

Southern Arizona Project to Mitigate Environmental Damages Resulting from Illegal Immigration



2005 End-of-Year Report



**SOUTHERN ARIZONA PROJECT
TO
MITIGATE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGES
RESULTING FROM ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION**

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Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

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Introduction

Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 was the third consecutive year for which funding was specifically provided by Congress: “Flexible funding of \$986,000 is provided for undocumented alien mitigation as described in House Report 106-646 (June 1, 2000). This includes removal of trash, abandoned vehicles, repair of environmental and safety hazards caused by illegal border activities” in Arizona.

In FY2005, the number of illegal immigrants (undocumented aliens “UDA”, undocumented immigrants “UDI”, or undocumented migrant “UDM”) that were arrested on Federal and Tribal lands in southern Arizona once again increased. The thousands of illegal immigrants and the increased illegal smuggling activities related to human and drug trafficking continue to cause very serious impacts to federal, tribal, state, county and private lands in southern Arizona, especially within the borderland zone 100 miles north of the US-Mexico border. Anecdotal reports now indicate that illegal immigrant trash areas are expanding into Pinal, Yavapai and Maricopa Counties.

Thousands of roads and trails are being illegally established; gates are rammed and range improvements are damaged. Thousands of acres are covered by clothing, water bottles, sanitation items, personal valuables and many categories of trash left at pickup-spots or lay over areas. The accumulation of disintegrating toilet paper, human feces, and rotting food also represents health and safety concerns to the members of the Tohono O’odham Nation whose members live on the reservation, to ranchers and other residents, and to public land visitors. The photographs in the attached Appendices illustrate the nature of this litter. Appendix J provides a description of the categories of trash as well as photographs of the variety of discarded items that are widespread to the borderlands.

Illegal roads and trails fragment habitat, destroy vegetation and springs, cause erosion and leave unsightly scars which, if not rehabilitated, will last for decades in areas which were pristine less than a decade ago. The presence of trash, as well as concerns about safety, now reduces the attractiveness of southern Arizona’s premier recreational lands.

Smuggling vehicles not only ram gates and tear out livestock fences or barricades, they also result in tires, batteries, gas cans and seats scattered across the landscape. Abandoned and often burned vehicles are difficult and costly to remove with great care needed to avoid further damage by the removal. Like trash removal, vehicle removal and the repair of resulting damages require a continuing effort. Even though hundreds of vehicles have been removed, hundreds need removal.

The impacts of warming and cooking fires by illegal immigrants cannot be overlooked. These not only escape and destroy vegetation and wildlife habitat and cause a safety hazard to people, but they increase the costs of suppressing fires and increase the requirements for prescriptive burns.

Additionally, the costs of undertaking agency and tribal missions, whether permitting uses or monitoring and restoring habitats, are increasing and the safety assuredness of employees and fire fighters, residents and ranchers is a growing concern.

It has been estimated that each immigrant discards at least eight pounds of trash on his/her journey through southern Arizona. On this basis, with over 577,000 immigrants stopped in FY2005 by the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP), almost four million pounds of trash were left on federal and tribal lands in southern Arizona by those detained. Add to this the number of illegal immigrants that were not apprehended but left trash on these lands, and add this to the accumulation of trash over the last six years, and we now have an understanding of the scope of the mitigation required.

Fortunately over the last three years, we have begun to mitigate the impacts of illegal smuggling thanks to the supplemental appropriations made available for this purpose. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and all of its partners greatly appreciate this support which was initiated by Congressman Jim Kolbe and supported by the Arizona Congressional Delegation and other members of Congress.

Fiscal Year 2005

Funding provided in FY2004 came late in the year and therefore unfinished work was carried into FY2005. The FY2004 carryover projects, as well as the FY2005 work, are reported in the following summary and Appendices. Funding provided in FY2005 supplemented ongoing efforts and permitted expansion into other areas and partnerships. Work accomplished in FY2005 included trash removal of tons of material; rehabilitation of illegal roads, trails and impacted washes; replanting burned out areas; repairs for fencing, gates and barriers; cattleguard and barrier construction; and other projects.

Once again BLM partnered with other agencies, non-governmental groups, counties and towns, and the Tohono O'odham Nation. These partners and other volunteers picked up trash left by smugglers and illegal immigrants and repaired the damages caused by them. Some groups such as the Humane Borders and Sky Island Alliance organized and carried out regular visits to remove trash or repair damage. Arrangements have been made with several sanitary land fills to receive the trash. Trash bags, gloves and other protective equipment have been purchased and distributed to those who are helping with this effort. Beginning in 2005 and continuing into 2006, the U.S. Border Patrol is pilot-testing an effort to distribute thousands of trash bags to local agents for use by the illegal immigrants when detailed by agents.

Individual agency reports follow with detailed information in the Appendices which follow.

Bureau of Land Management

Arizona Border Security Detail

In FY 2005, BLM enforcement from Arizona was provided approximately \$103,000 of this funding to provide security for crews completing cleanup and rehabilitation of lands in southeastern Arizona, and to provide emergency care to any persons found in distress in the southern Arizona deserts. Other indirect goals were to increase the law enforcement presence in

order to serve as a deterrent for undocumented immigrant and drug smuggling, prevent additional resource damage and trash dumping, and provide increased visitor and employee safety on public lands.

In April 2005, southeastern Arizona experienced the Minutemen Project. This activity consisted of approximately 900 volunteers who patrolled the border over a 30-day period. The group was especially active in the San Pedro National Conservation Area. There was extensive media coverage locally and nationally. BLM Law Enforcement presence was increased and a coordinated effort was made with other law enforcement agencies to prevent serious incidents. The successful planning of law enforcement contributed to the fact that there were no serious incidents of violence throughout the duration of the Minutemen Project.

Rangers from the El Centro Field Office regularly assisted the Yuma Field Office in patrolling the border areas. Agents from the Arizona State Office and rangers from other Field Offices in Arizona assisted the Gila and Phoenix Districts. Including the rangers that normally patrol the border areas, there were a total of 2,247 hours of overtime worked during Fiscal Year 2005.

Listed below are the highlights and statistics from this time period taken from Significant Activity Reports:

• Stolen Vehicles Recovered	68
• Vehicles Impounded tied to UDI Smuggling	121
• Undocumented Immigrants Detained for USBP	597
• Pounds of Marijuana Seized	924
• Assaults of Ranger (By Vehicle)	2
• Weapons Seized	8
• Backup to Assault of Border Patrol Officer	4
• First Aid Provided Injured Persons	41
• Assist on Recovery of UDI Exposure Fatalities	3
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BLM Phoenix Field Office

The Phoenix Field Office (now called the Lower Sonoran Field Office of the Phoenix District) received \$189,000 to clean up trash areas, replace gates with cattle guards, maintain roads damaged through use by smugglers, remove abandoned vehicles, stabilize illegal roads, upkeep warning signs and support Student Conservation Associates (SCAs) and youth crews involved in the clean up. Much of the focus of the effort was within the Sonoran Desert National Monument. Detailed project reports and photographs may be found in Appendix A:

- Over 50 miles of illegal roads and paths were rehabilitated in the 2004/2005 program;
- The Vekol Valley and Bates Well roads were improved from unsafe conditions to make them usable and safe for public land visitors;

- Cattle guards were installed in place of gates that were being destroyed or left unlocked;
- Approximately 100 abandoned vehicles were removed;
- 325 abandoned bicycles were removed;
- Signs warning the public were maintained or installed;
- Tons of trash were picked up through the SCA-Youth Corps programs and sites were identified for major 2006 removal work.

Phoenix/Lower Sonoran Field Office Partnerships

- New partnership agreement was completed in FY2005 with the International Sonoran Desert Alliance (ISDA) focused on maintaining the public lands in the Ajo area. ISDA is rehabilitating roads especially through vertical mulching techniques. Their work continues into FY2006.

BLM Safford Field Office

The Safford Field Office (SFO) received \$107,000 in FY2005, which was used to supplement existing assistance agreements with the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Work continued as carryover from FY2004 with Cochise and Graham Counties, and the Malpai Borderlands Group (MBG) to clean up trash left and repair damage caused by smugglers and illegal immigrants.

- These agencies and group and their volunteers (as well as BLM staff) removed thousands of pounds of trash and rehabilitated washes and roads;
- They repaired roads, fences, gates, cattleguards and installed a vehicle barrier.

Please see more on the accomplishments for the NPS, FWS and MBG in the summary below and project details in Appendices F, G and J.

BLM Tucson Field Office

The Tucson Field Office (TFO) administered \$505,000 to address land degradation from illegal immigration in FY2005. This funding was used to start three new partnership agreements, continue existing assistance agreements, and support project work ranging from vehicle barriers to signing. Projects accomplished with this funding are outlined in detail in Appendix B for the Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM), Appendix C for the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (LCNCA), and Appendix D for the San Pedro Riparian (SPRNCA).

Student Conservation Association, Youth Groups and Tucson Field Office Support

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns or associates are the core of much of TFO's program. At least four SCAs are in place working in teams of 2. Because of the remoteness, desert conditions and illegal smuggling activities, the BLM provided SCA interns and volunteer crews with a range of safety and communication equipment. Providing the necessary training and

communication is time-consuming and expensive, but necessary as part of the mitigation efforts, and this involved:

- Safety Training, Equipment and Supplies
- Purchasing toilet system to dispose of human waste
- Providing or purchasing cameras, GPS units and binoculars
- Providing safety equipment from gloves to first aid kits
- 80-hour medical training (Wilderness First Responder)
- 4 new satellite phones, 7 handheld radios, cell phones
- 3 laptop computers

A significant amount of the SCA intern time was spent in organizing and working with a variety of organizations and groups to do cleanup and repairs: see the list of Service Projects below, the utilization of the Youth Corps and many other projects. In addition, the four SCA interns spent more than 123 hours by themselves cleaning up trash left by smugglers and illegal immigrants (totaling over 70 cubic yards). They also rehabilitated illegal routes and other damaged areas. (See Appendices B, C, and D)

Youth Corps of Southern Arizona

The Youth Corps of Southern Arizona (YCOSA), was utilized for several weeks of mitigation. These YCOSA crews are able to travel to distant, remote locations on rough roads and spend several days working in the area. Because they are self sufficient and camp in these areas, they can rehabilitate many places that are logistically impossible to rehabilitate using volunteers. These crews worked all over the TFO. Their projects are detailed in the Appendices B, C and D. Examples:

- YCOSA crews worked 9 days in the SPRNCA circa November 16-19, 2004 and March 28-April 1, 2005 cleaning up 275 bags of trash (137.5 cubic yards);
- YCOSA crew, March 21-April 1, 2005, worked in the IFNM on a four-strand barbed wire fence along the western side of Waterman Rd. The fence is intended to limit smuggling vehicles to the Waterman Road corridor where the road travels through an endangered species habitat (*Echinocactus horizonthalonius var. nicholii*). Participants were able to construct more than two miles of fence along this road;
- YCOSA crew worked in LCNCA on April 3-7, 2005 removing 178 bags of waste (approximately 89 cubic yards);
- Community Learning Adventure Service Project (CLASP) affiliated with YCOSA, December 6-10, 2004. The crew of 12 worked 186 hours collectively to gather and dispose of 124 bags of trash. They also met with volunteers and community speakers on the land to learn about smugglers and illegal immigrants and to talk about immigration in this area. Through these educational sessions and practical work experience, the crew became intimately familiar with, as well as remediated the impacts of undocumented immigration in southern Arizona.

Service Organization Volunteer Projects

Several organizations have provided significant service hours to remediate the impacts caused by smugglers and illegal immigrants on public lands (see Appendices B, C and D for examples).

- Humane Borders provided regularly scheduled project work and 724 service hours to clean up 86 cubic yards of trash from the IFNM;
- BorderLinks, a not-for-profit organization that conducts travel seminars focusing on the issues of Mexican border communities, performed a volunteer clean-up on the IFNM. On June 6, 2005, 13 volunteers logged a total of 19.5 volunteer hours to clean up 30 bags of trash, approximately 15 cubic yards;
- The Tohono O'odham Nation (the Nation) and IFNM SCA Joint Clean-up Project on September 21, 2005, members of the Nation Solid Waste Management UDI Remediation Crew worked with BLM SCAs to clean up the boundary of the Monument and the Tohono O'odham Reservation. The combined crews collected 46 bags of trash over an eight hour period.

Waste Collection Contract

To ensure waste disposal for SCA, volunteer, other organizations and illegal immigrants who choose to use these, Tucson expanded its collection effort:

- Five (5) roll-off dumpster locations have been established;
- Since October 1, 2004, fifteen 30-cubic yard roll-off containers have been filled and removed; approximately 38.22 tons.

Cattle Guards

- Four cattle guards were purchased (2 in the IFNM and 2 for the LCNCA) replacing existing cattle guards or destroyed gates, reducing trespass cattle.

The Narrows Project

- Rock was purchased and delivered for armoring the stream bottom of the Narrows at the LCNCA.

This project will be implemented in FY2006, once the project design provided by contribution of the Phelps Dodge Corporation and the subsequent environmental analysis steps are completed.

Sanford Crossing Project

- The contract for installing the pipe rail vehicle barriers at the Sanford Crossing at the LCNCA was awarded. Sky Island Alliance completed the barrier in December 2005.

US Border Patrol (USBP) Pilot Trash Bag Program

- TFO purchased \$16,000 worth of sturdy lime-green trash bags designed for heavy-duty use by BLM, partners and groups. TFO established a pilot program with the USBP. Each BP vehicle in the Tucson Sector will be issued 10 trash bags. TFO has developed a recording sheet to track the use of these trash bags. The concept behind this program is to send the bags to where the trash is being generated. There has been much interest in this approach and TFO looks forward to reviewing the results.

Tucson Field Office Partnership Agreements

- Two new inter-governmental agreements were completed: one with the FWS for the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge (NWF) for \$14,000 and one with NPS for the Coronado National Monument for \$16,000;
- One new cooperative agreement was signed with Pima County for \$35,000;
- An additional \$30,000 was transferred to the Town of Marana to continue work under the existing assistance agreement.

See sections for counties and other federal agencies in the summary below. Work related to these agreements will also carry over into FY2006.

Town of Marana

The Town of Marana (Marana or the Town) is the gateway community for the IFNM which has been in a partnership with the town for the past three years. Under this agreement, Marana has been performing significant clean-up and revegetation projects in and around IFNM to remediate the impacts from illegal smuggling through this area. Marana received \$30,000 in FY2005 for labor, supplies, tools, equipment and work performed to remediate the impacts of illegal immigration. The Town performs weekly clean-up work on lands within and bordering the Monument. Their average weekly collection is 1,100 pounds of litter. This waste was collected and delivered to the Tangerine Landfill.

- Since October 2004, Marana disposed of over 30,000 pounds of trash. See Appendix B for project detail;
- Marana has also filled and disposed of two 30-cubic yard roll-off dumpster of tires.

The Town has voluntarily taken on the task of removing the tires from the rims, as required for disposal. They perform this not only on the tires they collect, but on the many truck loads of tires collected by SCAs and BLM staff from IFNM.

BLM Yuma Field Office

The Yuma Field Office was provided \$69,000 in FY2005.

- YFO restored an 8-acre border area along the Colorado River probably burned by illegal immigrants.

A crew of 10 from the Youth Corps of Southern Arizona assisted Yuma BLM staff from March 6 to 17, 2005 with the planting of 175 cottonwood and willow trees (native vegetation) from sprouted pole stock along with 880 potted mesquite trees. Wire cages were constructed around each tree for protection from beavers and rabbits and a temporary irrigation system was established.

The tree pole plantings exhibited a 50% survival rate. The average survival rate for tree pole plantings is 5-10%. As a result of the success rate for the pole stock, this project will be used as a model to formulate site selection criteria for future restoration projects. The survival rate for potted tree stock was approximately 20%. A contributing factor to the survival rate of the potted stock was browsing by rabbits before the protective cages could be installed.

See Appendix E for additional details and photos.

National Park Service (NPS)

NPS Fort Bowie National Historic Site

The BLM Safford Field Office signed an assistance agreement with the National Park Service (NPS) to continue work at the Fort Bowie National Historic Site and added an additional \$25,000 during FY2005 to the assistance agreement. The total amount of UDA trash removed in FY2005 was over 876 pounds with some pounds taking great efforts to haul away.

- NPS personnel monitored nine UDA activity sites. Only one site (Site 8) in the mouth of Siphon Canyon continued to show heavy UDA use;
- Hauled out 325 pounds of UDA trash from the mouth of Siphon Canyon consisting of backpacks, personal items and food and water containers;
- Removed over 43 lbs of trash from a canyon on the north side of Helen's Dome;
- Removed another 85 pounds of trash and two car seats from Apache Pass Road;
- An interagency effort removed 423 pounds of UDA trash from Bear Springs Canyon.

The NPS staff combined efforts with the Forest Service to remove UDA trash from Bear Springs Canyon (which is BLM land) just east of Fort Bowie. In April, a YCOSA (Youth Corps of Southern Arizona) crew and Park Service employees cleaned the canyon for nearly two and half miles. It was apparent that Bear Springs Canyon had been used by UDAs for years. In certain

areas of the canyon the trash was over two feet deep. Over 423 pounds of UDA trash (18 large bags) was packed to a saddle on the ridge and flown out by a Forest Service helicopter. Included in this amount were numerous backpacks, clothing, personal effects and food and water containers. After the canyon was cleaned up, NPS noticed a significant decrease in UDA traffic through Bear Springs Canyon.

See Appendix F for photos and additional details.

NPS Coronado National Memorial

The BLM Tucson Field Office signed an inter-governmental agreement with the Coronado National Memorial (CNM) for \$16,000 late in FY2005, so carryover projects will be completed in FY2006.

CNM encompasses approximately 5,000 acres along three miles of the US-Mexico border. The NPS, USBP, and other law enforcement agencies detained over 7,000 undocumented aliens and seized nearly 25,000 pounds of marijuana in the park in 2003.

The impacts of illegal border activities include damaged fences, miles of unauthorized foot trails, soil compaction and erosion, trampled vegetation, and piles of trash and human waste. A limited field survey in 2003 documented 70 trails crossing a 1.2 mile east-west transect parallel to the main road that bisects the park. Trespass cattle enter the park through the damaged fences, wildfires are started by UDAs, and abandoned mines are used as hideouts, camp sites, and caches.

In FY2006, CNM will capitalize on the volunteer resources available in the local area by hiring four SCA resource assistants, working in teams for 12 weeks each to document impacts, coordinate cleanup efforts, and begin restoration work.

The SCAs will locate, document, and help develop a GIS database of UDA impacts on the park including illegal trails, trash sites, and damages to natural and cultural resources. The SCAs will also coordinate and lead efforts with local groups (such as military units from Fort Huachuca, scouts, and other volunteers) to clean up trash and repair damaged fences in the park. In addition, the SCAs will coordinate the production, purchase, and installation of signs that will advise visitors of safety concerns along trails, indicate administrative road closures, and clearly mark the international boundary fence. Finally, the SCAs may also develop an exhibit to inform visitors about border activities, their impacts on cultural and natural resources, and the park's efforts to provide for visitor safety and mitigate resource impacts.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

FWS Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and San Bernardino NWR

The BLM Safford Field Office entered into an assistance agreement with FWS at San Bernardino and Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuges for \$20,000 in FY2005. All of this funding was used in FY2005.

- Just over seven thousand dollars (\$7,257) was used along with FWS funding to hire a term position employee that cleaned up and disposed of tremendous amounts of trash and human waste on the two refuges;
- \$10,000 was used to help install a total of 1,200 feet of corten steel vehicle guard rail at Leslie Canyon National Wildlife Refuge.

The barrier prevents vehicles from leaving the county road and accessing remote areas on the refuge to pick up illegal immigrants and narcotics. This unlawful trend has resulted in damage to sensitive riparian areas by illegal immigrants, has led to the take of federally-listed threatened and endangered species, and has put staff, refuge visitors, and illegal immigrants at risk from overloaded vehicles which have left the roadway.

The 1200 feet of vehicle barrier supplements 550 feet of guardrail that was installed during 2004. As a result, illegal vehicle access has been stopped along a major portion of Leslie Creek previously used by smugglers. Vehicle accidents and resulting human injury have been stopped along this stretch of roadway, native vegetation is healing, and the potential for contamination to the stream (and to endangered fish, plants, and amphibians) has been greatly diminished.

See Appendix G for additional details and photos.

FWS Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge

The BLM Tucson Field Office signed an inter-government agreement with Buenos Aires NWR for \$14,000 late in FY2005 to fund the following carryover project work in FY2006: (1) remove abandoned vehicles, (2) supply staff and volunteers with tools to repair damaged fences, and (3) provide supplies for removal of debris left by illegal immigrants.

Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge stretches from the U.S./Mexico border to twenty-five miles north of the international boundary. Border Patrol estimates that several hundred to thousands undocumented aliens enter or cross the refuge every day.

Law enforcement efforts recently increased east and west of Buenos Aires NWR, resulting in even more illegal activity on the refuge than the large amount of recent years. In the year 2001, GIS analysis and aerial imagery revealed 1,315 linear miles of UDA trails on the refuge, including 117 individual trail crossings at the 4.5-mile international border. This translates to 280 acres of complete denudation, much of which is in fragile and valuable riparian habitat. Presently 20 abandoned vehicles need to be removed. Some vehicles are blackened by being set afire, and many are in remote and off-road areas. Removal is difficult and costly. The amount of trash (litter, clothing, water bottles, human waste) is unsightly to visitors and unsafe for wildlife. In 2004, resident and guest volunteers at Buenos Aires spent more than 3,000 hours in litter clean-up, removing tons of waste.

Cochise County

The BLM Safford and Tucson Field Offices have signed assistance agreements with Cochise County for mitigation project work. In FY2005, Cochise County continued to complete ranch

cleanups funded by an additional \$20,000; this work will continue into FY2006. Various non-profit organizations residing within Cochise County participated such as Boy Scout Troop, local high school students, church organizations, Rotary clubs, and youth groups as well as the Youth Corp of Arizona (YCOSA.). Accomplishments:

- 11.5 tons of refuse from eleven separate locations with at least 40% being removed from 5 ranch sites.
- Monitoring is occurring on some sites especially along state routes.

Cochise County reports that it appears that in areas being monitored, smaller amounts of trash are being deposited at a slower rate. State highway 90 and 92 are scenic routes, and the trash pickups have enhanced tourism and photo opportunities. See Appendix H for specific projects and photographs.

Graham County

BLM Safford Field Office entered into an assistance agreement with Graham County for \$30,000 in FY2004 and this work continued into FY2005. Much of the FY2005 work to identify sites and plan for clean up and restoration was done with the Southeastern Arizona Clean and Beautiful (SEACAB) efforts.

- Near Safford, in January approximately twenty-five volunteers from SEACAB, the County and others removed an old building, picked up trash and gated the site to discourage vehicles from the entering area.

The County roll-out container was filled up with debris and refuse that was scattered about an abandoned house west of Eight Avenue and north of Highway 70 in Safford. The County furnished a front end loader to tear down the house and assist in loading all the larger items in the roll off dumpsters to be hauled away to the landfill. This area was somewhat hidden by trees ideal for various illegal activities to take place. The site is being used as shelter by illegal immigrants and other transients.

- Near Franklin, Railroad Wash was cleaned up last September by a group of SEACAB volunteers and BLM personnel who removed 16 bags of trash including a bicycle tire and trim. The trash was hauled to Safford city landfill.

The crew removed trash strewn along an unimproved roadway/two tire track from the highway approximately eight to ten miles back to a windmill site. Trash included a trail of water bottles found along railroad tracks and roadway plus miscellaneous day packs, blankets, and clothing items. The windmill was an obvious collection point, although trash appeared to be old. Day packs were found thrown into the middle of large bushes or trees to avoid being seen.

See project details and photographs in Appendix I.

Pima County

BLM Tucson Field Office signed an assistance agreement with Pima County Natural Resources Parks and Recreation for \$35,000 late in FY2005. This funding will allow the County in FY2005-2006 (1) supply staff and volunteers with tools to repair damaged fences, (2) provide supplies for removal of debris left by illegal immigrants, (3) hire additional temporary (intermittent) help to organize and perform clean-ups, fence repair, and rehabilitation efforts (4) replace existing damaged gates with other structures and (5) reach remote sites to collect and transport out litter and vehicles, and repair fence breaks.

Pima County covers over 9,000 square miles north of the U.S./Mexico border. Several major highways cross the county. USBP estimates that thousands of UDA's enter or cross the county every day. Traffic includes smuggling of UDA's and illegal drugs. As Pima County purchases additional open space lands and as the rate of smuggling and therefore law enforcement activities increase, the county will experience more damage. Impacts to county lands are similar to other land-managing agencies and ranchers ranging from fence and gate damaged and abandoned vehicles to waste accumulation, erosion and habitat fragmentation.

Malpai Borderlands Group

The BLM Safford Field Office first entered into an assistance agreement with the Malpai Borderlands Group in FY2003. This group has focused on repairing watershed and road damages as well as removing tons of trash from area ranches. The Malpai Borderlands Group (MBG) focuses on the area illustrated in Appendix J.

Within this area of southeastern Arizona and the edge of New Mexico, workers employed by the MBG traveled 8,932 miles in their efforts to repair damaged roads, remove trash and repair fences, etc. Working with local ranchers and reports from the Border Patrol, these men often walked great distances to clean up areas.

- The crew removed 8 to 10 bags of trash each day, working most 5-day weeks in the year

Not surprisingly, the MBG and their workers are very familiar with the nature of the trash being left behind on the area's ranches. A full description is provided in Appendix J along with photographs that illustrate the items.

The MBG reported an observation made by others such as the Tohono O'odham Nation which is that some areas once cleaned, remain free of trash. Why this reuse does not occur may be because the coyotes or smugglers are aware of the presence of others on the ground and avoid these areas. The MBG and others continue to monitor areas once cleaned and remove new trash.

In the future, the MBG will focus on fencing, road work and repairs to range improvements such as cattleguards and drift fences.

See Appendix J for project details.

The Tohono O'odham Nation

A total of \$130,000 was spent on the Undocumented Migrant (UDM) Clean-up Project in FY2005. The Solid Waste Management Program of the Natural Resources Department of the Tohono O'odham Nation (the Nation or Tohono O'odham) received \$50,000 from the BLM for the UDM Clean Up Project. In addition, the U.S. EPA Region IX provided \$50,000 and furthermore the Nation provided an additional \$30,000 of program funds to supplement efforts to assure success.

In FY2004, the BLM Arizona State Office and the Nation entered into a five-year cooperative agreement to address the problem. An initial \$50,000 was provided as the first year of funding and the work completed in FY2005 is reported in Appendix K. The purpose of the cooperative agreement is to mitigate damage caused by illegal immigration within the Nation by removing trash and rehabilitating and restoring natural resources damage caused by illegal immigrants.

The Nation has 2.8 million acres of tribal land, nearly the size of the State of Connecticut and 75 miles of remote international border. There have been as many as 1,500 illegal immigrants that cross onto the reservation each day, according to a June 2004 Government Accountability Office report. In FY2005 the US Border Patrol (USBP), Casa Grande Station reported that 77,261 UDMs were arrested on the Nation's land. In addition, 129,135 pounds of marijuana, 879 pounds of cocaine, 51 vehicles and \$32,500 in cash were seized. These numbers, as reported by the USBP, indicate the level of activity on the Nation's lands. Actual numbers of crossings per day of UDM's and smugglers can only be estimated.

Description of Approach:

A number of forms were developed to assist in tracking date, time, mileage and cost of fuel, site locations, number of bags collected and comments. Weekly and monthly reports were prepared for documentation and activity progress.

The biggest initial challenge was locating sites. Also initially, the lack of four-wheel drive vehicles and communication equipment was identified as critical problems. This was immediately addressed by purchasing two-way radios and reconditioning Tohono O'odham Police Department and other Tribal program out of service four wheel drive vehicles.

Site locations were based on information received from community members, district representatives and Tribal program staff, including Departments of Natural Resources, and Public Safety and the USBP.

Once located, general information was noted about the locality, site description and the number of trash bags collected. Photographs were taken before and after the debris removal. A standardized bag size and color was used to track the volume of waste removed. Volume removed was recorded as a bag count and transported back to the Solid Waste Management Program's yard and stored in 40-yard bins for waste composition analysis and disposal.

Site Details – 84 sites cleaned, 1,420 bikes removed and 45 tons of trash picked up:

UDM sites are often difficult to locate because illegal immigrants frequently travel in washes or use pre-existing trails and roads. An interesting discovery is they travel at night on bicycles in the western region of the Nation. Upon examination of locality and types of trash found, it has been determined that many of the large waste sites are holding areas where UDM wait for pick up by smugglers. This determination was based upon the proximity to the roads and the amount of clothing, back packs, blankets, food items, documents such as; birth certificates, marriage licenses, vehicle titles, bus and plane tickets, Mexican voter identification cards. Black tarps and black trash bags are used to hide from USBP helicopters.

Often abandon and stolen vehicles are found in places where the vehicles break down or get stuck in the washes or impassible dirt and sandy roads. Plastic water bottles ranging from quarts to five gallons are found at random locations on roads and trails. All personal identification documents are turned over to the Tohono O'odham Police Department for further investigation.

UDM campsites are usually pick up and drop off points that are located near communities. These sites include abandoned buildings, vehicles, as well as behind community churches and residence homes. Washes that have mesquite bosques are commonly used as hiding places due to the tree canopy.

Several identified areas were extensively covered with waste that had accumulated over the years of activity and with no clean up efforts. Fire pits were built at these sites that represent a threat of wildfires. The accumulation of disintegrating toilet paper, human feces, and rotting food also represents health and safety concerns to the members of the Nation.

About four months into the project, the UDM clean up crew were able to start revisiting the sites known as high traffic pick up points and discover extensive waste left behind by the illegal immigrants. These areas appear to be regular pick up points.

UDM Crew Safety Concerns:

Since the beginning of the project, there have been concerns for the safety of the UDM clean up crew. This crew crosses paths with UDMs and drug and people smugglers that are using the Nation land as a route to their final destinations into the US. In these cases the crew quickly back off and report the incident to the program's administrator, who in turn reports to the USBP.

Security concerns have always been a problem due to the vast amount of land that the crew works and the remoteness of the areas that they clean. Clear radio or cell phone signals are often a problem making communication back to the dispatch office impossible. Security protection from law enforcement agencies is not provided at the clean up sites. Crew members are taught that common sense and being aware of your surrounding are the keys to performing these clean up efforts safely.

Conclusion and Future Goals:

The Nation has been aggressive in addressing the UDM clean up efforts. The Nation's Natural Resource Department staff are using global positioning systems and mapping software to map and monitor all identified sites, abandon vehicles and bicycles of undocumented migrants. Preservation of the O'odham lands and natural resources is a major priority and is a reflection of the close relationship that the O'odham have with their environment. In FY2005:

- 84 sites were cleaned up; some monitored and re-cleaned
- 4005 bags were filled with UDM trash, 45 tons of waste in past 12 months.
- Quality backpacks and clothes have been sorted and stored for future recycling
- 1420 bicycles removed. Some are being stored; some are being recycled through BICAS of Tucson, a non-profit bike repair and reconditioning non-profit organization which promotes bicycling as a low cost non-polluting mode of transportation.

The majority of this waste has been discarded at the Pima County Tangerine Road landfill and the City of Tucson's Los Reales Landfill. Identification papers turned over to the Nation Police Department for further investigation.

The Tohono O'odham Nation has estimated that it needs \$200,000 for its annual program. With some anticipated funding through this program, the Nation will monitor sites cleaned up and remove new trash. The program will expand into more remote areas, especially to remove and recycle abandoned vehicles, working with the USBP to locate new sites. Additionally, program workers will utilize global positioning system (GPS) data recording and mapping of all sites for better coordination with different agencies and monitoring of activities. See Appendix K for an example of the mapping and recording.



Southeastern Arizona: Area with Archaeological Sites Impacted by smuggling activities.