

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ARIZONA STRIP FIELD OFFICE
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW**

CX-AZ-110-2005-0018

PROJECT TITLE: Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) Augmentation

PROJECT LEAD: Scot Franklin

PROPOSED ACTION: The western burrowing owl population on the Arizona Strip would be augmented with approximately 6-10 individuals introduced at the location given below. A backhoe would be used to dig holes for 16 burrows. Burrows consist of an upside down five-gallon bucket with twelve feet of four-inch tubing going to it for owl access. The holes would then be backfilled over the burrows. The owls would be brought to the site and kept inside a prerelease tent for 4-6 weeks. Eight burrows would be available to the owls inside the tent and two clusters of four burrows each available outside the tent. The owls generally go to the outside burrows after the tent comes down. Volunteers would bring mice to the tent (provided by Wild at Heart) every day for the time that the owls are in it.

The burrows would need to be in the ground by early April to get the tent down in May and give them maximum time to be on their breeding ground and get used to living this far north before migrating south in September.

Mitigation measures would include light revegetation of burrows after they are in place, and backhoes and other equipment will be powerwashed prior to use to avoid bringing invasive plants to the area.

There should be no added restrictions on existing uses in the area.

LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTION: T41N, R12W, NESWSE S24 on the Lizard Point quadrangle. Approximately 4.5 miles south of the Arizona state line near Atkinville Wash. The site can be accessed by driving south from St. George on 1069 and turning east on a tertiary road just south of the powerline for approximately 0.4 miles. This is within the Pokum grazing allotment. There is no ACEC, wilderness, or any other special designation for the area.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The proposed action has been reviewed for conformance with the Arizona Strip District Resource Management Plan (1992). The proposed action is in conformance with the RMP. In the Shivwits Resource Area RMP Implementation Plan, decision WL03 directs BLM to improve wildlife habitat through construction and maintenance of habitat improvement projects. Decision WL06 directs BLM to continue restoration of native wildlife into historic range by transplanting wildlife in cooperation with AGFD. WL16 directs BLM on proposed projects and other surface disturbing activities to meet the reclamation standards identified in Appendix 2. Areas disturbed by backhoe work will be revegetated as required in Appendix 2.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW: The proposed action is categorically excluded under 516 DM 6, Appendix 5.4: A.(3) Construction of perches, nesting platforms, islands and similar structures for wildlife use, and A.(5) routine augmentations such as fish stocking, providing no new species are introduced.

The proposal has been reviewed to determine if any of the exceptions described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply. Surname(s) verify completion of this review by appropriate specialists.

NAME **LIST OF EXCLUSION CRITERIA** *Assign surnames for determination under each below*

Wadsworth 1. The proposal would have no adverse effects on public health or safety: *Identify the effect if any*

- Folks 2. The proposal would not adversely affect unique geographic characteristics such as park, recreation, or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, wild and scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks: *Identify the area that would be affected if any*
- Herron 3. The proposal would have no adverse effects on historic or cultural resources: *Identify the effect if any*
- Herder 4. The proposal would have no highly controversial environmental effects: *Identify the effect if any*
- Herder 5. The proposal would have no highly uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects nor does it involve unique or unknown environmental risks: *Identify the effect if any*
- Herder 6. The proposal would not establish a precedent for future action or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration with potentially significant environmental effects: *Identify the effect if any*
- Spotts 7. The proposal is not directly related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant effects: *Identify the other actions and their effects if any*
- Herron 8. The proposal would not adversely affect properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: *Identify the effect if any*
- Hughes 9. The proposal would not adversely affect a plant species listed or proposed to be listed on the list of endangered and threatened species, nor have adverse effects on designated critical habitat for these species: *Identify the species and effect if any*
- Herder 10. The proposal would not adversely affect an animal species listed or proposed to be listed on the list of endangered and threatened species, nor have adverse effects on designated critical habitat for these species: *Identify the species and effect if any*
- Smith 11. The proposal would not require compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) or Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands). *Identify the order and effect if any*
- Herder 12. The proposal would not require compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act: *Identify the effect if any*
- Benson 13. The proposal does not threaten to violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment: *Identify the law and effect if any*
- Spotts 14. The proposal is in conformance with the Arizona Strip District Resource Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement (January, 1992)

DECISION: We have reviewed this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record and have determined that the proposal is in conformance with the approved land use plan, that it would have no significant environmental effects, and that no further environmental analysis is required.

REVIEWED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Environmental Coordinator - Arizona Strip

IT IS MY DECISION TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSAL, AS DESCRIBED, WITH THE STIPULATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES DESCRIBED BELOW.

APPROVED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Field Manager - Arizona Strip

Stipulations and mitigation measures:

- Burrow sites would be lightly revegetated after they are in place.
- Backhoes and other equipment would be powerwashed prior to use to avoid bringing invasive plants to the area.
- There would be no added use restrictions in the area due to the augmentation.
- Any surface, or sub-surface archaeological, historical, or paleontological remains discovered and not covered in the CRPR during construction, maintenance, or use shall be left intact; all work in the area shall stop immediately and the BLM Office Field Manager for the Arizona Strip (435-688-3301) shall be notified immediately. Commencement of work shall be allowed upon clearance by the BLM Office Field Manager in consultation with the Archaeologist.
- An additional archaeological survey shall be required in the event the proposed project location is changed, or additional surface disturbing activities are added to the project after the initial survey. Any such survey would have to be completed prior to commencement of the project.
- If in connection with operations any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601; 104 Stat. 3048; 25 U.S.C. 3001) are discovered, the proponent shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the Field Office Manager. The proponent shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Authorized Officer that operations may resume.

Required reviews:

- Gloria Benson, Native American Coordinator
- Tom Folks, Recreation
- Laurie Ford, Lands/Realty/Minerals
- Michael Herder, Wildlife
- John Herron, Cultural
- Lee Hughes, Plants
- Ray Klein, GCPNM Supervisory Ranger
- Linda Price, S&G
- Bob Sandberg, Range
- Richard Spotts, Environmental Coordinator
- Roger Taylor, Arizona Strip Field Manager
- Ron Wadsworth, Supervisory Law Enforcement

Discretionary reviews:

- Bob Smith, Soils and Water