

***FINAL* Minutes**
Arizona Resource Advisory Council (RAC)
September 18, 2008

BLM National Training Center
9828 North 31st Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona

RAC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Frances Werner, Larry Howery, Linda Binder, Norman Perry, Glen Collins, Steve Saway, Laura Pinnas, Richard Lunt, Bill Brake, Carolyn Loder, Jan Holder

RAC ABSENT: Ty Kelly, Linda Kennedy.

BLM STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Elaine Zielinski, Helen Hankins, Michael Taylor, Deborah Stevens, Joanie Losacco, Becky Heick, Tom Dabbs, Teri Raml, Scott Florence, Bill Gibson, Francisco Mendoza, Judy Culver, Bill Coulloudon, Pamela Mathis, Tom Edgerton, Rem Hawes, Steve Cohn, Julie Decker, Deborah Stevens, Don Charpio, Emily Garber, Don Applegate, Brian Bellew, Susan Williams

PRESENTERS & GUESTS: Amy Racki (Arizona State Parks), Kathy Makansi (Coronado National Forest), Jeremy Haines (Coconino National Forest), Bruce Fahrni and Rachel Franchina (Prescott National Forest), Katie Meyers, Dan Shein (Arizona State Parks), Jeff Saari (Forest Service), Lori Thorp (Forest Service)

AGENDA ITEM: Meeting Called to Order – Welcome and Introduction of RAC Members (Frances Werner, RAC Chair)

DISCUSSION: The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m. RAC members were introduced.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Review and Approval of March 6 and June 19, 2008 Meeting Minutes (RAC Members)

DISCUSSION: N/A

ACTION: Motion was made by Linda Binder to accept March 6, 2008, seconded by Richard Lunt. Motion made by Linda Binder to approve June 19, 2008, minutes, seconded by Steve Saway. Minutes approved for March 6 and June 19, 2008.

AGENDA ITEM: BLM State Director's Introduction, Update on Legislation, Regulations and other Statewide Issues (Elaine Zielinski, BLM Arizona State Director and other BLM Staff)

DISCUSSION: Talking Points include:

Welcome Remarks: Greetings. I hope you all have had a great summer and are ready for a beautiful fall and winter. The precipitation we've received across the state this monsoon season has really helped cool things down and reduced our wildland fire danger. Before we get started, I wanted to discuss a few items.

Personnel Update: We have made selections for several management positions in Arizona, including Emily Garber as the Lower Sonoran Field manager; Mark Lambert as the Ironwood Forest National Monument manager, and Mark Rekshynskyj, as the San Pedro Riparian and Las Cienegas National Conservation manager. Emily Garber was formerly with the Tonto National Forest; Mark Lambert was with the Tucson Field Office; and Mark Rekshynskyj was with the Nevada Las Vegas District. Of course as we get new staff, we also have managers who accept other BLM or Federal jobs. This includes Associate Gila District Manager, Bonnie Winslow, who is now working in the BLM National Landscape Conservation System office in Washington

Uranium Mining Update: There continues to be public and media interest in the uranium mining claims being staked in the Arizona Strip. The District report from Scott Florence highlights some of the activities currently going on in the Arizona Strip for the development of a new mining operation and restarting operations at several other previously developed mine sites. Scott and his staff will be hosting a tour on September 23, 2008, for several members of the Arizona Game and Fish Department and Commission, Arizona legislators, Grand Canyon Trust and mining industry representatives. The tour will consist of visits to several sites related to uranium mining, including an exploration site, a reclaimed mine site and a proposed new mine site. The discussion will focus on the mining processes and BLM's oversight.

Wild Horse and Burro Program: BLM Washington and the states continue to receive public and media inquiries on the Wild Horse and Burro Program and the management challenges the Bureau is facing. The BLM faces difficult choices in the program. Rising energy prices have increased our costs and it's clear we cannot continue current removal, lifetime holding, and limited direct sales practices under existing and projected budgets. For the BLM to continue its existing policies, the agency's wild horse and burro budget would need to rise to \$77 million by the year 2012 (a \$40 million increase over the current budget). Nor can we allow horses to multiply unchecked on the range without causing an environmental disaster. The BLM is looking at all options at this point to manage through the situation. We have not made any decisions about which option to pursue, but we are in discussions with advocacy groups to find an appropriate legal solution.

Healthy Lands Initiative: In fiscal year 2008, BLM Arizona Healthy Lands Initiative (HLI) had some tangible results including:

Hunter's Hole Partnership along Lower Colorado

Use of base funding for key HLI projects
Strong emerging partnerships and signed MOU with Arizona Association of Conservation Districts
Focused strategy for HLI in Arizona
Potential for funding from Walton Foundation, Arizona Game and Fish, Pulling Together Initiative (NFWF), EQIP, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Travel Management Planning: BLM's travel management planning is still underway. Later this morning you'll hear from the Tucson Field Office staff on the Middle Gila Canyons Travel Management Plan (TMP) on the Middle Gila Canyons. In addition, five BLM Arizona offices are working on the route evaluations and will develop TMPs for the Arizona Strip Field Office (1,250 miles); Lake Havasu Field Office (750 miles); Yuma Field Office (1,700 miles); Hassayampa Field Office (1,000 miles); and Safford Field Office (500 miles).

The above offices have agreements with Arizona State Parks, who is a partner in the route evaluation process. When route networks are evaluated, each office will present a draft preferred alternative, including a proposed route network map, for public comment.

Border Update: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues its infrastructure and technology programs along the Arizona-Mexico border. The emphasis is on completing the Congressionally-mandated fencing by December 31, 2008, both pedestrian fence types and vehicle fencing (barriers).

At the San Pedro, planned fencing on the east side has been completed. The bollard-style fence has been recently maintained by the Border Patrol contractor (Granite Construction) due to debris collection during rain storms. Temporary vehicle barriers were placed in the west side floodplain, but removed during the monsoon. The Border Patrol has indicated that the San Pedro channel and floodplain are being monitored to see what activities might require additional infrastructure, such as barriers. On the west side of San Pedro, outside the National Conservation Area, DHS is currently installing fencing which will run west into the Coronado National Memorial. The Department of the Interior (DOI) and DHS continue to work the questions related to San Pedro monitoring. That is, how DHS infrastructure and activities may/may not be impacting the San Pedro. Congresswoman Giffords has expressed an interest in the monitoring phase as well. The DHS Secure Border Initiative (SBI) originally filed an application for two tower locations within the Lower Sonoran Field Office. Some discussions have occurred about two additional locations within the Ajo block. BLM is waiting for final locations, final environmental documents and biological opinions before deciding whether to issue permits for all locations. Tower construction is not slated to begin until calendar year 2009 because DHS has requested that tower funding be applied to the current 2008 fencing projects.

2009 Budget and Priorities: The BLM is expecting to be working under a Continuing Resolution (CR) for several months during fiscal year 2009. At this time, we are not sure what

the wording in the CR will be, or what types of funding might be approved. In the 2009 Budget Justifications, the President has requested funding for several key emphasis areas. These areas include: Land Health, National Landscape Conservation Areas, Border Issues, Energy Security, Community Growth, and Non-Energy Commodity Use. Arizona BLM submitted requests in our out-year planning for each of these emphasis areas, and we feel we have a good chance of receiving new funding in several of them. BLM Arizona 2009 priorities will focus on the following areas: Borderlands, Range, Energy and Non-Energy Initiatives, Healthy Lands Initiative, National Landscape Conservation System, Travel Planning/Travel Management/Recreation, Mission Delivery Support, Fuels/Fire, Land Use Planning and Land Tenure Strategy.

Tri-State Shooting Range Update: BLM Washington has not signed the letter to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation yet; however it is imminent.

RAC Recognition and Awards: I would now like to make some very special presentations for our five out-going RAC members. First, I would like to thank you for getting involved in the RAC and dedicating your time over the past 3 years to BLM issues. All of us at BLM appreciate your leadership and interest in building a stronger collaborative process in managing Arizona's public land resources.

Secondly, I would like to present each of you with a small token of our appreciation for all your hard work. Steve Saway – Off-Highway Vehicle Use representative; Frances Werner and Glen Collins – Dispersed Recreation representatives; Richard Lunt, Elected Official; and Larry Howery – Academia representative. Because of your interest and participation, the BLM has received some excellent advice in several management areas. Thank you again for all your participation and excellent advice.

DISCUSSION: HLI – We are putting a lot of effort into the Lower Colorado River. Thanks to Tina Clark for all of her help. This is a community development project in Yuma. We have been working with AZGFD, Walton Foundation, NRCS, and Homeland Security. We have partners across the border. The Yuma project was recently discussed with Secretary Kempthorne. For the Lower Colorado River Restoration Project, \$18 million has been raised for restoration. An MOU has been signed with the Arizona Conservation District.

All RAC nominations are being vetted through DOI and an announcement will be sent out when new members are selected.

AGENDA ITEM: RAC Questions on Field Manager Reports (BLM Field Managers) (Field Manager Reports are listed at the end of these minutes.)

DISCUSSION: On the Butterfield Restoration Project in the Phoenix District, will BLM be asking for volunteer help? Teri Raml, Phoenix District Manager reported that there will be announcements of volunteer opportunities to help with cleanup and vegetation restoration work on the project.

Landscape Stewardship Award to RAC Member Jan Holder - Glen Collins reported that the Public Lands Foundation (PLF), a national organization composed primarily of retired BLM employees, gives Landscape Stewardship Awards annually to an organization and to an individual who have done outstanding work at the community level to help sustain landscapes on areas of public lands administered by the BLM. The PLF's 2008 Landscape Stewardship Award to the individual is being given to RAC Member Jan Holder who was nominated by the BLM Safford Field Office for her work as Executive Director for the Gila Watershed Partnership. Congratulations Jan Holder!

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: BLM Field Manager's Field Office Rangeland Resource Team (RRT) Member Proposals or Comments

DISCUSSION: The Gila District Manager submitted, on behalf of the Safford Field Office, a list of applicants for their Rangeland Resource Team. The Standards and Guidelines Work Group had discussed the nominations and voted to forward the list to the entire RAC for consideration. The nominees:

Group I: Pete Brawley, grazing; John Korolsky, mineral development

Group 2: Bill Brandau, conservation organization; Jim Armbrust, dispersed recreation; Mark Haberstick, environmental organization

Group 3: Duane Aubuchon, representing state agency responsible for managing natural resources; Bob Bigando, public at large; Pete Sundt, public at large/academia

MOTION: Richard Lunt moved and Jan Holder seconded that the RAC approve the list of Rangeland Resource Team nominations for the Safford Field Office as submitted by Tom Dabbs, Gila District Manager. Motion passed. The Chair will send a letter to the new RRT members reporting that the RAC had approved their nominations.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Presentation on OHV Ambassadors Program (Bill Gibson, BLM Travel Management Coordinator and Amy Racki, Arizona State Parks)

The Ambassador Program recruits OHV users to help enforce OHV use ethics. This is the one year anniversary of the Ambassador Program. Currently there are 46 Ambassadors with 40 more slated for training in October 2008. Katie Meyers (BLM contractor) and Chris Gammage have done a lot of work on this program. Jerseys have been printed for the ambassadors of the program so they have an identity on the ground.

Slide Show was presented and handouts distributed. Pilot projects are the Lake Pleasant Area, North Scottsdale, and the Florence Junction area. Functions of Ambassadors: help maintain

motorized areas, roads, trails, and facilities; organize cleanups. Volunteers receive training on OHV use.

Arizona State Parks will oversee the training of OHV Ambassadors. Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Tonto National Forest provide staff time to manage Ambassador events and participate in program planning.

DISCUSSION: This is a great program! Is this also going on in other states? The Boise area has a cadre of volunteers. The Arizona program is unique because it is multi-jurisdictional.

Do you have the route inventories available on a map and are they accessible to the public? Designations are existing roads and trails and this is public information. Per Bill Gibson, there will be access guides published for the public, but they are not yet available statewide.

There is another issue of a big concern as caretakers of public lands. Pima County, Maricopa County and Pinal County are non-attainment dust areas. Ninety percent of ATV owners live in these areas and dust created by all vehicles is a concern. People deserve a place to ride.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Presentation on Middle Gila Travel Management Plan (Francisco Mendoza, BLM Tucson Outdoor Recreation Planner). Slide presentation.

Route inventories have been done on approximately 1000 miles of roads and trails on BLM, National Forest and State Trust lands in the Middle Gila Canyons area northeast of Florence. This is an implementation-level planning effort that was initiated with the help of the RAC about 8 years ago. A Middle Gila Conservation Partnership group of government employees and users have helped develop alternative ways for access in the area which is heavily used for recreation, military training, livestock grazing and mineral development. We are trying to stay within the parameters established 20 years ago. There are a few routes that are functionally important for multiple use and administrative purposes. We are also looking at designating primitive roads, including the Great Western Trail. Areas have also been identified where there has been rock crawling activity for many years.

DISCUSSION: Was there any thought given whether certain roads or trails should be limited to ATV's? Most of the physical inventory consists of two-track roads. We are not designating or converting any of the routes to ATV's at this time, but there is a possibility. This will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. This all started due to the impacts on the Martinez Canyon area. The Tucson Field Office will be presenting a proposed travel management plan for this area for public comment some time later this year.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Update on Solar Energy Rights-of-Way (ROW) Applications (Julie Decker, BLM Group Administrator for Resources) Slide presentation.

See handouts for existing right-of-way location in Arizona. Scoping for PEIS began on June 16, 2008, in Riverside, California with NREL as a partner. The moratorium on receiving new solar applications has been rescinded. Arizona is providing data (GIS) and support. Arizona participates on Renewable Energy Team, which has monthly conference calls. Scoping comments are provided on <http://solareis.anl.gov>

Arizona currently has 42 applications as of September 17, 2008. The State receives an average of four applications per week. BLM Arizona will be receiving six new applications by the end of next week. Map and table to be posted on the website soon.

Applications are all covered under right-of-way applications with full cost recovery. An initial deposit of \$50,000, rough estimates of costs +\$250,000 per project. Applicants are developing Plan of Developments (PODs), and are due within the next 2 months. The Solar Core Team (representing the three Arizona Districts) will review all PODs (using a standard template) for completeness.

Statewide ROW Team is forming to be located in the State Office. Assessment of the workload will follow the POD review. The next step would be completing the strategy for the NEPA (EISs). Currently, there have been no PODs approved.

DISCUSSION: Where do the funds go? They go directly to the treasury fund. On the PEIS, what are the water requirements for the solar plants? Some requirements are huge. What is the disposal plan for water/chemicals? The National Renewable Energy Laboratory will be providing information on the disposal plan. This needs to be addressed in advance. How are they bringing in the water? BLM has not seen the plans yet. Will any of the plans affect the transportation routes in the Eagle Tail Wilderness area? People are submitting applications for thousands of acres and this will be dealt with in the planning process. There will be some conflicts involved when near wilderness areas. A moratorium was placed and then lifted so applications are being submitted. It was discussed last week regarding pre-application meetings. Will there be Tribal consultation? Yes, this will happen with the NEPA process. Tribal consultation has started on the programmatic level. Some of the applicants are on both private, State, and BLM lands. We all have a lot of questions and concerns on the production and transmission of solar energy, but we are at the early stages of the process before BLM is close to issuing authorizations of solar energy on Public Lands. We are still learning about solar technology and the NEPA process will not be fast. There has been discussion at the Washington Office level about having renewable energy pilot offices. The BLM should consider that giving Public Land to someone generating power, making money, and selling energy, that there should be a royalty coming in all the time. It would be nice for American production companies to be given priority over foreign companies.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Report from the Standards & Guidelines Working Group

DISCUSSION: Larry Howery, Chair of the Standards and Guidelines Working Group, reported that about 500 permit renewals have been completed with another 200 or so scheduled to be processed in 2009. The Grazing Rider will expire at the end of this month. This was in place to allow the BLM to reauthorize permits before the NEPA review was complete. There may be another rider for 2009 to continue to allow the BLM to reauthorize permits until the new grazing regulations are passed.

There is a pending lawsuit filed by Western Watersheds regarding grazing on the Sonoran Desert National Monument. The case has been assigned to the Department of Justice in D.C. and they are working on responses to the lawsuit. The lawsuit alleges that the BLM failed to complete compatibility analyses since the Monument designation was made. The BLM is making the determination via the RMP planning process.

Joe Feller has written to the BLM regarding BLM decisions made on the Arizona Strip several years ago, and he has requested 30 minutes to speak at the next RAC meeting in December. The RAC concluded that it would be better if Mr. Feller expressed his concerns during the public comment period, which is expressly for the purpose of allowing the public to voice concerns to the RAC.

The Safford Field Office has submitted the names of six individuals who have asked to be considered for appointment to the Safford Range Resource Team (RRT). The Working Group voted to forward their names to the RAC for approval (see **AGENDA ITEM:** BLM Field Manager's Field Office Rangeland Resource Team (RRT) Member Proposals or Comments).

ACTION: Deborah Stevens will draft a letter to Mr. Joe Feller regarding speaking at the next RAC meeting during the Public Comment Period.

AGENDA ITEM: Report from the Wild Horse and Burro Working Group

DISCUSSION: Linda Binder, Chair of the Wild Horse and Burro Working Group, reported that she had the unique opportunity of meeting with a wild horse activist group called Front Range Equine from Colorado, along with Mike Taylor, Al Burch and Roger Oyler. We discussed the new drastic measures being suggested by BLM in Washington, D.C. in order to bring all herds into manageable levels.

The BLM faces difficult choices in the Wild Horse and Burro Program. Rising fuel and energy prices have increased costs and it is clear the agency cannot continue current removal and holding practices under the existing budget.

Three quarters of BLM's Wild Horse and Burro program's budget is going to feed the animals as hay is so expensive and adoptions are drastically down. Transportation and feed in one year

have increased by almost \$4 million. We are fortunate in Arizona that we have more wild burros than horses as they are eminently more adoptable. Approximately 98.7 percent of burros find adoptive homes.

As of June 2008 there are more than 30,000 wild horses that are being fed and cared for at both short and long-term holding facilities. These animals can spend 10 to 25 years in a long-term holding facility.

Also, due to the economy, more domestic horses are being released onto rangelands because people can no longer afford their food and care. The purpose of our meeting was to see if we could come up with some ideas where we could work together with area horse activist groups to find solutions to this very large problem.

One of our main ideas is to activate a prisoner horse-breaking program within the Arizona prison system as a saddle broken or halter broken horse is a lot more saleable than a completely wild mustang. A broken horse can bring in around \$1,200 versus \$125 and benefits BLM, the new owner, and the corrections system. A very successful prison horse program has been operating in Canyon City, Colorado for several years.

Our State Director of Corrections, Dora Schriro, is extremely interested in working with the BLM on this issue. We are planning to make a working trip to Canyon City to observe this program.

We also had a discussion on how people could donate money to the Federal Government for a non-profit organization that is set up to specifically pay for the rescue and feeding of wild horses. In essence, a sponsor-a-horse program. But we need to create the mechanism for taking the money and keeping it in a special fund. Mike Taylor knows how to manage this. Al Burch also noted that we need to ask our lawyers about looking at changing regulation and reviewing our standard procedures and operations in order to do this. It was also agreed that we need to produce our own video on the wild mustangs in order to direct updated and correct information to the general public. Funding needs to be identified for this project which Norman Perry has offered to help us.

In conclusion, we will continue discussions with horse activist groups and will make an on-site visit to Canyon City to observe the prisoner horse program. Our activist friends will brainstorm with our horse groups and will provide us with a list of suggestions that we can work on together.

Please note that over 70 burros were gathered along the Colorado River in July by a BLM contracted crew of wranglers. In recent years, the population of burros in the area has increased causing traffic accidents as the burros roam the area near State Highway 95 south of Interstate 40. The Havasu burros were taken to the BLM wild horse and burro facility in Ridgecrest, California where they were examined by vets and vaccinated before being offered for adoption.

Comment: Linda's recommendations would also be helpful in Nevada.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Report from the Recreation Working Group

DISCUSSION: Norman Perry, Chair of the Recreation Working Group commented on the excellent presentation by Bill Gibson of OHV State laws. The Working Group also had a brief presentation on Solar Power, which was expanded on today.

The Recreation Working Group has developed proposed RAC concepts and principles for an Arizona BLM Recreation Strategy which needs to be considered by BLM in drafting Resource Management Plans. Norman Perry has done work in identifying recreational uses of the public lands that should be considered in developing Resource Management Plans.

MOTION: Glen Collins made a motion that the RAC send a letter to the Arizona State Director transmitting (1) The RAC concepts and principles for an Arizona BLM Recreation Strategy; and (2) a proposal for the collection of data related to recreational use of the BLM lands in Arizona. Seconded by Frances Werner.

DISCUSSION: Any discussions? Motion passed.

AGENDA ITEM: Report from Land use Planning and Tenure Working Group (Glen Collins, Chair)

DISCUSSION: The BLM's Arizona Land Use Planning Update of September 2008, which each RAC member has received, summarizes the status of Resource Management Plans in the BLM District and Field Offices.

The RAC will be briefed on the Draft RMP/EIS for the Sonoran Desert National Monument and Lower Sonoran Land Use Plans at, or before, the next RAC meeting.

The Draft RMP for the Ironwood National Monument is being revised by the Tucson Field Office to reflect the further analysis of recreational target shooting activities in the National Monument.

The BLM Offices in Phoenix and Yuma are working on the protests which have been received on the Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw-Harquahala Area RMP and the Yuma RMP. The three protests to the AFNM/BH RMP involve transmission lines and off-highway vehicle issues. The seven protests to the Yuma RMP involve livestock grazing, wild horse and burro, cultural resource issues, and conflicts between off-highway vehicle and residential uses.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is now looking at State Trust land in the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area as a site for reintroduction of the black-tailed prairie dog.

The Tucson Field Office will soon be issuing a proposed decision on a transportation plan for the Middle Gila Canyons Area for a 30-day public review and comment period.

The Department of the Interior's Field Solicitor is assisting the Tucson Field Office in dealing with Pinal County officials on the issue of the road crossing the San Pedro River in the Dudleyville area, and the impacts off-highway vehicle users are having on the wildlife habitat in the riverbed, which is protected by the Federal Government's conservation easement.

Comment: How does it work with plans getting through with budget cuts? Will the priorities change? How will RMPs be affected with the energy shift ongoing? If plans are inconsistent with proposals, we either reject the plan or make a plan amendment.

If certain roads/trails are closed to motorized vehicle access, what would happen to that trail? After the decision is made to close the road/trail, the condition would be checked and damage repaired and rehabilitated if necessary. Access points would be blocked.

Will the rock crawling routes remain open? Yes, some will remain open.

ACTION: N/A

AGENDA ITEM: Public Comment Period 11:30 a.m.

DISCUSSION: No public comments received. Therefore the public comment period was closed.

[RAC RECESSED FOR LUNCH @ 11:30 A.M.](#)

[RAC RECONVENED TO THE REA WORKING GROUP REPORT @ 1:00 P.M.](#)

AGENDA ITEM: RRAC Session – see separate RRAC minutes.

AGENDA ITEM: Discussion on Future Meetings/Locations (BLM State Director and RAC Members)

DISCUSSION: A December meeting would be during the travel blackout period (due to BLM system changes) so it is recommended that the next meeting be in January. January 14-15, 2009, was proposed. Future meeting dates will be discussed by the RAC at the January meeting.

Future agenda items:

- BLM update on the status of RAC OHV guidelines approved in March 2007
- Solar Update
- Land Health Standards for Mapping (Sherm Karl, National Inventory & Monitoring Spec. – NOC)

- Right-of-Way Process
- Updates on Arizona Travel Management Plans in process (La Posa, Middle Gila, etc.).
- Training session on how to navigate the BLM website

MEETING ADJOURNED: Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. Motion made by Frances Werner and seconded by Steve Saway.

9/18/2008 RAC District and Field Manager Reports are as follows:

Arizona Strip District Office

SUBJECT: Proposed Mineral Withdrawal Update

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act of 2008 (H.R. 5583) was introduced by Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) on March 11, 2008, to withdraw approximately one million acres from mineral exploration under the 1872 Mining Act. The bill would withdraw 628,886 acres in the Kanab Creek area and 112,655 in House Rock Valley managed by Bureau of Land Management, as well as 327,367 acres in the Tusayan Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest, south of Grand Canyon. The bill has not yet moved forward. On Wednesday, June 25, the House Committee on Natural Resources passed a rarely invoked emergency resolution that directed the Secretary of the Interior to immediately withdraw approximately 1,068,908 acres of Federal land from all forms of location and entry under the United States mining laws (30 U.S.C. 22 et seq.) for a period not to exceed 3 years. The Secretary has not yet implemented the withdrawal action.

SUBJECT: Uranium Mining Update

ISSUE SUMMARY: BLM staff met with Denison Mines officials in June to discuss proposed uranium mining activities on the Arizona Strip. Denison discussed beginning planning for the development of a new mining operation and restarting operations at several other previously developed mine sites. The new mines EZ-1, EZ-2 and WHAT would entail sinking a single shaft and extending horizontally into the three breccia pipe uranium deposits. Operations at the existing Arizona 1 mine site could begin within the next few months, pending receipt of an Air Quality Permit from Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). The Pinenut and Kanab North mines will require both Air Quality and Aquifer Protection Permits from ADEQ before start up.

SUBJECT: Lake Powell Pipeline Project

ISSUE SUMMARY: The proposed southern routes for a controversial 174 mile long pipeline project that will carry water from Lake Powell to communities in southwestern Utah would cross through BLM lands on the Arizona Strip. One preliminary proposed route would follow an electrical transmission line and another along Highway 389. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) was chosen over BLM as the lead agency because of the hydroelectric components of the project. Public scoping meetings for the proposed Lake Powell pipeline were held during June in St. George, Kanab and Cedar City, Utah. Recently officials have announced

that cost estimates for the project have risen dramatically from the original estimate of \$585 million in 2005 to \$1.1 billion.

SUBJECT: Proposed Arvada Land Sale

ISSUE SUMMARY: Two parcels of land near Mesquite Nevada (119 acres) were being considered for competitive sale under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA) authority. The sale of one parcel (79 acres) bordering a golf course and containing an isolated population of desert tortoises, which would require relocation to the Beaver Dam ACEC, is currently on hold, but the sale of the other parcel (40 acres) is anticipated to occur this fall/winter. Proceeds from the sale would go into a statewide interagency fund for the purchase of inholdings and lands adjacent to federally designated areas containing exceptional resources in Arizona as authorized by FLTFA.

SUBJECT: BLM Events and Partnership Activities

ISSUE SUMMARY: BLM has participated in a variety of educational activities, field tours and events including the following highlights:

Uranium Mining Field Tours: The District and Field Office managers hosted local area officials for a field tour of some of the proposed uranium mining sites on the Arizona Strip on April 4, 2008. BLM staff will also lead a field tour on September 23, 2008, to visit several different sites related to uranium mining. Attendees may include 6-8 Arizona State legislators (*not yet named*), Arizona Game and Fish Commissioner Jennifer Martin (*Tentative*), Arizona Game and Fish Department staff (Josh Avey, Habitat Branch Chief; Bob Brocheid, Assistant Director, Wildlife Management; Ron Sieg, Flagstaff Regional Supervisor; Tony Guiles, Legislative Liaison; Simone Hall, Assistant Legislative Liaison) and Grand Canyon Trust staff (Rick Moore, Associate Programs Director, and Roger Clark, Air and Energy Program Director). Lori Faeth, Policy Advisor for Natural Resources and Environment for the Governor's Office has also been invited but her attendance is doubtful.

Mojave Desert Initiative Moves Forward: The Mojave Desert Initiative is comprised of a tri-state management group focused on solving common Mojave Desert management issues. The Mojave Desert managers recently visited sites near Las Vegas and on the Arizona Strip. Healthy Lands Initiative funding will be requested for restoration projects in FY 2010.

Cultural Resources Program Receives Award: The Cultural Resources Program on the Arizona Strip District received a national award for excellence from the U.S. Forest Service for contributions to the development of the Kaibab Vermilion Cliffs Heritage Alliance. KVCHA is a partnership of federal land managing agencies (Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management) along with the Grand Canyon Trust, Coconino County, Northern Arizona University, Museum of Northern Arizona, tribes, and interested citizens working together to protect cultural resources, provide research opportunities, engage the public and raise awareness for resource conservation.

Archeological Field School: A month-long archaeological field school sponsored by the Arizona Strip District BLM, Northern Arizona University, and Grand Canyon Trust was conducted on the Arizona Strip District in June. A volunteer group of students, agency archaeologists, and Arizona Site Stewards continued test excavations at West Bench Pueblo in the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, surveyed and recorded archaeological sites in the Monument, and in House Rock Valley.

Take It Outside Funding Supports Education Programs: 1) The Arizona Strip received a “Take It Outside: Children and Nature Initiative” (TIO) grant to support a week-long environmental education camp for high school students (grades 10-12). Twenty-six students participated in the Color Country Natural Resource Camp on May 27-31. 2) TIO funding also allowed several BLM staff to participate as instructors in the North Kaibab Kids camp for Kaibab Paiute youth on August 7- 9. 3) BLM, through the TIO initiative is joining with the National Park Service through its Youth Partnership Program to host a three-day, two-night field camp to reconnect Southern Paiute youth to their traditional homelands on the Arizona Strip. Cultural lessons and skills will be led by tribal elders and agency staff will present various resource management programs. The Yevingkarere Camp will be held in Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument near Mt. Trumbull on September 19-21.

Phoenix District Office

SUBJECT: Phoenix District Office (PDO) Receives Applications for Solar Land Leasing

With the filing of two new applications in late August 2008 by Light Source Renewables, this brings to 20 the number of leasing applications for solar projects within the Phoenix District Office as of September 15, 2008.

ISSUE SUMMARY: One project would generate 2,300 megawatts of electricity using 20,800 acres within the Hassayampa Field Office in Maricopa County near Jackrabbit Wash; another application involves 6,160 acres within the Lower Sonoran Field Office south of the Palo Verde Hills, for a production of 500 megawatts. The largest solar-leasing application being handled by the PDO, from Beeter and Associates, LLC (Beeter), involves 224,000 acres of BLM managed land in four Arizona Field Offices (Hassayampa, Lower Sonoran, Yuma and Lake Havasu). An initial cost recovery deposit of \$50,000 was received in late August; however, a Plan of Development has not yet been submitted.

SUBJECT: International Media Contact: Discovery Network Canada: *The Daily Planet*

The Discovery Channel is currently in the post production (writing and editing stages) for the TV segment featuring the BLM Phoenix District firefighters and helicopter crew. The air date is not yet scheduled.

ISSUE SUMMARY: The PDO worked with the Discovery Network crew from Canada in May, coordinating a television news magazine segment that focuses on the science of aviation, GPS, and wild land range management to prevent and fight wildfires. On May 17, the crew followed the PDO Helitack Crew stationed at Weaver Mountain, near Wickenburg, as they trained for the first time this season with a relief helicopter pilot and new firefighter recruits. On May 18, the crew traveled to Prescott with the Diamond Mountain, California, Hotshot Crew as they cleared hazardous fuels from adjacent half-million dollar homes nestled on the edge of BLM land. It should be noted that the areas cleared by BLM crews were not in danger or destroyed by fire as were other Wickenburg homes during the summer 2008 fire season.

SUBJECT: Firefighters Contain 500 Acre Blaze South of Phoenix – High Fire Season Successfully Closes

Although the Fire Season was officially over, the PDO Firefighters successfully assisted in the quick management of a very visible Phoenix area blaze August 14-16, culminating in a successful fire season where there were no injuries or accidents within the Phoenix District.

ISSUE SUMMARY: During the week of August 16, 2008, 70 interagency firefighters contained a 500-acre fire that started a week previous on private property south of Phoenix, near the small town of Buckeye, and then progressed to BLM land. The cause is being investigated, but presumed to be multiple lightening strikes. Called the Robbin's Fire, high flames could be seen along Highway 85 as salt cedar burned. There were no injuries reported and no structures threatened. This brings to total 25 fires that were managed by the District in the 2008 high fire season; 23 were human caused, consuming 212 BLM acres, and two fires caused by lightening, burning an additional 50 acres of BLM public lands. Resources were also mobilized on 13 false alarms. The PDO firefighters accomplished, without incident, 450 acres of prescribed burns, and they treated another 850 acres of urban-interface lands.

SUBJECT: New Field Office Manager in the Lower Sonoran Field Office

Emily Garber comes to BLM from the Tonto National Forest where she is the Assistant Public Service Group Leader responsible for managing the Lands, Realty and Recreation Special Uses programs for the Forest Service. In her role, she reviews realty cases for the Ranger Districts and is the forest lead for implementing cost recovery for special use authorizations. Emily has been an Acting District Ranger in the Cave Creek Ranger District, and has also been a NEPA Coordinator. Her educational background is in anthropology/archaeology. She earned a Master's degree from the University of New Mexico. Emily served in a detail last year as the BLM Sonoran Desert National Monument Manager.

Hassayampa Field Office

SUBJECT: Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw-Harquahala planning areas

ISSUE SUMMARY: This planning document addresses the proposed management of nearly a million acres of public lands managed by the Hassayampa Field Office in central and western Arizona. The Notice of Availability for the Proposed RMP/FEIS was published in the *Federal Register* on August 8, 2008, followed by a 30-day protest period ending on September 8, 2008. So far, BLM has received five protests on the RMP/FEIS, including from the City of Peoria on the energy corridor issue; Sierra Club on the grazing issue; and three protests from the Prescott Open Trails Association on the routes and access issue. Staff will work with the Washington Office during the protest resolution phase and will continue work on the Records of Decision, scheduled for completion in 2009. Copies of the document are available at the Phoenix District Office, and it can be reviewed online at www.blm.gov/az/st/en/prog/planning/afria_plan.html.

SUBJECT: Table Mesa Recreation Zone - Activity Planning Underway

ISSUE SUMMARY: An interdisciplinary team has initiated work that will ultimately result in an activity plan for the Table Mesa recreation zone north of Phoenix. This popular recreational area, located north of New River and directly west of Interstate Highway 17, hosts multiple uses including off-highway vehicle recreation; motorized tours authorized under special recreation permits; hiking and equestrian activities along the Black Canyon National Recreation Trail; recreational target shooting; mining; and an important utility corridor for electric transmission lines and natural gas pipelines. This area is also the gateway to the northern, undeveloped end of Lake Pleasant County Park. Unsafe target shooting and trash dumping are common problems. This effort seeks to sustain multiple uses, providing opportunities for safe recreation while protecting natural and cultural resources. Currently the team is gathering information to develop alternatives for route designations, recreation facilities, and safe shooting areas. The team is coordinating with partners including the Arizona Game and Fish Department and Maricopa County Parks.

SUBJECT: Sophie's Flat Trail System Nears Completion

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Sophie's Flat Trail System near the town of Wickenburg is currently under construction with completion scheduled for November 8, 2008. The non-motorized system will consist of 16 miles of interconnected trails and a trailhead complex with day use parking, horse staging area, and overflow staging area. Development of the system is supported by a partnership with the Wickenburg Conservation Foundation, which is helping to preserve the western lifestyle of the community while improving economic opportunities. The project is made possible by volunteers from the foundation, local businesses, and local trail user organizations. When completed, the Sophie's Flat system will be the only non-motorized, multi-use trail system within 40 driving miles of Wickenburg. Volunteers are currently holding fund raising events at the site and are scheduling a formal BLM dedication ceremony for the spring of 2009.

SUBJECT: Hassayampa Field Office –Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Numbers Increase

BLM Arizona conducted a successful wild horse and burro adoption in Show Low, Arizona on August 9-10. A total of 17 horses and 2 burros were adopted. The final adoption for FY 2008 was held in Kingman September 12-14. A total of 9 horses and 5 burros were adopted at this event.

Agua Fria National Monument

SUBJECT: BLM Releases Water Quality Test Results

ISSUE SUMMARY: On August 20, 2008, the BLM released water quality test results that indicate the Agua Fria River in the BLM's Agua Fria National Monument has not been impacted by upstream mining, primarily from the Iron King Mine - Humboldt Smelter site. The river in the Monument was the subject of a water mapping project conducted by volunteers on June 21. In addition to mapping flows in the Agua Fria River, the BLM had three teams of volunteers collect water samples for water quality testing, primarily to test for inorganic chemicals that could come from mining activity. In each stretch of the river, the presence of chemicals of concern was not detected — what the water laboratories term below “practical quantitative level.” Sulfate was detected, but in each case it was below the maximum contaminant level of 250 milligrams per liter (parts per million) for drinking water. The mapping and sampling project was a joint effort by the Arizona Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO), Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument, Upper Agua Fria Watershed Partnership, Agua Fria Open Space Alliance, Arcosanti, Prescott College, and the BLM. The BLM is interested in collecting data to characterize baseline water quality conditions in the Agua Fria National Monument, and to determine compliance with applicable surface water quality standards.

SUBJECT: Agua Fria National Monument Trespass Case Resolved

ISSUE SUMMARY: After 8 years of negotiations and nearly 1 year of legal proceedings, the BLM resolved a long-standing unauthorized occupancy (trespass) case in the Agua Fria National Monument. Within 10 days of a trespass house being vacated by the unauthorized occupants, the homeowner had the house moved from the Monument to adjacent private land. The homeowner agreed to the BLM's January 18, 2008, trespass decision to move the structure from public land within 60 days of it being vacated. On February 15, 2008, the structure occupants (unauthorized by the homeowner or the BLM) appealed the decision. On June 23, 2008, the Interior Board of Land Appeals affirmed the BLM's original trespass decision.

SUBJECT: BLM and APS Survey Vegetation and Map Utility Corridor Management

ISSUE SUMMARY: On August 27, 2008, BLM staff met with Arizona Public Service (APS) planners regarding procedures for corridor management of vegetation along the twin 500 kilovolt Navajo to Westwing transmission power lines on public land north of Phoenix and in the Agua Fria National Monument. To reduce ground-fault hazards and to comply with Federal Energy

Regulatory Commission regulations, APS must treat hazardous vegetation in the right-of-way. The vegetation management of this power line will include initial corridor clearing, ongoing hazard vegetation pruning or removal, and follow-up routine vegetation maintenance scheduled every five years. BLM is working with APS on a corridor management plan describing the proposed actions for maintenance activities and the clearance standards for the maintenance of this power line. APS will contract out the salvage of saguaro cacti where possible and safe. Salvaged saguaros will be made available for transplant to public entities including parks, schools, and municipalities. The PDO had previously established a list of suitable public and governmental sites for cacti transplant.

SUBJECT: Media Contact from Arizona Highways

ISSUE SUMMARY: On August 21, 2008, BLM Agua Fria National Monument Manager, Rem Hawes, toured the Monument with Arizona Highways editor Robert Stieve for a future article. Stieve visited areas highlighted in the Arizona Highways August 2008 issue's article "Endangered Arizona: 12 of the State's most threatened natural wonders." The article included a section about the Agua Fria National Monument and Ironwood Forest National Monument, stating, "They're both rich in rock art, archaeological sites and rare species." BLM staff discussed the Monument's world-class resources, recent management plan (published August 8, 2008), OHV use, target shooting, resource impacts, and volunteerism.

SUBJECT: Agua Fria National Monument Friends Group Annual Meeting September

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument holds its 4th annual business meeting on September 13, 2008, at the Rock Springs Café in Black Canyon City. The Friends' general members convene every year to conduct elections, approve the yearly budget, and for other business. The Friends group is governed by a seven-member board of directors. This year marks the group's highest membership level since inception four years ago. The BLM initiated the effort to form a friends group for the monument in 2004. The Friends of the AFNM incorporated in 2006, and received its 501c3 non-profit status in July 2007. The Friends group is organized exclusively for charitable, scientific, and educational purposes; more specifically to protect, preserve, and promote appreciation and enjoyment of the ecological, archaeological, scenic, and scientific resources and values of the Monument.

Lower Sonoran Field Office

SUBJECT: Painted Rocks Campground Storm Damage

An exceptionally strong thunderstorm on August 29, damaged roads and foot trails at the Painted Rocks Campground and Petroglyph Site. A trail crew has been hired for early Fall to repair the ADA-accessible Petroglyph Trail that circles the famous Painted Rocks Petroglyph Site. BLM Force Account crews will make repairs to the site before October 15 when the winter visitors start to arrive. Most campsites and facilities were not damaged, but some of the main roads cross washes of varying sizes.

Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM)

SUBJECT: Western Watersheds Project Files Suit against Grazing within Monument

The Western Watersheds Project (WWP) filed a lawsuit against BLM on August 11, 2008.

ISSUE SUMMARY: The suit contains two allegations. First, they state that BLM is in violation of the SDNM Proclamation for failure to complete the grazing compatibility determinations in the 7.5 years since the Proclamation was enacted. The WWP believes this represents a failure to act and/or unreasonably delay under the administrative procedures act. Second, the WWP believes BLM is in violation of the SDNM Proclamation for reauthorizing grazing on five grazing allotments north of Interstate 8 prior to conducting subject compatibility determinations. The WWP formally filed the suit against BLM on September 10. The BLM and the Solicitor has 60 days to prepare a litigation report and prepare and submit Responses to Allegations. BLM has asserted the grazing determinations and a Proposed Action alternative related to grazing compatibility would be made through the Resource Management Planning process (see below).

SUBJECT: Butterfield Restoration Project and Temporary Road Closure

The Butterfield Restoration Project Area and Temporary Road Closure went into effect on June 13, 2008. BLM is now reviewing comments submitted on the Butterfield Restoration Plan and associated Environmental Assessment. The comment period ended July 30, 2008, and a decision is anticipated on the plan and EA in October.

ISSUE SUMMARY: The closure temporarily closes 88 miles of road or 15 percent of the roads in the SDNM. The closure became necessary after natural and cultural resources were damaged by OHV activities over the past years. Effected roads were either signed, fenced, or a combination of the two by June 14. Moreover, kiosks and additional information signage and bulletin boards were installed at higher use entry points. Closure compliance has been good with the exception of some sign vandalism and theft. The SDNM Park Ranger and Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern are planning and staking the Fall, Winter and Spring restoration projects for the FY 2009 field season. Utilization of volunteers and up to 9 weeks of contracted trail crew time are planned, along with hiring four SCAs to conduct restoration activities.

SUBJECT: Sonoran Desert National Monument Advisory Council (SDNMAC)

The charter and nominee process for the SDNMAC is being re-started as the original Advisory Council Charter expired.

ISSUE SUMMARY: Individuals and tribal members who applied to be on the council have been sent letters alerting them that the advisory council process is being re-initiated. Advisory Council charters must be renewed every 2 years. BLM will resubmit the charter and conduct a new call for nominations upon approval of the charter by the Secretary of the Interior. BLM anticipates scheduling is first SDNMAC meeting late next year.

Gila District Office - Safford and Tucson Field Offices

SUBJECT: Native Fish Get New Habitat

ISSUE SUMMARY: An important step in the restoration of the endangered desert pupfish was taken on July 1 as nearly 250 fish were placed in a pond southeast of Safford. Safford Field Office fishery biologist, Heidi Blasius, led cooperative efforts with the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) that placed the native fish into Howard Well in the San Simon Valley. AGFD had captured the fish earlier that day and transported them from Boyce Thompson Arboretum near Superior and The Nature Conservancy's San Pedro Preserve near Dudleyville. Future pupfish supplements will be made to bring the total number of fish to at least 500.

SUBJECT: Application for Solar Power Generation Project Filed

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Tucson Field Office has received an application from Optisolar for development of a solar facility in southern Pinal County near Eloy. The company is asking for about 2,000 acres for a photovoltaic plant. The company has been sent information on providing its Plan of Development.

SUBJECT: Nonnative Fish Barrier Nearly Complete

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and its contractors estimate that a non-native fish barrier in Bonita Creek will be completed in approximately 3-4 weeks. On October 5-7, biologists and volunteers will salvage native fish from project area then, on October 8, a 1.7-mile upstream stretch of the stream will be chemically treated to eradicate non-native fishes. The project is part of mitigation for the Central Arizona Project. The barrier will impede the movement of nonnative fish upstream from the Gila River, thus helping to maintain a healthy native fishery in Bonita Creek. Bonita Creek is home to five native fish species including the endangered Gila chub. The final phase of the project will be the release of the federally listed loach minnow, spikedace, desert pupfish, and Gila topminnow into Bonita Creek, located in the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area. Another fish barrier is currently proposed for Hot Springs Canyon within the Muleshoe Ranch Cooperative Management Area. The BOR is completing work on that Environmental Assessment, which will be released later this year.

SUBJECT: Final Saginaw Hill Cleanup Set for 2009

ISSUE SUMMARY: The second phase of the cleanup of Saginaw Hill, a 540-acre abandoned mine site located southwest of Tucson, will be completed in 2009. Bids for a contractor will be issued soon. The mine site was identified as having high concentrations of arsenic and other metals. The first phase of the cleanup was completed this year, with removal and burial on-site of contaminated soils. The second phase will complete the process of onsite burial; the BLM will continue monitoring of wells to ensure that contaminants are not moving offsite.

SUBJECT: Dry Lake Wind Project Moving Forward

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Safford Field Office is moving forward with its Environmental Assessment for the Dry Lake Wind Project. The project proponent, Iberdrola Renewables (formerly PPM Energy), recently announced that it had secured a Power Purchase Agreement with the Salt River Project for energy produced in Phase 1. The Agreement is a required step in the BLM's approval process for energy projects. The SFO anticipates a Record of Decision could be signed by September 30. The Dry Lake Wind Project would be located north-northwest of the Town of Snowflake and southwest of the I-40 corridor. Subsequent phases of the project could result in up to 209 wind turbines on a mix of Federal, State, and private lands in Navajo County.

SUBJECT: Company Voluntarily Reclaims Old Zeolite Mines

ISSUE SUMMARY: UOP, a mining subsidiary of Honeywell, continues its work with the Safford Field Office in reclaiming old zeolite mines about 25 miles south of Safford in the Bowie mining district. As the principal operator in this mining district, UOP wanted to reduce the size of their "footprint" in the area, and has voluntarily taken on the reclamation of four old pits left over from that bygone era, prior to 1981, when hardrock mine reclamation on Federal land wasn't required. The first mine was reclaimed last year; UOP is just finishing the second pit about five miles south of Hot Well Dunes. This 40-year-old mine was poorly designed for reclamation, greatly increasing the amount of earthmoving required and thus the cost. About \$140,000 was needed to reclaim these 20 acres. A low spot was left in the pit area to collect water, allowing for increased vegetation, with the idea of replacing the old mine pit with an area favorable for wildlife. Working in partnership with UOP, the BLM has re-seeded the site with grasses. BLM range staff took the lead on this phase, dispensing and planting the seed, which was purchased by UOP. This seeding is done in cooperation with BLM wildlife biologists, who are conducting seeding pilot studies in nearby areas. The soils of the mine area were scarified to help retain the seed, as well as facilitate the reestablishment of creosote bush and other nearby desert plants.

SUBJECT: Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM) Plan to be published in 2009

ISSUE SUMMARY: Development of the IFNM Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) is ongoing, and should be published in the Spring of 2009. The BLM is conducting an analysis of target shooting in the IFNM in response to comments received on the Draft RMP; this has delayed publication of the Proposed from the original schedule. This analysis is nearly complete.

SUBJECT: Proposed New Rules for Hot Well Dunes Published in Federal Register

ISSUE SUMMARY: A Federal Register notice was published on September 2, 2008, outlining proposed new Supplementary Rules for the Hot Well Dunes Recreation Area east of Safford. Three new rules relate to vehicle rider capacity, clinging to or being towed by a vehicle, and safety flags. The proposed Supplementary Rules also include existing rules regarding vehicle use, public nudity, firearms, pets, speed limit, camping, waste disposal, and length of stay. Hot Well Dunes Recreation use has increased from 5,000 users in 1990 to well over 22,000 annually.

Sparsely vegetated, low rolling dunes and large dunes with steep drop-offs limit the line of sight. These proposed rules will help provide safe public recreation and protect public health.

Currently, low water pressure at the Hot Well Dunes has limited one of the favorite uses of the site. Currently, water is flowing intermittently and with little pressure into the two artesian hot tubs; they are temporarily closed until the water pressure is restored. The cause of the problem is not known, but could be related to lowering of the water table from groundwater pumping. Other uses of the recreation area, such as off-highway vehicle play and camping, continue.

SUBJECT: BLM Proposed to Fence San Pedro River Crossing at Dudleyville

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Tucson Field Office is still in discussions with Pinal County regarding the outcome of the BLM's decision to fence the crossing of the San Pedro River at Dudleyville. The crossing is part of a conservation easement that provides habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher. Off-highway vehicle (OHV) traffic that accesses the river from the crossing has caused damage to the riparian area. Pedestrian and equestrian traffic is allowed on the conservation easement. The landowner rescinded a temporary right-of-way with the County because of increased damage and destruction of the area. The county objected to the fencing and has sought to condemn the crossing through State court. The BLM has assured the County that it will have administrative access through the gates for law enforcement and emergency vehicles.

SUBJECT: Safford Completes New Trail

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Cottonwood Trail, located within the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area, now provides a link between some of the area's attractions. The 3 mile loop includes the Riverview Campground, Flying W Group Use Site, Bonita Creek Watchable Wildlife Viewing Area, General Kearny Encampment Monument, and Serna Cabin Historic Site. Interpretive signs along the trail highlight local birds and wildlife that can be viewed and provide insights to local history.

SUBJECT: UDI Dumpsite Cleanup to Begin

ISSUE SUMMARY: Thanks to collaboration with the Gila Watershed Partnership (GWP) and led by RAC member Jan Holder, cleanup of the Buzzard Roost, a large undocumented immigrant (UDI) dump site and other UDI dump sites throughout the Gila watershed, is moving forward. Utilizing financial support from the Gila District/Safford Field Office, the GWP has hired Souder Miller and Associates as the contractors for the project. They are awaiting approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete the actual physical cleanup, which requires a Section 404 permit. In addition, the Gila Watershed Partnership has been working with the City of Safford to verify numerous reports of recent UDI dumping along the Gila River just outside of Safford. There have been approximately ten large sites identified, and work will begin in late summer or early fall to remove the debris. These sites are particularly important, as their proximity to the Gila River makes them a serious health risk.

SUBJECT: Teachers Thrilled with Outdoor Classroom

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Safford Field Office hosted two half-day field trips to the Dankworth Village Outdoor Classroom as part of the Tri-County Teachers' Academy. The annual workshop brought more than 200 teachers from Graham, Greenlee, and Gila Counties to Safford. More than 350 teachers took the hike to the archaeological facility for a guided tour and were introduced to the many activities in the Dankworth Village Teacher's Guide that provide lessons that can be done in school or at the outdoor classroom. Replica artifacts, such as points and scrapers, used during classroom activities at the village, were shown and teachers had a chance to try using an atlatl to throw a spear. The BLM booth at the Academy promoted BLM initiatives with topics such as renewable energy, fire prevention, invasive plants, and outdoor ethics. It also provided handouts with links to educational websites hosted by the BLM and Department of the Interior.

SUBJECT: International Exchange Program Visits Safford

ISSUE SUMMARY: Sixteen engineering students from Iraq, accompanied by University of Arizona professors and an international program representative from Washington, D.C., visited the Safford Field Office on August 7 to learn about management of public lands. A cadre of BLM professionals representing realty, wildlife, recreation, hydrology, geology, public affairs, and range management discussed their jobs and how they interact with the engineering staff, and the Gila District engineering technician provided a closer look at the specifics of his job. After the presentations, the students visited in small groups with BLM staff to ask questions, viewed the mineral and fossil exhibits in the public room, and gathered brochures, maps, and information. The following day they traveled the Black Hills Back Country Byway and visited the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area.

SUBJECT: Middle Gila Transportation Plan Being Readied for Public Review

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Proposed Middle Gila Canyons Area Transportation and Travel Management Plan are nearing completion and will soon be released for a 30-day public comment period. The Proposed plan defines the BLM transportation network including roads, primitive roads and trails, and related travel management designations. The proposed plan was developed based public input received through the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership (MGCP), and the interagency physical travel route inventory completed in 2003; the motorized route evaluation completed by the MGCP facilitated by Advanced Resource Solutions, Inc.; the stakeholder's discussions facilitated the Udall Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution in 2007; and new information from land use proposals and resource inventories. Input was received from other government agencies including the National Forest Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, State Land Department, OHV recreationists and other users, and environmental interests throughout the process.

GILA DISTRICT PERSONNEL UPDATES

ISSUE SUMMARY: Following personnel changes occurred from April 2008 to September 2008

New Employees

Brian Bellew, Tucson Field Manager
Mark Lambert, NLCS Manager, Ironwood Forest National Monument
Jason Smith, Gila District Law Enforcement Ranger (Tucson)
Jason Carey, Gila District Law Enforcement Ranger (Sierra Vista)
Ron Livingston, Gila District Law Enforcement Ranger (Tucson)
Mark Brunk, Gila District Law Enforcement Ranger (Safford)
Kristin Duarte, TFO Range Management Specialist
Marcia Radke, TFO Wildlife Biologist
Amy Sobiech, TFO Archaeologist
Nancy Wilson, Administrative Officer
Chris Morris, SFO Hydrologist
Scott Ford, SFO Park Ranger
Dusty Goodman, GIS Technician

Departing Employees

Bonnie Winslow, Associate Gila District Manager
David Peters, Gila District Fire Mitigation Specialist
Mark Lambert, Planner, Ironwood Forest National Monument
Bill Childress, NLCS Manager, San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area
Maile Adler, Park Ranger, Ironwood Forest National Monument
Jane Childress, TFO Archaeologist
Patricia Gibson, TFO Archaeologist
Michael Cordiero, TFO Management Assistant
Grant Drennen, TFO Range Management Specialist
Jeff Wilbanks, SFO Lead Outdoor Recreation Planner

Colorado River District Office

Kingman Field Office

SUBJECT: Arizona State Route 95 Realignment Project

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Federal Highway Administration has proposed a realignment of State Road (SR) 95 between I-40 and SR 68. The proposed realignment would involve constructing 42 miles of new road. The project has been planned for several years. Completion of the project would involve appropriating public lands for the State Route realignment. BLM Kingman Field Office (FKO) staff met with ADOT, Jacobs Engineering (ADOT's consultant), and the Federal Highway Administration in May 2008 to discuss the project, the EIS, and other alternatives for the EIS.

A Federal Register Notice published on July 15, 2008, announced BLM's intent to amend the Kingman Resource Management Plan (RMP) to designate a Transportation Corridor and prepare an associated Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze impacts with the proposed amendment. BLM received one letter during the public comment period which ended August 22, 2008, from the Arizona Game and Fish Department who expressed concern with potential impacts to wildlife caused by construction. Jacobs Engineering is currently preparing an EA and EIS for the project.

SUBJECT: Golden Valley 230 Kv Power Transmission Line

ISSUE SUMMARY: Unisource has proposed building a 230 Kv power transmission line to the Mineral Park Mine north of Kingman to meet the mine's electrical needs. While no individuals or groups oppose the need for power, there is quite a bit of concern about the route the power line will take to the mine. Public workshops were held at the Black Mountain School in Golden Valley in May 2008. Transcon, the environmental contractor, facilitated the meeting with representatives from BLM, UniSource and Mineral Park Mine were present to answer questions about Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF), right-of-way, site location, the mine upgrade and visual concerns. The public was invited to propose additional routes to be evaluated.

A field trip was held on August 28, 2008, with the Kingman Mayor and City Council members, BLM, contractor (Transcon) and user groups to look at alternative routes. The major concern for City of Kingman officials is potential visual impacts of the transmission line in town. Recreational user groups favor alternative routes that keep the transmission line from crossing the Cerbat Foothill Recreation Area. Residents of Golden Valley and members of the Golden Valley Public Awareness Team are concerned about perceived health hazards associated with EMF and decreased property values. Transcon is preparing visual simulations showing power poles and lines crossing the landscape for several alternatives. A preferred alternative has not been selected at this time.

SUBJECT: Kingman Wild Horse and Burro Corrals

ISSUE SUMMARY: Construction continues on the new BLM wild horse and burro corrals west of Kingman. The corrals will be operational, but not completed by September 30, 2008. The water well has been drilled, waterlines are installed, and drinkers are in place. A contract has been issued to move the hay barn from the old facility to the new corrals and Unisource gave BLM a very good price for running electrical power to the water well. Other needs such as the office and warehouse are planned and will be worked on as funding becomes available. Currently, all gathered, returned, or nuisance animals are being shipped to BLM's Ridgecrest facility in California. Once completed, the corrals will be to stage or temporarily hold up to 300 animals. An adoption event is scheduled September 12-14, 2008, in conjunction with the Mohave County Fair.

4. SUBJECT: Navajo Transmission Project

ISSUE SUMMARY: BLM Kingman Field Office management staff met with representatives from Dine' Power Authority in June 2008 to discuss power line routing alternatives addressed in the EIS in western Arizona for the proposed Navajo Transmission Project. An EIS for the project was completed in 1997. That EIS identified a route beginning in Shiprock, New Mexico to Las Vegas, Nevada. The portion of the preferred route in western Arizona extends from Cameron (approximately 20 miles north of Flagstaff) to Las Vegas that crosses the southern end of the Hualapai Tribe Reservation.

Coordination on compensation and fees between the Hualapai Tribe and the Dine' Power Authority has not been successful and the two entities have not reached an agreement. Dine' Power Authority has identified the Truxston route which just skirts outside the southern border of the Hualapai Reservation as their preferred alternative to proposed route. The Hualapai Tribe has concerns that the Truxston route would cross many cultural resource sites which could lead to extensive Section 106 Consultation. BLM is concerned that sensitive visual resources will be impacted.

BLM Kingman Field Manager, Ruben Sanchez, and Assistant Field Manager, Jackie Neckels, attended a Hualapai Tribal Council meeting in August 2008 to discuss the project as there is now new leadership representing the Tribe. The Council expressed interest in continuing the negotiations. The Record of Decision approving construction of Segment 1 of the power transmission line (in New Mexico) is planned to be signed this fall.

SUBJECT: Cerbat Foothills Recreation Area (CFRA)

ISSUE SUMMARY: During an August 2008 meeting, ADOT informed KFO staff that they would be closing the Coyote Pass Cerbat Foothills Recreation Area access (CFRA). The access provides ingress and egress to the CFRA trailhead located just off of Highway 93. During the last 2 years KFO BLM has installed a kiosk and restroom for the public that use the area. The reason for the potential closure is due to safety issues regarding the ingress and egress of traffic to the CFRA trailhead and back on Highway 93.

At a follow-up meeting with KFO Field Manager Ruben Sanchez and staff on August 07, 2008, ADOT agreed to allow continued public use of the access into the CFRA trailhead as is. BLM will pursue negotiating with the City of Kingman for allowing the use of city land for constructing an acceleration lane for the public leaving the trailhead. BLM will also obtain estimated costs from a local engineering company to design the needed deceleration and acceleration lanes, cattle guards and other required work to make the access safe. KFO will also pursue funding avenues to get this project completed in the near future.

SUBJECT: Kingman Field Office Personnel Changes

ISSUE SUMMARY: Following personnel changes occurred from April 2008 to September 2008

New Employees

Mike Brown, Public Affairs Officer
Gary Cook, Assistant Fire Management Officer
Jackie Neckels, Assistant Field Manager, Nonrenewable Resources
David Brock, Rangeland Management Specialist
Ammon Wilhelm, Wildlife Biologist
Debbie Collins, Property Specialist
June Wendlandt, Wild Horse & Burro Specialist

Departing Employees

Ed Cyrus, Administrative Officer
Keith Curry, Rangeland Management Specialist
Trevis Olson, Rangeland Management Specialist

Colorado River District Office

Lake Havasu Field Office

SUBJECT: Draft Bullhead Unit Travel Management Plan

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Draft Bullhead Unit Travel Management Plan is being prepared for public comment in early September 2008. Public comments have been received on the various route alternatives for the 143 miles of routes within this planning area. A preferred alternative is being prepared that proposes to designate approximately 40 miles of these routes as "closed" for concerns regarding desert tortoise habitat or cultural resources. The remaining routes will be designated either "open" or "limited-use." After public input, the environmental assessment and implementation plan will be finalized. Plans are to begin route signing in 2009.

SUBJECT: Colorado River Nature Center in Bullhead City.

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Cooperative Management Agreement among Bullhead City, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and BLM to manage the Colorado River Nature Center in Bullhead City is scheduled to be signed in early September. In addition, the Colorado River Nature Center CRNC will be the site of the BLM Lake Havasu Field Office 2008 National Public Lands Day on September 27. Bullhead City is organizing the event volunteers and projects, and BLM will provide t-shirts, a commemorative item, and some funding for supplies/tools.

SUBJECT: The Tri-State Waterways Group

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Tri-State Waterways Group has developed a video and draft report entitled "Managing Troubled Waters" to present the issues and concerns of the nearly 40 agencies and organizations along the waterway from Davis Dam to Parker Dam. The DVD and report (expected to be available in September 2008) outline these items in four sections: Public Safety, Economic Development, Natural Resources, and Recreation - providing a framework for

sustaining the waterways and communities into the future. This group was formed and coordinated by the BLM Lake Havasu Field Office and the Bureau of Reclamation, following completion of the Water Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, developed in 2005 for the Colorado River and Lake Havasu.

SUBJECT: Quagga Mussels in the Colorado River and Lake Havasu.

ISSUE SUMMARY: The quagga mussel issue has evolved statewide on Arizona lakes, as well as in neighboring Nevada and California. Kirk Koch has been working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Arizona Game and Fish Department representatives to address the situation in the area. Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has aggressively targeted the problem at their facilities at the south end of Lake Havasu, including research and treatments for turbines and pipelines taking river corridor water to millions of residents in southern California. The 100th Meridian Group and Arizona Game and Fish Department are the best sources for information and reports and treatments for quaggas, impacts on fish populations and water quality, and public awareness/outreach campaigns and materials.

SUBJECT: Jurisdictional Issues on Waters of Lake Havasu

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Lake Havasu Field Office continues working with Lake Havasu City and regional State and Federal agencies to resolve several issues concerning jurisdictions and authorizations for activities on Lake Havasu. Of primary concern at the present time are commercial vendors anchored on the lake and construction of lighthouses along the shoreline.

SUBJECT: Updating Improvements to Park Moabi within Concession Sub-Lease

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Lake Havasu Field Office met on May 29, and August 26 with San Bernardino County (CA) Regional Parks officials to discuss updates being considered for the Park Moabi Reclamation Lease. The site, located in Needles, on the California side of the Colorado River near Interstate 40, operates within jurisdictions of BLM, Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and California State Lands. Within the sub-lease, a section of the site has been designated Pirate Cove Marina and Resort, to which site improvements and construction are being considered. The proposed actions are within the Reclamation lease and include replacement of three existing docks, construction of four additional docks, a walkway, restaurant, and 12 park model/cabin units. The meeting was held to establish BLM contacts and to outline the steps for San Bernardino County to submit the proposal to BLM and other involved entities for processing through NEPA, along with Tribal, Section 106 cultural, and Section 7 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service review and consultation.

SUBJECT: Burro Gather North of Lake Havasu City

ISSUE SUMMARY: Over 70 wild burros were gathered from along the Colorado River north of Lake Havasu City the week of July 21, 2008, by a BLM-contracted crew of wranglers on horseback and a helicopter. In recent years, the population of burros in the area has increased as

well as traffic accidents as the burros roam the area near State Highway 95 south of Interstate 40. The "Havasu Burros" were taken to the BLM Wild Horse and Burro facility in Ridgecrest, California, where they were given equine testing and vaccinations by veterinarians, and other preparations, and then they will be offered for adoption to citizens.

SUBJECT: Lake Havasu Field Office Personnel Changes

ISSUE SUMMARY: Following personnel changes occurred from April 2008 to September 2008

New Employees

Fran Norton, Concession Management Specialist
George Shannon, Archaeologist
Jim Priest, Wildlife Biologist

Departing Employees

Alan Morelli, Maintenance Work Leader
Cass Palmer, Fire Ops Specialist

Yuma Field Office

SUBJECT: Yuma Field Office Resource Management Plan

ISSUE SUMMARY: The BLM Yuma Field Office (YFO) Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement was published in the Federal Register on April 11, 2008, for a 30-day protest period which ended on May 12, 2008. The YFO received seven protests that need to be resolved prior to publishing the Record of Decision (ROD). YFO is working through the protest resolution process. The State Director's analysis of the protests has been completed and the Washington Office is preparing the Draft Protest response letters. These letters will be routed through the Washington Office specialists and the Solicitor's Office for review. YFO expects the ROD to be completed in early FY 2009.

SUBJECT: Hunters Hole

ISSUE SUMMARY: Hunters Hole is a pocket of high quality habitat beside the lower Colorado River. It lies within the limitrophe division of the Colorado River (limitrophe) along the U.S./Mexico border. It contains small amounts of backwaters, marsh, cottonwood, and willow. In recent years Hunters Hole has started drying up and is currently dominated by salt cedar. The Yuma Field Office (YFO) has started working with Arizona Game and Fish Department, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area (Heritage Area) to restore the habitat and improve safety conditions at Hunters Hole. Reclamation is the lead agency with YFO as a cooperating agency. Reclamation will prepare an environmental assessment that is tentatively scheduled for public comments later this year. Reclamation has provided YFO a draft purpose and need for which we have provided comments

and is now working on the Proposed Action. The limitrophe area on the Mexico side of the Colorado River has also become a priority for the government of Mexico.

SUBJECT: La Posa Travel Management Plan

ISSUE SUMMARY: The Yuma Field Office (YFO) continues to make steady progress on the development of the La Posa Travel Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. The primary objective of the Travel Management Plan is to designate over 1,700 miles of inventoried roads, trails, and drivable desert washes on over 380,000 acres of public lands surrounding Quartzsite, Arizona. To date, the interdisciplinary team, which is composed of staff from the BLM YFO, Arizona Game and Fish Department Region IV Office, Bureau of Reclamation Yuma Area Office, and Advanced Resource Solutions, Inc., has systematically evaluated 1,654 individual routes totaling 1,474 miles within the planning area. The YFO hopes to post maps of three alternative route networks on the internet for public review within the next few months and plans to conduct extensive public outreach efforts during the height of Quartzsite's busy winter visitor season this January. The YFO will also hold meetings with interested local, state, and Federal agencies and Native American tribes about the project prior to the Travel Management Plan and Environmental Assessment's formal public review and comment period.

SUBJECT: Blythe Intaglios Partnership

ISSUE SUMMARY: Yuma Field Office (YFO) expanded its Blythe Intaglios Partnership with the Southern Low Desert Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) to include the La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle and Blythe Area Chamber of Commerce. The Memorandum of Understanding between the YFO and RC&D was amended to include the two new partners. In addition to the four project partners, representatives from the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe have been actively participating in project planning, and the Chemehuevi Tribal Council passed a tribal resolution in support of this project in August 2006. The goal of this partnership project is to develop the Blythe Intaglios site into a destination where the public can visit and learn about the intaglios without degrading the site area. The partners would also like to replace the existing protective fencing with a more effective and aesthetic fence design. The partners are currently preparing grant proposals for funding to develop a Blythe Intaglios Site Plan.

SUBJECT: Yuma Field Office Personnel Changes

ISSUE SUMMARY: Following personnel changes occurred from April 2008 to September 2008

New Employees

Buzz Todd, Geologist
Carl Persson, Geologist
Clarence Kent, Equipment Operator
Lalo Herrera, Assistant Fire Management Officer

Departing Employees

Bruce Rittenhouse, Assistant Field Manager

Penny Seitz, Records Manager

Mike Miller, Wilderness Park Ranger

Dan Schneider, Law Enforcement Ranger

Matt Soulier, Firefighter