

Arizona Strip Cooperators Planning Meeting

February 13, 2003 10 am – 3:30 pm
Riverside Drive Conference Room

Upcoming meetings, deadlines:

Next Cooperating Agencies Meeting – **April 24 10am** at Interagency Office Conference Room (345 East Riverside Drive, St. George, UT).

No meeting in March.

Public meetings to address alternatives will be scheduled in June 2nd – 6th

Assignments:

Diana – send public meeting schedule to Cooperating Agencies once developed, confirmed.

Diana – will send out latest Route Decision Tree criteria process and information.

All – Make sure all adjacent plans are sent to Diana Hawks
Studies that might help planning team (ex: socio-economic issues on Plateau)

Darla, Dennis – to address in Washington and report back to Cooperators; already designated wilderness - modifications, adjustments

Dennis – email Joy (Town of Fredonia) Route/Road Criteria

Introductions, ground rules, minutes - Diana

Meeting Objectives

Update on Plan Progress – Schedule

Clarify what cooperators are bringing to planning effort

Update on Alternative Process

- Desired Ecological Conditions
- ANMAS
- Decision Points – From Public Scoping
- Alternative Process
- Wilderness – working into planning process
- Route Decision Tree

Review of the minutes / Minutes from Last Meeting – 12/12/02

Minutes approved – No changes recommended.

Planning Update – Diana Hawks

Schedule: Formulate Alternatives – dates moved from March to June. Planning team not ready to present fully developed alternative. Opted to wait until Alternatives fully

developed to present to Public. June 2nd – 6th. Maps will be presented to show alternatives – on the ground.

Detailed info on meeting dates and places will be sent to cooperators once they have been confirmed.

Draft EIS – internal copies in January – Public comment in May (See Planning Schedule).

Rules-Responsibilities of Cooperating Agencies – Darla Sidles

Cooperator to assist in EIS – hope to get info from Coop Agencies to determine impacts of each alternative (see handout).

Must have jurisdiction by law or special expertise to collect and analyze data

MOUs still being reviewed by Solicitor

Participate in scoping process

Develop/Prepare environmental analysis

Staff Support – other resources, provide info

Share freely info and data relevant to process, but needs to remain between planning team – not for public review

No new authorities gained by Cooperating Agency participation

Need to outline roles and responsibilities – how each member involved, expertise bringing to table.

Diana - Copies of pertinent plans in adjacent areas – Still need Kaibab Paiute Tribal Plan. Need to ensure that plan developments are consistent with adjacent plans. Need to look at regional context.

Fredonia's Concerns:

Roads – as a committee, putting together group to gps roads between monuments. Roads that are been using need to be available to people of AZ Strip. Developing report

Grazing – important to keep multiple use on public lands

Water – important to keep original water rights, both private and public, more development if interested. Wants water studies to evaluate local hydrology of AZ Strip to find how deep the water is and where it is flowing.

People – people are more important than plants and animals

Sustainability – people who live on the Strip want to live here indefinitely, do not want to destroy environment

Tourism – interested in having access of some point on North Rim all year round – to make a living.

Fredonia's Contribution to Planning Effort:

Data from Fredonia Welcome Center

Constituents – ask what services are missing that local communities take up – is there a service or niche to fill by planning effort (ex: Grand Staircase-Escalante no campgrounds in plans to allow private entities to have campgrounds)

Interested in Campgrounds, Showers

Dennis – There will be opportunities for consolidating blocks of state lands once those lands are exchanged out of the monuments. Asking towns/communities to consider where they would like those blocks of lands for community expansion. Also, the plan will identify BLM lands for disposal or exchange. The communities can determine where they would like those for public purposes, etc.

Colorado City Concerns:

Areas of interest – area of economic impact of landscape monuments on support structures, communities, Mohave County Economic Authority –
Water Resources – water flows from Utah into Arizona - working to try to establish water flow studies, water planning committee to bring resources
Transportation, routes, improvements – have info on various kinds of roads/routes – cost profiles, for example and can bring opinions on where roads should be and level of maintenance
Cost projections - background in public modeling and accounting, can critically analyze in cost model projection
Socio-economic data - involved with school district – generate info from surveys, access to data for region
Emergency Services – well positioned to discuss in relation to monuments, can respond with paramedics/search and rescue teams. Have resources and needs. Recommendations on routes needed to maintain access for rescue teams.
Air Transportation – can bring resources and information to the table, improved airport, have fixed base operator located at airport, have instrument flight rated systems to bring aircraft into and out of areas. Understand air routes and noise.
Land Use Planning – invested in, with State Lands Department concerns, considering which properties should be acquired or exchanged, which should be protected for watershed values
Sustainable Communities Initiative – introducing concept of maintaining appropriate resource channels with BLM, FS and keeping resources at local level. Can bring info regarding this.

Colorado City Contribution:

In each area of above, opportunity to draft original material, can participate in document creation, edits, with suggestions for grammatical, content, etc. Also, boards/councils/groups – can bring information forward.

Kaibab Paiute Concerns/Contribution:

Tribal Council met last week and has information for planning team. They will email that information from the Council. Tribe wants to have better communication with AZ Strip – esp. with planning efforts. Wants to have input. AZ Strip are traditional tribal lands. Human remains are particularly sensitive. They want notification right away in order to take care of these remains. No burial grounds, bodies placed at death site. They would like the dirt roads maintained but not much more development. They want more communication on road maintenance.

Oral history. They can contribute, particularly the Shivwits Band who lived on this portion of the Strip. They can give educational classes, out in the field, particularly to the youth. They can teach about rock art, etc.

Waters are really important to animals – water storage when in drought. Animals gave us language, taught us our songs. It is important to consider the animals. There is a traditional, spiritual, healing consideration. We need to have a traditional, spiritual respect for the land.

Tribal council is more for policy input. Want place at the planning table and would like to develop a good working relationship. May contribute to vegetation analysis – erosion, etc. They could speak to the Elders on how to fix particular areas (such as erosion).

Concerned about plans for pipelines, ohv routes

Tribal Office: 928-643-7245

Diana – The plans need to identify areas traditional cultural places in order to minimize impacts, development. Contact Gloria Benson because specific locational information can be kept from public in order to protect the places. BLM may receive a grant to get information including oral histories on AZ Strip. This might include place names that various tribes have for places on the Arizona Strip.

Washington County Concerns:

Grazing, in particular keeping traditional ranches operating.

Maintaining access. Not looking to develop anything new, but keep existing access

Concerned about proliferation of ATV/OHV trails. Need to stay on existing roads and trails.

Need better travel services on some roads, there is a safety concern.

Socio-economic issues, ranchers on Strip reside in Washington County.

Wilderness – concerns with tying up lands and cutting off public access. Don't feel like wilderness inventory needs to be conducted

Washington County Contribution:

Washington County GIS folks talking to BLM GIS

OHV use in St. George, Colorado City, Fredonia – need to address use:

Transportation corridors and Lake Powell water pipeline dipping into the Strip. Concern over blocking state lands – around borders, expanding – will get information on the current corridors to BLM.

Route inventory in two monuments – routes will be designated, also south of St. George want to designate and tie into Utah with open use areas for ATV's and motorcycles.

AGFD Concerns/Contribution

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State has authority and responsibility for management of wildlife resources. Therefore, whatever the range of alternatives, AGFD wants to ensure that our ability to complete work, surveys, access, etc. are included into planning documents as land uses necessary to complete management tasks (as a minimum) in any/all alternatives developed (including authorized administrative access where deemed necessary).

AGFD Concerns with wilderness proposals – must address ongoing, proposed, and future ability to access areas necessary for proactive management of wildlife and wildlife habitat. The objects included in the Proclamation include a variety of wildlife species.

Land use designations must allow for conservation of these species – in line with the Proclamation – keeping in mind that restrictions to land uses may hinder achieving population goals and wildlife habitat objectives.

Route Designations – AGFD wants seat at planning table during designation process to ensure our management responsibility needs are met.

Have been working cooperatively with AZ Strip FO for many years, will continue to do so. We are able to participate fully in planning process, contributing game and nongame species data, on-the-ground experience and information specific to wildlife and wildlife habitat, access issues, wildlife-related recreation. We can assist in reviews of documents, edits, writing, participation in public and planning team meetings, etc.

USFWS Concerns/Contribution

Appreciates opportunity to be involved early. Leaning away from being Cooperating Agency because they are worried about providing people and time but are willing to be at as many meetings as possible. All existing ways to participate still exist. Will still cooperate; participate, even without Cooperating Agency Status. Want to take full advantage to provide input, attend meetings.

Can bring T&E expertise; provide written comments on planning documents, meet with wildlife working group.

Get goals into planning process early so **no surprises** during Section 7 consultation.

Primary concerns are adverse effects to sensitive species, reducing, minimizing impacts.

Diana - May be limitations to participation at meetings, if not full Cooperating Agency Status. BLM needs to check on this.

Grand Canyon Concerns/Contribution

May be in the same situation as USFWS and not be a cooperating agency. Interest is primarily with lands overlap of Grand Canyon – Kanab Plateau, Toroweap Valley. Ways to contribute: provide data, particularly for Kanab, Toroweap, re-inventory of roads, serving as a conduit for other types of info. River management planning is now ongoing. They would like to keep communications open, between planning efforts for the Canyon and planning effort for monuments. They will begin their Backcountry Wilderness Management Plan in 2005. And will reinventory roads this spring. Contact Linda Jalbert at 928-638-7909.

Mohave County Concerns/Contribution:

Already have MOU – board of supervisor's instruction to become Cooperating Agency. Socio-economic land use data, transportation systems, which roads are maintained, cannot hire someone to assist – limited by funding.

May be involved in a few of the public meetings located in Mohave County.

Alternative Development - Decision Points - Darla:

Public Scoping Meetings – 2219 (1600 were form letters emailed from The Wilderness Society – most not from AZ) comments, grouped into major issues that public concerned about, combined with management concerns (BLM, NPS) – condensed into major issues. Refine major issues to take back to public. Comments reviewed, analyzed. Alternatives have to address full range of public comments.

Decision Point Criteria – showing range of opinions, capturing public comments and major issues for the plan.

DRAFT DECISION POINTS FOR ARIZONA STRIP

1. To what extent can we provide recreational, managerial, and commercial access while protecting resource values, sensitive species, and special areas?
2. To what extent should additional lands be managed for wilderness values, such as naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation?
3. To what extent will we restore ecological systems that are outside their natural range of variability?
4. How do we protect monument objects?

Wilderness – Tom Folks:

BLM has an established process for determining suitability and quality of lands to consider for wilderness designation.

1984 Arizona Wilderness Act established wilderness on the Strip with Soft Release Language – which means it can be revisited. BLM regulations require reevaluation in planning context.

Majority of NPS lands are proposed wilderness already, will be treated as wilderness. Not a lot of change to what is being proposed as wilderness on Park Service Lands.

Tom Folks – Legal standing to conduct the original wilderness inventory is FLPMA Section 603, which makes recommendations to Congress. NOW, founded in FLPMA Sections 201, 202, and following the BLM Wilderness Inventory study and procedure handbook – broken into 1) inventory, 2) planning process (reference Chart Wilderness Component).

RMP is level at which wilderness recommendations are made along with consideration of other uses for the landscape. These recommendations are made in the land use plans and wait for Congress to pick them up and act, if they desire. These lands must also be treated as wilderness until Congress acts, but there may be some differences. Some roads may remain open until Congress acts, for example. The difference between the 603 inventory process (large enough, apparently natural, solitude, primitive recreation) where any lands containing wilderness quality automatically became WSA and the 202 process is that no recommendation is forwarded to Congress. Only Congress can create wilderness under both the 603 and 202 processes.

Now that we are working with Section 202 of FLPMA (land use planning), a requirement is new lands acquired since the last RMP are to be inventoried for wilderness character.

We have about 60,000 acres acquired after 1982 that need to be inventoried for basic wilderness character.

One section of the wilderness handbook allows citizen group proposals on additional wilderness. Data is analyzed against current knowledge, spot fieldwork. BLM has to show if citizen's proposals data differs significantly from existing BLM inventory from the 1980's. If yes, finding of reasonable probability (no field verification at this stage) will be made.

Under Section 202, we have more involvement in what becomes WSA (different from 603). There is more discretion to derive a variety and range of alternatives.

In the Section 202 process, we may also look at manageability. This will allow planners to evaluate other uses of the land, impacts to users, resources, etc.. It will allow planners the ability to draw wilderness boundary lines where they are better managed, considering use, roads, enforcement, etc.

Development of alternatives – looking at potential supply of wilderness, full range will be included in alternatives: from no new wilderness study areas designated, to full range of wilderness supply. Size, naturalness, solitude, primitive recreation – must now really evaluate *quality*.

Naturalness is defined not by scientists, but by public viewpoints

**What other resources and/or resource uses are benefited by designating as WSA.
How will a WSA benefit wildlife values, cultural, monument values, objects?**

How will a WSA impact other programs, uses, resources?

Is it a tool in some cases, an encumbrance in others? Must be evaluated on a site specific basis, and in conjunction with all other factors.

Anything headed towards preferred alternative will be field inventoried.

WSAs managed under Interim Management Policy (until designated by Congress).

WSAs outside monuments open to mineral entry, leasable-locatables.

Whether in or outside monuments, case by case, some routes could be designated through WSA.

Previous 603 process (1978-1982) on wilderness suitability reports in BLM office were sent as recommendations to Congress for wilderness. Now, this is not part of process. The wilderness recommendations made in the land use plan will not be sent to Congress but will remain for Congress to use at their discretion at a later date.

Wilderness Inventory determinant: road vs. way definition – mechanical construction, regular maintenance, and regular/Continued use.

Will consider uses, whether or not meeting criteria for road (vs. route), can still decide to leave open.

Citizens Proposal – analysis is two tiered approach. 1) does it have wilderness character, and 2) bring it into the planning realm and decide what other uses are available for that landscape, then determine the best use.

LUNCH

GC-PNM is an amendment to Lake Mead GMP for the Grand Canyon - Parashant portions of Lake Mead.

Requirements – CEQ regulations, BLM, NPS Policy - Diana

Alternatives must look at all reasonable alternatives but only those that are feasible and that will meet the projects purpose and need. Alternatives must provide a mix of resource protection, management use, and development and they must meet federal laws and regulations and BLM and NPS planning policy.

Alternatives must be analyzed and examined. Look at Reasonable, Feasible extremes to address full scope of comments.

The planning team and resource specialists will work together to insure that alternatives are internally consistent. No conflicts within alternatives - workable alternatives that make sense.

CEQ – rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated.

Those sections of wilderness that either do not qualify and/or conflict with uses, resources must discuss reasons for elimination from process.

Lands determined suitable for WSA will be brought forward into alternatives, then analyzed to determine affects to other resources.

Most will be included in “supply” area – to be dealt in the analysis process.

Alternative Concepts - Kathleen and Mike

Developing alternative “themes”, “concepts”. Decided on mixture of concepts and no-concepts. Wilderness designation implies a lot of management that coincides with wilderness management.

Alt A – 100% of wilderness supply

Alt B – Resource specialists ID areas best managed by WSA designation

Alt C – No Action

Alt D – additional developments, without additional WSA, fair amount of restoration on areas outside areas of natural variability

Preferred Alternative – taking individual decisions from Alt A-D. Mix and Match.

Alternatives need to be consistent within themselves. Conflict resolution. Alternative decisions must work.

Each alternative must address Decision Points, Desired Ecological Conditions for each Ecoregion as goals, Areas Outside Natural Variability (ANMAS), Hot Spots, Sacred Areas

For each alternative, soils, T&E, Veg, wildlife, fire, cultural, range, lands, recreation, wilderness will be addressed – how each component will be managed.

Question in identifying range of alternatives – can already designated Wilderness (by Congress) be “undesigned” in the planning process? Would have to prove suitable – not suitable. Also how it fits with management, and resources.

Concern – designated wilderness can only increase – no mechanism for change, wilderness management doesn’t allow for some activities to address long-term sustainability of resources.

Wilderness still allows management, but tools are more primitive.

Is it possible to have recommendations in alternatives to modify already designated wilderness.

Darla/Dennis - Will push question up line to Washington to determine answer.

Planning Process for Alternative Development (flo-chart) – Diana

April 7th – 11th working on alternative resolution with resource specialists – still trying to determine where route determination process takes place.

Cannot identify preferred alternative until draft plan. Public meetings in June will not present preferred alternative in order to take comments on alternatives. Preferred alternative will not be developed until after public meetings.

Route designation is support activity for alternatives. But still go through decision tree to document closures/opened/etc.

Desired Ecological Conditions WILL NOT change between alternatives. Management zones/prescriptions will vary between alternatives.

How will all components come together for each alternative – how to graphically display?

Develop DEC's for specific areas – will be umbrella to make recommendations.

Starting to develop decisions by program, then planning team brings all decisions together, get rid of redundant decisions (allowable use, restricted use), resolve conflict, etc.

Bring to public in JUNE – 3 MONTHS to decide how these decisions to pull together.

Update on Route Decision Tree Process – Tom Folks

Tom will develop new version of Route Process with all Cooperating Agencies comments – give to Diana to send out.

Hierarchy of route designation – tiered process – to reflect issues on AZ Strip. Look at route inventory data for both monuments (route inventories completed), and hopefully around St. George, Colorado City (if completed). Included in database, orthophotoquads, GIS ground truthing, photos taken.

Route decision process will be completed on Preferred Alternative first – then backtrack to other alternatives to determine route criteria for each (to eliminate having to go through every route for every alternative).

Decision Tree is consistent across state – but can be modified to fit AZ Strip to address local needs.

Open vs. Closed vs. Limited Access – once determined simple open/closed/limited (seasonal, types of use, etc) – then look at implementation level plans will identify class – maintenance, etc.

Attendees:

Diana Hawks	AZ Strip BLM	Diana_hawks@blm.gov	435-688-3266
Bill Dickinson	NPS Lake Mead	William_k_Dickinson@blm.gov	702-293-8920
Linda Jalbert	NPS Grand Canyon	Linda_Jalbert@nps.gov	928-638-7909
Darla Sidles	NPS Parashant NM	darla_sidles@nps.gov	435-688-3226
Becky Hammond	BLM Vermillion NM	becky-hammond@blm.gov	435-688-3323
Oliver Barlow	Colorado City	oliver@color-country.net	928-875-9030
Ila Bullets	Kaibab Paiute Tribe	ijbullets@hotmail.com	928-643-6014
Brenda Drye	Kaibab Paiute Tribe	spaicons@xpressweb.com	928-643-6014
Alan Gardner	Washington Co. Comm	adgardner@washco.state.ut.us	928-634-5700
Robert Price	AZ Game and Fish	rlprice92@msn.com	435-574-3923
Luke Thompson	AZ Game and Fish	(b) (6)	435-986-4289
Allen Taylor	USFWS	allen_taylor@fws.gov	928-226-8002
Bill Austin	USFWS	William_Austin@fws.gov	928-226-0714
Gary Warshefski	NPS Lake Mead	gary_warshefski@nps.gov	702-293-8920
Dennis Curtis	BLM Parashant NM	dennis_curtis@blm.gov	435-688-3202
Kathleen Harcksen	BLM Parashant	Kathleen_harcksen@blm.gov	435-688-3380
Rebecca Davidson	AZ Game and Fish	Rebecca_Davidson@blm.gov	602-417-9612

Joy Jordan	Town of Fredonia	joyj@xpressweb.com	928-643-7207
Michael Herder	BLM AZ Strip	Michael_herder@blm.gov	435-688-3239
Chris Ballard	Mohave County	Christine.ballard@co.mohave.az.us	928-757-0903

Others interested in receiving planning documents and information:

Rick Miller	AZ Game and Fish (R2)	rmiller@gf.state.az.us	928-774-5045
Ron Seig	AZ Game and Fish (R2)	rseig@gf.state.az.us	928-774-5045