

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, FONSI and DR FORM

EA Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2010-0018-EA

Lease/Serial Case File No. AZA 34298

Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office

Proposed Action Title/Type: Recreation and Public Purpose Act Lease/Conveyance

Location of Proposed Action: S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, sec. 8., T. 21 N., R. 18 W., G&SRM.

Applicant (if any): Mohave County Community College District (MCCCD)

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN

This proposed action is in conformance with the Kingman Resource Management Plan approved March 1995. Remarks: RMP Decision number and narrative: LR10/B2 Dispose of public land identified in Appendix 17 only through the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act to qualified entities. The subject lands are within the W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of sec. 8, T. 21 N., R. 18 W., G&SRM, which are identified in said Appendix 17.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

On October 17, 2001, MCCCD submitted an application, serialized as AZA 34298, for the lease and conveyance of the lands identified above for a community college under the authority of the R&PP Act. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is required to make a determination of the suitability of the action proposed in the application as it relates to applicable statutes, regulations, policy, and guidance, and render a decision to authorize, authorize with modifications, or deny the application.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, OR OTHER PLANS

The proposed action alternative, which would be the issuance of a lease with the possibility of conveying the subject lands upon substantial build-out of the facilities, would be in conformance with the R&PP Act (43 USC 869, *et seq.*) and 43 CFR Part 2400 (concerning classification of the land), Part 2700 (concerning conveying the land), and Part 2900 (concerning leasing the land). A decision to not classify the land and deny the application as considered in the No Action Alternative would be based on and in conformance with the criteria specified in 43 CFR 2420.2 and 2430, or that the proposed use of the land would not fall within the guidelines specified in 43 CFR 2741.5.

MCCCD is a political subdivision of the State of Arizona, and therefore is qualified to lease or take title to the public lands under the provisions of the R&PP Act as specified in 43 U.S.C. 869 and as codified in 43 CFR 2741.2.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The proposed action would be to issue a lease for the construction, operation, and maintenance to Mohave County Community College (College) of 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, more or less, for an community college instructional facility in Golden Valley, Arizona. The description of the lands for which the College has made application is the S $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, sec. 8., T. 21 N., R. 18 W., G&SRM. The proposed facilities are shown on MCCCD's Development and Improvement Plan submitted with its application on October 17, 2001. Once the facilities have been substantially constructed and otherwise in compliance with the terms and conditions of the proposed lease the BLM would consider conveying the lands to the College. Conveyance of the land would be subject to terms and conditions mandated by the R&PP Act and any terms

and conditions deemed necessary by the authorized officer to protect the public interests, including the applicable terms and conditions of the proposed lease.

The proposed facility would include 12 classrooms, a computer room, student services area for registration and advising, library and bookstore, athletic facilities, office, parking, and other educational supporting facilities. Construction would occur in phases as outlined in MCCC'D's Development and Improvement Plan as approved by the BLM.

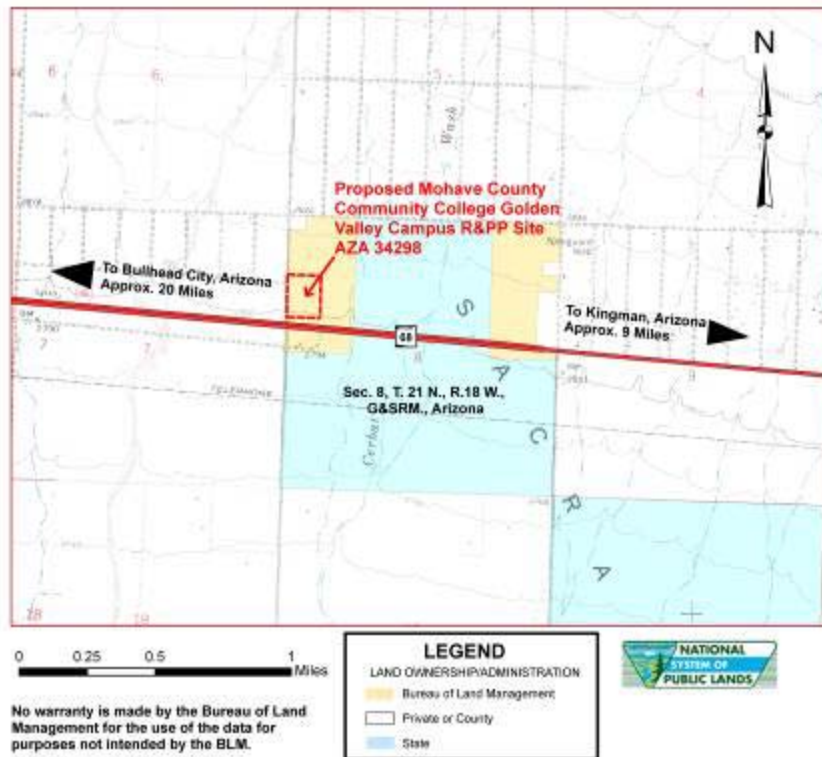
DESCRIPTION OF NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative the application would be denied.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

General Setting

The affected environment is in central Golden Valley along and just north of SR 68 and east of Colorado Road (see map and photo below). The surrounding lands are mostly privately owned and are continuing to be developed for commercial and residential uses. Of the approximate 145 acres of public lands remaining in said section 8, approximately 60 acres are occupied by two schools, a county park, a library, the Golden Valley Chamber of Commerce, an American Legion Post, roads, and utilities which have been authorized by the BLM.





Affected Resources

The following is a description of the affected resources on public lands and the anticipated impacts which would result from the proposed action.

Vegetation

The vegetative community in this area is Sonoran and Mojave desert scrub. The dominant species are creosote bush, bursage, snakeweed, big galleta, cholla, wolfberry, and catclaw acacia.

Wildlife

Wildlife species occurring in this area are primarily birds, including migratory species such as mourning dove, cactus wren, Laconte's thrasher, loggerhead shrike, blackthroated sparrow, Gambel's quail, and mockingbird. Other wildlife species occurring in this area are rabbits, ground squirrels, field mice, snakes, lizards, and, occasionally, coyotes.

Visual Resource Management (VRM)

The lands proposed for lease and/or conveyance described in the Proposed Action alternative would be within VRM Class IV. The objective of this classification is to provide for management activities which allows for major modifications to the existing landscape. The level of change to the landscape may be high and may dominate the view. The existing landscape within the area of the proposed action is flat with distant views of the Cerbat Mountains to the east, Hualapai Mountains to the southeast, and the Black Mountains to the south, west, and north. The views within the immediate area of the proposed campus are dominated by manmade structures and facilities such as roads, buildings, and utility lines.

PROJECT RESOURCE review

| Resources Considered | Not Present | Present and Not Affected | Present and/or Potentially Affected |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Air Quality* | ✓ | | |
| Areas of Critical Environmental Concern* | ✓ | | |
| Cultural and Historic* | ✓ | | |
| Environmental Justice* Socioeconomics | ✓ | | |
| Floodplains* | ✓ | | |
| Grazing | ✓ | | |
| Hazardous or Solid Waste* | ✓ | | |
| Invasive and Non-native Species* | ✓ | | |
| Land Use | ✓ | | |
| Migratory Birds* | | | ✓ |
| Native American Religious Concerns* | ✓ | | |
| Prime and Unique Farmland* | ✓ | | |
| Threatened and Endangered Species* | ✓ | | |
| Vegetation | | | ✓ |
| Visual Resources | | | ✓ |
| Water Quality* | ✓ | | |
| Wetland or Riparian Zones* | ✓ | | |
| Wild and Scenic Rivers* | ✓ | | |
| Wilderness* | ✓ | | |
| Wildlife | | | ✓ |

* Consideration Required By Law or Executive Order

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Anticipated Impacts from the Proposed Action

The following is a description of the anticipated impacts which would result from the proposed action.

Vegetation

The impacts anticipated from the proposed action would be the elimination of up to 12.5 acres of native vegetation. In its application MCCCCD notes it would remove state protected plants (cactus, yucca, nolina (beargrass), ocotillo, and agave) only at the express authorization of the BLM. The proposed action would include a term and condition which would require MCCCCD to remove only those protected plants which would be in the way of the facilities or construction activities. These plants would be salvaged and incorporated into the landscaping. The landscaped area would be approximately 3 acres.

Wildlife

The impacts anticipated from the proposed action would be the elimination of up to 12.5 acres of wildlife habitat. As stated above approximately 3 acres of the lands which would be leased and/or conveyed under the proposed action alternative would include landscaping and would make suitable habitat for some native species like birds, reptiles, and small rodents.

If construction or other disruptive activities occur during the breeding and nesting period for migratory birds, these activities could result in failed breeding and fledging activities.

Visual Resources

The proposed facilities would be larger than other structures in the area and would attract the attention of observers in the vicinity, however VRM objectives for this area would be met.

Public Safety

The majority of access to and from the proposed campus would be at the intersection of Arizona State Route (SR) 68 and Colorado Road (a county road). The posted speed limit on this section of SR 68 is 55 miles per hour, which could cause a safety hazard due to an increase amount of traffic decelerating and accelerating to gain access to and from the proposed campus. In communication with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) it is likely the applicant would need to perform a traffic impact analysis study to determine if any improvements to SR 68, such as turn lanes, would be recommended or required. It is anticipated that if any such improvements are necessary these would be within ADOT's right-of-way for SR 68 and the ability to construct, maintain, and operate them would be authorized under that grant.

Anticipated Impacts from the No Action Alternative

Under the no action alternative the land would remain as it is. Given the BLM's designation in the Kingman RMP that a primary use of these lands could be for recreation and public uses it is likely the BLM would entertain other applications for these kinds of uses in the future.

Cumulative Impacts

Other cumulative impacts on public lands in this area are the recent granting of two rights-of-way in the vicinity of the proposed action. The BLM granted a right-of-way on public lands adjacent to the proposed campus site along State Route 68 so that UNS Electric could replace its 20.8kV distribution line with a 69kV line and 20.8kV under built. This right-of-way is 30 feet wide and 2,232 feet long. This right-of-way partially overlaps the right-of-way for State Route 68; its southern boundary is 20 feet south of the northern boundary for the highway right-of-way. The lands affected are lot 1, the S $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ S $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of sec. 8, T. 21 N., R. 18 W., G&SRM.

Also, the BLM granted a right-of-way for a road approximately 0.7 miles east of the proposed campus site. This right-of-way affects the west 84 feet of lot 1 north of State Route 68, the west 84 feet of lot 4 south of the right-of-way for Chino Drive, the west 84 feet of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, and the west 84 feet of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, sec. 8, T. 21 N., R. 18 W., G&SRM. The purpose for this was to improve safety by changing the access for the Black Mountain Elementary School and Golden Valley Junior High School from State Route 68 to Chino Road. This road would also provide access for future development of the public lands in that part of said section 8 for R&PP Act uses, however no applications are currently pending for these lands.

Given that this area has experienced significant population growth in the past 20 to 30 years and much of the land is privately owned, it is likely more lands will be converted from desert to residential and commercial development. It would be anticipated this would occur regardless of the decision made on the action analyzed herein.

DESCRIPTION OF MITIGATION MEASURES AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS

Should the proposed action alternative be selected, the following terms and conditions would be included in the lease and made a part of the conditions for conveyance, should the land be conveyed, to address mitigating the impacts to migratory birds and the potential public safety issue regarding access onto and from SR 68:

Except as stipulated below, construction activities will be limited to the period of September 1 through February 28 to avoid disruption to migratory birds during their breeding season unless operations have substantially begun prior to February 28 and remain on a continuing basis, i.e. substantial operations occur during the weekdays. The BLM will periodically monitor construction activities and may conduct surveys for migratory bird nesting activities. In the event nesting activities on public lands are or may be disrupted as a result of the Lessee's construction activities, the BLM may provide written notice to the Lessee to cease all or part of its activities on public lands until the young birds have left the nest(s) or otherwise nesting activities would no longer be disrupted.

If the Lessee has not begun operations prior to February 28 and wishes to perform construction activities during March 1 through August 30, the Lessee would be required to request from the authorized officer a Notice to Proceed after having a survey conducted to the specifications of the authorized officer to determine if impacts to migratory birds would be anticipated. The authorized officer will have the discretion to either have BLM employee(s) perform this survey or to have the Lessee hire a qualified biologist to perform the survey upon consultation with the BLM. No construction activities would be permitted during the breeding season until the authorized officer has issued a Notice to Proceed after a finding that no migratory birds are nesting within the vicinity of this lease.

Lessee will coordinate with the Arizona Department of Transportation and Mohave County Public Works Department to provide safe ingress/egress to and from State Route 68.

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Dave Brusby | Director of Facilities, Mohave County Community College |
| Dr. Len Cundiff | Vice President, Mohave County Community College |
| Anthony Martinez | Transportation Construction Technician III, ADOT |
| Monte Wilson | Mohave County Public Works Dept. |
| Tim Watkins | Archaeologist, BLM Kingman Field Office |
| Ammon Wilhelm | Biologist, BLM Kingman Field Office |

Preparer(s):
Environmental Coordinator:

Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT and DECISION RECORD

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-CO10-2010-0018-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Assistant Field Manager, Non-Renewable Resources, Kingman

Date

Decision: The decision is to implement the Proposed Action Alternative and issue a Recreation and Public Purposes Act lease to Mohave County Community College for a satellite campus in Golden Valley. This decision also would allow the conveyance of the leased lands upon substantial completion of the authorized facilities.

Rationale for Decision: The lands to be leased/conveyed are designated in the Kingman Resource Management Plan for uses under the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. The analysis completed for the lease/conveyance of these lands found that there are no conflicts between resources if the lands were leased/conveyed.

Stipulations: See the attached lease. Should the lands be conveyed the patentee would be bound by the approved site plan as well as standard terms of a patent issued under the provisions of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, and any relevant term and condition to protect the public interests.

Assistant Field Manager,

Date

Non-Renewable Resources, Kingman