

**Bureau of Land Management – Arizona  
Resource Advisory Council Meeting  
November 14, 2019**

**BLM Arizona State Office  
One North Central Avenue, Suite 800  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004**

**RAC Members:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Residence</b>	<b>Interest Represented</b>	<b>Term Expires</b>	<b>Present</b>
Bill Brake*	Scottsdale	Grazing	01/2020	Y
Stephen Williams	Elgin	Public-At-Large	01/2020	Y
Emmett Sturgill	Kingman	Grazing	01/2020	Y
Krishna Parameswaran	Scottsdale	Energy/Minerals	09/2021	Y
Michael Quigley	Tucson	Non-Commodity/Environmental	01/2020	Y
Sharma Torrens	Tempe	Archeology and Cultural Resources	01/2019	Y
Michael Dawson	Tucson	Environmental	09/2021	Y
Gary Watson	Kingman	Local Area/Elected Official	09/2021	Y
Holly Jaleski	Flagstaff	Public-At-Large	09/2021	Y
Jim deVos (non-voting)	Phoenix	Arizona Game and Fish Department	n/a	Y

**BLM Staff:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Present</b>
Raymond Suazo	Arizona State Director	Arizona State Office	Y
Karen Kelleher	Arizona State Associate Director	Arizona State Office	N
Amber Cargile	Deputy State Director, Communications	Arizona State Office	Y
Jerry Davis	Acting Deputy State Director, Resources & Planning	Arizona State Office	Y
Elena Fink	Deputy State Director, Lands, Minerals & Energy	Arizona State Office	Y
Michael Herder	District Manager	Arizona Strip District	Y
Leon Thomas	District Manager	Phoenix District	Y
William Mack	District Manager	Colorado River District	Y
Scott Feldhausen	District Manager	Gila District	Y
Dolores Garcia	Public Affairs Specialist	Arizona State Office	Y
Dawn Smith	Recording Secretary	Arizona State Office	Y

**Public in Attendance:** *See the attached sign-in sheet.*

## Meeting Minutes

### **Agenda Item: RAC Business Meeting Called to Order/Introductions**

**Presenter:** Bill Brake, Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Chair

- Meeting called to order at 8:30 A.M.
- Welcomed RAC members and others to the meeting and introduced Stephen Williams as the Recreation RAC chairperson. He was nominated and approved as Recreation RAC chairperson on the working group day.

### **Agenda Item: State Director's Opening Remarks**

**Presenter:** Raymond Suazo, BLM Arizona State Director/Designated Federal Official

- Welcomed new and returning RAC members and provided an overview of current initiatives in the state, including a recap of this year's major projects, border-related work and partnerships, the BLM Arizona Outreach and Engagement planning effort, Aravaipa Hot Shot certification, wildland fire update, Integrated Vegetation management, Dingell Act implementation efforts and the Department of the Interior regionalization.

#### *RAC Chair Comment:*

- RAC Chairman Bill Brake recognized the BLM Arizona team for their outstanding work with the public.

#### *Arizona Game and Fish Comment:*

- Arizona Game and Fish Department representative Jim deVos recognized Ray Suazo as the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Federal Conservation Partner of the Year. Ray is an innovative leader with an eye for partnerships and collaboration. The BLM team worked with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to identify research priorities, and he helped secure federal funding for a study that would collar mule deer to track their migration corridor movement.

### **Agenda Topic: District Updates (*See RAC\_DM DSD Report*)**

*The BLM Arizona District Managers provided brief updates on work their Districts are accomplishing on the ground in order to advance the Secretary's Orders, Department of the Interior priorities, and improve customer service in Arizona.*

**Presenter:** Mike Herder, Arizona Strip District Manager

- Arizona Strip District
  - Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)
- Arizona Field Office
  - Lake Powell Pipeline/Arizona Strip Field Office (Kanab Creek ACEC) Proposed RMP Amendment Update
- Vermillion Cliffs National Monument

- BLM to Release Decision for Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan visitor use increase

**Presenter:** William Mack, Colorado River District Manager

- Colorado River District
  - Law Enforcement (Public Safety)
  - Fire Management Program (Public Safety, Ecological Function)
  - Dingell Act implementation
- Kingman Field Office
  - Black Mountain Herd Management Area Wild Burro Gather EA (Sustainability)
  - Moss Mine Expansion (Working Landscapes)
- Lake Havasu Field Office
  - Fisheries Program
    - Recreation Program/Pilot for “Your Pass Now” Program
- Yuma Field Office
  - Ten West Link Transmission Line
  - Mittry Lake North Shore Access
  - Yuma Proving Ground Withdrawal
  - Fee Amenity & Long-Term Visitor Areas (LTVA) Business Plan Update
  - Copperstone Mine Plan of Operation

**Presenter:** Leon Thomas, Phoenix District Manager

- Phoenix District Office
  - Recreation Shooting Sports Project
- Hassayampa Field Office (HFO) and Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM)
  - Vulture Mountains Recreation and Public Parks (R&PP) Lease
  - Outcome-Based Grazing and Horseshoe Grazing Allotment Lease Decision
  - Dingell Act, Sec. 1017. Embury-Riddle Tri-City Land Exchange

*RAC Member Comment:* Concern regarding the Hassayampa Field Office being short staffed.

*Arizona State Director Response:* It is a top priority to fill these positions.

- Lower Sonoran Field Office (LSFO) / Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM)
  - Sonoran Valley Parkway
  - Juan Bautista De Anza Recreation Management Zone
  - Securing America’s Border Resources (SABR)
  - Peralta Park

**Presenter:** Scott Feldhausen, Gila District Manager

- Gila District Office

- San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS)
- Ray Mine Land Exchange
- Integrated Vegetation Management
- Tucson Field Office
  - Proposed Resolution Mine Land Exchange & Mining Plan of Operations
  - Ripsey Wash Tailings Impoundment
  - Dingell Act, Sec. 1004. Udall Park Land Exchange
  - Dingell Act, Sec. 1007. Pascua Yaqui Tribe land conveyance
- Safford Field Office
  - Holbrook Basin Oil & Gas Interest

**Agenda Topic:** Recreation RAC Session (*See Proposed Fee Change*)

**Presenters:** Stephen Williams, Recreation RAC Chair; Francisco Valenzuela, USFS Director of Recreation, Heritage & Wilderness Resources; Jeremy Golston, USFS Recreation Fee Program Manager; Brian Poturalski, USFS; and Kyung Koh, USFS

- The Recreation RAC discussed 11 U.S. Forest Service Phased Fee proposals in Arizona.
  - Coconino National Forest
    - Blue Ridge Campground
    - Rock Crossing Campground
    - Knoll Lake Campground
    - Elks Group Campground
    - Long Valley Group Campground
    - Moqui Group Campground
    - Clint’s Well Campground
    - Kehl Springs Campground
  - Kaibab National Forest
    - Ten X Campground Recreation Fee Increase
    - Ten X Group Campground Site “A” Recreation Fee Increase
    - Ten X Group Campground Site “B” Recreation Fee Increase

*U.S. Forest Service Comments:*

- The camping fees have not changed in 18 years.
  - There is an Allocated Funds gap of \$180,440 per year
- There are designated dispersed campgrounds for those with low income.
- Generate reinvestment in our forests.
- Trying to align with the fair market value.
- The Inter-Agency America the Beautiful Senior Pass / Access Pass will still be accepted for 50% discount as single family Units.

**Public Comment Period—Fee Proposals (30 minutes)**

*Two Public Comments: (See Public Sign In)*

1. Sandy had heartfelt comments; she appreciated the Recreation RAC process to listen to the public prior to voting. She was a prior Camp Host with the U.S. Forest Service and she believes the increases are needed to have sustainable lands. She wants to pay more; so, she does not see the toilet paper and the trash on public lands. As a Camp Host, she polled other campers and they agree to pay more, as well.
2. Carl believes without the fee increase you have a non-sustainable campground. He, too, talked with several of the public who encourage the needed increases. The U.S. Forest Service land...is everybody's land. Additionally, Carl advised more bear boxes are needed on the campgrounds.

### **Recreation RAC Votes on Recommendation**

*Recreation RAC Chairperson Comment:* The Forest Service did a remarkable job presenting the proposal. So, I, as Chair would like to make two motions.

1. Motion to support the Mogollan Rim Ranger District / Coconino National Forest Campground *revised* fee increases made by, Leland "Bill" Brake  
Seconded by Dr. Krishna Paraweswaran  
Vote: For 8 Against 1
2. Motion to support the Tusayan Ranger District / Kaibab National Forest (Ten X) Campground *revised* fee increases with an extra vehicle fee of \$5.00 per car made by Michael Quigley.  
Seconded by Leland "Bill" Brake  
Vote: For 9 Against 0

*Note:* The initial motion to support the Tusayan Ranger District / Kaibab National Forest Campground proposed fee increase made by Emmett Sturgill and Seconded by Michael Dawson. Original motion was withdrawn by Emmett Sturgill.

*RAC Member Comments/Discussion:* Mike Quigley motioned to not phase-in the rate increase at Ten X over a 2 year period due to visitation patterns. About 50% of users are from outside the US (thus not paying taxes to support our federal parks and forests) and about 40% of visitors are from out-of-state and thus travel some distance to see the Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP). In the overall picture of user costs the increase from \$10 to \$20 a night is a minimal expense for users that may have traveled many miles and will pay a \$35 fee the next day just to enter GCNP. Visitors will begin to see substantive on-site improvements by the Kaibab National Forest in 2020 that puts the site on-par or better than other off-GCNP sites in the area. No need to phase in increase between 2020 and 2022.

- The Recreation RAC accepted the U.S. Forest Service Revised Campground fee increases.

Recreation RAC Session Adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

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**Public Comment Period – General RAC (30 minutes):**

- No public comments were made.
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**Wrap-up:**

Raymond Suazo thanked members Leland “Bill” Brake, Emmett Sturgill, Mike Quigley, Sharma Torrens and Stephen Williams, whose terms expire in January 2020.

**Next Meeting Discussion:** No quorum until new members are appointed.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Dawn Smith.

**BLM Arizona Resource Advisory Council  
District Managers/Deputy State Directors Report  
November 2019**

**Arizona Strip District**

Michael Herder, District Manager

**1. SUBJECT: Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)**

**SUMMARY:** Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) team made up of various programs within the Arizona Strip District worked together to achieve a common goal of protecting, maintaining and restoring ecologically diverse plant communities on the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument and the Arizona Strip Field Office.

The Arizona Strip District has completed over 10,000 acres on 11 treatment areas of mechanical, chemical and prescribed fire treatments in the Uinkaret Mountains of Northern Arizona. These highly successful treatment projects enhance important wildlife habitat by promoting growth of key forage plants, opening up wildlife migration corridors, and reducing the potential for high-intensity wildfires. Objectives for these projects include restoring healthy landscapes by promoting soil stability, reducing the potential for erosion, and limiting the spread of exotic or invasive species. Another 22,000 acres of treatment are planned for FY20 on the Arizona Strip District. A major success during the FY19 fire season was our Trumbull Fire that was managed for resource benefit, accomplishing nearly 11,691 total treatment acres which was planned as a prescribed fire for FY20. All of the above takes close coordination with many resources internally and externally for our program to be successful. All of this success was because of the partnerships we have on lands managed by the Arizona Strip Field Office and the Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, within the Arizona Strip District.

***Arizona Strip Field Office***

Lorraine Christian, Field Manager

**2. SUBJECT: Lake Powell Pipeline/Arizona Strip Field Office (Kanab Creek ACEC)  
Proposed RMP Amendment Update**

**SUMMARY:** The Utah Board of Water Resources (UBWR) proposes to construct a 69-inch-diameter water pipeline from Lake Powell to Sand Hollow Reservoir (near Hurricane, Utah), with a 24-inch-spur pipeline to Kanab, Utah, to meet the forecasted water demand for these areas. The proposed Lake Powell Pipeline Project (LPP), for which the BLM is a cooperating agency, would cross a portion of the 13,148-acre Kanab Creek ACEC located on the Arizona Strip Field Office—for approximately 1.5 miles. About one mile of this would be in a designated utility corridor, while the other 0.5 mile would be located inside the ACEC but outside the designated utility corridor. An RMP amendment is necessary to consider allowing the proposed LPP to cross the ACEC outside of the utility corridor because the RMP directs that new land use authorizations be discouraged within avoidance areas (including ACECs) and be allowed in those areas only when no reasonable alternative exists.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has historically been the lead agency for the development of the project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); however, in September

2019, the UBWR revised their project proposal to remove the hydroelectric facilities from the proposed action and filed a notice of withdrawal of the FERC licensing application. As a result, the FERC no longer has permitting jurisdiction over the proposed project and is no longer the lead agency. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) has since been assigned lead agency status for the EIS with BLM the lead on Section 106 and Section 7 consultation. The DOI technical team is holding a kick-off meeting in late October to discuss moving the project forward in light of recent changes.

### ***Vermilion Cliffs National Monument***

Brandon Boshell, Monument Manager

#### **3. SUBJECT: BLM to Release Decision for Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness Management Plan visitor use increase**

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arizona Strip Field Office and BLM Kanab Field Office conducted an environmental assessment (EA) to disclose and analyze the environmental consequences of a proposed change in management of Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness (PCVCW) within Vermilion Cliffs National Monument and the Kanab Field Office.

A recent increase in public demand for improved recreation opportunities and visitor access prompted the BLM to take a fresh look at ways to be able increase recreation and conservation opportunities, in particular to Coyote Buttes North (CBN), where the geologic feature known as “The Wave” is located. For example in 2013, 86,898 individuals applied for one of 7,300 permits available annually to the Wave. In 2018, 200,589 individuals applied for the same number of permits, representing a 231 percent increase in demand for access to the Wave. With 20 people allowed each day through both the online and walk-in lotteries, only 3.6 percent of applicants were able to obtain a permit to access the Wave. This increase in public demand underscored the need to consider increasing visitor access to CBN.

The need for action is in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), which directs the BLM to protect the resources and provide for recreation on public lands; the action also supports Department of Interior (DOI) Secretarial Orders 3347, 3356, and 3366, which direct agencies (including the BLM) to increase recreation and conservation opportunities.

The BLM conducted a 45-day public scoping process from May 8-June 21 which included public meetings in St. George and Kanab, Utah and Page, Arizona from which BLM received 1,570 public comments. Public comments were analyzed and considered in the development of the preliminary environmental assessment (EA) in order to analyze impacts of alternatives for increasing visitor use numbers at The Wave. The public was invited to review and comment on the preliminary EA and alternatives during the 30-day public comment period which ran from September 13 through October 12 with open house meetings hosted in St. George and Kanab, Utah and Page, Arizona from September 24-26. The BLM received 217 comments in person at public comment meetings, via email and mail. BLM has analyzed public comments received on the preliminary EA and alternatives in the development of the final EA and will issue and publicly share the Final EA, FONSI and Decision Record in late 2019.



## **Colorado River District**

William Mack, Jr., District Manager

### **1. SUBJECT: Law Enforcement (Public Safety)**

**SUMMARY:** The Colorado River District (CRD) law enforcement rangers assisted with multiple high-use activities/recreational events. These events included the Parker 250 and 425 “Best in The Desert” off-road high-speed races under the Lake Havasu Field Office. All CRD Law Enforcement (LE) rangers assisted with patrols during the peak season of the BLM Long Term Visitor Areas in Yuma.

CRD LE rangers balanced national, district and field office priorities. They supported the El Centro Field Office in covering the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area during high use. In addition, they staffed Burning Man, Alien Stock and responded to hurricane aftermaths over the last three years to support ESF-13 (Emergency Security Force).

CRD LE continues to successfully support our fellow agencies and the public land users we serve. CRD LE across the District assisted Arizona Game and Fish Department with Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) patrols on public land to protect natural resources. We also teamed up with La Paz County Sheriff’s Office during OHV events and coordinated with Mohave County in investigating dumpsites on BLM-administered lands. CRD LEs worked with six different agencies to prosecute a suspect who committed criminal damage in two states and three counties by spraying graffiti at over 120 locations on public and state lands and private property. Our K-9 collaborated with local agencies to include Arizona Department of Public Safety.

### **2. SUBJECT: Fire Management Program (Public Safety, Ecological Function)**

**SUMMARY:** Fire season began early in the Colorado River District as fire staff responded to multiple wildfires through the winter, including the 1300 acre Bermuda Fire that burned within the Mittry Lake Wildlife Area near Yuma. Conditions were favorable for an above normal fire season and fire restrictions were in place from mid-June through mid-September, but local fire activity was below normal through the summer months. CRD firefighters were able to support wildfire suppression efforts across neighboring BLM districts, state lands, and several forests in Arizona. CRD continues to provide fire suppression services to Bureau of Indian Affairs Fort Yuma Agency, Mohave County parks, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Reclamation Multi Species Conservation Program Properties along the Colorado River through direct protection agreements with these agencies. In addition, a new agreement was completed to allow BLM to provide wildfire suppression response on the Barry Goldwater West Bombing Range in Yuma near the international border. Fuel program activities focused on reducing wildfire risk to urban interface areas across the district. Fuel break construction and maintenance occurred near the mountain communities of Pine Lake, Atherton Acres, Pinion Pines, and at multiple locations along the Colorado River from Parker to Arizona’s southern border. Hand and mechanical thinning, chemical treatment, piling, and burning was completed in coordination with several rural fire departments, Mohave County Parks, Bureau of Reclamation, and US Customs and Border Protection. Existing fuel treatment areas were utilized to assist firefighters in halting the progress of three wildfires within CRD this year. All mechanical and chemical fuel program treatment targets were met or exceeded for fiscal year 2019.

Planning was completed on two new fuel treatment projects in the Yuma Office that will allow for additional urban interface hazard fuel reduction and vegetation removal along high traffic corridors near the Mexican border. CRD fire and fuels staff continue to work with district resource staff and multiple partners in planning for future projects that will increase capacity to manage fire risk in the urban interface and improve the health of both riparian and grassland ecosystems.

### ***Kingman Field Office***

Amanda Dodson, Field Manager

#### **1. SUBJECT: Black Mountain Herd Management Area Wild Burro Gather EA (Sustainability)**

**SUMMARY:** The Kingman Field Office is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing a proposed wild burro gather and removal and use of fertility controls within and near the Black Mountain Herd Management Area (HMA) located in western Mohave County. The estimated wild burro population in the Black Mountain HMA is more than 2,200--nearly four times greater than the target population of 478. As a result of the wild burro population, the area is experiencing significant issues related to the health of the herd, native wildlife, and the landscape. Additionally, wild burros that have wandered off the HMA seeking food and water have caused public safety impacts on area roadways as well as private property damage. State and federal agencies, as well as nearby communities, have requested that the BLM address the wild burro overpopulation in the Black Mountains and return the HMA to its target population level.

Wild burros essentially have no natural predators, resulting in a rapid increase in population. If not appropriately managed, herds can double in size every five years. To maintain wild burros in good physical condition and protect the health of public lands, the BLM must manage their population growth. The EA analyzes the use of fertility control, sex ratio adjustments, and periodic removal of wild burros over a 10-year period to maintain the target population within the HMA. All action alternatives analyzed in the EA ensure the humane treatment of the animals. Any wild burros removed from the range would be made available for adoption or sale to good homes through the BLM's Adoption and Sale Program. The EA is expected to be available for public review and comment by the end of the calendar year.

#### **2. SUBJECT: Moss Mine Expansion (Working Landscapes)**

**SUMMARY:** The 254-acre Moss Mine currently operates on private land located approximately five miles east of Bullhead City in the foothills of the Black Mountains. The Kingman Field Office is currently preparing an environmental assessment with the assistance of Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. to analyze the proposed mining Plan of Operation for the Moss Mine, managed by the Golden Vertex Corp (GVC). This plan proposes to expand the existing Moss Mine operation onto federal land, and provide for mineral exploration in the area surrounding the existing mine.

The proposal would expand mining operations onto approximately 528 acres of federal land managed by the BLM Kingman and Lake Havasu Field Offices. These operations would include an open pit mine, an expanded heap leach pad, rock stockpiles, solution ponds, buildings, and

associated roads and infrastructure. In addition, GVC has identified additional federal lands around the existing mining operation on which they have expressed an interest in conducting further exploratory drilling.

BLM held an EA public scoping meeting on Aug. 29, 2019, to present the proposed Plan of Operation. Approximately 50 members of the public attended and provided scoping comments that will be addressed in the EA for the proposed project. The EA is scheduled to be available for public review and comment in early December 2019. Consultation is on-going with several of the local tribes regarding this project.

### **3. SUBJECT: Dingell Act, Sec. 1015 Black Mountain Range and Bullhead City Land Exchange.**

**SUMMARY:** BLM-AZ has been working in coordination with Bullhead City to conduct a site visit of the offered lands (Sept. 23-25) and to prepare a market consultation report to facilitate the subsequent requisite appraisal. Upon completion of the report, the BLM will then initiate the cadastral survey and legal description review.

### ***Lake Havasu Field Office***

Jason West, Field Manager

#### **1. SUBJECT: Fisheries Program**

**SUMMARY:** The Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO) had a productive year improving fisheries habitat. Beginning in May 2019, volunteers from two separate organizations contributed 804 labor hours to build 340 woody material brush bundles which were submerged in Lake Havasu to create 334 acres of artificial fish habitat reefs. This season, our team initiated two reef improvement pilot studies, with monitoring continuing over the next several years. The program continues to be an international example of best management practices. The program also collaborated with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) to stock 300 endangered razorbacks into Three Mile Lake, a rearing area for the fish until they are large enough to release into the Colorado River. Lake Havasu Field Office will be assessing the feasibility of using two different fish habitat structures over the course of the coming year.

#### **2. SUBJECT: Recreation Program**

**SUMMARY:** The Lake Havasu Field Office Recreation Program has continued to see an increased demand for recreation opportunities on public lands. LHFO's Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program authorized 16 SRPs this fiscal year, including the Best In the Desert Parker 250 and 425 high speed races. In addition to SRPs, Lake Havasu shoreline sites were able to accommodate over 15,000 visitors at 73 boat-in campsites generating almost \$40,000. The success of the Your Pass Now mobile fee program has increased fee compliance by 62%. Sixty three annual passes were sold online (42% of entire passes sold) in addition to 158 day passes, saving countless hours of administrative work by park rangers and administrative staff. The transition of Crossroads Campground to online reservations was also a great success accounting for 2,723 visitor days or 58% of all visitor use on public lands managed by the LHFO. Our operations staff has been working with the Arizona State Office to complete four different deferred maintenance projects in support of Secretarial Order 3366 "Increasing Recreational

Opportunities on Lands and Waters Managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior” by providing improvements at two off-highway vehicle open areas and two water-based recreational sites.

## ***Yuma Field Office***

Aron King, Field Manager

### **1. SUBJECT: Ten West Link Transmission Line**

**SUMMARY:** Yuma Field Office is helping lead the Ten West Link Transmission Line Project, a 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line that is proposed to provide a connection between the Arizona Public Service Company’s Delaney Substation in Tonopah, Arizona, and the Southern California Edison Company’s Colorado River Substation in Blythe, California. The proposed project would strengthen grid reliability and efficiency for millions of customers in both states. BLM-AZ published the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Sept. 13, 2019, which included amendments to the Yuma Field Office Resource Management Plan and California Desert Conservation Area Plan. The Final EIS analyzed several alternatives, with BLM-AZ’s preferred alternative being a 125.8-mile-long route located mostly within existing utility corridors or parallel to existing infrastructure. The protest period ended on October 15 with two protests received. BLM-AZ anticipates signing the Record of Decision for the Ten West Link Transmission Line project in late November 2019.

### **2. SUBJECT: Mittry Lake North Shore Access**

**SUMMARY:** Yuma Field Office with Bureau of Reclamation concurrence, is cooperatively working with AZGFD to create additional hunting and fishing access to over 300 acres within the Mittry Lake Wildlife Area in Yuma, Arizona. The Decision Record was signed in 2019, and project coordination to obtain and execute contract funding is underway. BLM led the planning processes, while AZGFD is leading the engineering and implementation.

### **3. SUBJECT: Yuma Proving Ground Withdrawal**

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Army has requested a withdrawal of 23,000 acres of public lands be added to the existing Yuma Proving Ground (YPG) footprint. These lands are located north of Yuma and bounded by Highway 95 on the east and the existing YPG boundary on the west. The current schedule reflects a four-year timeline resulting in a recommendation to Congress if all approvals are received.

### **4. SUBJECT: Fee Amenity & Long-Term Visitor Areas (LTVA) Business Plan Update**

**SUMMARY:** The Yuma Field Office is currently working on updating the draft business plan to reflect current BLM guidance. This plan will look at fees charged for services for our day-use sites, two week camping areas, LTVA’s and annual passes. Outreach is being conducted in collaboration with the California BLM offices that manage their own LTVA’s under the same permit system.

### **5. SUBJECT: Copperstone Mine Plan of Operation**

**SUMMARY:** Bonanza Explorations Inc. is planning to amend its Plan of Operations for the Copperstone Mine Project. The mine area is located in La Paz County, halfway between Parker and Quartzsite, near State Route 95. Bonanza plans to operate the existing underground mine and

expand the mill and tailings dam area. This plan amendment would extend the mine life for up to ten years. The draft EA is anticipated to be posted for public comment and review in early November.

**7. SUBJECT: Dingell Act, Sec. 1008 La Paz County Land Conveyance**

**SUMMARY:** The BLM will convey approximately 5,935 acres of Federal land to La Paz County, excluding parcels with significant resources in accordance with the Dingell Act. The BLM Cadastral survey team completed and published the legal description and survey plats in the Federal Register on Oct 16 for a 30-day protest period. On Nov. 1, the BLM provided a statement of work so that the County may contract for an appraisal of the lands.

**Phoenix District Office**

Leon Thomas, District Manager

Patrick Putnam, Associate District Manager

**1. SUBJECT: Recreational Shooting Sports Project**

**SUMMARY:** Recreational shooting sport activities are long-standing and appropriate uses of BLM lands and approximately 99% of BLM-managed lands are available to dispersed recreational shooting. The Recreational Shooting Sports Project will inform the development of national policy to provide a suite of management options for use throughout the BLM. The project will develop and manage sites appropriate for recreational shooting sports on public land. The project is not intended to limit recreational shooting access but focuses on areas best suited for ensuring public safety and minimizing impacts to natural resources and infrastructure. It includes five sites around the greater Phoenix area in Maricopa and Pinal Counties. In collaboration with Arizona Game and Fish Department and other partners, BLM-AZ has analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) different approaches for actively managing recreational shooting sports sites – from more passive to more intensive ones – while preserving widespread dispersed recreational shooting sports opportunities.

Scoping for the EA took place from June 3 through July 2. Public input and further analysis was incorporated into a draft EA which was released to the public for review from August 20 through September 4. The Phoenix District will published the final EA, Finding of No Significant Impact and related proposed grazing decision initiating a 15-day protest period in late fall 2019. The Phoenix District will publish the EA decision record this fall which will initiate a 30-day appeal period.

***Hassayampa Field Office (HFO)/ Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM)***

Angie Meece, Acting Field Manager

**1. SUBJECT: Vulture Mountains R&PP Lease**

**SUMMARY:** On March 27, The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and Bureau of Land Management signed a lease agreement allowing the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department (MCPRD) to enter into a Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) lease with the BLM Hassayampa Field Office. Under the lease, the parks department will be responsible for managing approximately 1,046 acres of public lands near Wickenburg, Arizona. The lease will

allow for the construction and operation of recreation facilities in the Vulture Mountains Recreation Area.

In 2012 the BLM received an application from MCPRD for a Recreation & Public Purposes Act (R&PP) lease of approximately 1,046 acres located in Maricopa County, Arizona. The R&PP Act allows for State and local governments to apply for the leasing of public lands for the construction and maintenance of facilities such as schools, fire stations, and for parks. On November 13, 2018, the BLM Hassayampa Field Office released a draft environmental assessment (EA) and announced a 30-day public review period from November 20 until December 19, 2018. Public outreach included an open-house style meeting held on December 4, 2018. The BLM released the final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the lease on January 31, 2019.

**2. SUBJECT: Outcome-Based Grazing / Horseshoe Grazing Allotment Lease Decision**

**SUMMARY:** On November 26, 2018, the BLM Hassayampa Field Office/Agua Fria National Monument issued a proposed decision to revise and approve the lease for the Horseshoe Grazing Allotment. On June 20, 2019, the AFNM released the final decision for the Horseshoe Allotment's grazing authorization renewal. On August 22, Western Watersheds Project appealed and asked for petition for stay on the range improvement portion of the Decision. The stay was granted on October 3 by the Office of Hearings and Appeals.

**3. SUBJECT: Dingell Act, Sec. 1017. Embry-Riddle Tri-City land exchange.**

**SUMMARY:** Public Land Order 105-363 section 3, issued November 10, 1998, and directed the Secretary of Interior to convey 16 acres of land in Yavapai County to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University for educational purposes only. If the Secretary of the Interior determined that the conveyed lands are not being used for educational related purposes, at the option of the United States, the lands would revert to the United States. Public Land Order 116-9 section 1017, signed March 12, 2019 directs that if after the completion of an appraisal, the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University submits to the Secretary an offer to acquire the reversionary interests of the United States in the lands acquired in 1998, the Secretary shall convey to the University the reversionary interests of the United States for the purpose of unencumbering the title to enable economic development of those lands.

The Phoenix District has received notice from the Appraisal and Valuation Services Office (AVSO) that an initial appraisal report for the Embry-Riddle land conveyance has been submitted by the approved contract appraiser. Upon acceptance of the Final Appraisal Report by AVSO, BLM-AZ will then meet with officials with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott to proceed with the land conveyance. This work supports Secretarial Order 3374 regarding Implementation of the Dingell Act, of which Sec. 1017, The Embry-Riddle Tri-City Land Exchange, was sponsored by Representative Paul Gosar and Senator Martha McSally. Target completion date is December 2019.

## ***Lower Sonoran Field Office (LSFO) / Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM)***

Edward J. Kender, Field Manager

Brandon Colvin, Monument Manager/ Assistant Field Manager

### **1. SUBJECT: Sonoran Valley Parkway**

**SUMMARY:** The City of Goodyear (City) has requested a 250-foot-wide right-of-way for the construction of a two- to six-lane, approximately 15- to 18-mile long parkway in Rainbow Valley, Arizona. The Sonoran Valley Planning Area, annexed by the City in 2007, and does not currently provide a paved, safe route from Goodyear to the Town of Mobile. The Parkway would enable the City to expand its road network and provide infrastructure enhancements to improve the provision of emergency services, reduce travel time, provide transportation to the City's annexed lands, and address the demands of growth in the area. The BLM has offer the 25 year lease to the City. The city council approved the lease at their October 28, 2019 city council meeting. Upon receipt of the signed lease, the BLM will issue a decision and execute the lease.

### **2. SUBJECT: Juan Bautista De Anza Recreation Management Zone**

**SUMMARY:** The Juan Bautista de Anza Recreation Management Zone (RMZ) Recreation Plan includes the development of three recreation areas on the Sonoran Desert National Monument, which would include facilities such as picnic areas, campsites, trail exhibits, and three group use areas. The plan also includes improvements and upgrades to existing roads in the recreation areas.

In 2008, the BLM temporarily closed approximately 88 miles of travel routes in the RMZ to motorized use, because of the damage to natural and cultural resources on the Monument caused by off-highway vehicle travel. Recognizing the importance of public access to the Monument for responsible recreation, the BLM completed a Transportation and Travel Management Plan in 2012 that officially designated approximately 57 miles of travel routes in the RMZ for motorized public use.

The BLM anticipates it will take two to three years to complete all phases of the Implementation Plan. Upon completion of the plan, the new recreation facilities will be open for public use and enjoyment.

The BLM has approved the final designs for each of the 3 sites:

- Butterfield Rec Area (approximately 20-30 campsites, and 15-20 day use sites)
- Estrella/Wayside Rec Area (approximately 1 group site, with 10 primitive sites)
- Christmas Camp Group Area (up to 10 group sites)

Next phases include completing an EA for the construction, applying for funding, and breaking ground on the construction phase.

### **3. SUBJECT: Securing America's Border Resources (SABR)**

**SUMMARY:** The first SABR surge of FY20 is currently underway in the Arizona borderland region, including on the Sonoran Desert National Monument. Resource projects are planned to accomplish the following:

- Repair and maintain border fence between the Sonoran Desert National Monument and the Tohono O'odham Nation
- Removal of smuggling trash
- Rehabbing of illegal routes

#### **4. SUBJECT: Livestock grazing**

**SUMMARY:** The Lower Sonoran Field Office continues to move forward with addressing the U.S. District Court's decision on the compatibility of grazing on the Sonoran Desert National Monument and grazing permit renewals on two complexes.

#### **5. SUBJECT: Peralta Park**

**SUMMARY:** On October 27, 2019, the Phoenix District granted a Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act lease to the Pinal County Board of Supervisors for the development of Peralta Park. The Pinal County Board of Supervisors applied to lease 498 acres of public land for recreation-related facilities. The incorporation of the public lands into the Pinal County regional park system will help the county achieve the goal of protecting these resources, while also providing public non-motorized trails, recreation, and environmental education opportunities. The R&PP lease was analyzed in an EA. On July 15, 2019 BLM released a Final EA and Finding of No Significant Impact and Proposed Grazing Decision. On August 8, BLM signed the Final EA Decision Record, approving the lease.

### **Gila District**

Scott Feldhausen, District Manager

#### **1. SUBJECT: San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS)**

**SUMMARY:** The BLM is implementing decisions in the Approved Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area.

The BLM approved the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area on August 6, 2019. The RMP updates management guidance that was more than 25- years old and accounts for the population growth and increased demand for access and groundwater that could affect the SPRNCA's resource values. Highlights of the RMP include continued grazing on existing allotments, expansion of areas open to licensed hunting, provisions for a diverse mix of recreation opportunities and active resource management that allows for a broad array of management tools for ecosystem restoration and conservation stewardship.

The Tucson Field Office is working with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to implement the new hunting related decisions in the RMP and initiating the renewal process for four existing allotments. The BLM is using Assessment Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) to do quantifiable assessments of the grazing allotments. The assessments, in conjunction with Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, will be used to determine whether Rangeland Health Standards are being met. The AIM data will provide a baseline to measure against and adjustments to livestock grazing management can be made to ensure that the grazing allotments continue to meet land health standards. The BLM developed these standards and guidelines in the 1990s with input from the Resource Advisory Council.



## **2. SUBJECT: Ray Mine Land Exchange**

**SUMMARY:** BLM signed a Record of Decision for the Resource Management Plan Amendments and land exchange decisions on October 24 and plans to have completed the protest period by winter 2019.

The Gila District Manager signed the Record of Decision on October 24 approving the Ray Mine Land Exchange between the BLM and ASARCO and the BLM State Director signed the three Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendments to facilitate the exchange. A Notice of Decision (NOD) followed, initiating a 45-day protest period for the land exchange decisions. The BLM will implement the land exchange at the end of the protest period and following the resolution of any protests.

The exchange will increase recreational access to BLM managed public lands and allow ASARCO to expand its operation. The project meets the 150-page requirement of Secretarial Order 3355's new guidelines for streamlining NEPA and updates information to reflect any changes in environmental conditions in the project area, as well as any applicable environmental laws or regulatory policies that may have come into effect since the Final Environmental Impact Statement was signed in 1999.

## **3. SUBJECT: Integrated Vegetation Management**

**SUMMARY:** The BLM Gila District initiates integrated vegetation management coordination with partners

The Gila District is working with partners to implement BLM Arizona's robust integration of locally led, landscape scale vegetation management that contributes to BLM Arizona's implementation of Secretarial Order (SO) #3372 Reducing Wildfire Risks through Active Management, SO #3347 Enhance Stewardship and Management of Wildlife Resources, SO #3356 Promote Collaboration with Partners and Stakeholders and SO #3362 Improve Habitat Quality in Big Game Habitat and Migration Corridors.

The TFO is preparing a landscape level Environmental Assessment (EA) and vegetation management plan to conduct erosion control activities and vegetation treatments for 212,920 acres in the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and adjacent public, private, and state lands. This collaborative adaptive management approach has been used to implement vegetation treatments to restore grassland habitat, and to curtail soil erosion through grant funded erosion control workshops. The TFO is planning to prepare a landscape level EA and vegetation management plan for the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, including public, private, and state lands. Both plans will incorporate BLM's approved Assessment Inventory and Monitoring technique to evaluate treatment effectiveness.

The Safford Field Office (SFO), as a part of the Arizona Conservation Partnership, coordinates with the Arizona Association of Conservation Districts, National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Arizona Game and Fish Department, county and private land owners on juniper thinning projects in Navajo County. The funding is provided by the Arizona Conservation Partnership Program (which includes NRCS, BLM, Game and Fish funding sources). The work improves Arizona's highest priority rangelands, provides improved wildlife corridors and the resulting biomass is sold to the bio-generation plant in Snowflake, Novo Power. The partnership

provides energy to the local community of Snowflake and allows for the treatments to be completed at a reduced price, due to the ability to sell the mulch. The Safford Field Office played a big role in the removal of over 19,081 tons of biomass in FY 19. The partnership resulted in the treatment and pre and post treatment monitoring of 4,115 acres, and the award of an additional 2,000 acres of juniper removal contract to be completed in FY 20.

The SFO is preparing an Environmental Assessment and vegetation management plan that, once complete, will cover the 1.4 million acres the field office manages, including new vegetation treatments in Apache County and continued treatments in Navajo County.

#### **4. SUBJECT: Water Rights Litigation**

**SUMMARY:** The BLM is in litigation to defend its federal reserved water rights for three BLM-managed areas.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is defending in litigation its federal reserved water rights for water in the San Pedro River system necessary to support the purposes for which the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) was established in 1988. The SPRNCA litigation is the third of three contested cases, sub-proceedings within the Gila River general stream adjudication, over the federal reserved water rights that the BLM has claimed for reservations in the BLM management area. The almost eight-week SPRNCA trial was held in January and February 2019 with additional trial dates in April and May, the Redfield Canyon Wilderness Area trial was held spring 2017 and the parties submitted closing briefs in May 2018, and the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Area trial was held in 2015 with the presiding judge issuing an Order quantifying the Federal Reserve Water Right for the area on December 17, 2018. The SPRNCA and Redfield cases are still pending the judge's decision.

#### ***Tucson Field Office***

Jayme Lopez, Field Manager

#### **1. SUBJECT: Proposed Resolution Mine Land Exchange & Mining Plan of Operations**

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Forest Service is the lead agency in this project, which involves a land exchange to the BLM and a proposed tailings alternative on BLM managed public land.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) – Tonto National Forest is the lead agency for a land exchange between the United States and Resolution Copper Mining, LLC as required under the fiscal year 2015 National Defense Appropriations Act. The land exchange would convey federal lands near Superior, Arizona to Resolution Copper and lands near Mammoth and Elgin, Arizona would go into Bureau of Land Management ownership. The lands near Mammoth would become part of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area and the lands near Elgin would become part of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The act also requires the USFS to prepare a single Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to cover the land exchange and the proposed Resolution Copper Mine near Superior, Arizona. The BLM is a cooperating agency in the development of the EIS based on jurisdiction and special expertise. While developing alternatives for the EIS, the USFS identified an alternative (the Peg Leg alternative), which could place mine tailings on 10,782 acres of BLM administered public lands west of the community of Kearny in Pinal County, Arizona. The BLM worked with the USFS to develop the Preferred

Alternative in the Draft EIS, identified as Skunk Camp. This alternative would place mine tailings on private lands. The USFS released the Draft EIS for a 90-day public comment period in August 2019 with six associated public meetings. The Forest Service plans to issue the Final EIS in summer 2020 and the ROD in winter 2020/2021.

## **2. SUBJECT: Ripsey Wash Tailings Impoundment**

**SUMMARY:** The BLM is implementing decisions related to ASARCO's proposal to build a new tailings impoundment for the Ray Mine.

The BLM served as a cooperating agency for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) developed for the project in which mining company ASARCO proposed to construct a new 2600-acre tailings impoundment for its Ray Mine. The USACE signed the Record of Decision to finalize the EIS in December 2018. The BLM is implementing the decisions in the ROD in cooperation with partners Arizona Game and Fish Department, Pinal County, and ASARCO. The BLM's implementation activities include the relocation of 6.3 miles of the Arizona National Scenic Trail and development of a streamlined mineral materials sale to ASARCO and authorization of a power line and road right-of-ways.

## **3. SUBJECT: Dingell Act, Sec. 1004 Udall Park land exchange.**

**SUMMARY:** The project is completed. On August 16, 2019, the BLM conveyed the U.S. reversionary interest on 172.8 acres to the City of Tucson.

## **4. SUBJECT: Dingell Act, Sec. 1007. Pascua Yaqui Tribe land conveyance.**

**SUMMARY:** This project involves three parcels of land.

- Parcel A involves the relinquishment of approximately 39.01 acres of land, currently owned by the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD), to the U.S. to be held in trust for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. The BLM is currently reviewing the draft relinquishment documents provided by TUSD. The target date for completion is December 2019.
- Parcel B involves the sale of approximately 13.24 acres of BLM lands to TUSD. The BLM is currently preparing the mineral report. This report is required prior to requesting an appraisal as the law requires full compensation at fair market value. The target date for completing this transaction is March 2020.
- Parcel C. The BLM is working on transferring the U.S. reversionary interests to the Hohokam Middle School located in Tucson, AZ, for an approximately 27.5 acre parcel (Parcel C). This project requires compensation at fair market value and the BLM has requested an appraisal from the USDI Appraisal Valuation Services Office. Target completion date is December 2019.

### ***Safford Field Office***

Scott Cooke, Field Manager

## **1. SUBJECT: Holbrook Basin Oil & Gas Interest**

**SUMMARY:** Oil and gas development in the Holbrook Basin

BLM Arizona suspended three oil and gas leases issued to two companies for the Holbrook Basin in November 2018. The lessees have not submitted to the BLM any applications for permit to drill (APD), thus no production activities have occurred under these leases. The leases were

suspended pending completion of a regional environmental assessment (EA). The three leases in the BLM's Safford Field Office area represented the first "expressions of interest" in 12 years to lease oil and gas in Arizona, in which there has been little to no demand for oil and gas development.

With the initial three expressions of interest, the BLM intended to complete an EA if and when the BLM received a "notice of application to drill" (APD), the authorization of which allows ground disturbing activity to occur on public land. Subsequently, the BLM received another three expressions of interest to lease oil and gas in the same area. Now that there appears to be growing interest in helium production in the area, the BLM will prepare a regional EA for oil and gas leasing within the Safford Field Office area. The regional EA would provide an updated analysis for the three previously issued leases, the pending "expressions of interest" and potential future interest within the Safford Field Office area.

## **Division of Lands, Minerals and Energy**

### **Division Leadership**

Elena Fink, Deputy State Director

Gerald Davis, Cadastral Survey Branch Chief

Lindsey Curnutt, Branch Chief-Minerals

Eddie Arreola, Supervisory Project Manager

Amy DePestel, Supervisory Land Law Examiner

### **1. SUBJECT: John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 (PL 116-9, dated 3-12-2019)**

**SUMMARY:** The Dingell Act is a broad-sweeping piece of legislation that established guidance for various programs and mandated projects for management and conservation of natural resources on federal lands. For BLM Arizona, there are five Dingell Act-mandated projects: Sec. 1004 Udall Park Land Exchange, Sec. 1007 Pascua Yaqui Tribe Land Conveyance, Sec. 1008 La Paz County Land Conveyance, Sec. 1015 Black Mountain Range and Bullhead City Land Exchange, Sec. 1017 Embry-Riddle Tri-City Land Exchange. BLM completed the Udall Park conveyance in September 2019. The Black Mountain conveyance, per the law, would be executed after December 2020. Barring any major issues, the remaining projects would be completed between December 2019 and March 2020. The Dingell Act also permanently reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program, which provides funds to acquire from willing sellers, private or state lands which are inholdings within federally designated special areas, such as wilderness areas. The Dingell Act also amended the Mineral Leasing Act to provide that the "extraction of helium from gas produced from such lands shall maintain the lease as if the extracted helium were oil and gas."

### **2. SUBJECT: Executive Order 13868 (April 10, 2019) - Promoting Energy Infrastructure and Economic Growth**

**SUMMARY:** BLM Arizona has taken significant steps to further develop America's energy infrastructure and to promote economic growth, including the near completion of the Ten West Link Transmission Line Project and continued progress on various solar projects. The State

Office Renewable Energy Coordination Office (RECO) Team is set up to provide streamlined environmental review and permitting, with the BLM lands and realty specialists working in close coordination with the wildlife biologist and cultural resource specialist as one team.

**Current Projects:** The RECO Team is working on construction design of the White Hills Wind Energy Project (previously known as Mohave County Wind Farm). We are also starting environmental reviews of the White Hills Solar Project and Intersect Solar Projects in the Yuma and Safford field offices, and two solar projects on private lands with transmission lines and access roads proposed on BLM lands. BLM continues to receive inquiries for potential new projects.

BLM Arizona is overseeing final reclamation of Arizona Public Service's 500-kilovolt (kV) Sun Valley to Morgan line that completes a high-voltage transmission loop around the metro Phoenix area to improve grid reliability. BLM Arizona finalizing plans for the future construction of the Southline and SunZia projects, which support energy development and grid reliability in the desert southwest.

One of BLM Arizona's highest priority for this fiscal year is to renew existing energy-related rights-of-ways (transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines) which have or are due to expire in the near future. In accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act of 1946, right-of-way holders who timely request renewal, may continue to operate under said right-of-way until such time the BLM renders a decision. BLM-AZ is currently reviewing this workload and developing a strategy to complete or start processing all the expired rights-of-way by April 2020.

***Solar Energy Zones:*** The BLM established solar energy zones (SEZ) in six states through the Western Solar Plan, which included three in Arizona. The SEZs are well suited for developing solar energy and associated transmission infrastructure. If fully developed the Arizona SEZs have the capacity to produce 1,100 megawatts of electricity.

- Gillespie—2,618 acres in western Maricopa County
- Brenda—3,348 acres in La Paz County
- Agua Caliente—2, 560 acres in Yuma County

***Renewal Energy Development Areas:*** The Western Solar Plan also provides for development on "variance" and "exclusion" lands after upfront screening. BLM Arizona identified renewable energy development areas (REDAs) spanning 192,100 acres which could provide 24,000 megawatts of electricity. Because the BLM completed preliminary screening on the REDAs, renewable energy developers can start project planning in areas with the best potential for a successful outcome.

## **2. SUBJECT: Minerals Program**

**SUMMARY:** BLM Arizona encourages the environmentally responsible development of minerals on public lands. Opportunities on public lands and minerals in Arizona are abundant and diverse. Statewide, Arizona contains over half of the Secretary of the Interior's 35 minerals deemed critical to national security and the economy.

***Mineral Materials:*** BLM Arizona manages the bureau's second largest saleable minerals program, permitting more than a million tons of sand, gravel, and crushed stone worth about \$10

to \$20 million annually to the economy and supports regional infrastructure needs. Revenue collected and redistributed to the States and US Treasury totaled \$2.2 million.

**Mining Claims:** BLM Arizona currently administers over 64,000 active mining claims and collects over \$9 million in annual fees. In addition, the State Office adjudicates all reclamation bonds filed for mining operations, which in FY2018 consisted of 164 bonds statewide, totaling just under \$31M.

**Mining Operations:** BLM Arizona has a role in several of the state's largest mining operations:

- **Bagdad Mine** (operated by Freeport McMoRan) open pit copper mine on private and BLM lands 100 miles northwest of Phoenix.
- **Mineral Park Mine** (operated by Origin Mining from Canada) open pit copper, molybdenum and Kingman turquoise located on private and BLM lands 14 miles northwest Kingman.
- **Kirkland Mine** (privately Arizona owned) pozzolan mine on BLM lands 100 miles northwest of Phoenix.
- **Ray Mine** (operated by ASARCO) open pit copper mine 65 miles southeast of Phoenix. BLM is preparing a Final Supplemental EIS for a land exchange to dispose of 10,900 acres of public lands to support expanded mining and acquire 7,300 acres of private lands to expand public recreation access.
- **Resolution Mine** (operated by Rio Tinto/BHP Billiton) proposed underground copper and molybdenum mine 60 miles east of Phoenix on the Tonto National Forest. USFS is preparing a Draft EIS for a land exchange to support mining operations. The BLM is participating as a cooperator.

**Native American Minerals Program:** BLM has trust responsibility for mining activities on Indian lands, which includes providing technical assistance to agencies, and Tribal governments, perform mining inspections, verify production, approve exploration and mining plans and provide recommendations on agency bond decisions. The BLM works collaboratively with the BIA, Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation, and Enforcement (OSMRE) and Tribal governments on multiple active mines that includes:

- **Cyprus Tohono Corporation** (privately held) open pit copper mine on Tohono O'odham Nation lands 30 miles south of Casa Grande
- **Mission mine** (operated by ASARCO, Grupo Mexico) underground and open pit copper mine on Tohono O'odham Nation lands 18 miles south of Tucson
- **Kayenta mine** (operated by Peabody) is a surface strip coalmine on Navajo Nation lands. The lease expires in 2019 and the mine will be closing, as well as the Navajo Generation Station (2,250 MW on Navajo Nation near Page) which relied on the coal resource to generate electricity. The BLM is lending its minerals and mining expertise to facilitate an orderly and proper closure of the mining operations.

**Oil and Gas Leasing (Helium):** Although there is no oil and gas production on BLM managed public land in Arizona, there has been increasing public interest in leasing for helium resources within the Holbrook Basin and Little Colorado River Valley, in Navajo and Apache Counties, Safford Field Office. In November 2018, BLM Arizona issued three oil and gas leases, encompassing 4,201 acres. Since then, BLM Arizona received three more expressions of interest

(EOIs) for oil and gas leasing, in the same area as the previously issued leases. Leasing does not equal drilling. Before a leaseholder can drill, they must submit an Application for Permit to Drill (APD). Additional site-specific environmental analysis is required before drilling may occur to ensure environmental concerns are addressed. To date, no APDs have been filed.

### **3. SUBJECT: Land Tenure Program Leadership**

**SUMMARY:** The Division provides program oversight and project management of multiple land tenure projects, which consist of land sales, land exchanges, land acquisitions and land donations. The goal of the program is to enhance the administration of public land ownership patterns through land tenure adjustments. This includes acquiring lands that support BLM priorities such as expanded public access and complement resource values. The BLM also occasionally disposes of public lands which are difficult and uneconomical to manage, or are no longer needed for Federal purposes.

Projects: Several projects are under review including:

- Ray Mine Land Exchange which would allow Asarco, LLC to acquire 9,339 acres of public land to expand its copper mining operation and create hundreds of mining jobs in Pinal County. In exchange, the BLM would acquire 7,304 acres of land in Pinal and Mohave Counties to improve recreation access to existing public lands. The BLM published the Record of Decision to the Supplemental EIS on October 24, 2019. The Notice of Decision for the land exchange was published in two newspapers of general circulation on November 1, 2019, and on November 6, 2019. The protest period for both of the Decisions will extend to December 19, 2019.
- BLM is a cooperator on an EIS for the Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange, which is a proposed underground copper mine east of Superior, AZ. The land exchange was directed in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. The project would create one of the largest copper mines in the U.S. The BLM would acquire about 3,000 acres of land as part of the exchange. A draft Environmental Impact Statement for the land exchange was released to the public in August 2019. Public comments were due on November 7, 2019, and comments from the Indian tribes has been extended to December 22, 2019.
- The BLM is preparing an environmental assessment for a noncompetitive sale of 3,380.69 acres of public lands to the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC). The GRIC is interested in acquiring these lands because of their adjacency to its reservation and the presence of significant cultural resources. The lands are located on the western and southern margins of their reservation in Maricopa and Pinal Counties, south of the Phoenix metro area. The BLM issued an Environmental Assessment for a 30-day public review and comment period, which closed November 7. Pending review of public comments, the BLM anticipates making a decision in November 2019.

### **4. SUBJECT: Management of Land Boundaries**

**SUMMARY:** The Cadastral Survey group performs all executive duties pertaining to the identification and survey of the public lands of the United States as delegated by the Secretary of the Interior. Cadastral Survey retains and preserves the original survey plats and field notes for the Secretary, which are the base documents for most legal descriptions used to issue original patents. Cadastral Survey provides technical direction on the management of land boundary

issues to other federal agencies, Indian tribes, States, counties, municipalities and other interested parties through surveys and/or Standards for Boundary Evidence (SBE) products. Cadastral Survey responds to Congressional, Solicitors and other public inquiries on complex survey issues.

Cadastral Survey is currently working numerous projects, such as:

- Official surveys and SBE reviews in support of the Resolution Copper Land Exchange Project being led by the U.S. Forest Service;
- Official legal descriptions for BLM and U.S. Forest Service designated National Monuments and National Conservation Areas;
- Official surveys of portions of the Navajo Nation in coordination with the BIA Navajo Regional Office and Canyon de Chelly National Monument administered by the National Park Service (NPS);
- Administrative boundary research and determinations for the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) along the Colorado River.

## **5. SUBJECT: Federal Agency Support through Land Withdrawals**

**SUMMARY:** A withdrawal is a formal action that sets aside, withholds, or reserves public lands by statute or administrative order for a specific use. Withdrawals are established for a wide range of public purposes or programs and are used to protect the substantial investment of Federal funds, improvements and facilities, sensitive environmental values, public health and safety, and national security.

### **Current High Priority Withdrawals:**

- BLM is processing a Notice of Proposed Withdrawal Extension for the Roosevelt Lake, Salt River Project, Arizona filed by the BOR. The public lands included in Roosevelt Lake encompassing 9,175 acres of National Forest System lands and are proposed to be extended for a period of 20 years. The proposed withdrawal extension would continue to protect capital investments currently in place. The improvements and facilities include the following: boating, fishing, swimming, or camping activities, with an estimated value of 25 million dollars.
- The BLM completed processing an application filed by the BOR to extend the Lake Pleasant Regional Park expansion area withdrawal. The 20-year withdrawal extension would ensure continued public access for popular recreation activities on public lands around the lake, such as fishing, hiking and camping and would facilitate recreation access to the Lake Pleasant Regional Park (LPRP) for the more than one million people who visit the park each year. The withdrawal extension also protects the area's water-oriented developments and capital investments. The Public Land Order was published in the Federal Register in April 2019.
- The BLM is coordinating with the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps regarding the withdrawal for the Barry M. Goldwater Range (BMGR). The BLM anticipates applications to be filed by the military to extend the withdrawal, which expires in 2024, and an application to expand the withdrawal. The current withdrawal encompasses over 1.7M acres. Extension of the withdrawal would allow for use of the public lands for continued military training purposes. The Air Force and Department of the Navy (DON) submitted two applications in November 2018 to extend the Barry M. Goldwater Range



withdrawal indefinitely and expand it by an additional 2,300 acres just south of Gila Bend, AZ. The current withdrawal expires October 2024. The BLM is a cooperating agency in the development of the Legislative EIS (LEIS) and the Air Force and DON are co-leads. A Federal Register publication for the application of withdrawal and the notice-of-intent to initiate the LEIS is expected to be published December 2019 or January 2020. This will initiate a public scoping period and the public meeting dates and locations will be published in local news papers

## **6. SUBJECT: Oversight of Commercial Recreation Leasing Program (Concessions)**

**SUMMARY:** BLM Arizona manages 14 leases for private businesses operating recreational related businesses on BLM-managed land along the lower Colorado River in Arizona and California. These businesses provide important public services the BLM cannot readily provide. The BLM acquired oversight of the leases from the Bureau of Reclamation (BR). The BLM administers the leases under broad regulatory authority for leases, permits and easements. Unlike agencies like the National Park Service, the BLM lacks a distinct concessions authority.

The Department of the Interior's Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted a review of the BLM's lease management practices, resulting in a March 2015 report that found the BLM's lease practices were inconsistent with its regulations, specifically regarding rent and cost recovery. The OIG recommended that Congress also consider legislation to create a concessions authority.

BLM Arizona has developed guidance for issuing new commercial leases for recreation-related business. Existing leases may continue to operate under their existing agreements until they are assigned, renewed, or amended. All leases will be issued with rent that is based either on the fair market value of the authorized use, or as determined by competitive bidding. All new, assigned, amended, or renewed leases will also require cost recovery to reimburse the BLM for the costs for processing and monitoring the lease. The BLM is actively working with current leaseholders to implement the changes in a fair, business-like and consistent manner.

## **Division of Resources and Planning**

Jody Weil, Deputy State Director

### **1. SUBJECT: Outcome Based Grazing**

**BACKGROUND:** In the fall of 2017, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Washington Office (WO) asked for nominations from each state to be part of National Demonstration Project for Outcome Based Grazing (OBG). Arizona District Managers solicited applications from permittees. There was some interest but no proposals were submitted. Final Selections were made by the WO in March of 2018. The WO selected 12 demonstration projects from other states. Most of the allotments selected for Outcome Based Grazing Authorizations (OBGA) contained enough resources and infrastructure (fences, water developments, etc.), including a sufficient number of pastures so that flexibility in grazing management was feasible.

The **purpose** of the OBGA are to give greater flexibility to the livestock operator and the BLM to adjust grazing use for changing conditions in order to achieve specific vegetative, habitat and livestock operation sustainability objectives. These authorizations are intended to support:

- Enhanced partnerships for managing livestock grazing
- Conservation performance and ecological outcomes rather than process and prescription
- Cooperative improvement, management and/or protection of public lands within an allotment or specified geographic area (multiple allotments)
- Positive economic and social outcomes

**SUMMARY:** Currently, the BLM Pilot offices are in various stages of completing monitoring plans and NEPA documentation and permit decisions for OBGAs. Our goal is to have an OBG decision by the end of fiscal year 2020 (FY20). The experience gained during development and implementation of the demonstration projects will be documented and used to develop guidance for application of the OBG concept. The BLM will consider additional demonstration projects in the future to further highlight best management practices and innovative grazing management.

Nineteen state and federal agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1998, to establish Coordinated Resource Management in Arizona. The MOU provides a mechanism for resource management agencies in Arizona to work together, share resource information, and develop complementary policies, procedures, and methodologies.

In Arizona, most of our grazing allotments have terms and conditions for yearlong grazing use with opportunities for ephemeral forage use (annual grasses and forbs) during wet years in accordance with Land Use Plan Guidelines. The flexibility to increase livestock numbers to take advantage of changing resource conditions is not available in most other states. (Perennial-Ephemeral Allotments).

## **2. SUBJECT: NEPA Streamlining**

**SUMMARY:** In August 2017, the Secretary of the Interior issued Secretarial Order (SO) 3355, Streamlining National Environmental Policy Act Reviews and Implementation of Executive Order 13807, “Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects.”

The purpose of the order is to implement improvements to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews conducted by the Department of Interior (DOI), including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The SO 3355, and subsequent guidance from the Deputy Secretary of Interior, set page and time limits for Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) and Environmental Assessments (EAs).

For projects where the BLM or other DOI bureaus are serving as a NEPA lead agency, an EIS should be no more than 300 pages long, excluding appendices, and should be completed within 365 days of publishing a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register. EAs should be no more than 75 pages long, excluding appendices, and completed within 180 calendar days from the start of the EA. Waivers may be requested for EISs that exceed page length or timeframes.

The BLM Arizona had four EISs in progress when SO 3355 was issued. Arizona devoted a deliberative effort to make these projects meet the intent of the SO. Work was completed earlier

this year on two projects, the Sonoran Valley Parkway EIS, and the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan and EIS. The remaining two projects are nearing completion. The Ray Mine Land Exchange signed a Record of Decision (ROD) in October 2019, and is currently undergoing a required administrative protest process. A ROD for the Ten West Link Transmission Line, that crosses both Arizona and California, is expected to be signed this November. The BLM Arizona is also currently working on a couple high interest EAs. The Phoenix District Office is analyzing the proposed development of a recreational shooting sports project (target shooting areas). The Arizona Strip District Office and Vermillion Cliffs National Monument is analyzing a possible increase in visitor use access to the Coyote Buttes North area within the Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness (where the geologic “Wave” feature is located). Both projects have released EAs for public comments and anticipate a decision later this fall.

### **3. SUBJECT: Wild Horse and Burro (WHB) Management**

**SUMMARY:** The Arizona WHB program is determined to place excess WHB removed from public lands into permanent homes in order to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance on public lands.

In fiscal year 2019 (FY19), the BLM Arizona removed 809 excess wild burros and 47 wild horses from private, public, and state land. The BLM Arizona also placed 708 WHB into private care through the adoption/sales program based at the Florence WHB Training and Holding Facility (Facility). The Facility’s training program was recognized by numerous national media outlets for its unique training methods and supply of trained animal for the U.S. Border Patrol. The Facility is also committed to modernizing the way the BLM manages WHB by instituting a microchip program and tracking system.

The BLM Arizona is currently participating in two research projects. These projects include a fertility management pilot project in partnership with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in which 75 female wild burros were treated and released. The Phoenix District Office continued a research collaring project in FY19 with 55 collars being tracked. The partners in this project will continue to monitor movement of burros in the Lake Pleasant area using a combination of radio telemetry and GPS.

The BLM Arizona is committed to achieving Appropriate Management Level (AML) on all Herd Management Areas (HMAs). In order to achieve this goal, the BLM Arizona Colorado River District is initiating NEPA to gather wild burros in the Black Mountain HMA in order to achieve AML in fiscal year 2020 (FY20).

### **4. SUBJECT: AIM- Assessment, Inventory and Monitoring**

**SUMMARY:** The AIM program provides a standardized process for the BLM to collect quantitative information on the status, condition, trend, amount, location, and spatial pattern of resources on the nation’s public lands.

The AIM approach is based on five key elements:

- Standardized set of core and contingent indicators for both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems
- Statistically valid sampling design (where appropriate)

- Structured implementation process
- Electronic data capture
- Integration with remote sensing

Terrestrial Core Indicators:

- Bare Ground
- Non-native Invasive Species
- Plant Species of Management Concern
- Proportion of Large Gaps between Plant Canopies
- Vegetation Composition
- Vegetation Height
- Soil Aggregate Stability

Previous AIM protocols were utilized on the Agua Fria National Monument. These plots are still being monitored, but not all of the current AIM protocols are being utilized. AIM protocols were used in FY17 on the Gila District to help determine the extent and health of grasslands on the BLM administered lands in Southeastern Arizona.

In FY19, AIM data was collected on the Tucson and Safford Field Offices. This AIM data will help inform the Land Health Evaluation and grazing permit renewal processes.

Moving forward, the BLM Arizona will expand AIM monitoring to include fuels fire treatments. AIM monitoring may also be expected to include aquatic AIM and address future management questions:

- Habitat appropriate for a specific T&E species
- Expand use of AIM for Land Health Evaluations/grazing permit renewals to other offices/areas.

##### **5. SUBJECT: Secretary's Order 3362 "Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors"**

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary's Order 3362 directs appropriate bureaus --US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Park Service (NPS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)--within the Department of the Interior (DOI) to work in close partnership with the State of Arizona to enhance and improve the quality of big game winter range and migration corridor habitat on Federal lands under the management jurisdiction of the DOI in a way that recognizes state authority to conserve and manage big game species and respects private property rights. This order focus on three big game species, elk, mule deer, and pronghorn.

BLM Arizona has awarded an assistance agreement for \$250,000 to the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) to study mule deer movement and identify important corridors. This agreement addresses the State's highest priority submitted to the DOI at the request of the Secretary.

Improving coordination with State Fish and Wildlife Agencies is a focus SO 3356 and 3362. Arizona BLM has a great working relationship with the AGFD. Through State and Regional coordination meetings, BLM will work with the AGFD to implement action under the orders.

There are several regional coordinators identified by the DOI. Arizona's coordinator is John Sherman, the BLM Wildlife Program Lead in New Mexico. Each coordinator worked with the State wildlife agency and the BLM state point of contact to develop a State Action Plan to address priorities for SO 3362.

Actions being implemented or ongoing:

- Elroy Masters, BLM Arizona's Fish and Wildlife Program Lead, is the Arizona Migration Corridor Coordinator. Maile Adler, Recreation Program Lead, is the Recreation Access Coordinator.
- In February 2019, AGFD conducted the capture and collaring effort in the Hassayampa, Lower Sonoran, and Tucson Field Offices. A total of 61 collars were deployed on mule deer and 8 desert bighorn sheep in the Interstate 11 proposed corridor.

Arizona has participated in the 3362 working group lead by the AGFD to update Arizona's State Action Plan. The update addressed current BLM Arizona completed environmental analysis for Shuttleworth – Suicide vegetation treatment project located in the Paunsaugunt- Kaibab Plateau priority corridor and winter range (mule deer). The update was submitted to DOI in September.

## **6. SUBJECT: Integrated Vegetation Management**

**SUMMARY:** BLM Arizona is leading the way in a statewide effort to build locally led, landscape scale resource conservation efforts. Many ongoing and planned partnerships among state and federal agencies, landowners and stakeholders are helping to build collaboration and accomplish shared landscape level objectives. These efforts directly support many of the priority themes set fourth at the national level and include challenges related to managing wildfire, watershed restoration, habitat improvement and connectivity, controlling invasive species and providing for energy development and urban growth. This effort is tied to overarching priorities, policies, objectives and standards common to all renewable resource programs, including forestry, fuels, range management, soil, water, air, fish and wildlife, and wild horse and burro programs. BLM Land Use planning manual .06 (C), Collaborative and Multijurisdictional Approaches to Planning and .06 (D), Planning Scale and Integrated Vegetation Handbook H-1740-2 Rel. 1-1714. The Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) model for BLM Arizona will require the establishment of IVM coordinators and committees at the State and District Offices. IVM Coordinators and Committees will facilitate goals and priorities set by State Leadership Team (SLT) that will fully integrate natural resource and fuels management projects into coordinated, planned, landscape scale projects.

#BLM#



# Arizona Resource Advisory Council November 14, 2019



## Member and BLM Sign-in

PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE	REPRESENTATION (Category or BLM)	EMAIL (If Changed)
STEPHEN WILLIAMS	<i>Stephen Williams</i>	PUBLIC	
Bill BRAKE	<i>Bill Brake</i>	Grazing	
J.C. Sanders	<i>John Sanders</i>	Visitor	
Michael Herder	<i>Michael Herder</i>	BLM Arizona Strip	
Scott Feldhausen	<i>Scott Feldhausen</i>	BLM Coila District	
William Mack	<i>William Mack</i>	BLM CRDOM	
Amber Cargile	<i>Amber Cargile</i>	BLM	
GERAUB DAVIS	<i>Geraub Davis</i>	BLM	
Elena Fink	<i>Elena Fink</i>	BLM	
RICK SELBACH	<i>Rick Selbach</i>	BLM	
Ken Hawes	<i>Ken Hawes</i>	BLM	
CHRIS WONDERLY	<i>Chris Wonderly</i>	BLM	
BILL WELLS	<i>Bill Wells</i>	BLM	
JEREMY GILSON	<i>Jeremy Gilson</i>	USFS	
KYUNG KIM WILLIS	<i>Kyung Kim Willis</i>	USFS	
Michael Dawson	<i>Michael Dawson</i>	Environmental	
Mike Quigley	<i>Mike Quigley</i>	Environmental	
KAY SUARZ	<i>Kay Suarz</i>	BLM	
Jim deVas	<i>Jim deVas</i>	AZCFD	
KRISHNA PANDMESWARAN	<i>Krishna Pandmeswaran</i>	Energy & Minerals	
Holly Jaleski	<i>Holly Jaleski</i>	Public@-large	
Benny Watson	<i>Benny Watson</i>	Local Elected official	
Sharma Torrens	<i>Sharma Torrens</i>	Environ GPS	
EMMETT STURGILL	<i>Emmett Sturgill</i>	GRAZING	

