



Public Lands Foundation

P.O. Box 7226 Arlington, Virginia 22207

For America's Heritage

November 7, 2011

Ms. Emily Garber, Field Manager *EG*
 Lower Sonoran Field Office
 U. S. Bureau of Land Management
 21605 North 7th Avenue
 Phoenix, AZ 85027

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 PDD
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 BUREAU OF LAND MGT
 PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Re: Draft RMP and EIS on Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert National Monument

Dear Ms. Garber:

I am writing on behalf of the Arizona Chapter of the Public Lands Foundation to compliment and thank you and your staff for the massive amount of work which has been done to collect and analyze information on the natural and cultural resources of the public lands in the Lower Sonoran Area and Sonoran Desert National Monument, and to prepare the draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, which was released for public review and comment in August 2011.

We have reviewed the Alternatives described in the draft RMP/EIS, and several of our members attended your briefing on the draft RMP/EIS at the October 5 public meeting at the BLM National Training Center. We endorse your selection of Alternative E as the preferred Alternative. It will protect the "objects" of the Sonoran Desert National Monument, and these same natural and cultural resource values that are also present on the BLM public lands in the Lower Sonoran area outside the National Monument. Alternative E will allow a variety of public recreation activities and other public uses on the lands. The travel management plan appears to provide adequate opportunities for motorized travel into most areas covered by the plan. However, there are public safety concerns associated with immigration activities as evidenced by the public comments at the October 5 meeting.

We are pleased that you have identified the public utility corridors through the area as shown on Map 2-5e, and you probably will have to be flexible in the future in widening and/or relocating these corridors to accommodate the energy needs of the rapidly growing population in the Southwest.

We have one concern about Alternative E. We question that it is necessary or appropriate to permit yearlong livestock grazing on the allotments shown as Perennial or Perennial/Ephemeral on Alternative E Livestock Grazing Map 2-8e of the Draft report. Most of the livestock use of these desert lands in the Lower Sonoran area and the Sonoran Desert National Monument occurs in the Spring, after winter rains have produced a lush, short-lived crop of annual vegetation. The Executive Order that established the Sonoran Desert National Monument, provided that livestock grazing would eventually be terminated on public lands south of Interstate-8, and there are continuing court actions over livestock use on Monument lands north of Interstate-8. BLM is

managing prime Sonoran desert habitats on public lands adjacent to a major metropolitan area. Why would you want to have a few cows on these lands year-round to stir up the environmental controversies commonly associated with livestock grazing?

We strongly recommend that the Perennial Allotments and the Perennial/Ephemeral Allotments shown on Map 2-8e be re-designated as Ephemeral Allotments, and used for livestock grazing only when annual vegetation is present on the lands.

The Public Lands Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization formed in 1987. And, many of the members of the Arizona Chapter have long experience working on the BLM lands in the Phoenix District. Thank you again for your good work on this draft RMP/EIS, and for this opportunity to comment on the proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beau McClure". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Beau McClure
President, Arizona PLF Chapter

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21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85027

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