

# Kingman Field Office Special Recreation Permits

# Final Business Plan

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Arizona State Office

September 2006



# KINGMAN FIELD OFFICE SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS BUSINESS PLAN

**A strategy for fee expenditure in compliance with the  
Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act P.L. 108-447  
Enacted December 8, 2004**

## Introduction

This business plan has been prepared to meet the criteria defined in the "Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, 2004" (FLREA). It replaces, in part, the existing business plan (as amended, September, 1999), for the Kingman Recreational Areas (BLM Project No. AZ06). The area was initially managed under Section 315 of the "Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1996," commonly known as the "Recreation Fee Demonstration Program," and management continued under annual reauthorizations of this legislation. The Kingman Recreational Areas Fee Demonstration Project was selected as a Fee Demonstration Pilot Project in August, 1998 and the BLM began collecting fees in October, 1998. The authorities for this plan are:

- The ***Federal Land Policy and Management Act*** (FLPMA), Public Law 94-579, contains BLM's general land use management authority over the public lands, and establishes outdoor recreation as one of the principal uses of those lands. Section 302 (b) of FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to regulate through permits or other instruments the use of the public lands, which includes commercial recreation use. Section 303 of FLPMA contains BLM's authority to enforce the regulations and impose penalties. Subsequent Federal authorizations tiered from FLPMA enable the BLM to charge Special Recreation Permit (SRP) fees for organized group events, commercial activities, and individual use of special management areas
- The ***Land and Water Conservation Fund Act*** (LWCFA), as amended, authorized BLM to collect fees for recreational use and to issue special recreation permits for group activities and recreation events and limits the services for which BLM may collect fees.
- The ***Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act*** (FLREA) replaced LWCFA as BLM's authority to collect fees in 2004. Under FLREA, Congress has authorized the BLM to collect two types of recreation fees, Amenity Recreation fees and Special Recreation Permit fees. FLREA also authorizes the BLM to retain these fees locally so they can be used to repair, maintain, and upgrade recreational facilities and services to meet public demand.
- Regulations governing BLM's Special Recreation Permit program can be found in ***Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2930 (43CFR2930)***.

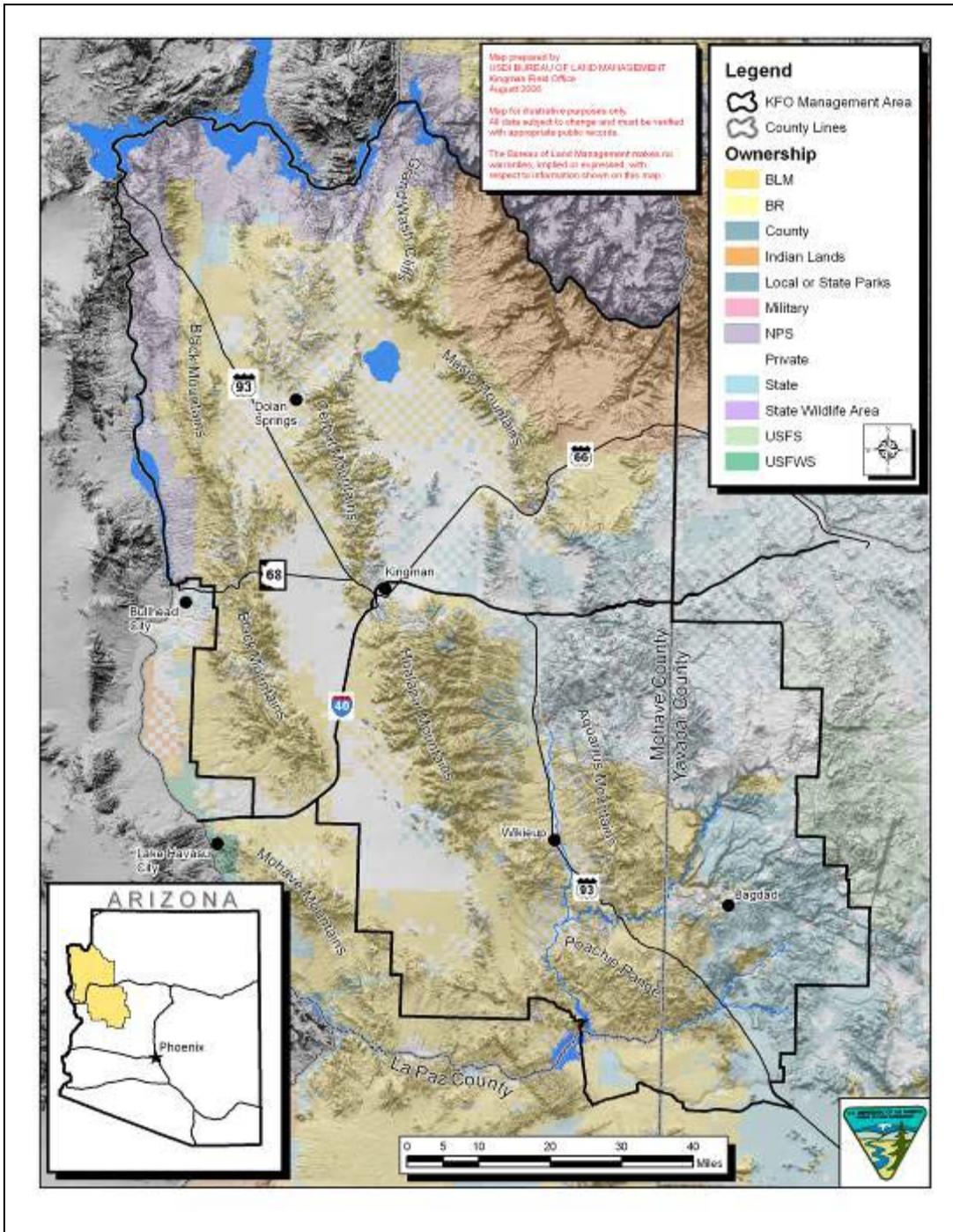
Because Special Recreation Permit fees collected under FLPMA are accountable to the public separately than amenity recreation fee collected under the authority of FLREA, this document pertains only to Special Recreation Permit fee revenues. The Kingman Field Office does not manage any special areas where individual use SRPs are issued. Consequently, this business plan pertains only to the collection and expenditure of fee revenues from recreational commercial and/or competitive activities, and organized group events. The actual fee revenues collected segregated into an account BLM refers to as AZ17.

This business plan is NOT APPLICABLE TO SRP COST RECOVERY ACCOUNTS. Such funds are not considered public fee revenues. Under other SRP regulations and policy BLM is authorized, under certain situations, to require SRP permit applicants to pay costs related to processing and managing their permit, which are deposited into separate accounts specific to the

permit. The expenditure of those accounts is guided by separate policy and is accountable directly to the permittee.

### 1. Fee Project/Site/Area Description

**Kingman Special Recreation Permits (SRPs)** are issued on a discretionary basis to manage use of public lands for recreational commercial and/or competitive activities, and organized group events in the northwestern corner of Arizona. These public lands lie within Arizona Congressional Districts 1 and 2.



The Kingman Field Office administers large blocks of public land (approximately 2.4 million acres) mostly in the Basin and Range physiographic province, but also including some of the Colorado Plateau on the eastern side of the management area. Most people attracted to the public lands here are drawn especially to the rugged mountain ranges and the varied recreation opportunities available therein. Highly eroded igneous and metamorphic mountain geology, greatly faulted and folded, provide complex topography for exploration. Sonoran and Mohave Desert vegetation, and the transition between them, provide a varied and colorful cover over the lower elevations. Intermediate elevations of the mountains display Arizona Interior Chaparral vegetation and pinyon/juniper woodlands. Groves of Ponderosa pine, Gambel oak and aspen can be found at the highest elevations of the Hualapai and Cerbat Mountains. Several perennial streams, including the Big Sandy River, Santa Maria River, Burro Creek and Francis Creek support corridors of riparian vegetation which contrast sharply with the surrounding upland vegetation.

The combination of mountainous topography and diverse vegetation communities are what attract most visitors to this area. The **Black Mountains**, located between Kingman and Bullhead City, create a stunning panorama for tourists at the casino city of Laughlin, NV and for travelers along Historic Route 66. The **Hualapai Mountains** and **Cerbat Mountains** appeal to the local population especially during the summer months because of the cooler temperatures that can be found at higher elevations. The **Music Mountains/Grand Wash Cliffs** provide a scenic interlude for tourists heading to Grand Canyon West on the Hualapai Indian Reservation or for those traveling on Route 66.

Public lands are very attractive to some public because of the experiences and beneficial outcomes associated with hunting opportunities. Elk, mule deer, javelina and desert bighorn sheep are the primary species inhabiting these areas that bring clients to seek the assistance of outfitters.

## **2. Description of Customers Who Use the Area**

A demographic survey of users on KFO public lands has not been conducted. Professional judgment by KFO field staff estimates that the majority of public land use is made by local and regional residents. However, activities that are conducted under SRPs often cater to non-resident U.S. citizens and international visitors. These clients rely on the expertise of local guides, promoters and outfitters to help them realize the most satisfaction from their visit. Several examples:

- **Hunting Outfitters** These services are commonly used by non-residents unfamiliar with local terrain who don't have the luxury of spending long periods of time scouting for good hunting areas. Outfitters usually provide equipment, lodging and meals in addition to guiding services so that their clients don't have to worry about these details. Clients benefit from outfitter services by learning new outdoor skills, escaping social pressures, getting some exercise and perhaps feeling a sense of accomplishment in stalking and harvesting game.
- **Tour Guides** Horses, all-terrain vehicles, busses and a variety of four-wheel drive passenger vehicles are utilized to help clients explore public lands away from paved roads. Like hunting outfitters, tour guides help non-residents to see the back country without the requisite skills or equipment for horseback riding or four-wheel driving, or the ability to interpret a map or have much knowledge of their destination. Tour guides add local 'flavor' to sightseeing by providing historical/anecdotal background. Visitors get to enjoy facilitated access to the outdoors with friends, family or others with similar interests, and may gain an increased appreciation for nature and an awareness of man's relationship with the land.

- **Self-Guided Tour Operations** Promoters provide detailed printed tour guides or well-marked routes to allow clients to see backcountry in unfamiliar territory. These operations, such as Dual Sport Motorcycle Tours or Poker Runs, appeal to local as well as non-resident people. Participants may gain a sense of adventure, get to improve their outdoor skills, enjoy spending time with people that have similar interests and probably enjoy improved mental health by spending time away from everyday responsibilities.

In addition to commercial services provided by hunting outfitters and tour guides, KFO also receives permit applications for competitive events including road rallies, mountain bike races and OHV races. The potential exists to receive applications for various other types of both competitive and/or commercial activities on public lands.

### **3. Objectives for Use of Fee Receipts**

The primary purpose of this business plan is to assure public accountability for the collection and expenditure of SRP fee revenues. This is accomplished by sharing the KFO's objectives for the processing and expenditure of these revenues as allowed under current law.

BLM is authorized to expend up to 15% of the fee revenues for *general* administration, overhead, and indirect costs, (including labor) of a SRP program. KFO recognizes this as the highest priority objective for the use of SRP revenues, because without it the capability to process permit applications and manage approved permits would be constrained by available federal appropriations. KFO will first use this portion of the revenues to fund things such as, but not limited to: labor for handling and deposition of fee receipts, development of SRP management policies, travel and training associated with SRP management, purchasing equipment and supplies directly related to SRP monitoring and compliance (GPS devices and software, cameras, radios, uniforms, etc.)

KFO's second priority objective for the use of SRP fee receipts is to help visitors exposed to the public lands through the permitted activities as clients or participants to attain certain beneficial outcomes they sought from their experience. These were described in Section 2. Specifically, revenues will be used to purchase and distribute brochures and other interpretive materials (i.e. *Tread Lightly!/Leave No Trace*) to SRP participants and clients to promote ethical, lawful and responsible behavior on public lands in order to facilitate learning new outdoor skills, gaining an increased appreciation for nature and awareness of man's relationship with the land, and improving outdoor skills.

KFO's third priority objective will be to ensure public safety while visiting the public lands under specific permit authorizations. Some of the fee revenues may be used to provide law enforcement to conduct on-the-ground monitoring of specific SRP activities or events, and to assure permit compliance and visitor safety at those events. However, law enforcement activities that are administrative or provide overhead to the permitting program in general will not be funded from revenues.

KFO's fourth priority objective will be to use available funding for purchase and installation of kiosks at strategic locations on public lands to advise clients and participants of regulations, ethical behavior and special restrictions. These are on-the-ground projects that produce off-site environmental and social benefits (such as increased protection of public land natural resources) by producing settings for clients and participants seeking to escape social pressures, enjoy facilitated access to the outdoors with friends, family or others with similar interests, and enjoy spending time with people that have similar interests, all of which are outcomes they came to achieve.

It needs to be recognized that annual total of revenues collected by the KFO will rarely allow, in any one year, for the ability to fully invest in any one of these priorities, let alone all four. That

means it may be necessary to shift up and down this scale as situations arise, other funding is available, and higher priority items can be delayed. This may be necessary in order to fund lower priority items that require larger amounts of revenues. For example, if a supply of brochures are already in stock (priority number two), KFO may elect to refrain from using the account until there is enough money saved to purchase a kiosk (priority number four), while utilizing federal appropriation or permit cost recovery accounts to assure public safety through specific permit monitoring (priority number three).

#### **4. Recreation Use by Major Component**

The data below reflects the number and types of new SRPs and renewals of multi-year SRPs authorized by the KFO in recent years:

	FISCAL YEAR				
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007 (estimate)
<b>Commercial Permits</b>	9 new/ 8 renewals	8 new/ 11 renewals	7 new/ 10 renewals	8 new/ 10 renewals	8 new/ 9 renewals
<b>Competitive Permits</b>	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Organized Group Permits</b>	0	0	0	0	0

#### **5. Relevant Costs Expended or Needed to Manage the Special Recreation Permit Program**

The following information indicates the average cost of processing a Special Recreation Permit and the average cost of conducting compliance checks on permits, once issued. These figures represent labor costs (staff salary) plus operations costs (vehicles, supplies, etc.) incurred by the Kingman Field Office to manage the Special Recreation Permit program. This information was determined by calculating the total costs attributed to performing these work activities in KFO each year divided by the number of permits managed for that year.

	FISCAL YEAR			Overall Average Cost Per Permit
	2003	2004	2005	
<b>Permit Processing</b>	\$1,184	\$1,033	\$1,749	\$1,322
<b>Permit Compliance</b>	\$903	\$534	\$1,029	\$822

#### **6. Fee Collection History of the Special Recreation Permit Program**

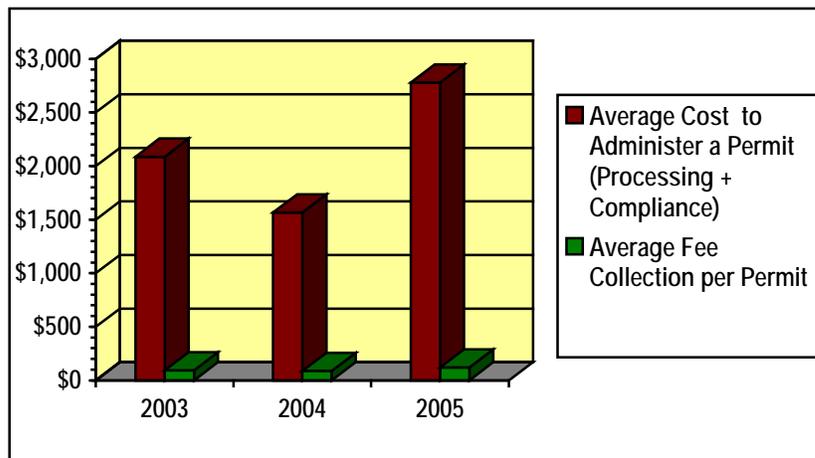
The following information indicates fee collection for SRPs for the fiscal years 2003 through 2006 in KFO.

Type of Permit	FISCAL YEAR			
	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>Commercial Fees</b>	\$1,595	\$1,588	\$1,676	\$2,247
<b>Organized Group Fees</b>	--	--	--	--
<b>Competitive Fees</b>	\$80	\$160	\$461	\$406
<b>TOTAL FEES COLLECTED</b>	<b>\$1,675</b>	<b>\$1,748</b>	<b>\$2,137</b>	<b>\$2,653</b>

## 7. Fee Calculation Process

National Special Recreation Permit management regulations specify that SRP fees for recreational commercial and/or competitive activities, and organized group events, cannot be set by the local BLM office. Rather, they are determined at the BLM's Washington Office level. For consistency, this is generally done in concert with the U.S. Forest Service.

Such considerations do not take into account the cost of operations for a local program. The table below compares the data presented in sections 5 and 6. This serves to illustrate the revenues that would be required for the KFO commercial and/or competitive activities/organized group event SRP program to be self-sufficient.



What the table does not illustrate is that few permitting activities are "average". Some requests may be for activities that are far more elaborate, involving more of staff time and land resources, than others. It is for these reasons that BLM was authorized to require certain permit applications to pay cost recovery fees.

This table also explains why KFO, as well as other BLM offices, are working continuously to make managerial changes that improve business practices to make the processing and monitoring of SRPs more efficient and thus less costly. Such efforts include programmatic environmental assessments wherever common activity proposals can be identified, streamlined documentation of environmental compliance, standardized stipulations, and increasing use of internet resources, capabilities, and services. As explained earlier, only 15% of the recreation revenues can be expended on developing such efforts. In the KFO, much of this progress is dependant upon federal appropriations.

As mentioned earlier, Special Recreation Permit fees recreational commercial and/or competitive/organized group events are not set by the local BLM office. The \$90 minimum annual fee and \$180 minimum site reservation fees for these SRPs were last adjusted on March 1, 2005. This was done in accordance with a three-year fee adjustment policy published in the Federal Register on October 19, 1989 (54FR 42998). The next fee adjustment will occur on March 1, 2008.

Additional fee calculations for recreational commercial and/or competitive/organized group event SRPs are routinely calculated using guidance found in BLM Manual H-2930-1, Section III.G. In some cases the calculations may determine that fees for a particular permit will exceed the minimums described above. This is particularly true when authorized commercial activities reflect a large profit margin, or if competitive events and organized group activities have large numbers of participants. This Manual section is available for review at the KFO BLM office.

## **8. Customer Feedback**

Feedback from SRP customers is solicited on at least an annual basis via Post-Use Reports. The Post-Use Report provides an opportunity for customers to comment on any aspect of the BLM permitting program.

The Draft Business Plan was made available for a 30-day public review in several venues:

- Copies of the plan were mailed to our stakeholders, including customers who currently hold a SRP and groups/clubs that may potentially seek a SRP (a list of these customers is provided in Appendix 1) ;
- The plan was posted on the Kingman Field Office website;
- Copies of the plan were available at Kingman Field Office for walk-in customers.

The public review period ran from August 29, 2006 to September 29, 2006. At the conclusion of the 30-day public review, one e-mail response was received. In addition to minor editorial comments, two statements were made:

- ❖ *"We need a time frame on submitting and receiving SRP's. This has always been a bone of contention with motorized recreationists. Six months before an event to submit an application for an event permit is a long wait. And, it is very unfair of the land manager to keep a group hanging in the air until the very last possible minute (sometimes the day before the actual event) before receiving the permit. This is a STATEWIDE problem, not just local. Events take a lot of work and coordination by the public/club/group--everyone gets involved. We must produce brochures, application forms, arrange for food, prizes, signage, etc. It takes as much effort for us as it does for BLM to run through its various environmental impact concerns."*
- ❖ *"There is a national organization called the ATV Safety Institute. When one buys a new ATV one can opt to take their safety course. The institute actually pays a person with a new vehicle to take the course, which indicates how concerned they are for new riders. It is an excellent course for a novice, even an experienced rider. Discussed are safety; environmental concerns; safety; Tread Lightly; safety; staying on existing roads/trails/ways/tracks, etc. and safety! We have taken the course. It's excellent. The ATV instructor has been looking for a new site for his classes. There are a lot of ideally suitable sites on public lands. Since this course is of great benefit to our public lands and the environment - it would behoove the BLM to offer a no-fee area for this purpose. Surely, a special exemption could be made for an educational program such as this? Something to consider."*

Both of these comments were given consideration. However, the intent of this business plan is to describe the fiscal aspects of recreational fee revenues generated through issuance of Special Recreation Permits. Procedures for issuing SRPs, including timeframes for submission by applicants, and determining whether or not permits or fees are appropriate, are clearly stated in 43 CFR 2930 and in BLM's Manual Handbook **H-2930-1, Recreation Permit Administration**. The second comment, addressing the possibility of identifying area(s) on public land suitable for OHV education, is an excellent one. Land use decisions such as this will be addressed in the BLM's Land Use Planning process, which Kingman Field Office is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2009.

Copies of the **Kingman Field Office Special Recreation Permits FINAL BUSINESS PLAN** will be mailed to all stakeholders listed in Appendix 1, following approval of the plan by the Kingman Field Manager.

**RECOMMENDATIONS, REVIEWS and APPROVALS**

Recommended By:

\*SIGNED BY BRUCE ASBJORN and LEN MARCEAU\*  
Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Kingman Field Office

9/29/2006  
Date

Reviewed By:

\*SIGNED BY RUBEN SANCHEZ\*  
Assistant Field Manager - Non-Renewable Resources  
Kingman Field Office

9/29/2006  
Date

Approved by:

\*SIGNED BY WAYNE KING\*  
Field Manager  
Kingman Field Office

9/29/2006  
Date

## APPENDIX 1

The following parties were mailed copies of the *Kingman Field Office Special Recreation Permits Draft Business Plan* on August 29, 2006:

Starr Guide Service  
Douglas A. Starr  
Paulden, AZ 86334

Blue River Adventures  
Charles and Sharon Gould  
Clifton, AZ 85533

Dry Creek Outfitters  
Tim Mercier  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Double D Outfitters  
Darin Collins  
Bullhead City, AZ 86439

Bedlion Outfitters  
James Bedlion  
Flagstaff, AZ 86004

Arizona Wildlife Outfitters  
Don Martin  
Kingman, AZ 86401

Double H Outfitters  
Tyson Hatch  
Holbrook, AZ 86025

United States Outfitters  
George Taulman  
Taos, NM 87571

Todd's Guide Service  
Chris C. Todd  
Buckeye, AZ 85326

James Guide Service  
Marvin James  
Flagstaff, AZ 86003

Outback Off-Road Adventures  
Gary West  
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403

American Rally Sport Group, Inc.  
Roger Allison  
Laughlin, NV 89029

SNORE, LTD.  
Ken Freeman  
Las Vegas, NV 89127

Walapai 4-Wheelers, Inc.  
Kingman, AZ 86402

Kingman Area Chamber of Commerce  
Kingman, AZ 86402

John R. Montgomery  
Fort Mohave, AZ 86426

Prescott College  
Rachel Peters  
Prescott, AZ 86301

Oatman Stables  
Tom and Jennifer McCarthy  
Durango, CO 81301

Michael Badura  
Golden Valley, AZ 86413

Bullhead 4-Wheelers, Inc.  
Bullhead City, AZ 86430

Cerbat Ridge Runners ATV Club  
Kingman, AZ 86409