoned mines and mine structures, and prehistoric peoples which adds to making this area special for those who wish to visit.

With the increase of usage in the area coupled with sensitive riparian habitat the TFO needs to implement systems to better provide for maintenance of the recreation sites and the surrounding area. Use and overcrowding has caused campsites to expand and new user created sites to be developed, which causes resource damage in this riparian corridor (Figure 3).

Considerable investment has been expended to create these recreational opportunities. However, funding is lacking for continued maintenance and further development of the sites without implementation of a fee structure. This business plan seeks to implement fees to better provide for the sustainable recreational use of these sites as well as overdue infrastructure improvements.



Figure 4: A camp unit at the Shores Campground.

The GRRS (Christmas and Shores) have been developed for day and overnight use. These sites meet FLREA standard and expanded amenity fee requirements and conditions with amenities including access roads, camp sites, group site, security presence by BLM staff, permanent trash receptacles, vault toilet restrooms, picnic tables, and fire rings. In addition, this area is designated in a resource management plan as a Special Recreation Management Area. These developments include:

- Twenty-nine tent-camping pads (16 at Shores and 13 at Christmas)
- Picnic Tables at campsites.
- Fire Rings at campsites.
- One group site (At Christmas)
- Three restroom facilities (two at Shores and one at Christmas (Vault Toilets)).
- Bear-proof trash receptacles.
- Day-use parking areas with river access
- Site and local area information /interpretive signs
- Improved site road.
- River access trails.
- Security services (law enforcement and non-law enforcement).

Activities: Camping, picnicking, swimming, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, fishing, small craft floating, typically tubing/inflatables. No developed boat launch is available at the sites; however, the day use areas are positioned to utilize a sand bar that accesses the river for launching.

Location: The GRRS are located along the 9-mile section of the Gila River and SR 77 between the Town of Winkelman and Globe in Gila County, AZ, approximately 70 miles north of Tucson and 100 miles southeast of Phoenix (Figures 8-9). The Gila River Recreation Sites are

approximately 3.5 miles (Shores) and 6.5 miles (Christmas) Northeast of the Town of Winkelman.

Season of use: Open year-round; busiest September-March. Site has 24-hour access for campers and non-campers as space allows (First Come, First Served Principles).

Fees: None currently; See proposed fees in Section 5

Standard Amenities: Table 3 shows the standard amenities available at GRRS (FLREA 6802(f)(4)).

Table 3: Standard Amenities at GRRS

Required Amenities per 16 U.S.C. 6802(f)(4)	Christmas Day Use	Shores Day Use
Significant Opportunities for Recreation	Yes	Yes
Substantial Federal Investment	Yes	Yes
Fee Collection	Yes	Yes
Developed Parking	Yes	Yes
Interpretive Signage	Yes	Yes
Picnic Tables	Yes	Yes
Security Services	Yes	Yes
Refuse Containers	Yes	Yes
Toilet Facilities	Yes	Yes

Expanded Amenities: Table 4 shows the expanded amenities available at GRRS (FLREA 6802(g)(2)).

Table 4: Expanded Amenities at GRRS

Required Amenities per 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A)	Christmas Campground	Shores Campground
Tent or Trailer Spaces	Yes	Yes
Picnic Tables	Yes	Yes
Drinking Water	No	No
Access Roads	Yes	Yes
Collection of Fee by Employee or Agent	Yes	Yes
Reasonable Visitor Protection	Yes	Yes
Refuse Containers	Yes	Yes
Toilet Facilities	Yes	Yes
Group Site	Yes	No
Simple Devices for Containing Campfires	Yes	Yes

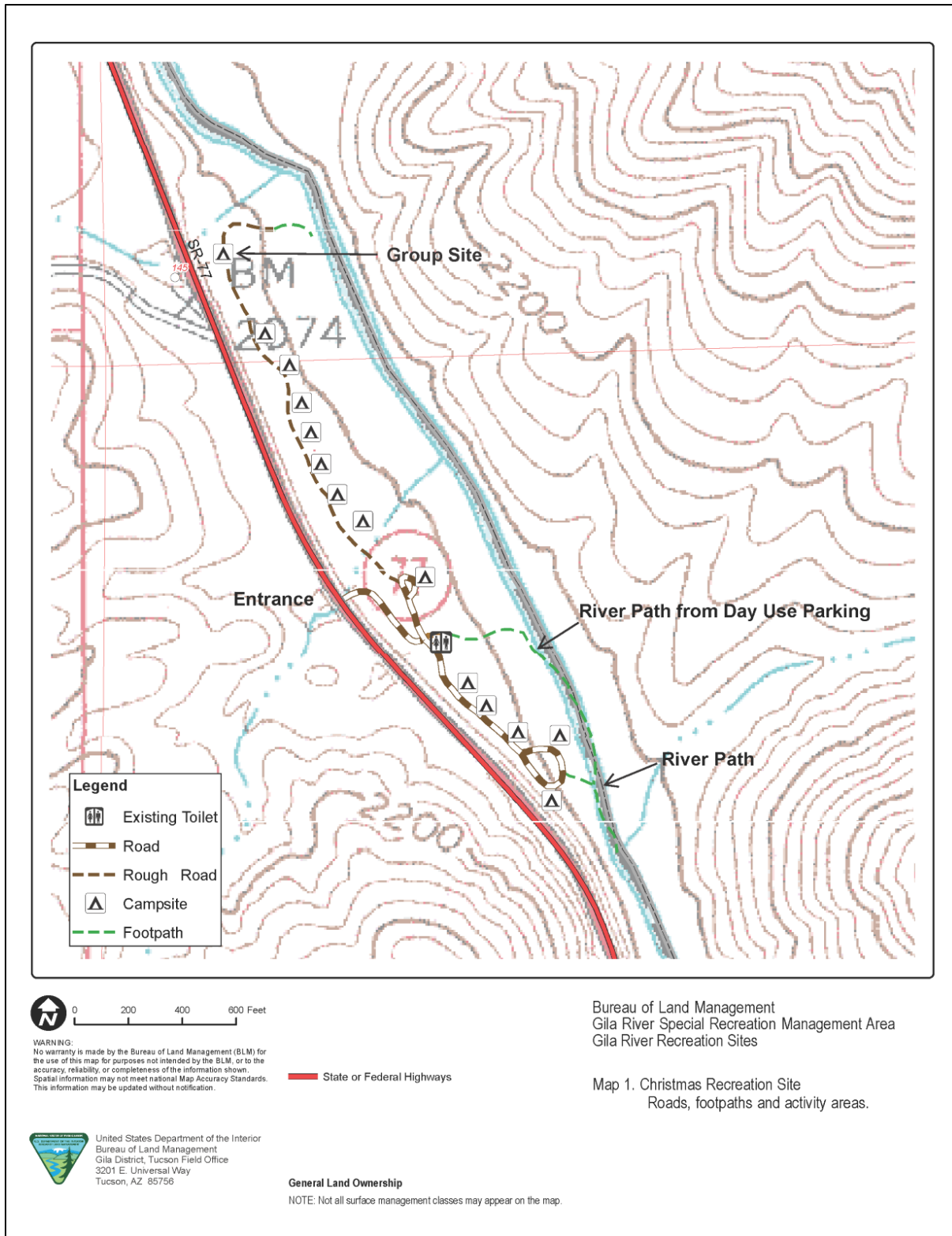


Figure 5: Site map of GRRS-Christmas Recreation Site.

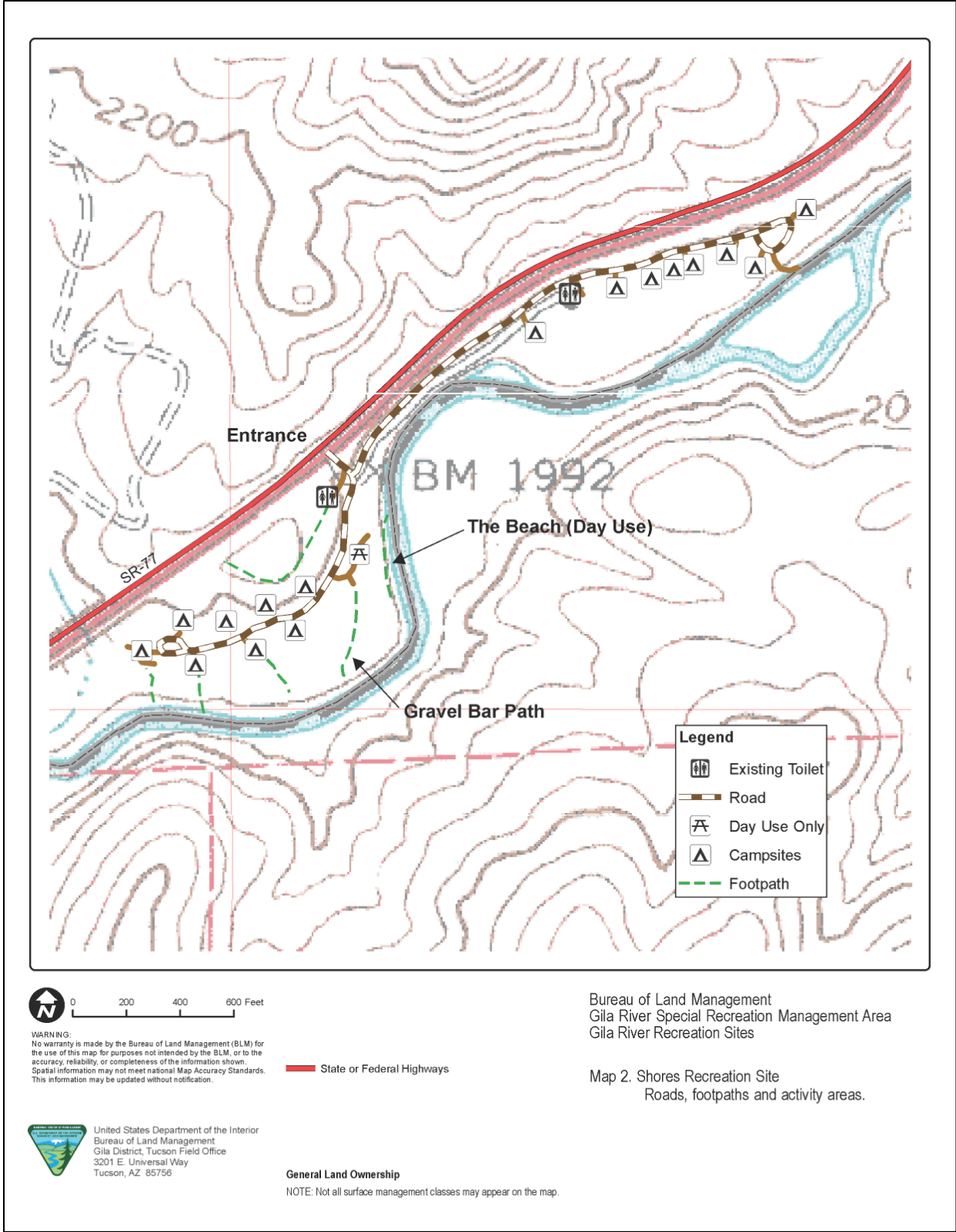


Figure 6: Site Map of GRRS-Shores Recreation Site.

4.2 Ironwood Forest National Monument



Figure 7: View of sunset near Ragged Top.

Description: The 129,000-acre Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM) is a designated Special Area and contains a significant system of cultural and historical sites covering a 5,000-year period. The monument possesses one of the richest stands of ironwood trees in the Sonoran Desert, and also encompasses several desert mountain ranges including the Silver Bell, Waterman, and Sawtooth, with desert valleys in between (Figure 7).

With elevation ranging from 1,800 to 4,261 feet, the IFNM provides an abundance of habitats for a variety of desert dwellers including the only native desert bighorn herd in southern Arizona. Three areas within the monument, the Los Robles Archeological District, the Mission of Santa Ana del Chiquiburitac and the Cocoraque Butte Archeological District are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The IFNM provides recreational hiking trails such as the Ragged Top trail, Waterman trail, and Elephant Tree trail. In addition, the area features interpretive opportunities, such as the Titan Missile Intrepretive Site. This site is under military withdrawal and is co-managed between the BLM and U.S. Air Force (Davis-Monthan Air Force Base). The area includes a fully developed interpretive site with ADA parking, interpretive signage, and a short interpretive trail around the site. TFO also manages historic sightseeing locations such as the Silverbell cemetery, Mission of Santa Ana del Chiquiburitac, and Cocoraque Butte (Figure 8). There are additional plans for implementation to create developed picnic areas at the



Figure 8: View from Cocoraque Butte with petroglyphs.

Waterman Site and Ragged Top trailhead, as well as future development at the Pump Station camping area to protect resources from damage.

IFNM meets FLREA requirements for Individual Special Recreation Permits (ISRPs) (i.e., private, noncommercial) for recreation use in Special Areas (16 U.S.C. 6802(h)). As a Special Area, the Authorized Officer may determine that resources need to be protected by special management and control measures and that a permit system for individual use would achieve management objectives. To achieve management goals in the respective resource management plans, the ISRP would be required in the specific areas (See Appendix 1) that have seen considerable visitation growth and subsequent resource damage. This will help track usage as well as recreational density to better manage the recreational opportunities and limit the potential for resource damage.



Figure 9: ATV users on designated routes in the IFNM.

Activities: Camping, picnicking, sightseeing, wildlife viewing, hiking, hunting, biking, OHV use (Figure 9), and equestrian use.

Location: The Ironwood Forest National Monument is located 25 miles northwest of Tucson, and about one hour by highway south of Phoenix (Figure 10). There are two main points of entry: Interstate 10 at Avra Valley Road, and Interstate 10 from the Red Rock exit, southwest on Sasco Road to Silverbell Road.

Season of use: Open year-round; busiest September-March.

Fees: None currently; See proposed fees in section 5

Individual Special Recreation Permit: Table 5 shows amenities provided at IFNM. While no amenities are required to implement an ISRP, the IFNM does provide some and has plans to improve/expand on these amenities once recreation fees are established (16 U.S.C. 6802(h)).

Table 5: Amenities Provided at IFNM

*Amenities Provided	IFNM
Tent or trailer spaces	Yes
Picnic tables	Future planned
Drinking water	No
Access roads	Yes
Fee collection by employee or agent	Yes
Reasonable visitor protection	Yes
Refuse containers	Future planned
Toilet facilities	Future planned
Group site	Yes
Simple devices for containing campfires	Future planned

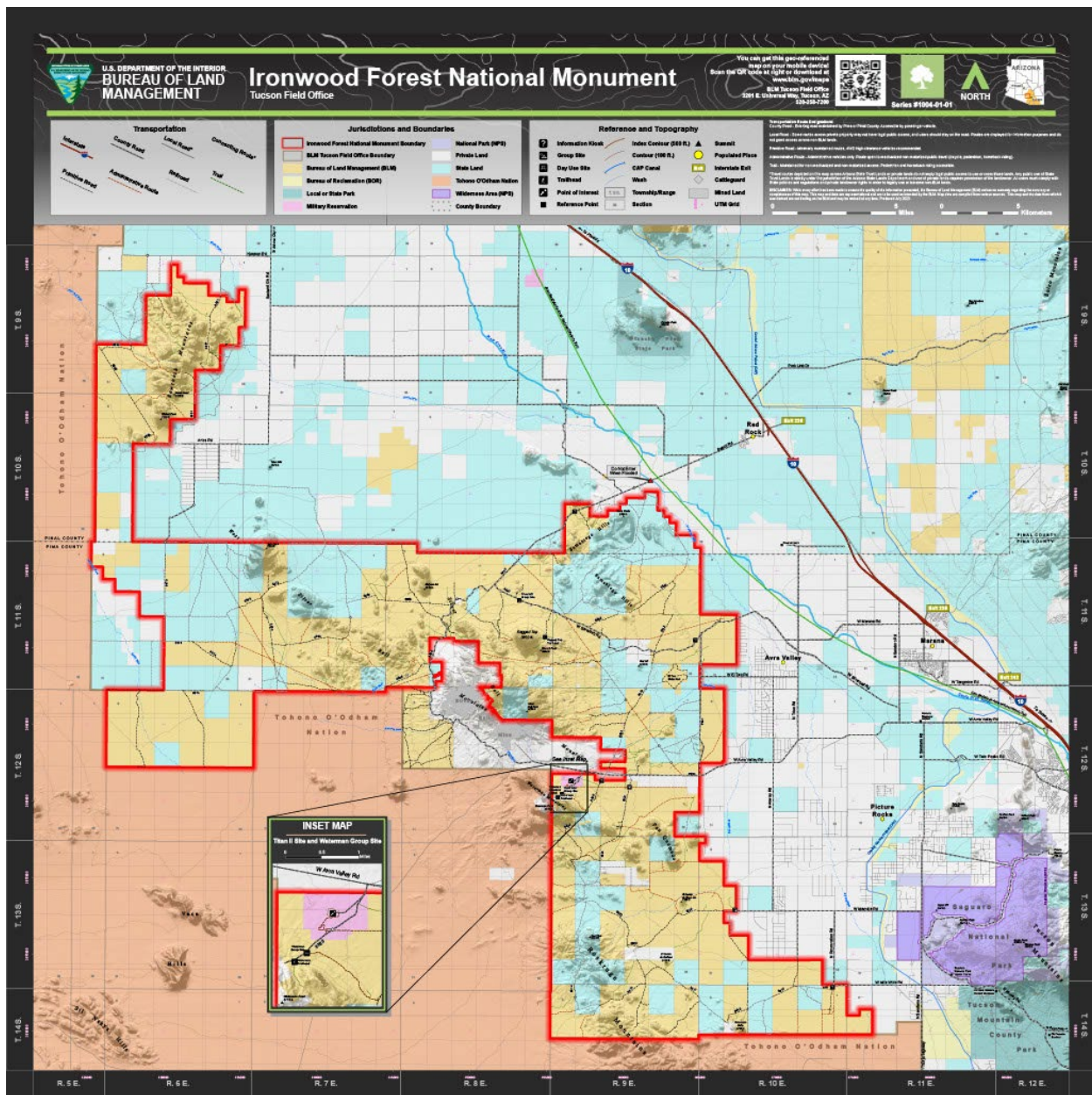


Figure 10: Map of IFNM-IFNM lands only fall within the red boundary and all BLM lands outside of that boundary are not subject to this proposal.

4.3 Las Cienegas National Conservation Area



Figure 11: View of the rolling desert grasslands of the LCNCA.

Description: The 45,000-acre Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA) (Figure 11) connects “Sky Island” mountain ranges, and Cienega creek supports a diverse plant and animal community including desert grasslands and mesquite bosques. The LCNCA also provides excellent wildlife viewing for pronghorn, deer, and native fish species in Cienega Creek and several TFO managed ponds.



Figure 12: View of the Empire Ranch

The most popular attraction within the LCNCA is the historic Empire Ranch Headquarters. The historic Empire Ranch remains a working cattle ranch, complete with the enchanting old headquarters, now operating under an innovative rangeland management style unique to the area. The Empire Ranch House is a 22-room adobe and wood frame building, which dates to 1870 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Figure 12). The ranch house provides an immersive experience through

interpretation of the site and surrounding landscape’s history. The Empire Ranch Headquarters area sits on 125 acres and includes a visitor contact station, vault toilets, an interpretive hiking trail, potable water, and interpretive displays throughout the headquarters. The site sits on a knoll surrounded by high desert grasslands that create excellent habitat for pronghorn herds.

Empire Ranch:

- Visitor Contact Station and Interpretive Center
- Interpretive heritage trail
- Potable water
- Developed parking
- One ADA-compliant restroom facility (Vault Toilets)
- Trash receptacles
- Benches and picnic tables
- Full-time site host
- Improved site road
- Interpretive programs (docent tours)
- Security services (law enforcement and non-law enforcement)
- Youth programming including Junior Ranger Program and Agents of Discovery

Other popular sites include the Airstrip, Ag Field, Maternity Well Group Sites, the Cieneguita Camp Area, and the Airstrip Day Use Area. The group sites include a very large area with the ability to accommodate groups up to 500 people and 30 vehicles. The Airstrip Group Site has a vault toilet, equestrian water station, and lockable gate for exclusive uses when required. Future development plans for the group sites include adding shade structures, picnic tables, fire rings at all group sites, vault toilets, and lockable gates at the Ag Field and Maternity well group sites. These plans are currently in development and are intended to be complete around or soon after the approval of this business plan.

Group Sites:

- Site and local area information/interpretive signs
- Improved site road
- Secured access through locked gate
- Non-potable water
- One restroom facility (vault toilet)
- Picnic table
- Fire ring
- Shade structure
- Security services (law enforcement and non-law enforcement)

The Cieneguita Camp Area currently has the capacity of 10 large campsites with no amenities. However, TFO has started planning to expand the site for upward of 50 camp units, adding a vault toilet, site host unit, and site trail. Many of these amenities have been approved for development and are expected to start being constructed soon after the approval of the business plan.

The Airstrip Day Use Area is a day use parking area that currently contains a vault toilet. However, additional site improvements are underway. The TFO will be adding a trailhead with access to approximately 12 miles of non-motorized trail with construction starting in fall of 2024, as well as developing a day use picnic area which will include ADA access in the following phase of the project. Parking areas will be further developed to accommodate day-use only traffic (Figure 13).

The LCNCA meets FLREA standard and expanded amenity fee requirements and conditions with amenities including access roads, camp sites, group sites, security presence by BLM staff, permanent trash receptacles, vault toilet restrooms, picnic tables, fire rings, and drinking water.

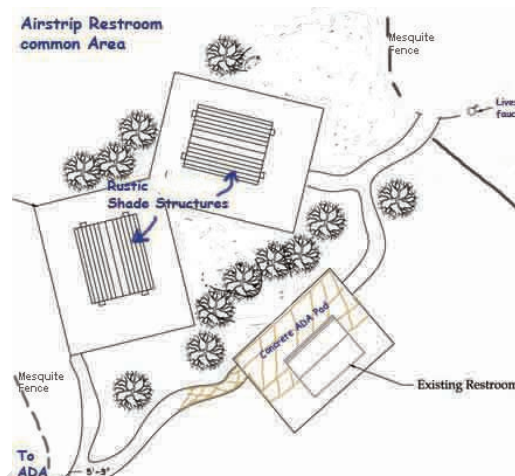


Figure 13: Future Airstrip Day Use Site diagram.

The LCNCA meets FLREA requirements for Individual Special Recreation Permits (ISRPs) for individuals (i.e., private, noncommercial) for recreation use in Special Areas. The LCNCA was created through Congressional Designation via Public law 106-538 on December 6, 2000. As a Special Area, the Authorized Officer may determine that resources need to be protected by special management and control measures and that a permit system for individual use would achieve management objectives. The ISRP will be required in the specific areas (see Appendix 2) that have seen considerable visitation growth and subsequent resource damage to achieve management goals in the respective resource management plans. This will help track usage as well as recreational density to better manage the recreational opportunities as well as limit the potential for resource damage.

Activities: Camping, picnicking, off-roading, sightseeing, hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, horseback riding, bicycling, interpretation.

Location: East of SR 83 between Tucson and Sonoita in Pima County, Arizona (Figure 14). Las Cienegas is located 45 miles southeast of Tucson, Arizona.

Season of use: Open year-round; busiest September-March.

Fees: None currently; See fee proposal in section 5.

Standard Amenities: Table 6 shows Standard Amenities at the LCNCA (FLREA 6802(f) (FLREA 6802 (f)(4):

Table 6: Standard Amenities at LCNCA

*Required Amenities per 16 U.S.C. 6802(f)(4)	Empire Ranch	Airstrip Day Use
Significant Opportunities for Recreation	Yes	Yes
Substantial Federal Investment	Yes	Yes
Fee Collection	Yes	Yes
Developed Parking	Yes	Yes
Interpretive Signage	Yes	Yes
Picnic Tables	Yes	Planned
Security Services	Yes	Yes
Refuse Containers	Yes	Planned
Toilet Facilities	Yes	Yes

Expanded Amenities: Table 7 shows the expanded amenities available at LCNCA (FLREA 6802(g)(2)).

Table 7: Expanded Amenities at LCNCA

Required Amenities per 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(A) (majority of)	Airstrip	Ag Field	Maternity Well
Tent or Trailer Spaces	Yes	Yes	Yes
Picnic Tables	Planned	Planned	Planned
Drinking Water	Equestrian Only	No	No
Access Roads	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fee Collection by Employee or Agent	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reasonable Visitor Protection	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refuse Containers	Yes	Planned	Planned
Toilet Facilities	Yes	Planned	Planned
Group Site	Yes	Yes	Yes
Simple Devices for Containing Campfires	Yes	Yes	Yes

Individual Special Recreation Permit Fee (ISRP): Table 8 shows the additional amenities available at LCNCA. While no amenities are required to implement an ISRP, the LCNCA does provide some with plans to improve/expand on these amenities once recreation fees are established. Additionally, the Cieneguita Camp Area will fall under this section with additional future plans to further develop camping areas at Oak Tree Canyon and Road Canyon. (FLREA 6802(h)):

Table 8: Additional Amenities Provided at LCNCA

*Amenities provided	LCNCA
Tent or Trailer Spaces	Yes
Picnic Tables	Future planned
Drinking Water	Future Planned
Access Roads	Yes
Fee Collection by Employee or Agent	Yes
Reasonable Visitor Protection	Yes
Refuse Containers	Future Planned
Toilet Facilities	Future Planned
Group Site	See Group Sites
Simple Devices for Containing Campfires	Yes

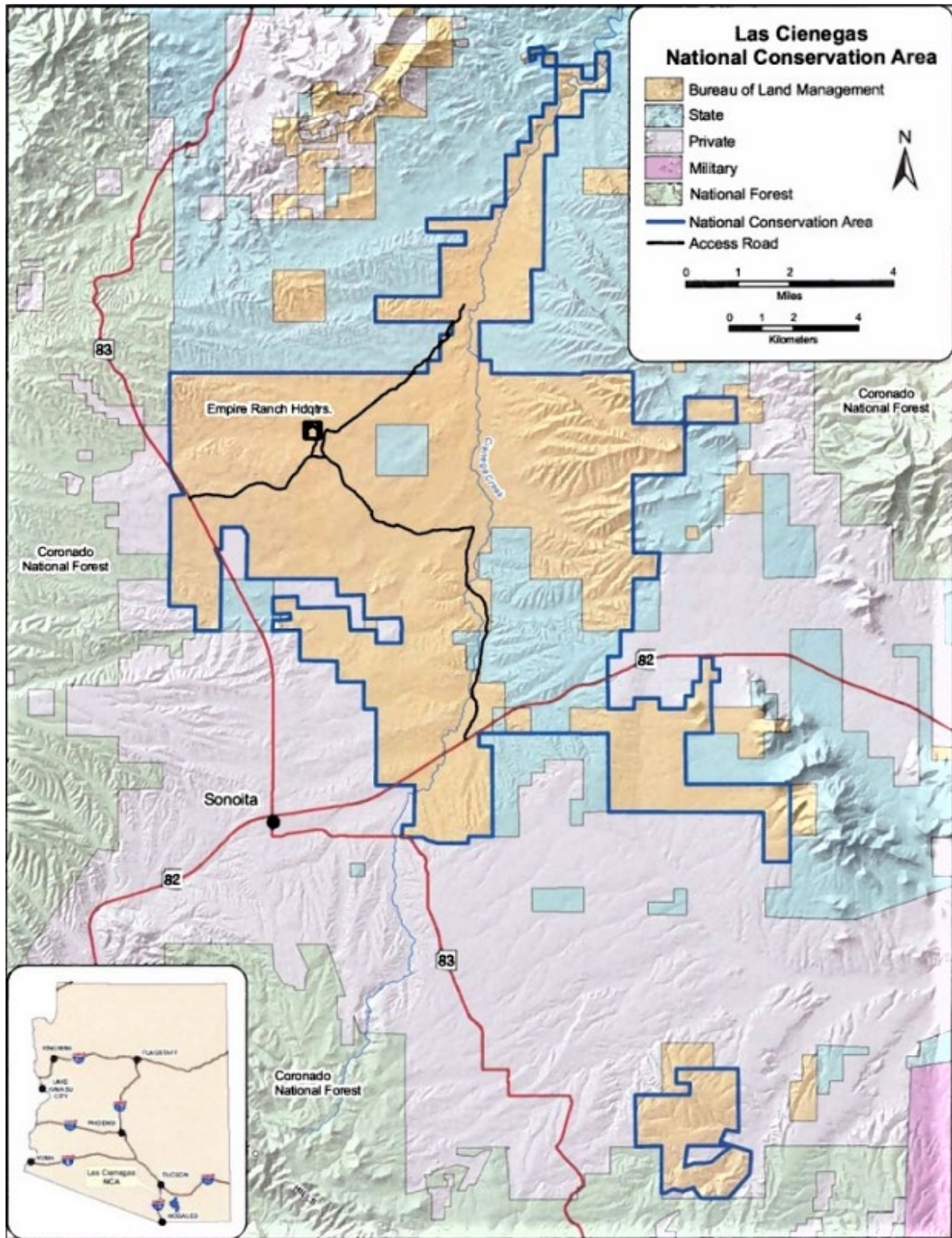


Figure 14: Map of LCNCA-LCNCA lands only fall within the blue boundary and all BLM lands outside of that boundary are not subject to this proposal.

4.4 San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area



Figure 15: View of the San Pedro River Corridor.

Description: The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) encompasses 40 miles of lush riparian corridor and 56,183 acres managed by the BLM Tucson Field Office (Figure 15). Many recreational opportunities are available within the SPRNCA. Three of the most popular sites are: the Spanish Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate, the San Pedro House, and the Fairbank Historic Townsite. The SPRNCA Backcountry Permit System (ISRP) allows visitors the unique opportunity to camp in solitude along the San Pedro River. The permit allows for camping anywhere in the backcountry. The BLM also has developed primitive first come, first served camp units in the backcountry which include a vault toilet. While the Miller Backcountry is the only developed backcountry site, backcountry camping is allowed throughout the SPRNCA outside of day-use sites with an ISRP and is first come, first served.

The Spanish Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate is the most intact remaining example of a once-extensive network of similar presidios. These fortresses marked the northern extension of New Spain into the New World. Only a stone foundation and a few remaining adobe wall remnants mark the location of this isolated and dangerous military station. To reach the site, from Fairbank on Arizona Route 82, visitors drive approximately 2 miles west on Route 82, turn right on the Kellar Ranch Road and travel approximately 3 miles to the trailhead. It is a 2-mile hike to the ruins and interpretive displays.

The San Pedro House, located 9 miles east of Sierra Vista on Arizona Route 90, is a popular trailhead for birdwatchers, hikers, and mountain bikers. Today this area includes the San Pedro Trailhead with parking for cars and trailer towing vehicles, a Visitor Contact Station in the refurbished historic Ranch House, a picnic area, a multi-purpose ramada classroom, demonstration gardens, and trails to the San Pedro River for viewing wildlife in the riparian corridor under the cottonwood-willow canopy trees, mesquite woodlands, sacaton fields, wetland and aquatic habitat in both the Kingfisher Pond and Phoebe Pond (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Wildlife pond near the San Pedro House

The Fairbank Historic Townsite developed after 1881 during the Tombstone-Bisbee mining boom days when the railroad reaching the area was connected to El Paso, Tombstone, Millville, Bisbee, west to the Calabazas in the Patagonia-Nogales area, and even further west to Tucson, Yuma, and the west coast (Figure 17).

Around 1882 the Fairbank area was a transportation hub with a population of about 15,000; commercial and residential buildings and small farms nearby along the San Pedro River played a key role in the local area's history.



Figure 17: Historic mercantile building at the Fairbank Townsite

Today this area includes the Fairbank Trailhead with parking for cars and trailer vehicles, a Visitor Contact Station in the historic Fairbank School House, operated in cooperation with the Friends of San Pedro River, and several historic buildings along the historic Railroad Avenue including the Mercantile Building which operated until the early 1970's. Near Fairbank is the San Pedro River and beautiful examples of riparian and mesquite woodland, as well as the historic Fairbank Cemetery, and the historic Grand Central Mill north of town. The Fairbank historic town and San Pedro River corridor became part of the National Conservation Area (NCA) in 1998.

The SPRNCA exceeds all FLREA standard amenity fee requirements and conditions with amenities including developed parking, security presence by BLM staff, permanent trash receptacles, vault toilet restrooms, picnic tables, interpretation/education, cooking grills, shade structures, and drinking water.

The SPRNCA has been developed for day-use (San Pedro House, Murray Springs, Millville, Terranate, Fairbank Historic Townsite, Hereford, Palominas) and overnight-use (Miller Backcountry Camp/ unit-wide outside of day-use areas). These developments include:

- Two Visitor Contact Station and Interpretive Center (San Pedro House and Fairbank)
- Interpretive trail systems (32 miles)
- Potable water
- Eight developed parking areas
- Two ADA-compliant restroom facilities (vault toilets)
- Four other restroom facilities (vault toilets)
- Trash receptacles
- Benches and picnic tables
- Two full-time site host (San Pedro House and Fairbank)
- Improved site roads
- Site and local area information /interpretive signs
- Interpretive programs (docent tours)
- Fire ring
- Shade structure
- Security services (law enforcement and non-law enforcement)
- Youth programming including Junior Ranger Program and Agents of Discovery

The SPRNCA Backcountry Permit System (ISRP) allows visitors the unique opportunity to camp in solitude along the San Pedro River. The permit allows for camping anywhere in the backcountry, but the BLM has also developed primitive camp units in the backcountry which includes a vault toilet; these sites are available on a first come, first served basis. The system was implemented in 1989 per the resource management plan and was intended to 1) help protect the sensitive nature of the area and 2) serve as a safety measure to account for members of the public doing backcountry camping.

SPRNCA meets FLREA requirements for Individual Special Recreation Permits (ISRPs) (i.e., private, noncommercial) recreation use in Special Areas. The SPRNCA was created through Congressional Designation via Public law 100-696 on November 18, 1988. As a Special Area, the Authorized Officer may determine that resources need to be protected by special management and control measures and that a permit system for individual use would achieve management objectives. To achieve management goals in the respective management plans, the ISRP will be required in the specific areas (See Appendix 3) that have seen considerable visitation growth and subsequent resource damage. This will help track usage as well as recreational density to better manage the recreational opportunities as well as limit the potential for resource damage.

Activities: Backcountry camping, picnicking, sightseeing, hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, interpretation

Location: The San Pedro House is located 9 miles East of Sierra Vista on SR 90 and is the most popular destination in the unit, however, there are several access points to the SPRNCA along the 40-mile San Pedro River corridor between greater Sierra Vista area and the greater Tombstone/Bisbee area in Cochise County, Arizona (Figure 18).

Season of use: Open year-round; busiest September-March.

Fees: \$2 per person per night backcountry camping fee. See proposed fees in section 5.

Standard Amenities: Table 9 shows the existing and planned Standard Amenity (FLREA 6802 (f)(4)(D)).

Table 9: Standard Amenities at SPRNCA

*Required Amenities per 16 U.S.C. 6802(f)(4)(D)	San Pedro House	Millville	Terranate	Palominas	Hereford	Fairbank	Murray Springs
Significant Opportunities for Recreation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Substantial Federal Investment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fee Collection	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Developed Parking	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interpretive Signage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Planned	Yes	Yes	Yes
Picnic Tables	Yes	Planned	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Security Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refuse Containers	Yes	Planned	Planned	Yes	Yes	Yes	Planned
Toilet Facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Special Recreation Permit Fee (ISRP): (FLREA 6802 (h)) Table 10 shows the additional amenities available at SPRNCA. While no amenities are required to implement an ISRP, the SPRNCA does provide some with plans to improve/expand on these amenities once recreation fees are established.

Table 10: Additional Amenities and Services at SPRNCA

*Amenities provided	SPRNCA
Tent or Trailer Spaces	Yes
Picnic Tables	Yes
Drinking Water	Yes
Access Roads	Yes
Fee Collection by Employee or Agent	Yes - \$2 per person per night backcountry camping fee
Reasonable Visitor Protection	Yes
Refuse Containers	Yes
Toilet Facilities	Yes
Group Site	No
Simple Devices for Containing Campfires	Yes

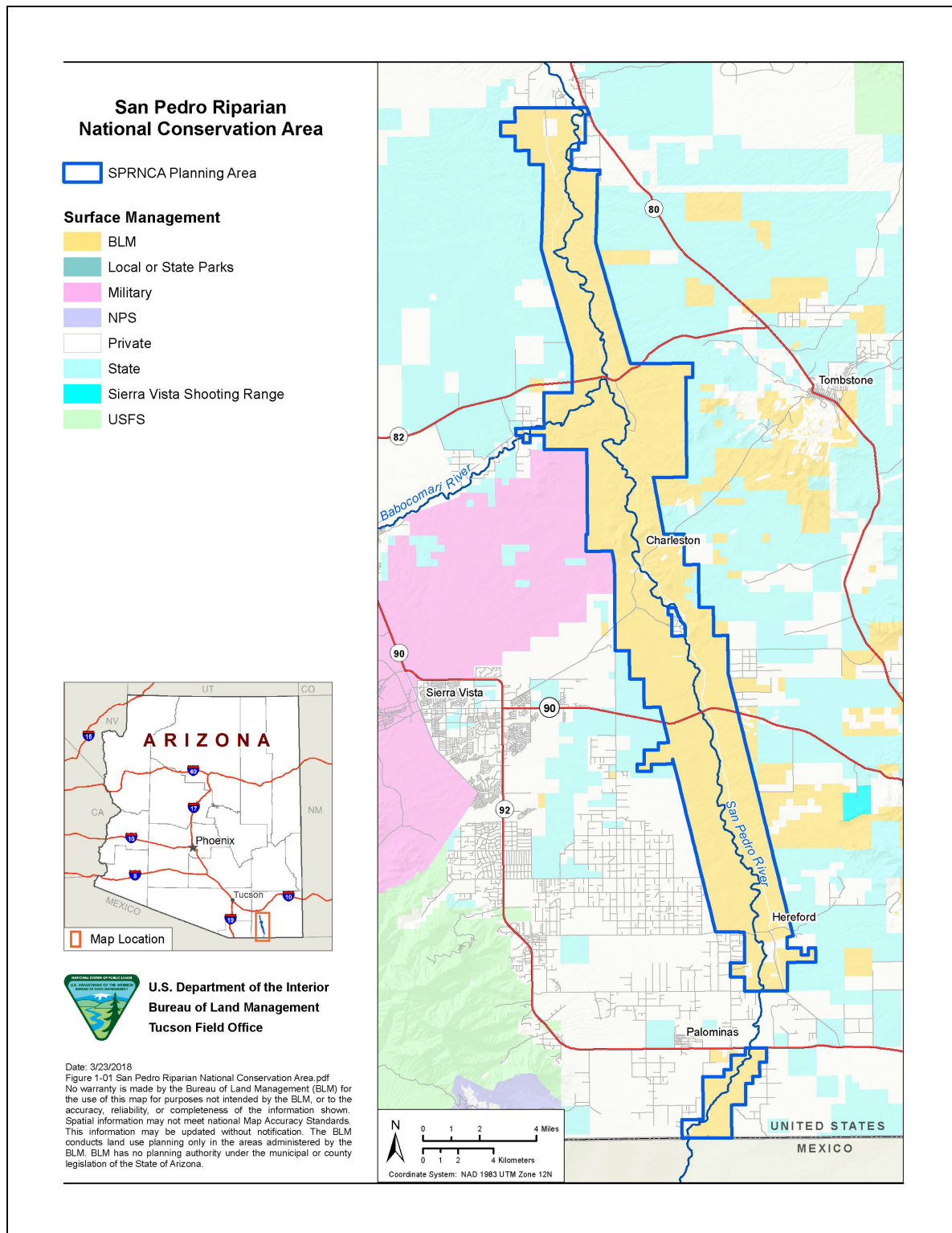


Figure 18: Map of SPRNCA-SPRNCA lands only fall within the blue boundary and all BLM lands outside of that boundary are not subject to this proposal.

5 Proposed Modifications to Recreation Fee Rates

The TFO proposes to establish standard amenity, expanded amenity, and ISRP fees at four recreation sites (GRRS, LCNCA, IFNM, and SPRNCA) and to increase fees for backcountry overnight camping ISRPs within the SPRNCA. The tables below summarize the proposed modifications. Proposed fees were identified through market analysis of comparable area sites.

TFO upholds various opportunities for discounted or fee-free recreation at day-use fee sites through the America the Beautiful (ATB) Pass; site-specific annual passes, such as the Gila River Annual Pass, the Empire Annual Pass, and the San Pedro Annual Pass (analyzed in this proposal); and fee-free holidays and events. These opportunities are discussed below.

5.1 TFO Recreation Fee Proposals

5.1.1 Gila River Recreation Site (GRRS), Christmas and Shore Campgrounds, Fee Establishment Proposal

Table 11: GRRS, Christmas and Shores Campgrounds, Fee Establishment Proposal

Service	FLREA Authority	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Day Use Standard Amenity (per vehicle)	6802(f)(4)(D)	\$0	\$7
Site-Specific Agency Annual Pass (Gila River Pass) (day use only)	6804(c)	\$0	\$40
Camping Expanded Amenity (per site per night)	6802(g)(2)(A)	\$0	\$10
Group Site 1-50 people Expanded Amenity (per day or night)	6802(g)(2)(A)	\$0	\$75
Group Site 51+ people Expanded Amenity (per day or night)	6802(g)(2)(A)	\$0	\$150

The GRRS would provide day use and camping opportunities based on the fees listed in Table 11 for both individuals and large groups as designated by BLM regulations and parameters set in this document. The campsites would be available for overnight use through the e-commerce reservation system. Unoccupied sites may be used by day users for picnicking as well.

The proposed day use fee would be valid at both Gila River Recreation Site day use areas. To accommodate frequent visitors, the TFO would offer the Gila River Annual Pass that would be honored at the recreation day use sites of GRRS. The Gila River Pass would only be valid for day uses at the site per vehicle of up to 4 people and cannot be used for overnight camping. This annual pass would be sold for \$40 and covers day use fees. This pass will be a great value for local community members who regularly visit these sites for day use access to the river.

5.1.2 Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM) Fee Establishment Proposal

Table 12: IFNM Fee Establishment Proposal

Service	FLREA Authority	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Overnight Camping ISRP (per night) (along Silverbell Loop Rd., Pump Station Rd., Ragged Top Rd., Manville Rd., and Cocoraque Rd.)	6802(h)	\$0	\$15

The IFNM would provide overnight camping in the front country areas listed in established pullouts along Silverbell Loop, Pump Station, Ragged Top, Manville, and Cocoraque Roads. Visitors will be required to obtain an ISRP for this activity. See Appendix 1 for IFNM Recreational Fee Zones.

5.1.3 Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA) Fee Establishment Proposal

Table 13: LCNCA Fee Establishment Proposal

Service	FLREA Authority	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Day Use Standard Amenity Fee (per vehicle per day) for use at both locations: -Empire Ranch Headquarters -Airstrip Day Use Site	6802(f)(4)(D)	\$0	\$10
Site-Specific Agency Annual Pass (Empire Pass) (day use only)	6804(c)	\$0	\$40
Overnight Camping ISRP (per night) -Designated ISRP Recreation Fee Zone (See LCNCA Recreation Fee Zone Map Appendix 2)	6802(h)	\$0	\$15
Developed Group Site 1-75 people Expanded Amenity Fee (Per Day or night) -Airstrip -Maternity Well -Ag Field	6802(f)(4)(D) 6802(g)(2)(A)	\$0	\$100

Service	FLREA Authority	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Developed Group Site 76+ people Expanded Amenity Fee (Per Day or night)	6802(f)(4)(D)	\$0	\$200
-Airstrip	6802(g)(2)(A)		
-Maternity Well			
-Ag Field			

The LCNCA would provide day use and camping opportunities based on the fees listed above for both individuals and large groups as designated by BLM regulations and parameters set in this document. Visitors will be required to obtain an ISRP for overnight camping throughout designated recreation zones on the LCNCA. Developed group site visitors may use the sites for exclusive use day-use activities or overnight camping of large groups and would be required to pay the associated fees regardless of day-use or overnight use. See Appendix 2 for LCNCA Recreational Fee Zones. For additional information about the recreation management zones please refer to the LCNCA Resource Management Plan available online.

The proposed day use fee would be valid for use at both the Empire Ranch Headquarters and Airstrip Day Use Site areas. To accommodate frequent visitors, the TFO would offer the Empire Annual Pass that would be honored at the recreation day use sites in the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The Empire Pass would only be valid for day use areas at the site per vehicle of up to 4 people and cannot be used for overnight camping. This annual pass would be sold for \$40 and covers day-use fees. This pass will be a great value for local community members who regularly visit these sites for day uses.

5.1.4 San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) Fee Establishment and Fee Increase Proposals:

The SPRNCA would provide day use and camping opportunities based on the fees listed in the following SPRNCA tables as designated by BLM regulations and parameters set in this document.

SPRNCA Fee Establishment Proposal:

Table 14: SPRNCA Fee Establishment Proposal

Service	FLREA Authority	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Day Use Standard Amenity (per vehicle per day)	6802(f)(4)(D)	\$0	\$10
- Millville			
- Terrenate			
- Fairbank Historic Townsite			
- San Pedro House			
- Hereford			
- Palominas			

Service	FLREA Authority	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Site-Specific Agency Annual Pass (San Pedro Pass)	6804(c)	\$0	\$40

The SPRNCA day use sites are open dawn to dusk. The day use fee would permit access to each of the day use sites listed in Table 14. To accommodate frequent visitors, the TFO would offer the San Pedro Annual Pass for recreation day use fee sites within the SPRNCA. This annual pass would be sold for \$40 and covers entrance and day use fees at these sites per vehicle of 4 people; it cannot be used for overnight camping. This pass will be a great value for local community members who regularly visit these sites for day uses.

SPRNCA Backcountry Individual Special Recreation Permit Fee (ISRP) Fee Increase Proposal:

Table 15: SPRNCA Backcountry ISRP Fee Enhancement Increase

Service	FLREA Authority	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Camping Backcountry ISRP (per person per night)	6802(h)	\$2	\$10

Visitors will continue to be required to obtain an ISRP for overnight camping throughout the SPRNCA backcountry. The ISRP also allows for parking in the day use area parking lots after hours. See Appendix 3 for SPRNCA Recreational Fee Zones. The fee increase will assist with maintaining the SPRNCA backcountry area.

The SPRNCA ISRP requires that campers be at least a half mile from any public access point including camping within day-use sites or parking areas. Camping is also restricted from occurring within any sensitive site or areas developed for other purposes, such as educational sites or administrative sites. Additionally, camping is limited to 7 days in a 21-day period, rather the typical 14 days of general BLM lands, due to the sensitivity of the resources within the SPRNCA. Currently there is one developed backcountry site called the Miller Backcountry Site for backcountry campers. Additional locations are planned to be developed when funds become available. Backcountry campers can choose to camp throughout the SPRNCA outside of day-use sites but are required to pay the same fee.

5.2 Routine Fee Adjustments

BLM’s permit and fee policy recommends the use of an index for routine fee adjustments rather than reviewing each individual adjustment through a comprehensive business plan effort that requires tremendous investment of effort and time. TFO fees have been at their current levels since 1988. In 1988 the average annual Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) was at 115.7; by 2023 it had climbed to 304.702. According to the [31TCPI Inflation Calculator](#), \$10 in January 1988 has the same buying power as \$26.82 in February 2024. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “the CPI -U is a measure of the average change over time in the price paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services” (bls.gov/cpi). The CPI-U is the broadest and most comprehensive CPI. The all-urban consumer group included in the CPI-U represents over 90 percent of the total U.S. population (<https://www.bls.gov/cpi/questions-and-answers.htm>). The BLM is seeking approval to exercise

the option to increase overnight camping, group site, and day use fees by 20% when there is a 20% increase in the CPI from the date this business plan is approved. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of January 2024 the CPI is 302.201. This option to further increase fees could occur when the CPI reaches 362.641.

The BLM is seeking approval to exercise the option to increase each fee by 20%, rounded up to the nearest half dollar, when there is a 20% increase in the CPI-U from the date this business plan is approved. This model would ensure the TFO fees evolve in tandem with the ever-changing environment of the future and increasing costs.

5.3 America the Beautiful

FLREA established an interagency National pass known as the America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass. There are six types of America the Beautiful (ATB) passes: Annual, Military, Every Kid Outdoors (4th grade), Senior, Access, and Volunteer. Any of the six ATB Passes may provide the bearer full coverage of the standard day use fee and some coverage for expanded amenity day use fees at fee sites on public lands, applicable to the GRRS, SPRNCA, and LCNCA. The camping ISRPs at LCNCA, SPRNCA, and IFNM are not subject to coverage or discount with the ATB passes and full prices will be enforced for these fees.

5.4 Indigenous, Native, and Tribal Access Rights

Within the context of this business plan, TFO currently upholds no special provisions outlined in treaties with federally recognized Tribes that grant certain rights or privileges regarding access. However, Indigenous groups may notify TFO of their intent to carry out religious ceremonies on public lands or access certain sacred sites.

5.5 E-Commerce

The BLM TFO will use various e-commerce technologies as directed by BLM policy, to provide recreation visitors opportunities to find, reserve and pay for campsites and day use within the field office. Most of these options are provided through the interagency reservation service Recreation.gov. If the BLM TFO decides to add additional reservation services of other types of e-commerce options available in the future, an expanded amenity fee for reservation services would be charged in addition to any other standard or expanded amenity fees in accordance with 16 U.S.C. 6802(g)(2)(G).

Reservation services fees could range from \$.50 to \$10.00 depending on the type of service provided. The reservation service is subject to contracting requirements and will be adjusted with contract changes or with future updates to the business plan. For visitors who wish not to pay the expanded amenity fee of reservation services, the field office will attempt to continue to provide a blend of reservation and first come-first served options until or unless the office moves the fee site/area entirely to e-commerce. Other payment options may also be considered in the future as technology and software develops, such as onsite credit card payment systems or scan and pay.

6 Operating Costs

Amenities and upkeep at the GRRS, the LCNCA, the IFNM and the SPRNCA are currently maintained with general appropriated funding. This funding is not specified for exclusive use at these sites and is allocated from the general budget for recreation costs across the field office. This funding can fluctuate from year to year which creates challenges in managing recreation across the field office.

It should be noted from 2020 to 2021 COVID-19 affected both costs and visitation at all sites. Due to performance issues, contractual services for cleaning the restrooms and picking up trash at the GRRS was terminated in 2022. No new contract for these services has been established as contract bids have exceeded the funding available for such services.

The last five years of operating costs for the recreation program are indicated in Table 16.

Table 16: Shows approximate maintenance and labor costs incurred by the TFO over the past five years. Labor costs include recreation staff, law enforcement staff, force account, and support staff.

Year	Maintenance Costs	Labor Costs	Total
2019	\$219,000	\$811,000	\$1,030,000
2020	\$161,000	\$843,000	\$1,004,000
2021	\$154,000	\$879,000	\$1,033,000
2022	\$216,000	\$916,000	\$1,132,000
2023	\$164,000	\$942,000	\$1,106,000

Currently, maintenance costs and expenditures at these sites impact TFO’s ability to provide quality services at the recreation sites across the field office. The goal is for fees collected at the sites to sustain most day-to-day operation and upkeep of the sites in this plan, plus a surplus that can be saved up to supplement appropriated funds for capital improvement projects.

7 Revenues

The SPRNCA ISRP revenue data (Table 17) is collected from the BLM’s internal budget system.

Table 17: Shows revenue brought into TFO from all sources including year-by-year carry over.

Year	ISRP Revenue	Carryover + Revenue
2019	\$4	\$4
2020	\$36	\$40
2021	\$26	\$66
2022	\$22	\$88
2023	\$16	\$104

Carryover is when the funds, whether revenue or appropriated, are carried from the last fiscal year into the new one. This table considers only one fund source related to recreation as the SPRNCA backcountry ISRP is the TFO’s only existing FLREA fee. Revenue is estimated based on use numbers at \$2 per person.

These collections cover only a percentage of the operating costs for the TFO’s recreation program, as indicated in the table in the "Operating Costs" section. An implementation of fees, and commensurate increase in revenue, is necessary to bring the management of the GRRS, LCNCA, IFNM, and SPRNCA to a more self-sustaining level.

If this business plan is approved, the TFO projects revenue to total \$956,000 across the proposed and existing sites (Table 18). Revenues will go directly to supporting the operations, maintenance, restoration, and capital improvements at the sites from which the fees are collected. These revenues will greatly help in bridging the gap to care for the sites and ensure that recreational visitors have a quality recreational experience throughout the TFO.

Table 18: Projected revenue totals for each unit based on visitation numbers to proposed fee areas.

Sites	GRRS	LCNCA	IFNM	SPRNCA	Total
Projected Full Year Revenue	\$65,000	\$348,000	\$93,000	\$450,000	\$956,000

8 Priorities for Future Expenditures

Ongoing expenditures

- Labor and supplies for facility maintenance.
- Labor for Law Enforcement patrols.
- Potable Water Permitting and regular testing.

Short-term priority expenditures

- Upgrade day use sites with additional picnic tables that are ADA compliant.

Long-term priority expenditures

- Site road improvements to accommodate larger vehicles,
- Additional camp sites with shade structures,
- Update interpretive signage,
- Upgrade day use sites,
- Improve vehicle barriers/ campsite delineation markers.
- Improve/add amenities for campers.

Planned Infrastructure Improvement with costs:

Table 19 shows current planned future expenditures for site improvements of the proposed recreation fee areas.

Table 19: Planned future expenditures for the recreation fee site areas.

Item	Description	Estimated Cost
ADA upgrades at GRRS	Update at least one site to full ADA access and improve all picnic tables and fire rings to ADA use.	\$50,000
Site road improvements	Improve site road at Shores (GRRS) and Miller Backcountry Site (SPRNCA) due to erosion issues and widen to accommodate larger vehicles	\$400,000
Site road maintenance	Lapsed maintenance for the main roads in LCNCA. Grading, shaping and drainage as needed.	\$350,000
Shade structures	Add shade structures to camp units that lack shading at GRRS, LCNCA and IFNM.	\$200,000
Camp units	Add camp capacity with additional camp units at LCNCA and IFNM.	\$500,000

Item	Description	Estimated Cost
Camp delineation	Add vehicle barriers to ensure camp compliance via boulders or post and cable at LCNCA, GRRS, and IFNM	\$100,000
Vault toilets	Add vault toilets at LCNCA and move toilet at GRRS	\$100,000
Trail work	Expand and improve trail system at SPRNCA and LCNCA	\$150,000
Interpretive signage	Refresh and improve interpretive signage at the SPRNCA and LCNCA	\$25,000
Expanded camp amenities	Add picnic tables and improve fire rings at several camping areas including the Silverbell group site, Pump Station, and Ragged Top area on IFNM.	\$50,000

9 Analysis of Recreation Fee Rates

9.1 Cost Recovery Fee Calculation Method

Visitor use at the sites continues to steadily increase, thus requiring a corresponding amount for maintenance, improvements, security, and visitor information. Overall site visitation has grown significantly over the past five years (see Tables 1 and 2), and regular annual maintenance and upkeep costs at TFO-managed sites exceeds the appropriated funds available (Table 20).

Currently there are no fees required outside of the \$2 San Pedro Riparian NCA backcountry camping fee and SRPs.² An implementation of fees, and commensurate increase in revenue, is necessary to bring the management of the GRRS, LCNCA, IFNM, and SPRNCA to more self-sustaining levels.

Table 20: Shows the disparity between revenues and costs incurred to manage the recreation program at the sites being analyzed for fee implementation and expansion.

Year	Revenue (SPRNCA)	Carryover + Revenue	Maintenance Costs	Labor Costs	Difference
2019	\$4	\$4	\$219,000	\$811,000	-\$1,029,996
2020	\$36	\$40	\$161,000	\$843,000	-\$1,003,960
2021	\$26	\$66	\$154,000	\$879,000	-\$1,032,934
2022	\$22	\$88	\$216,000	\$916,000	-\$1,131,912
2023	\$16	\$104	\$164,000	\$942,000	-\$1,105,896

² SRPs follow a separate process and are not included in the analysis of a recreation business plan.

9.2 Fair Market Value Calculation Method

This business plan uses a Fair Market Value Assessment to analyze recreation fee sites across the region with a level of development comparable to that of the GRRS LCNCA, SPRNCA, and IFNM (i.e., developed sites with amenities such as picnic tables and tent pads or restrooms) administered by federal, state, and county land management agencies as well as private sites.

The BLM TFO currently offers primarily free recreation opportunities and would continue to offer free opportunities along with the enactment of the proposed fees. FLREA requires the BLM to remain competitive within the local public and private recreation market, and the TFO is seeking to do this by enacting fees based on a market analysis with nearby opportunities at sites that contain comparable designations and/or amenities.

Market analyses of comparable local fee sites are listed in Tables 21-23.

9.2.1 Tent Camping and Day Use

Table 21: Tent Camping and Day Use Comparable Local Fee Sites

Agency	Site	Overnight	Day-Use
AZ State Parks	Catalina State Parks	\$25 per night non-electric	\$7 per vehicle
AZ State Parks	Oracle State Park (Near GRRS)	NA	\$7 per vehicle
AZ State Land Dept	Arizona Wide on all State Trust Lands. No Amenities Provided.	\$15 Annually for Individual, \$20 Annually for Families.	\$15 Annually for Individual, \$20 Annually for Families.
FS	Rose Canyon Lake	\$26 single tent site \$42 double site	\$8 per vehicle
FS	Rustler Park Campground	\$15	\$8 per vehicle
FS	Timber Camp Campground (has additional amenities near GRRS 30 miles away)	\$16	N/A
BLM	Fourmile Canyon Campground (Near GRRS)	\$5	N/A
NPS	Chiricahua National Monument	\$20	\$0

Agency	Site	Overnight	Day-Use
NPS	Saguaro National Park	\$8	\$25 per Vehicle/\$20 per Motorcycle/\$15 per person
County	Gilbert Ray Campground	\$10	N/A
City	Winkleman River Park (Near GRRS 5 miles away)	\$10 tent \$15 RV	N/A
Private	Camp Saguaro	\$25(4 max)	N/A
Private	Tucson Lazy Day KOA	\$70	N/A

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9.2.2 Group Sites

Table 22: Group Day Use Comparable Local Fee Sites

Agency	Site	Overnight
AZ State Parks	Catalina State Park	\$20 per night per vehicle
USFS	Whitetail Group Site	Up to 45 people \$125 per night, up to 60 people \$140 per night, up to 90 people \$165 per night, plus \$10 per vehicle
USFS	Gordon Hirabayashi Campground	\$50 plus \$10 per vehicle per night
USFS	Kellner Group Camp (Near GRRS)	\$75 per night up to 25 people
USFS	Rose Canyon Lake	1-50 people \$103 per night 51-90 people \$140 per night, 91+ \$162 per night
NPS	Chiricahua National Monument	\$3 per person (minimum \$24)

9.2.3 Annual Passes

Table 23: Site-Specific Annual Passes Comparable Area Fee Sites

Agency	Site	Cost
AZ State Parks	Full State Park System	\$75 non-commercial; \$200 premium non-commercial
USFS	Coronado National Forest	\$40
USFS	Tonto National Forest	\$80
NPS	Saguaro National Park	\$45
NPS	Tumacacori National Historic Park	\$35
Private	Sonoran Desert Museum	Individual \$70, Family \$159

9.2.4 Fee Satisfaction

The nearby Tonto National Forest has similar qualities to the GRRS and IFNM and can provide insight for similar services. The results from the most recent Visitor Use Report for Tonto National Forest indicate overall visitor satisfaction with the fees at those sites (Figure 19) (U.S. Forest Service, 2016).

The day use and annual fees proposed for the GRRS in this business plan (\$7 and \$40 respectively) are comparable to the passes for the same timeframe and amenities as those offered in the Tonto National Forest (\$8 and \$80 ATB pass (\$60 for ATB senior access pass)). The GRRS sites are more remote than those on the Tonto National Forest and primarily have local visitation. It is anticipated that the GRRS site-specific pass will be appealing for local visitors. In addition, the GRRS will accept the America the Beautiful Passes for day use only. The Tonto National Forest charges a comparable day use fee, but only accepts the America the Beautiful passes, which are used across federally managed recreation sites.

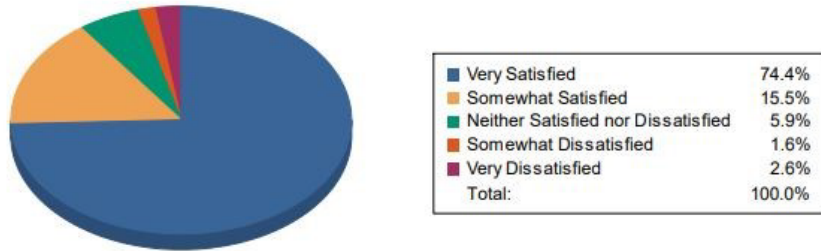


Figure 19: This pie chart summarizes the overall satisfaction with visitors to the Tonto National Forest based on the collection of 1,159 total surveys.

The Coronado National Forest is a neighbor with similar qualities to the Las Cienegas and San Pedro Riparian NCAs. The most recent Visitor Use Report for Coronado National Forest was conducted in 2017, and the results of the survey indicate overall visitor satisfaction with the fees at those sites (Figure 20) (U.S. Forest Service, 2017).

The day use and annual fees proposed for the Las Cienegas and San Pedro Riparian NCAs in this business plan (\$10 and \$40 respectively) are identical for the same timeframe and amenities as those offered in the Coronado National Forest.

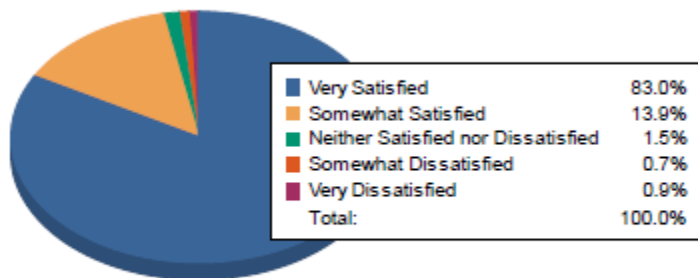


Figure 20: This pie chart summarizes the overall satisfaction with visitors to the Coronado National Forest based on the collection of 1,749 total surveys.

10 Impacts from Changing and Not Changing Recreation Fee Rates

Consistent with the Department of the Interior and BLM priorities, the BLM TFO seeks to achieve environmental justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility and make a difference in Arizona communities through expanding recreational access and opportunities and providing for natural resource interpretation.

10.1 Overall Impacts from Changing Fees

Overall impacts from changing fees include:

- Generation of revenue to be used for labor and operational needs.
- Ensure adequate staff to halt and remediate resource damage and provide the level of service the public has come to expect.
- Improve recreational opportunities and the quality of the experience and public satisfaction for visitors.
- Ability to continue operations despite potential increase of costs of goods, labor, and/or services.
- Greater fee equality with private, comparable recreation sites.
- Greater self-sufficiency for management of the recreation site.
- Preparation for the potential increase of costs of goods, labor, and/or services.
- Return visitors may find it off putting that they are now required to pay a fee with the change.
- Encourage, facilitate, and improve partnership with and access for youth, tribes, and underserved communities to public lands through recreation partnerships and collaborations.
- Improve public health and safety at developed recreation sites and areas by updating and modernizing infrastructure—including meeting accessibility standards for people with disabilities.
- Invite education, interpretation, and recreational access for all Americans, especially for diverse populations and those near urban areas to encourage enjoyment of BLM-managed public lands and waters.
- Collaborate with community members, government organizations, nonprofits, organizations, academic institutions, and other stakeholders to address environmental and health-related challenges for recreation management.
- Enhance understanding of environmental and health-related issues at the community level.
- Improve methods for identifying, addressing, tracking, and measuring progress toward achieving environmental justice.
- Develop and support youth education and outreach programs.

10.1.1 Impacts to Recreational Users

Recreational users would be required to pay a fee at the recreation sites proposed in this plan, which could affect their overall spending budget and satisfaction.

With increased demand for public land recreation, the BLM will need to improve sites to meet demand and maintain health and human safety. Should fees be established, services could

continue to be offered in the recreation program. In addition, revenues could be used to gradually improve infrastructure as part of routine upgrades and long-term projects, such as expanding site amenities like interpretive offerings and improving the roads to add capacity to better accommodate users.

As facilities age the replacement of some of the infrastructure is necessary to maintain health and human safety. In addition, revenues would be used to improve campground facilities. Substandard fire pits and picnic tables would be replaced, and amenities added such as tent pads and shade structures. Campgrounds would be constructed that meet current demand for RV and trailer camping and for those camping with groups of family and friends. Some visitor conflict around desirable site use may be reduced and/or eliminated.

10.1.2 Impacts to the Local Economy

Pinal County depends on tourism. Its location presents a crossroads between diverse recreation opportunities across the BLM, NPS, and USFS as well as major city hubs. The TFO has seen a considerable increase in visitation, which also brings increased expenditures from tourists into the tourism sectors of the Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise County economies. Local businesses benefit from increased area visitation and increased opportunity to engage in outdoor gear, and environmental education.

Moreover, the BLM sites offer important low-cost recreation. Many tourists prefer to camp at public campgrounds. Regional availability can be low when many local Forest Service campgrounds are closed between October and May. As a result, campers rely on BLM campgrounds. Many tourists would be unable to recreate in the area if not for the availability of BLM campgrounds and dispersed camping opportunities due to limited camping and lodging opportunities in the immediate vicinity. This is also true for group site campers, as many low-income and youth groups cannot afford to stay in motels. Recreation is important to the local economy to keep site infrastructure in good condition, and to service and clean facilities at a high standard.

10.1.3 Impacts to the Environment

Amenity fees enable TFO to operate the recreation program. Developed sites reduce negative impacts to resources associated with higher levels of visitation. By providing developed recreation sites for visitors, the BLM can better contain impacts to these smaller areas. Associated recreation impacts, including waste, fire, and garbage, are contained and managed properly.

It is expected that the visitor experience will improve with the addition of the campgrounds such as Cieneguita and associated fees. Construction of site improvements in the campgrounds will create new opportunities for developed camping with toilet facilities, picnic tables, metal fire rings and tent/trailer spaces. This will change the recreation setting, and the visitor experience, with more amenities as well as more management of recreation use. Phasing out undeveloped camping opportunities will likely displace visitors who do not want to camp in developed campgrounds. However, services will continue to be offered with the addition of the expanded amenity fees.

10.2 Overall Impacts from Not Changing Fees

Overall, impacts from not changing fees include:

- Loss of potential revenue in fees to augment appropriated funds for labor and operational costs.
- Potential environmental degradation of resources (Figure 21).
- Potential degradation of recreation experience and public satisfaction for current and new visitors with less funding available for aging facilities and not enough personnel to work the area potentially leading to site closures.
- Costs of goods, labor, and services increase at a faster rate than fee revenue projections.
- Favorable socio-economic impacts to low-income or minority populations.

10.2.1 Impacts to Recreational Users

Recreational users may benefit in the short-term from not implementing recreation fees, as they would not pay fees to recreate at the sites (except for the existing SPRNCA backcountry ISPR) examined in this proposal.

With this business plan, the BLM seeks to service recreators, the local economy, and public lands managed by the BLM in the long-term. BLM recreation sites are reaching an age where replacement costs of infrastructure will continue to increase. The proposed fee would be partially used to cover replacement costs of existing infrastructure. Not implementing the recreation fee would



Figure 21: Scattered trash at Shores Recreation Area.

mean that aging infrastructure would not be replaced in a timely manner to maintain site quality. It would also mean improvements to recreation sites, such as expansions or improvements to the site such as improving RV access, upgrading signage, repairing trails, and expanding developed recreation opportunities would not be added to the existing infrastructure. In addition, as maintenance and infrastructure replacement become more costly and if the BLM is unable to keep up it creates the potential for closure of the sites due to public health and safety.

10.2.2 Impacts to Local Economy

Not implementing recreation fees could reduce services like cleaning, maintenance, and staff presence at sites due to costs. This would eventually impact the recreation sector of the Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise County economy, resulting in decreased visitation to BLM sites. Visitation dollars are discretionary; people can spend their vacation dollars in many different locales. Should people be less likely to recreate at BLM sites because of poor or unmaintained facilities, the Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz, and Cochise County economies would likely suffer.

10.2.3 Impacts to the Environment

TFO developed recreation sites address the negative impacts to the environment resulting from dispersed use. Dispersed use can result in negative impacts to wildlife, riparian resources, wilderness areas, cultural resources, and enjoyment by other recreation visitors. Failure to maintain the recreation program would result in negative impacts to the environment. For example, should the BLM be unable to regularly service toilets (all routine cleaning costs are paid by the TFO appropriated funds), people would be less likely to utilize toilets and potentially damage natural or cultural resources. Additionally, recreation maintenance staff (funded entirely by appropriated funds) conduct site cleanup and weed control (Figure 22). Not implementing fees would mean such work would be reduced or stopped, resulting in negative impacts to the environment and increased likelihood of sites being closed permanently. The surrounding desert biomes, riparian areas, and grasslands along with proximity to many dispersed recreational opportunities such as OHV areas, the Arizona Trail, the Aravaipa Wilderness, and varied state parks. Should recreation facilities erode, the natural resources within the sites and surrounding areas which also include cultural and paleontological resources may erode and history lost.



Figure 22: Trash cleanup on IFNM

10.3 Socioeconomic Impacts, including Low-Income Populations

Overall, not implementing recreation fees may benefit low-income populations financially, as they would not have to pay fees for the sites examined in this proposal but would potentially experience overall degradation of the site as well as potential closure if BLM were not able to conduct routine area maintenance.

However, the presence of fees would mean local high frequency recreators are likely to purchase an Annual Pass which would help to offset the financial burden long term. In only a handful of visits to the various day use sites, day use fees could outweigh the one-time cost of an annual pass, resulting in recreators potentially paying more for recreation in the long run.

Furthermore, some group site reservations are held by groups looking for an inexpensive vacation. Should fee accounts erode such that group sites could not be maintained or serviced, the BLM might be forced to curtail group site opportunities. Failure to offer these low-cost group sites to youth groups, scout groups, family groups, and other such assemblages could have negative impacts on lower-income populations.

If TFO is unable to implement fees at these sites, then it is these sites will see continued resource damage from the impacts of high visitation with limited monies to keep up with needed maintenance as well as infrastructure improvements. This is likely to end up creating degraded recreational opportunities as well as the possible closure or demolition of developed recreational sites in order to protect sensitive resources.

Additionally, the BLM reviewed options for providing fee discounts for local residents. The FLREA (16 U.S.C. 6802(b)(1)) does not grant the authority for BLM to provide discounts or reduced recreation fees for local residents or other groups.

11 Public Outreach

TFO will initiate public notification and outreach for the fee proposal per PL 108-447 Sec. 804 (d)(4) and the BLM Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook (H-2930- 1). This includes:

- Soliciting public comments for 45 days on the draft business plan by:
 - Posting it on the [BLM Recreation Site Business Plans website](#) and [StoryMap](#);
 - Issuing news releases, posting information on social media platforms (including [BLM's social media pages](#)), and/or purchasing ads in local media outlets;
 - Posting notices at recreation fee sites and;
- Reviewing and considering public comments, revising the draft business plan as warranted, and presenting the business plan for Resource Advisory Council recommendation.
 - Including the number and content of public comments in an additional section of this business plan.
- Publishing a notice in the Federal Register for new fee sites.

FLREA only requires agencies to publish a notice in local newspapers and publications located near the proposed fee site at least six months before establishment (16 USC 6803(b)). TFO plans to reach a broader scope of visitors by using communication methods most used today.

12 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1: IFNM Recreational Fee Zones Map

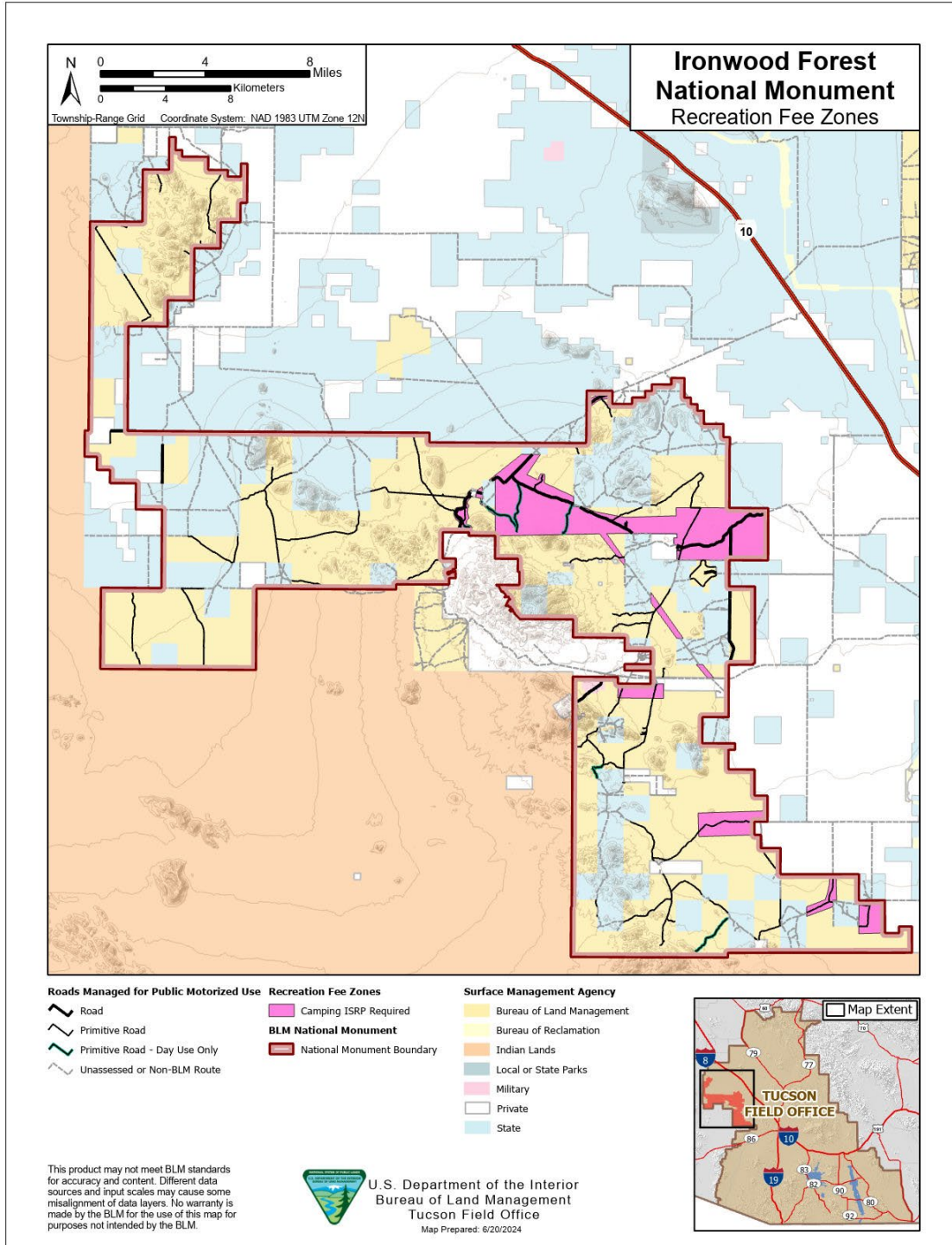


Figure 23: Map depicting fee zones for the IFNM

12.2 Appendix 2: LCNCA Recreational Fee Zones Map

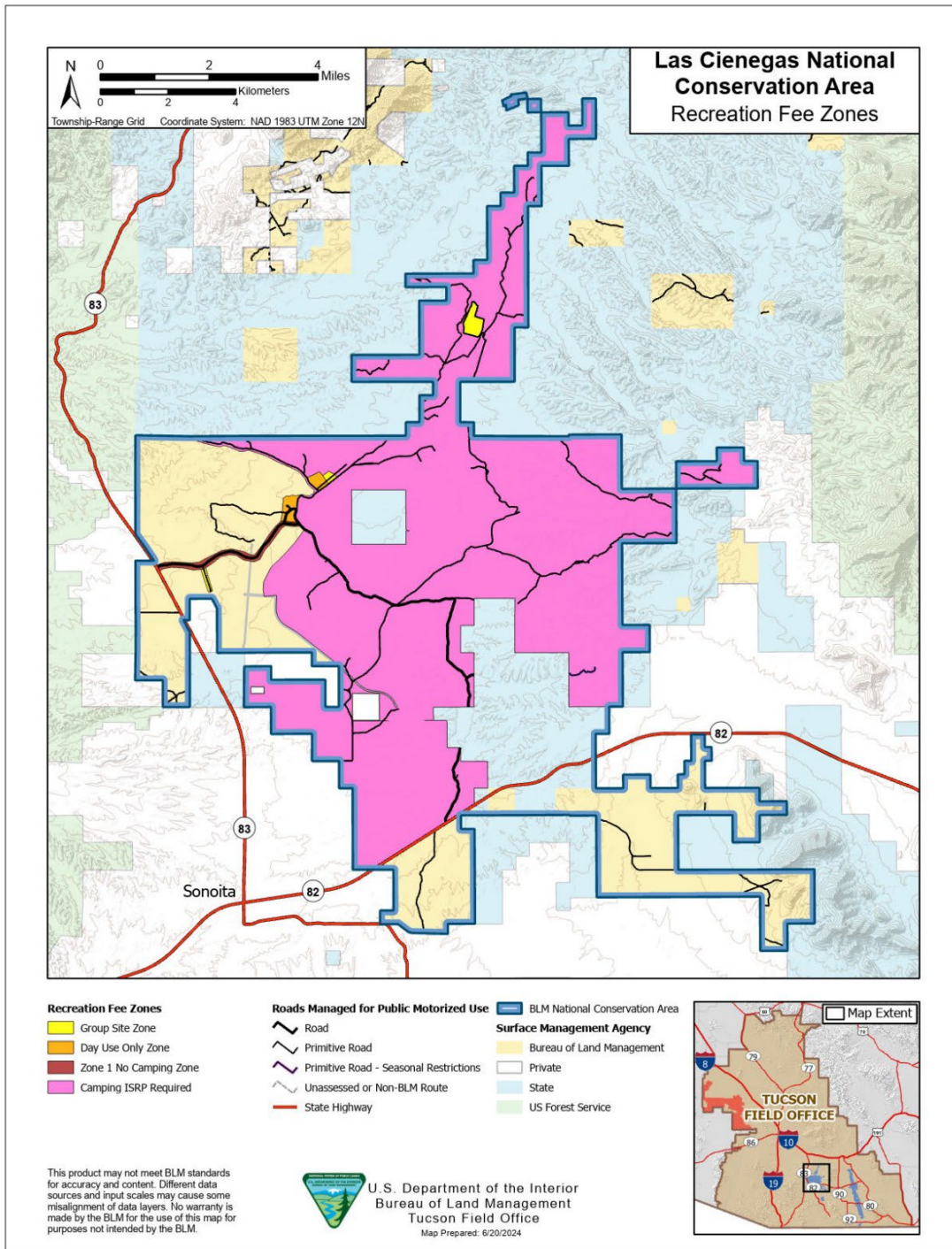


Figure 24: Map depicting the fee zones for the LCNCA

12.3 Appendix 3: SPRNCA Recreational Fee Zones Map

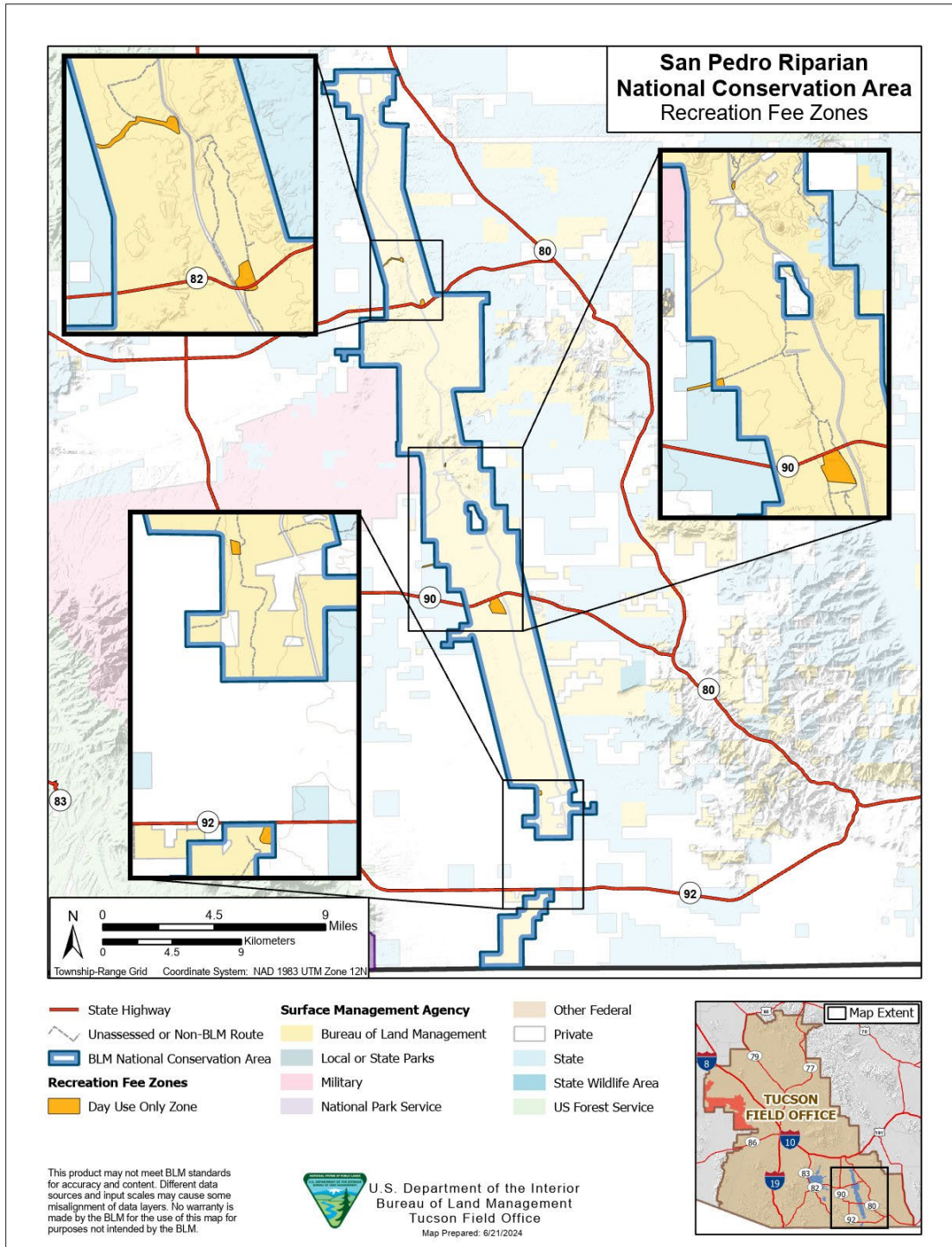


Figure 25: Map depicting fee zones for the SPRNCA. Note: The ISRP zones are explained in the fee proposal section for simplicity.

12.4 Appendix 4: Summary of Public Comments

Summary of public comments to be added after the public comment period.

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14 References

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