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Bureau of Land Management
Phoenix District

Hassayampa Field Office Agua Fria National Monument

Special Recreation Permits Business Plan

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I. Executive Summary

Introduction

This business plan (hereby referred to as the “plan”) has been prepared pursuant to the “Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2005” [(REA) (P.L. 108-447)], and the subsequent Interagency Implementation Handbook. The plan addresses the Special Recreation Permit (SRP) fees collected by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the Hassayampa Field Office (HFO) and Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM) located within the Arizona BLM Phoenix District Office (PDO). SRP fees collected by the Lower Sonoran Field Office (LSFO) and the Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM), also located within PDO, will be addressed under a separate plan to be completed in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007. The plan will explain the SRP program in relation to the REA legislation and the provisions within it; provide background information on the types of SRPs issued; describe the management objectives pertaining to the SRP fee receipts; present the detailed financial aspects in regards to fee collections and expenditures; and address how customers will receive this information and provide feedback.

The intent of this plan is to describe the financial aspects of recreational fee revenues generated through issuance of SRPs. Specifics regarding administrative procedures, processes and related issues are beyond the scope of this plan. The 43 CFR 2930 regulations and the BLM H-2930-1 Manual/Handbook governing SRPs can be obtained by contacting the SRP Coordinator at HFO.

Office Reorganization

On October 1, 2005, the Arizona BLM underwent a statewide office reorganization which created the PDO and two field offices, HFO and LSFO. Prior to that date, the HFO and the LSFO were managed as the Phoenix Field Office (PFO). The AFNM, created in 2000, and the SDNM, created in 2001, were also managed under PFO. Since the reorganization, the AFNM is now managed under HFO, and the SDNM is now managed under the LSFO.

Prior to the 2005 reorganization, all SRP fees collected within the PFO had been managed under guidance contained in the original Painted Rock Petroglyph Site and Campground Business Plan, dated June 1998. The Painted Rock Site was selected as a Fee Demonstration Pilot Project in 1998 and the original plan was developed in accordance with Section 315 of the “Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996,” commonly known as “Fee Demo”. The PFO began collecting fees for this site in October of 1999. At that time, a project account was set up (Project No. AZ09) and fees were collected for both the Painted Rock Site and the SRP program, and were deposited into this account. Site and fee management continued for the Painted Rock Site and the SRP program under the existing business plan under the purview of annual Fee Demo legislation re-authorizations until September of 2005. At that time, the Painted Rock Site business plan was updated in accordance with the new provisions contained in REA.

The legislation in REA distinctly separates the SRP fees from the amenity fees [Section 3(h)], and these fees are accountable to the public separately as such. The SRP section was therefore purposely omitted from the new Painted Rock Business Plan in anticipation of the preparation of

a separate Districtwide SRP business plan to cover all SRP fee collections. However, with the implementation of the new reorganization structure since that time, it has become evident that separate plans for each field office, HFO and LSFO, are warranted, and the monuments will be included within them. The plan covering both HFO and AFNM was chosen to be written first because 95% of the district's SRPs are managed within their boundaries. The HFO and AFNM SRP programs will hereby be referred to as HFO unless the distinction between the two areas and programs is necessary for discussion purposes.

Authorities

The authorities for the preparation and implementation of this plan are:

- **Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA)**, Public Law 94-579, contains BLM's general land use management authority over the public lands, and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses of those lands. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to regulate through permits or other instruments the use of the public lands, which includes commercial recreation use. Section 303 of FLPMA contains BLM's authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties. Subsequent Federal authorizations tiered from FLPMA enable the BLM to charge SRP fees for organized group events, commercial activities, and individual use of special areas.
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA)**, as amended, authorized BLM to collect fees for recreational use and to issue special recreation permits for group activities and recreation events and limits the services for which BLM may collect fees.
- **Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA)** replaced LWCFA as BLM's authority to collect fees beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2005. The act authorized the BLM to collect SRP fees and to retain these fees locally so they can be used to repair, maintain, and upgrade recreational facilities and services to meet public demand. REA also repealed the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program in its entirety.
- **Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2930 "Permits for Recreation on Public Lands"** (43 CFR 2930), effective October 31, 2002, contains regulation provisions and the administrative framework governing the BLM's SRP program.

II. Fee Project Area Description

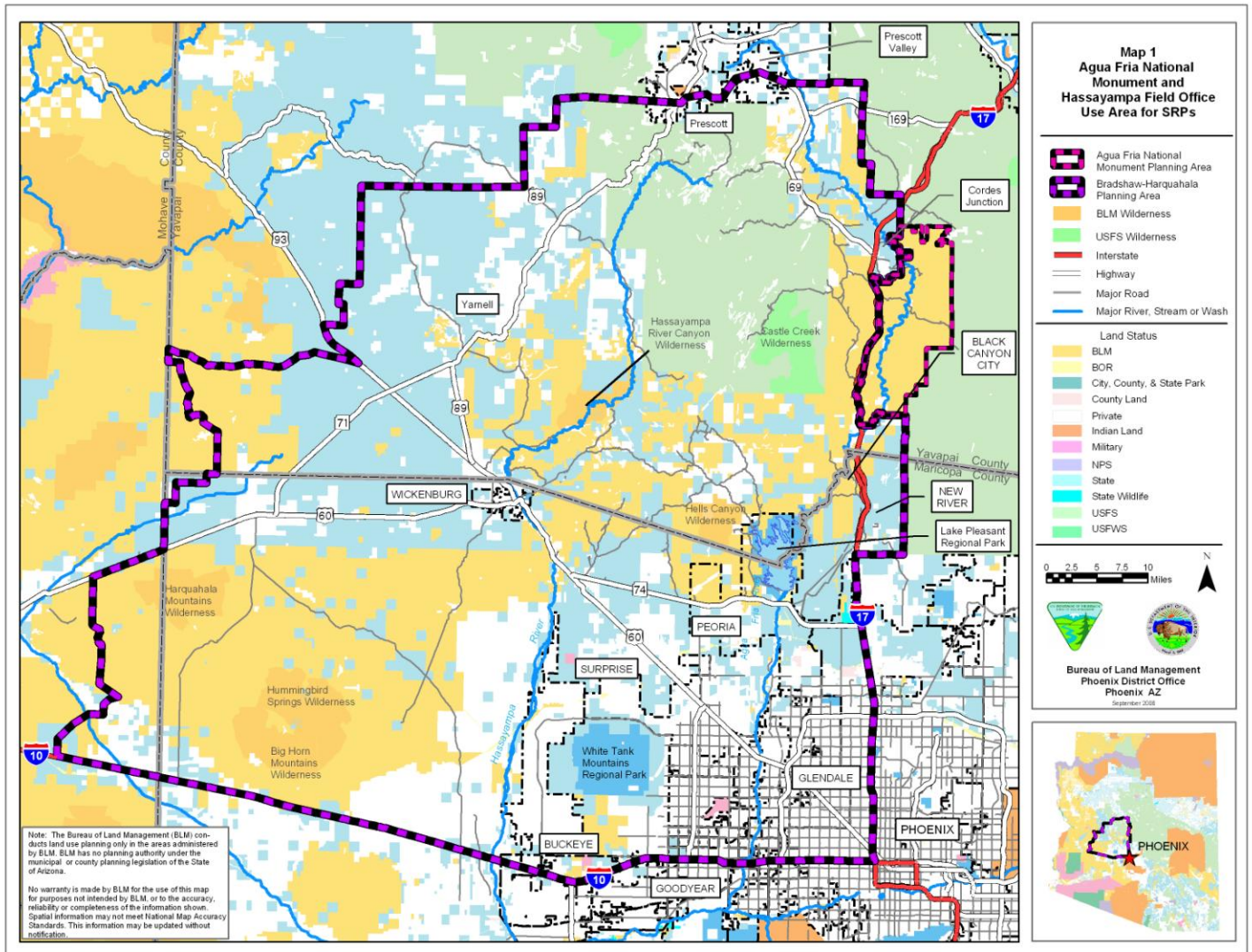
Physical Setting

HFO administers 895,910 acres of public lands located adjacent to the Phoenix metropolitan area and within Maricopa, Yavapai and La Paz Counties (see Map 1 on the next page). The smaller communities of Black Canyon City, Mayer, Castle Hot Springs, Wickenburg, and Tonopah are intermingled in this area and serve as gateway communities to the surrounding public lands. The AFNM encompasses 70,900 acres of public lands located 40 miles north of Phoenix and is

entirely in Yavapai County. Black Canyon City and Cordes Junction serve as the monument’s gateway communities. These public lands lie within Arizona Congressional Districts 1, 2 and 4.

The Phoenix metropolitan area, and surrounding gateway communities, has experienced significant population growth since 1990. Maricopa County has grown 71% to over 3.6 million people, and is expected to grow another 54% by the year 2025. Yavapai County has nearly doubled to nearly 200,000 people and is expected to grow another 70% by the year 2025 (U.S. Census Bureau). While these statistics are staggering, even more astounding is that recent studies indicate the rate of growth in recreation use exceeds the rate of population growth.

Figure 1



Resources

The above finding is no surprise for many given the area is vastly rich in natural and cultural resources resulting in an abundance of recreational opportunities. The area contains primarily

Sonoran Desert, Desert Grassland and Interior Chaparral vegetation communities and the wildlife associated with them. Riparian corridors support a variety of rare plants and animals including endangered species such as the bald eagle. The mixed paloverde-cacti communities dominate the uplands area northwest of Phoenix (known as the Bradshaw Foothills), where the saguaro cactus is a dominant feature on the landscape and the protected Sonoran Desert Tortoise calls home. In the AFNM, 45 miles north of Phoenix, the grassland communities are predominant on Perry Mesa and where desert pronghorn antelope may be found. The AFNM was created to preserve the outstanding cultural resources within its boundary, home to over 400 prehistoric pueblo ruins and rock art sites. The area also contains five designated wilderness areas, two areas of critical environmental concern, a back country byway and is home to several herds of wild burros. Dispersed amongst these resources is close to 2,500 miles of maintained and primitive back country roads and single track trails not only providing access to these vast resources but also offering its own array of benefits as well to the many off-highway vehicle (OHV) enthusiasts.

The combination of all these resources and features is what attract most visitors to this area. The varied panorama of mountains, mesa, canyons, grasslands and high and low desert vistas provide residents and visitors each year with unparalleled recreation opportunities including those activities which can only be provided thru the issuance of SRPs.

Primary SRP Activity Locations

The lands located within HFO offer many areas for permitted activities to be conducted, however four areas stand out above the rest. The most popular area is referred to as the Black Canyon Corridor, northeast of Lake Pleasant, stretching from Table Mesa Road to the town of Cordes. Many OHV tours, OHV and non-motorized events, and two dude ranch operations keep this area busy with permitted activities. Two Indian ruins, the Agua Fria Fort and Indian Mesa, are two prehistoric ruins available that can accommodate frequent tours and large groups. Of the two, the Agua Fria Fort is by far the most popular due to the reasonable driving distance from the larger resorts in north Phoenix and Scottsdale, and the roads are in fairly good condition for easy access. This is the destination for most of HFO's jeep and hummer tours. The vicinity also offers prime boulder areas within wash bottoms that are popular for motorized rock crawling. Several large rock crawling four-wheel-drive (4WD) events have been held there attracting enthusiasts from all over the country. Another activity gaining popularity is the use of the non-motorized Black Canyon Trail that traverses the area providing the perfect location for equestrian and mountain biking events. Currently there is approximately 25 miles of trail offering varied difficulty levels for riders from the flat mesas to gently rolling hills to very steep technical trail sections nestled amongst a scenic backdrop consisting of major geographic features including deeply incised canyons, flat topped mesas and the foothills of the Bradshaw Mountains nearing 7,000 feet in elevation.

To the west of Lake Pleasant, the OHV community is well served with the Hieroglyphic Mountains area that has a network of over 200 miles of routes bound to please any OHV enthusiast from the easy jeep trails to technical motorcycle trails. The area has a staging area easily accessible from a main highway and currently being developed with facilities that can accommodate hundreds of visitors and several hundred vehicles, including recreation vehicles

towing trailers. Most of the commercial OHV events and competitive speed races and enduros are held in this area.

Both OHV and non-motorized recreation users are accommodated in the surrounding area of the town of Wickenburg, 45 miles northwest of Phoenix. To the northwest and to the south around Vulture Peak lie hundreds of miles of historic horse trails used by ranchers and guest ranches since the early 1900's, that now attract equestrian riders from all over the country for the many horse endurance and trail rides offered throughout the cool season. The weeklong Desert Caballeros and Las Damas rides have been held since the 1950's and continue to be Wickenburg attractions. These large events are easily accommodated on public lands because none of the camping and staging occurs on BLM, they are held at the local rodeo grounds. On the opposite recreational spectrum, the southwest area around Vulture Mine offers OHV enthusiasts a variety of jeep and motorcycle trails that have been home to competitive races since the 1970's, and more recently has started being used for non-motorized users and prospecting clubs. These users take advantage of the large cleared area that can accommodate large groups.

III. HFO Special Recreation Permit Program

SRP Program Management and Administration

The SRP program regulations, administrative procedures and guidance for issuing SRPs are clearly stated in 43 CFR 2930, and in the BLM Manual, *H-2930-1, Recreation Permit Administration Handbook*, dated August of 2006. BLM has discretion over whether to issue an SRP. SRPs are issued as means to manage visitor use, avoid potential user conflicts, protect natural resources, provide for the health and safety of recreational users, and provide an opportunity to use public lands for commercial purposes.

Permit Types and Recreation Uses

HFO has the authority to issue SRPs for the following types of recreational uses on public lands: commercial uses, competitive events, organized group activities or events, special area uses and vending. The following is a brief definition of each type:

- Commercial: When any person, group, or organization makes or attempts to make a profit, receive money, amortize equipment, or obtain goods or services, as compensation for recreational activities on public lands.
- Competitive: any organized, sanctioned, or structured use, event, or activity in which two or more contestants compete and either of the following elements apply:
 1. Participants register, enter, or complete an application for the event; or
 2. A predetermined course or area is designated.
- Organized group activities or events: Permits may be required for group outdoor recreation activities or events which are neither commercial nor competitive.
- Special area uses: Permits may be required for individual (private, noncommercial) recreation use in Special Areas officially designated by statute or Secretarial order; an

area covered by joint agreement between the BLM and a State Government; or any area where it is determined that the resources require special management and control measures for their protection and a permit system for individual use would achieve management objectives.

- Vending: Temporary, short-term, non-exclusive, revocable authorizations to sell goods or services on public lands in conjunction with a recreation activity.

HFO issues SRPs for most of these types of recreational uses with the exception of special use permits and competitive permits on the AFNM. There are no special areas within HFO's jurisdiction therefore fee revenues relating to these types of permits will not be addressed in this plan. In addition, since the AFNM was created in 2000, it has been monument policy not to allow competitive recreational uses within the monument. This policy may or may not change when the draft land use plan is approved but it is expected that they will not be allowed in the future as well. Although individual vending permits have not been requested or issued in PDO for the past ten years, it is likely they will be issued in the future to better manage the vending services provided at the larger commercial and competitive events, including commercial filming and still photography.

A wide variety of permitted activities are available to public land visitors in HFO. Activities range from the commercial guides and outfitters to competitive races to low-key organized club events. The many activities and events permitted include jeep, hummer, ATV and other OHV guided tours; guided horseback rides; nature walks; gold panning tours; dude ranch activities such as cattle drives; outfitter guided hunting; guided teambuilding exercises; orienteering events; cultural and historical site tours; prospecting club outings; competitive OHV races and enduros; OHV rock crawling events; OHV jamborees; nighttime jeep rallies; dual sport rides; poker runs; equestrian endurance, trials and trail rides; eco-challenge extreme adventure racing; guided mountain bike tours and races; marathons; boy scout jamborees and hand cart events; and hiking club outings.



Management Concerns for the SRP Program

There are three concerns for the future management of the HFO SRP program which are ability to manage continued demand, customer safety and the retention of desired future outcomes and benefits derived from a quality recreation experience for the recreation visitors and permit users.

The office reorganization resulted in the reallocation of the recreation staff within the district. Previously, workload for the district (formerly the PFO) was allocated between five outdoor recreation planners (ORPs). More time and emphasis could be placed on the permit program as the general recreation workload in the north (now HFO) was spread amongst the large staff, and assistance was available for permit processing and monitoring during high use times. Under the new organization, HFO has only two ORPs to handle the workload once handled by five. The

ability to manage the permit program has become more of a challenge as workload priorities get shifted from the permits to other critical recreation work even though the permit demand has remained steady and 95% of the permits still occur in the HFO. Streamlining the process will become imperative if the current level of permits is to be maintained. Strategies to become more efficient will include extending the permit terms to five years or longer; converting single use event permits to multi-year permits; utilizing categorical exclusion (CX) evaluation documentation in lieu of environmental assessments whenever possible (once the new CX criteria becomes available); and delegating monitoring responsibilities to volunteers or contract employees.

If the demand for permits increases in the future, other options will have to be explored and utilized as well. The use of cost recovery procedures, requiring the applicant to hire contractors to conduct evaluations and write the assessment documents, and obtaining assistance from other field offices are just a few possible ideas. If none of these options are successful, a moratorium on new permits may become necessary. Under any circumstance, fee revenues generated from SRPs will be critical to meet permit demand in the future.

The second concern relates to the safety of the permit clients and participants themselves. They pay for permitted tours and for the use of the public lands for their activities, and in doing so, expect high levels of safety during permitted activities. Unfortunately it is becoming difficult for the tour operators and event organizers to ensure this expected level of safety. This is due to the high level of unsafe target shooting and the encroachment of undocumented aliens (UDAs) in some of the high use recreation areas in HFO. The shooting issues in the Black Canyon Corridor around Table Mesa have become the most critical concern and affects both commercial tours and event activities. Many operators are receiving complaints as customers have felt they “feared for their lives” while passing thru areas where automatic and semiautomatic weapons are being used. In other recreation areas, camps and drops have been found where it’s apparent that UDAs have been left by coyotes (paid smugglers) for large amounts of time. They not only leave trash and personal belongings which reduces the quality experience for recreation users, but they create a high level of concern and uneasiness for organizers to want to continue to use the areas for events because they fear the coyotes will show up again with UDAs during events. HFO law enforcement and recreation staff are aware of the public concerns with both issues and efforts have been made to at least increase law enforcement patrols and clean up the trash left behind at UDA camps. It is impossible to know where and when an area might become the next UDA camp site, so attempts to relieve public fear have mostly been unsuccessful. These issues have a detrimental impact to permitted uses on many of HFO public lands. If management solutions aren’t found, not only could someone be hurt or killed, but permit holders could choose to go elsewhere.

The final management concern is the retention of the benefits and outcomes associated with a high quality experience for the permit clients and participants. As briefly mentioned above, the dumping of trash and other large debris such as appliances and furniture, is becoming a monumental problem on public lands. The remote natural areas that tour operators have counted on for their “scenic” tours, along with the large cleared areas relied upon by businesses and clubs for events, are no longer as remote as they once were and have become depositories for the public to dispose of their unwanted items. Customers and participants have a high expectation

for undisturbed beauty when touring or using the public lands, especially when they've paid for the use. And up to now, tour operators and event organizers have done their best to clean up the permitted areas they use but in many of the high use areas, they can no longer keep up. Operators are receiving complaints from customers and fees have had to be refunded. Again, if a viable solution isn't found resulting in the reduction of trash over the long term, not just the short term, tour operators and event organizers will have to go somewhere else, and the operators could be forced to go out of business.

IV. Description of SRP Customers

Who are our customers in the SRP program? For purposes of this plan, the customer not only includes the permittee (tour operator or event organizer) but the tour clients and the event participants as well as they all derive a benefit from the SRP program. Where do they come from? A demographic survey of visitors participating in permitted recreational activities has not been conducted for the District. Based on observations and professional judgment by the recreation staff it is believed that the majority of public land users participating in permitted activities are local and in-state regional residents. It is recognized however that the larger nationally sponsored events and tours often attract out-of-state and international visitors as well.

These clients and participants rely on the expertise of local guides, outfitters and commercial and/or club event organizers and BLM staff to help them realize the most satisfaction from their visit. As described previously, many activities occur within HFO offering an array of experiences from which visitors can derive multiple personal benefits. The most common permitted activities along with some of the potential personal benefits that may be experienced by visitors are discussed below.

Guided Tours:

A variety of OHVs, such as jeeps and hummers, and pack stock animals, such as horses or mules, are utilized as a means to allow interested paying clients to reach and explore the vast public lands off of the paved roads. Tour guides help their local, regional, national and international clients experience the Sonoran Desert back country without the requisite skills and equipment usually needed for four-wheel driving or horseback riding, and also provide an opportunity for those urban city dwellers or east coast residents who may not even be aware of the vast opportunities the public lands offer or of the unlimited experiences and destinations available to them. Guides add local 'flavor' to sightseeing by providing interesting historical and anecdotal background and educational information about the natural environment as well. They also present land use education and social etiquette information by teaching principles presented in the *Tread Lightly!* and *Leave No Trace* programs. Clients learn land preservation concepts that can be taken away to practice at a later date and pass along to others. Other benefits to the clients are enjoying facilitated access to the outdoors with friends, family or others with similar interests; enhancing their awareness and increase their knowledge of the natural environment; increasing their appreciation for nature; gaining an understanding for caring for the environment; gaining a greater respect for their cultural heritage; simply enjoying the great outdoors and fresh air; and possibly getting some rest and relaxation improving one's mental and physical well

being at the same time. In addition to having the opportunity to earn a profit, benefits to the tour operators and guides include getting the opportunity to interact with people and nature; sharing their knowledge of the cultural and natural resources with others; feeling good about providing a service to others; providing an opportunity for others to realize the benefits described above; providing a recreation market niche that might otherwise not be available; and being stewards to aid in the protection of the public land resources which can lead to personal satisfaction and accomplishment.

Commercial-Competitive Events:

Both commercial promoters and club organizers offer participants a variety of OHV and non-motorized competitive events. Several large commercial and competitive truck, buggy, ATV and motorcycle long course desert speed races occur each year along with national sponsored motorcycle and club sponsored competitive timed events. Several large national equestrian endurance rides and horse trials events are also held covering as much as 50 miles of trails on a course. Other non-motorized competitive events include land navigation orienteering events, foot marathons; and extreme eco-challenge adventure racing similar to extreme triathlons by combining running, rock climbing and mountain bike riding with orienteering. Most of these events attract regional and national participants with some international visitors coming from as far away as New Zealand. In addition to realizing some of the same benefits identified for tour clients, competitive events offer participants additional multiple personal experiences and benefits such as feeling the thrill of competition and a sense of adventure; testing personal skills against others; testing the performance of their vehicles or other technical equipment; improving personal performance; improving outdoor skills; testing their personal endurance; improving fitness and agility; improving problem solving; spending time with friends, family and other people that have similar interests which all aid in improving their mental health and physical well being. In addition to having the opportunity to earn a profit, benefits to the event organizers include utilizing their organization and coordination skills for the benefit of their business or club; interacting with people and nature; providing an opportunity for others to realize the benefits described above; and providing a competitive recreation market niche that might otherwise not be available.

Organized Group Fundraisers:

These events, although considered commercial in nature, are usually low-key compared to the typical commercial business-oriented events. The Phoenix area and surrounding communities



within Maricopa and Yavapai Counties have approximately 15 jeep clubs, 10 ATV clubs and 10 motorcycle clubs, and an immeasurable amount of other non-motorized clubs conducting activities such as equestrians, mountain biking, hiking, orienteering, prospecting and scouting. Of course most of these clubs are formed with recreation in mind and as such they seek places to do their respective activities. Public lands offer wide open spaces with many roads and trails that can accommodate most of the club needs. While the majority of the club events do not warrant the need for

an SRP, many do because they are events held not only for group social interaction, but as a means to make money for the clubs or favorite charities, which makes them commercial due to the fundraising element. The bulk of these events attract mostly local participants who derive many of the same benefits previously described. The primary benefits however for participants is the increased social interaction and activity participation with people with similar interests; improved camaraderie; opportunity to improve or practice communication skills; greater family interaction and nurturing; relaxing and enjoying the outdoors which hopefully improves their mental and physical well being. With the exception of competition, club organizers have similar benefits as previously described for the tour operator and guides, and commercial-competitive event organizers.

V. Recreation Use by Component

Table 1 shows the types and number of permits that have been issued for uses within the HFO boundary since fiscal year (FY) 2003, and also includes projected levels for FY 2006 (the fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30 of a given year). For FY 2007, it is anticipated that the number of active permits will remain steady although the mix between offices may change. Permits for HFO are expected to decrease to 44 permits and the AFNM will increase to 8 permits. No significant changes in the number of active permits is expected for several years after FY provided all factors remain the same (assigned workload commitments, fees and available lands).

Table 1

ACTIVE AND ISSUED PERMITS BY OFFICE AND TYPE								
	Fiscal Year							
	2003		2004		2005		2006	
SRP TYPE	HFO	AFNM	HFO	AFNM	HFO	AFNM	HFO	AFNM
Commercial								
Active	45	6 JO*	45	9 JO	41	8 JO	40	6 JO
Issued	28	0	19	0	19	0	21	0
Competitive								
Active	5	n/a	5	n/a	5	n/a	6	n/a
Issued	5	n/a	5	n/a	5	n/a	5	n/a
Organized Group								
Active	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Issued	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total Active	51	8	51	9	46	8	46	6
Total Issued	34	2	25	0	24	0	26	0

* JO = joint office permits are those issued by other offices, including HFO, and are mostly hunting permits. The monument has not issued an exclusive commercial permit to date. Commercial guide services operate both in and outside of the monument.

One change that is expected to occur as the result of streamlining efforts is the number of issued permits. Previously it had been office policy not to approve multi-year permits for events. However, the policy has been readdressed and beginning in 2006 many of the annual event permits have been issued as multiple year permits. This will result in a noticeable decrease in issued permits in 2007.

Table 2 shows the permitted recreation use broken down not only by permit type but by motorized and non-motorized use, and identifies whether they were tours or single events. This information attempts to illustrate the kinds of activities that have been historically permitted and managed by the HFO to gain a better understanding of what types of experiences and benefits have been provided to the customers and participants.

The table also shows the trends amongst uses for HFO. The overall trend reflected decreasing levels of motorized commercial tours and events since FY 2003 while the non-motorized events increased. This trend reversed for commercial OHV tours in FY 2006 although it was a one time occurrence due to OHV tour guides leaving their employers and starting their own businesses. This is not expected to occur in FY 2007 and no new commercial OHV permits are anticipated.

Table 2

PERMIT USE BREAKDOWN FOR HFO												
	Fiscal Year											
	2003			2004			2005			2006		
	OHV	Non-OHV	Total	OHV	Non-OHV	Total	OHV	Non-OHV	Total	OHV	Non-OHV	Total
Commercial												
Tours	18	16	34	14	17	31	12	17	29	13	14	28
Events	7	5	12	8	7	15	7	5	12	2	11	12
Competitive												
Events	4	1	5	3	2	5	3	2	5	3	3	6
Totals	33	23	51	28	28	51	25	26	46	18	28	46

As for the commercial events, most of them are club fundraisers. The number of non-motorized events is expected to remain steady in the future, however the OHV commercial events dropped sharply in FY 2006 and are expected to remain low for FY 2007 and perhaps even longer. The drop in FY 2006 was attributed to no rock crawling and ATV club events being held in HFO. The rock crawling clubs had held their events in the Table Mesa area for several years, however some issues arose regarding the staging area so other locations were found to hold their FY 2006 and FY 2007 events. It is expected that some of these issues will be resolved soon and perhaps they will again use the area for their events in FY 2008. However, the ATV clubs may or may not return. These club events have been commercial fundraisers in the past thereby requiring the need for the clubs to purchase liability insurance which is expensive if not impossible for the clubs to obtain. Unfortunately the local office manager and State Director do not have the authority to waive the insurance requirement for commercial uses. However, if the clubs choose to not have the event as a fundraiser, thereby making it an organized group event, then the

insurance may be waived by the Field Manager if certain conditions apply. But the down side then becomes that the fee for organized group events must be used (currently \$4 per person per day), which so far has not been an acceptable option for the clubs. They can go elsewhere to camp and ride for much cheaper and much less paperwork and they do so. Until these other area options are no longer available, or they find a way to obtain more affordable insurance, it is unlikely that many ATV clubs, or any other club or organization for that matter, will request commercial or organized event permits.

The number of non-motorized events is expected to remain high. There is a steady demand for equestrian events in Wickenburg and this will remain since Wickenburg is surrounded by hundreds of miles of horse trails and is marketed as “Arizona’s Most Western Town” drawing riders from all over the country. The Black Canyon Corridor is also becoming a popular place for non-motorized events due to the trail building and improvements on the Black Canyon Trail. Non-motorized permit requests are expected to continue there as well.

Another trend to make note of is the decreasing amount of commercial tour operators. Some of the decline can be attributed to a change in the most recent CFR regulations that made statewide permits no longer acceptable. SRP applicants are now required to obtain their permits from the district or field office where the activities are to occur, affecting the amount of hunting outfitters and guides permits in HFO. Most of the commercial hunting is done outside of the HFO, however, before HFO processed most of the statewide hunting permits in an attempt to offer “one-stop-shopping” to the outfitters. Hunting permits in HFO have decreased and will continue to decrease as the statewide permits expire and they aren’t renewed for HFO.

The OHV tours have also decreased over the last four years and are expected to continue to decrease or remain level over the next several years for several reasons. First, HFO had an influx of permit requests from small operators, when hummers became popular and affordable. Many of these operators have not been able to compete with the more established operators and have found themselves doing mostly subcontract work and not needing to retain their BLM permits. Second, most operators consider BLM lands in HFO too long of a driving distance from the large resorts in north Phoenix and Scottsdale from which they receive the bulk of their business. This will remain an issue for operators until resorts are built closer to the BLM lands, such as in the Anthem area or near Lake Pleasant. And finally, the influx of trash dumping and target shooting along the routes to the most popular commercial destination, the Agua Fria Fort, is becoming a serious concern for operators and they may seek alternative destinations if it continues and gets worse.

VI. Types of Fees Collected for SRPs

Standard Recreation Use Fees

All fees associated with recreational commercial uses, competitive events, organized group activities or events, and vending are established by the BLM Director. These fees are updated every three years based on the Gross National Product Implicit Price Deflator Index and are

published in the Federal Register. **The local BLM manager does not have authority to change or waive use fees.** All uses require a minimum annual use fee payment to be paid before a permit is authorized. This fee is also set by the Director and is currently \$90 (as of March 2005). For multi-year permits, this fee must be paid each year the permit is in effect. In addition to the minimum use fees, additional use fees may be required depending on the type of use. These fees are assessed as either a percentage of adjusted gross income and or as a per person charge (refer to Appendix A for the SRP National Recreation Fee Schedule). Discounts for time spent off of public lands as well as transportation and lodging deductions may also be allowed when applicable.

Fees for commercial use permits are intended to provide a fair return to the government for the opportunity to make a profit for using public lands. Fees for organized group permits are assessed to defray costs to administer the permit and to provide a fair return to the government for use of the public lands in relation to comparable fair market value for such services on adjacent lands.

A fee concern that was previously alluded to in the "Recreation Use" section, warrants mention again here. As just stated, it is the intent of the BLM national office to set fees for organized groups in accordance with the fair market value for such services on adjacent lands. However, we may not be satisfying this intent. Public lands in the HFO are surrounded by both state trust and national forest lands. Both of these agencies require considerably less fees for this same use on their lands and it seems that BLM has outpriced the market in this regard since these groups go to the adjoining agencies to hold their events, or they simply conduct their activities on public lands without obtaining permits. In addition, county parks are also located within HFO. Fees are charged for organized uses within these parks, however permittees receive more return as they have access to many standard amenities that the public lands do not offer. Therefore, it appears that BLM is not being fair and equitable to all permitted users by not making the fees commensurate with the types of uses and is not serving the club's needs. Per the Federal Register notice dated February 1984 which originally established the SRP program and set the related fees, it stated that recreation fees "should be a reasonable portion of the average fee charged to commercial permittees and in most cases will be less than commercial fees". For this to be true, clients on commercial tours would need to pay \$130 per trip to even equal the use fee that participants in organized events pay. On average, clients pay less than half that amount for the standard guided horse ride or jeep tour so in essence BLM receives less than \$2.00 per person for equivalent recreation uses and impacts. HFO will continue to bring this to the attention of the state and national offices for consideration when the recreational fee schedules are addressed in the future

Reclamation Fees

These fees are defined as fees assessed for the rehabilitation, repair or replacement of resources or property resulting from damages or loss sustained from the permitted use. Due to the nature of the activity certain permitted uses (such as OHV speed races) carry a higher risk of potential damage to natural resources and property including impacts to plants, soils or fences. In situations where actions do not warrant a criminal or legal approach by law enforcement, administrative procedures can be used and additional fees may be assessed and charged to the

permittee for the rehabilitation, repair or replacement of these damaged resources. Costs may be determined a variety of ways including actual cost assessments or estimated costs based on established tables used by law enforcement or from other agencies (such as the Department of Agriculture for Arizona native plants). When these situations occur, every possible effort will be made to ensure the fees received are applied directly to repairing the damaged area that warranted the fees. In those situations where the area cannot be repaired or property replaced, the fees will be used for the reclamation, repair or replacement of a similar area used for similar permitted uses.

Other Fees Associated with SRPs

In addition to the standard use fees, other fees may be required or assessed. They are as follows:

- Application fees - Set by the State Director and used to offset the cost of processing SRP applications. These are in addition to the fees established in the National Recreation Fee Schedule.
- Assigned site fees - Charged by the BLM for exclusive commercial use of a site in addition to the commercial use fees. This does not preclude general public use.
- Exclusive use fees – Fees set by the State Director based on fair market value for exclusive use of a site for a specific permitted activity if the BLM determines it is warranted based on health and safety concerns or to eliminate user or resource conflicts.
- Grazing fees – Fees charged for livestock grazing or trailing associated with an SRP and calculated based on the grazing fee formula in effect the SRP is issued.

Cost Recovery

Under separate SRP regulations and policies, when more than 50 hours of staff time is expected to be required for processing and monitoring a permit, cost recovery of direct expenses related to the permit is to be charged to the applicant. These costs are deposited into a separate account specifically set up for the permit. Allowable expenditures are managed in accordance with the established cost recovery guidelines and they are accountable to the permittee, not the general public. Therefore, although this may be an additional cost borne by the applicant for an SRP, these costs are not considered public use fee revenues and are not addressed in this plan.

VII. Fee Revenue and Expenditure Review for HFO

In accordance with REA, a special account was set up in FY 2006 for the collection and disbursement of all use fee revenues collected for the HFO permits (Subactivity 1232, Project No. AZ20). Prior to FY 2006, these fees were collected in, and disbursed from, the special account set up for the Painted Rock Fee Demo Site (Project No. AZ09). The following table illustrates the use fees collected (receipts) and expenditure amounts since FY 2003 for all SRPs within the HFO. The receipts only reflect those fees deposited into account AZ09 for the SRP program as determined from the BLM Collection and Billing System for those years.

Table 3

FEE RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES FOR HFO AND AFNM								
	Fiscal Year							
	2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Receipts	Expenses	Receipts	Expenses	Receipts	Expenses	Receipts	Expenses
SRP Type								
Commercial	\$11,026*		\$14,030		\$9,952		\$11,087	
Competitive	\$2,516		\$2,741		\$4,228		\$2,811	
Organized Group	0		\$1,200		0		0	
Totals	\$13,542	\$16,847**	\$17,971	\$11,240	\$14,180	\$4,212	\$13,375	\$8,575

* Includes \$80 for AFNM

** Includes contract cost of \$8,905 for FY 2004 monitoring/collections workload

The total receipts for fiscal years 2003 thru 2005 were \$45,693. Total expenditures for the same period were \$32,299. The expenditures for the SRP program were used for the following items:

- administrative compliance including processing post use reports and billing collections
- contracted services to provide field monitoring and OHV management expertise
- law enforcement for events
- volunteer uniforms and reimbursements for event monitoring
- misc. supplies including motorcycle maintenance, gear, uniforms and cell phone usage
- route signs and decals
- tread lightly and leave no trace brochures

Prior to FY 2006 most of the \$13,394 in excess use fees collected for the SRPs were used to operate the Painted Rock Campground and Petroglyph Site. The remaining carryover balance, along with approximately half of the expected carryover for FY 2006, will be used to pay for route and staging area maintenance and improvements in the high use recreation permit areas of the HFO (refer to Management Objective #6 for further discussion).

Fee revenues for FY 2007 are expected to be approximately \$14,000. Expenditures will be higher than in the past few years to fully utilize the fees collected and are discussed in more detail in the next section.

VIII. Objectives for Use of Fee Revenues

Permit customers and participants will benefit both directly and indirectly from the collection of permit use fee and reclamation revenues. In addition to helping defray costs associated with permit program management which allows for a greater number of permits to be issued, the most notable direct benefits realized by the permitted users will be increased BLM presence by law enforcement and other recreation staff, increased visitor services including providing education and information in the form of brochures, maps and kiosks, maintaining kiosk and restroom facilities at the high use permit areas, improved roads and trails allowing for safer and better access to the public lands and the repair and restoration of damaged lands and/or property.

Without the ability to collect these fees, none of these benefits would be possible and HFO would have to reduce the number of permits issued and managed. The following objectives have been identified for the use of fee revenues collected from issued SRPs in HFO:

Objective #1: Cost of Collection

BLM can use fee revenues for the direct operating or capital costs associated with the recreation fee program [REA, Section 8(a)(3)(E)]. These costs are defined as “the costs that occur as a direct result of collecting, remitting, transporting, protecting, storing, or securing fee funds at a site”. These costs are also referred to as “cost of collection”. Expenses may include salaries, benefits and training. Performance measures have been established by BLM to set a target for cost of collection at 15% of annual fee receipts. To comply with this cost target HFO will use up to 15% of the annual SRP fees collected for cost of collection administrative expenses. These expenses will include labor and training costs associated with the processing of post use reports and fee billings. This work may be accomplished by BLM employees, volunteers or contracted labor. In 2007 this cost is estimated to be \$2,250 based on revenue projections.

Objective #2: Program Oversight

The BLM may use not more than an average of 15% of total revenues collected for administration, overhead and indirect costs related to the recreation fee program [REA, Section 8(c)]. This includes only those costs not listed as separate expenditure activities in other sections but which are necessary for the administration of the recreation fee program. Costs may include budget development and program planning, administrative support and public notification and information. To comply with this limitation, HFO will use up to 15% of annual fee revenues in support of overall permit program oversight. This will pay for labor and operational costs associated with budget tracking, policy development and direction, supervision and guidance, meetings and training and other associated management and administrative support. In 2007 this cost is estimated to be \$2,250 based on revenue projections.

Objective #3: Law Enforcement

The third objective will be to ensure permittee compliance with the stipulations required by their authorized permit, and ensure public safety for customers and participants while visiting the public lands under permit authorizations. REA allows fee revenues to be spent on law enforcement related to public use and recreation (REA, Section 8(a)(3)(D)] therefore revenues will be used to provide law enforcement assistance to monitor SRP events and tour operations. The presence of law enforcement rangers will result in greater visitor safety and permit compliance by discouraging improper behavior of the customers, participants and spectators, and the disregard of permit stipulations by the permittee. Most permittees have requested the BLM to provide law enforcement presence for this very reason. The cost for law enforcement assistance is estimated to be \$1,750 for labor and supplies including motorcycle and ATV maintenance and repair, and standard vehicle costs.

Objective #4: Visitor Services

The BLM may use fee revenues for interpretation, visitor information, visitor services, visitor needs assessments and signs [REA, Section 8(a)(3)(B)]. This authority will help meet several objectives. The fourth objective will be to fund part-time park rangers, volunteers, student conservation association interns and/or contract labor to provide much needed visitor services and field assessments. Services will include making visitor contacts, disseminating educational materials, installing signs, maintaining facilities such as kiosks and restrooms, collecting visitor use data, travel management assistance and coordination, and providing BLM presence and monitoring for SRP events and tour operations when law enforcement is unable to do so. The HFO law enforcement workload is dictated by the most urgent critical need which doesn't always include SRP monitoring, and the staff is small relative to the number of acres they must patrol. The cost in 2007 for this objective is estimated to be \$4,750 in labor, volunteer, SCA or contract services and \$250 for miscellaneous supplies to include training, uniform components, cell phones, motorcycle and ATV repair and maintenance, and standard vehicle costs. This cost may be low compared to costs in future years because recruiting for these services has not began and much of the use season will be missed.

Objective #5: Education and Interpretation

The fifth objective for SRP fee revenues will help customers and participants realize expected beneficial outcomes from their experience as described in Section III. Revenues may be used for labor to design and produce informational handouts and signs, to purchase interpretive brochures such as *Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace* materials, to purchase kiosks or kiosk components and to purchase sign materials and decals to promote ethical, lawful and responsible behavior on public lands. This information will facilitate their ability to learn land use and social etiquette skills, increase outdoor skills, gain an understanding for caring for the environment, gain a greater respect for their cultural heritage, and increase their knowledge of the nature and gain an appreciation for the land and the natural resources. The cost in FY 2007 for these items is expected to be \$750 to purchase brochures and fabricate brochure holders for existing kiosks.

Objective #6: Facility and Route Maintenance and Repair

The BLM may also spend fee revenues for repair, maintenance and facility enhancement directly related to visitor enjoyment, visitor access, and health and safety [REA, Section 8(a)(3)(A)]. The sixth and final objective for the use of fee revenues will be to provide funding for repair and maintenance of kiosks, restrooms and the route transportation systems, including staging areas, which are utilized for most permitted activities. Funds will also be used to purchase supplies for trash cleanup projects. Customer enjoyment, access and health and safety are all directly dependent upon the on-going maintenance and repair of the informational kiosks, vault restrooms and the roads and trails within HFO. Maintaining cleaner public lands also directly affects the enjoyment and health and safety of visitors enjoying permitted activities as stated in previous discussions. Unfortunately the disposal of trash and debris remains a continual problem since it's easy and cheap to dump on public lands. Vandalism to the kiosks and restrooms also continually occurs in addition to normal wear and tear from the weather and other outdoor elements.

Roads and trails used to access the public lands suffer from overuse from both casual and permitted recreational activities, along with water and wind damage sustained from weather events creating serious hazards and access problems on these routes. Historically, these roads have not been cared for because they weren't included in a travel and transportation plan or on a regular road maintenance schedule. It is expected that once the HFO route designation process is done, many of these roads will be added to the maintenance schedule and separate funds will be obtained to periodically maintain them in the future. Until that time, the most critical roads or sites will be improved as permit fees will allow. Limited available SRP fees will not fix these extensive problems but they can at least contribute to it. For fiscal year 2007, it is estimated that \$2,000 of the 2007 fees, in addition to carryover funds from prior years, will be used for repair and maintenance of roads and trails in the Vulture Mine area benefiting both OHV enthusiasts and recreational mining clubs.

In summary, fee revenues will be used for a combination of the above defined objectives as means to manage recreational use related to the SRP program. As critical issues or unplanned needs arise, or other funding becomes available, it may be necessary to shift emphasis from one objective to another. The estimated costs provided for FY 2007 are projections based on many factors and are likely to change. However, the expenditure of fees will be limited to those addressed in the six objectives presented, and will be reported to the public annually in accordance with REA. Any deviations to these objectives and expenditures will require an amendment to this business plan.

IX. Relevant Costs Expended to Manage the SRP Program

Table 4 shows the average cost of processing and monitoring a permit, including on-site and administrative compliance. These figures represent labor costs for resource specialists and law enforcement plus direct operational costs incurred by HFO to manage the SRP program. This information was determined by calculating the total costs attributed to performing these work activities each year divided by the number of permits managed for that year as reported in the BLM's Cost Management Reporting System, an internal BLM cost accounting database.

Table 4

PERMIT LABOR AND OPERATIONS COSTS FOR HFO AND AFNM					
	Fiscal Year				Average Cost Per Permit
	2003	2004	2005	2006	
Permit Processing	\$946	\$577	\$784	\$1,099	\$852
Permit Monitoring/ Compliance	\$803	\$597	\$430	\$531	\$593
Total Costs Per Permit By Year	\$1,749	\$1,174	\$1,214	\$1,682	\$1,445

X. Fee Calculation Process

As previously discussed, permit fees are set at the national level, and not by the local or state BLM offices, and therefore they do not take into account the actual processing and monitoring costs, or other factors such as local fair market value or comparable fees, for a particular local permit program. Since the local BLM offices have such little control in regards to the fee structure, it is unreasonable to expect that sufficient fees can be received to sufficiently support a permit program.

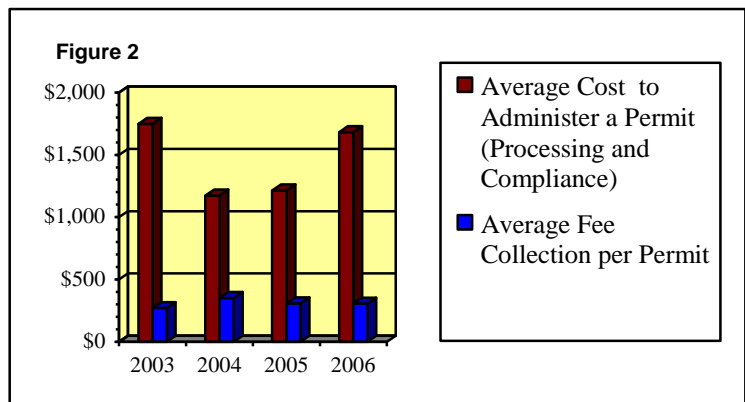
In Figure 2 the cost and fee data presented in sections VII and VIII are illustrated. The chart depicts the revenues that would need to be received for the HFO permit program to be self-sufficient. But even more revealing, it demonstrates the considerable discrepancy between the cost to administer permits and the fees collected which brings to attention just how much baseline appropriated recreation dollars is relied upon to subsidize the permit program. It should be noted that when deriving these cost figures, none of the permits included in the permit counts were processed using cost recovery money which would have resulted in an incorrect permit cost average if not appropriately adjusted.

One factor the table fails to take into consideration is the fact that few permits are “average” in regards to the amount of processing and monitoring time involved. Some permit

applications may only need a quick review due to the nature of the activity such as hunting permits, or jeep tours on previously analyzed trails. On the other hand, some permit applications are for new proposed activities that are far more complex to process and monitor, particularly OHV competitive events. Due to the higher potential for resource impacts, safety issues, user conflicts and a greater sensitivity from other agencies, other groups and the general public, they involve more thorough environmental analysis than usually required for the common non-motorized events. Consequently these applications require more resource specialists and staff time to evaluate, process and administer. Even then, they may or may not meet the criteria for cost recovery so that these costs are borne by the applicant. And as stated previously, cost recovery in regards to SRPs is not applicable to this plan and is not addressed.

It is these fee concerns that again illustrate the need for HFO, and other BLM offices, to improve business practices and streamline processes and procedures to make the SRP program more efficient and in turn, less costly. Areas to consider for improvement can include the following:

- simplifying the environmental analysis process;
- standardizing and reducing unnecessary or inappropriate stipulations; and
- increase the use of the internet to get information out to interested publics and improve internet services to aid in streamlining the permit application process.



However, as explained earlier, only 15% of the recreation permit fee revenues can be expended on developing such efforts and is dependent on the availability of appropriated funds and sufficient staff time to develop.

XI. Customer Feedback Mechanisms

SRP permittees can currently provide general feedback to HFO regarding the SRP program in two ways: 1) by providing written comments on the Post Use Report forms submitted semi-annually, or thru direct contact with the HFO SRP Coordinator in person or by phone.

SRP clients and participants have several unsolicited ways to provide comments to HFO regarding the permit program. Indirect approaches would be to provide comments to their tour operator or their event organizer who can in turn relay the concerns to the SRP Coordinator. They could also access the Arizona BLM's website at www.az.blm.gov and submit a comment to the webmaster using the comment link. For event participants, a more direct approach would be to locate a BLM law enforcement officer or staff person at the event and directly convey the information. For tour customers, they could obtain the BLM SRP Coordinator or other employee's contact information from their tour guide and contact the person directly.

Potential mechanisms to proactively solicit and collect comments could be to informally talk to customers and participants while monitoring activities. The best and preferable method would be to develop a formal visitor use survey designed for those engaged in permitted activities. This survey would be made available thru tour operators and event organizers. The down side to this option is that these surveys are not simply or quickly done because they require State Office, Washington Office and Office of Management and Budget approvals and take a considerable amount of time for development and approval. Printing fees are also involved but it is recognized that they are the best method so this option will be researched further

XII. Public Participation and Communication Plan

Public Participation

REA requires that the public be provided opportunities to participate **in the development of, or changing of, a recreation fee established under REA** [REA, Section 4(a)]. It further states that before establishing any new recreation fee area, the public will be provided the opportunity for public involvement by establishing guidelines for public involvement and guidelines on how agencies will demonstrate on an annual basis how they have provided information to the public on the use of recreation fee revenues; and these guidelines will be published in the Federal Register [REA, Sections 4(c)1-3].

HFO has concluded that public participation is not necessary for this plan and is not subject to a comment period. This determination was made based on the following: 1) Section 4 of REA is not applicable to the SRP program in HFO since no fees are being established. As stated

previously, standard fees for permitted recreation activities are set by the BLM Director and published in the National Recreation Fee Schedule. The public may only provide comments on the established fee structure or fee amounts when afforded the opportunity by the National Office. Local managers and State Directors do not have the authority to adjust fees. 2) The SRP program is not establishing a new fee area or program. It has been part of the Painted Rock Site, an approved Fee Demonstration Pilot Project since 1998 and included in the approved business plan for that project for which public participation was obtained. It is recognized however that public participation is beneficial and in the best interest of the BLM and interested parties. Therefore a communication plan for doing so has been written and is presented below.

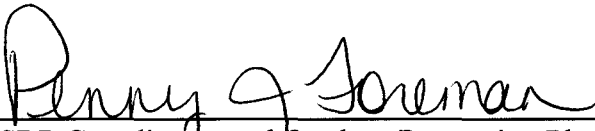
Communication Plan

Management objectives were presented in Section VIII which discussed the planned uses for future fee revenues expected to be collected by the HFO SRP program. Full disclosure of actual expenditures must be reported annually to the public in accordance with REA. The following mechanisms will be used to both inform the public of such fee use and to solicit public comments regarding fee expenditures:

1. Upon final approval, this plan will be sent to all current permittees thru regular postal mail or by electronic mail. It will include a letter giving a brief overview of REA requirements and inviting them to provide feedback to us concerning the expenditure of their fees. It will also ask that they inform their clients or participants of the plan availability and to provide copies to them upon request.
2. The plan, and the above mentioned letter, will be posted on the Phoenix District website for review by any interested members of the public.
3. At the end of each fiscal year, and no later than November 1 of each year, an annual progress report will be sent to all current permittees and posted to the Phoenix District website. The report will include the following information:
 - An overview of REA and expenditure guidelines.
 - A brief description of the SRP program in general.
 - Permit statistics for the year and highlights on at least one permit in each use type category.
 - Summary of expenditures and benefits provided to the public.
 - Accounting summary by major category component that corresponds with the objectives presented in this plan.
 - Projection of expenditures for the upcoming year.
 - An open invitation to the public requesting suggestions and comments concerning the use of the fee revenues
4. This report will be made available to customers at all permitted events.
5. This report will be provided with all newly issued permits.

XIII. RECOMMENDATIONS, REVIEWS and APPROVALS

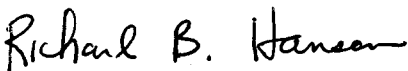
Recommended By:



SRP Coordinator and Outdoor Recreation Planner
Hassayampa Field Office

9/28/07
Date

Reviewed By:



Resource Advisor for Recreation
Phoenix District

9-28-07
Date

Approved By:



Field Manager
Hassayampa Field Office

9/28/07
Date

Appendix A

NATIONAL RECREATION FEE SCHEDULE

Permit Type	Type of Recreation Fee		
	Minimum	Use	Cost Recovery
Commercial or Vending	\$90, Adjusted every three (3) years based on IPDI*	Three(3) percent of Gross Receipts	
Commercial Assignment of a non-exclusive site		\$180, Adjusted every three (3) years based on IPDI	
Commercial Assignment of an exclusive site	\$180, Adjusted every three (3) years based on IPDI, actual appraised value should be assessed		
Commercial, Competitive, or Organized Group or Events			If more than 50 hours of staff time is required to process and administer the permit, cost recovery charges begin with the first hour. This is the BLM average state work-month cost.
Competitive	\$90, adjusted every three (3) years based on IPDI	Three percent (3) of Gross Receipts or \$4 per participant per day or whichever is greater.	
Organized Group or Event	\$4 per person per day or \$90, whichever is greater		

* = Implicit Price Deflator Index

The fee adjustment shown above was effective on March 1, 2005 and will remain in effect through March 1, 2008.