

From: Lower Sonoran RMP
Subject: FW: Comments on LS-SDNM plan

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 25, 2011 7:59:56 AM
To: BLM_AZ_LSFO_SDNM_RMP
Subject: Comments on LS-SDNM plan
Auto forwarded by a Rule
BLM, Lower Sonoran Field Office
Attn: LS-SDNM RMP
21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85027
blm_az_ls_sdnm_plan@blm.gov

Dear BLM:

Please consider this message as our comment on the draft RMP for Lower Sonoran field office and Sonoran Desert National Monument. I (George) have visited the area, and our friends in Arizona enjoy it often. We have the following suggestions.

Wilderness

We would like to see BLM do a wilderness study of the Sand Tank Mountains as part of this RMP project. The area is now part of the Sonoran Desert NM but was under the Defense Department during the original BLM wilderness inventory in 1978-80, so it was never considered for wilderness. A wilderness inventory and study should be completed, and suitable areas should be recommended for wilderness designation. Margies Peak and Butterfield Stage wilderness units should also be included in the SDNM wilderness inventory.

The final plan should include far more units as recommended wilderness. A pitiful 55,000 acres were slated for wilderness in the draft plan. Please include Face Mountain, Columbus Peak and Yellow Medicine Butte units as wilderness recommendations in the final plan.

Travel System

Motorized vehicles should be allowed only on routes designated for their use. This has become a standard policy in most BLM field offices and national forests, after too many years of allowing cross-country travel that caused great damage to lands and waters. The new RMP should provide for a travel plan involving designation of specific routes, with adequate signage and enforcement to make sure vehicles stay on the designated routes. The routes designated should be those capable of withstanding the impacts of ORV traffic without damage to fish and wildlife habitat and without disturbing quiet recreational visitors such as anglers, hunters, wildlife-watchers, hikers and mountain bikers.

We support the closure of 255 miles of user-created routes within SDNM and LSFO lands that are unnecessary and harmful to the land and wildlife habitat. That leaves 371 miles open to vehicular use, which is more than adequate.

Wildlife Corridors

The final RMP should give more protection to wildlife migration corridors, as described in Alternative D. Wilderness recommendations are a good first step, but those protected areas need to be connected by safe habitat corridors where large mammals such as bighorn sheep and mule deer can safely move between the secure islands of habitat.

The final plan should designate priority wildlife areas and wildlife movement corridors. Such designated areas will provide linkage corridors, and the designation will also have an educational benefit in telling visitors about the habitat linkage concept.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes.