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Please improve Sonoran Desert recommendations

Comment Number: 1

Comment Title: Please improve Sonoran Desert recommendations

Issue: 10759

Comment:

Please see attached file.

Related Attachment: 111124_sonoran_desert_nm_management.doc

Thursday, November 24, 2011

Subject: Please improve Sonoran Desert recommendations

Dear Ms. Garber,

The Bureau of Land Management's preferred alternative in its draft plan to manage the Lower Sonoran Field office and the Sonoran Desert National Monument is inadequate for protection of the natural and cultural resources of the planning area. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is required to do better under its organic act and the proclamation establishing the Sonoran Desert National Monument. The Sonoran Desert is an iconic American landscape and the BLM's preferred alternative in its draft plan would harm what people value most about this American treasure.

“It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment.”

-- Ansel Adams

The recommendation of BLM's draft plan does not adequately protect the wildness of the Sonoran Desert in the following ways:

- The draft plan identifies a mere 39% of the areas identified as having wilderness characteristics as actually protectively managed for those qualities. This is only 12% of the entire planning area

and woefully inadequate to protect access to places like Margie's Peak, which offers outstanding habitat for bighorn sheep, and the Butterfield Stage Memorial area, which features a high volume of cultural sites such as rock shelters and petroglyphs.

"From whom are the resources of the parks locked up? From the rape, ravish and run exploiter that would disrupt and destroy the biotic communities of life—yes. From the scientist, the photographer and those who would visit in harmony with the web of life of which we are all a part—no."

-- Former National Park Service Director George Hartzog

- The plan largely leaves many lands vulnerable to unfettered off-road vehicle use. Sonoran Desert gems such as Face Mountain, Yellow Medicine Butte, and cultural sites along the Gila River will continue to be carved up by motorized uses in the current plan.

"In permitting the sacrifice of anything that would be of the slightest value to future visitors to the convenience, bad taste, playfulness, carelessness, or wanton destructiveness of present visitors, we probably yield in each case the interest of uncounted millions to the selfishness of a few individuals."

-- Frederick Law Olmstead

- The draft plan proposes to keep many existing and unnecessary routes in the travel network that have led to natural and cultural resource damage. In the plan, major vehicle travel routes through wilderness character areas would remain open to motorized travel. This travel management recommendation endangers the survival of both native wildlife and cultural sites.

"Every man who appreciates the majesty and beauty of the wilderness and of wild life, should strike hands with the farsighted men who wish to preserve our material resources, in the effort to keep our forests and our game beasts, game-birds, and game-fish—indeed, all the living creatures of prairie and woodland and seashore—from wanton destruction. Above all, we should realize that the effort toward this end is essentially a democratic movement."

-- Theodore Roosevelt

The BLM should act to protect the Sonoran Desert and its abundance of natural, cultural and historic resources. The preferred alternative does not manage this important landscape in a way it should be managed. I strongly encourage you to adopt Alternative D, which would provide the necessary access to backcountry recreation and wilderness while balancing the other uses of the field office. This alternative also provides the necessary management that is required by the monument proclamation for the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

-- Aldo Leopold

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.