



Maricopa County

Parks & Recreation Department

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November 23, 2011

BLM Lower Sonoran Field Office
Emily Garber
Lower Sonoran Field Office Manager
21605 North 7th Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85027

RE: LS-SDNM Resource Management Plan

Dear Emily,

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department would like to thank the BLM for the opportunity to comment on the Lower Sonoran and Sonoran Desert National Monument Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. We have great interest in seeing the Lower Sonoran Resource Management Plan incorporate strong resource protection while providing for a balance of recreational opportunities.

Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department supports BLM with Alternative E for the Lower Sonoran Draft Resource Management Plan. While we support the general overall plan with Alternative E, we have a few suggestions for consideration.

San Tan Mountains

- San Tan Mountains is designated as an ERMA in the Land Use Allocation Summary. San Tan Mountain Regional Park is an established recreation area and should be classified as such.
- San Tan Mountains is identified for all disposal methods. It should be noted that Maricopa County and Pinal County currently have an agreement for the management of San Tan Mountains; disposal should be limited to these government agencies.

Buckeye Hills

- Overnight camping is prohibited within the Buckeye Hills East SRMA. Overnight camping should be allowed in designated campgrounds or areas.

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- No timetable is identified for the development of the route designations in the Buckeye Hills SRMA. With Buckeye Hills East being identified as an area for motorized recreational activities, the need to complete the route designation is one of expediency so that these recreational opportunities can become available.
- Buckeye Hills should be closed to Locatable and Salable Minerals
- Under Recreation Management actions and allowable uses, Buckeye Hills West is identified as 100% front country in RR-1.2.36 but in RR-1.2.37 it is identified as 40% front country, 58% back country and 2% passage zone. We support a balanced approach with both front and back country designations.

General

- Look at adding additional protections from off-road vehicles and the additional protections for lands with wilderness characteristics.
- Support for providing wildlife connectivity as identified in the plan.

Thank you for your consideration of these suggestions and comments. We hope to see these comments/recommendations included as the Lower Sonoran Resource Management Plan revision process continues. Please give me a call at 480.888.5353 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Teresa Retterbush
Regional Superintendent
Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department

cc: RJ Cardin, Director
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