

CF 1781



United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management • Arizona

Congressional Staff Briefing
Tuesday, July 10, 2007 • 10 a.m.

Agenda

Welcome and Comments

Elaine Zielinski,
BLM Arizona State Director

Travel Management

Bill Gibson,
Travel Management
Coordinator

Recreational Shooting

Michael Taylor,
Deputy State Director,
Resources

Pacific Gas and Electric/Topock Project

Becky Heick,
District Manager,
Colorado River

U.S.-Mexico Border Issues

Shela McFarlin,
Special Assistant

Information Sharing

Congressional Staff

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SIGN-IN SHEET

Name (please print)	Affiliation
Speth McFarlin	BLM ASO [Tucson]
BILL GIBSON	BLM ASO
Becky Heick	BLM - CRD (Lake Havasu City)
Mike Taylor	BLM - ASO
Helen Hankins	BLM
Liamie Lozano	BLM
Elaine Zielinski	BLM
Andy Jacobs	US Senator Jon Kyl
Carlos Sierra	US Senator John McCain

Bureau of Land Management • Arizona

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Name (please print)	Affiliation
Ernestina Borquez-Smith	Congressman Harry Mitchell
Bruce Raden	Congressman Shadegg
Andrew Compton	Congressman Flake
Mary Baumbach	U.S. Rep Jeff Flake
Tamarack Little	Rep. Giffords
Stephen Cole	U.S. Senator Jon Kyl
Ryan Whalen	Congressman John Shadegg
Natalie Luna	Congressman Raul M. Grijalva

Congressional Staff Briefing
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10:00 a.m.
Arizona State Office
State Director's Conference Room

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Travel Management: Motorized Recreation

July 2007

ISSUES:

- Current rate of damage associated with Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on public lands
- How BLM is addressing OHV damage
- Communication between BLM and OHV enthusiast groups

Current Rate of Damage

There has been an increase in resource damage associated with OHV use. However, this damage can be attributed to the increase in OHV use on public lands. BLM has not measured damage to public lands in terms of dollars or resources lost. BLM does measure numbers of visitors who participate in the sport. In 2006, it is estimated there were over 13 million visitor-days on BLM land in Arizona. Approximately 700,000 of those visitor days were devoted to OHV travel. The Arizona Game and Fish Department estimate there has been a 350% increase in OHV use in Arizona since 1998. As expected, Pima, Pinal and Maricopa counties see a vast majority of this use close to the metropolitan areas. During the winter months, areas including Yuma and Quartzsite swell significantly in population. Recently, BLM conducted a comparison study of usage in the Quartzsite area. Since the routes were mapped in the mid 1990s, there appears to have been an increase of over 500 miles in vehicle routes within a 20-mile radius of the Town of Quartzsite.

Addressing OHV Damage

BLM has been mapping (inventorying) all routes since 1990. This project comprises 26,000 miles of routes on 11.5 million acres of public land in Arizona. The inventory is 90% complete. By December 2008, seven out of eight field offices will be 100% inventoried. This allows BLM to evaluate its transportation system in terms of habitat, recreation opportunity, heritage sites, administrative and commercial uses. A systematic approach is used statewide that involves users, interest groups and adjacent land managers. By 2013, all routes will be designated for use. Additionally, BLM is posting signs on the routes and will be publishing access guide maps for the more popular areas. BLM believes that an informed user will be a more responsible user.

BLM is partnering with Arizona State Parks, Forest Service, State Lands and user groups to educate OHV users in the field and at their organization meetings. In addition, users and volunteers assist BLM in clean-up projects and facility construction.

Communication with User Groups

BLM works with local user groups in each field office to accomplish the projects mentioned above. Users are regularly invited to participate in the Land Use Planning process and in the development of Travel Management Plans (TMPs). TMPs will actually implement usage of the transportation networks that are currently being mapped and evaluated. One example of the collaborative process is the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership. Motorized recreationists and conservation groups met to assist the Tucson Field Office in developing a TMP for an area near Florence Junction. While there was not total agreement on the outcomes, it was useful in bringing the two groups together for this collaborative process.

SUMMARY:

BLM, through its planning process, is developing a statewide network of transportation routes for various groups of users. We are carefully considering effects to valuable resources and uses of the public land. This is an ongoing collaborative effort that involves users, interest groups, and adjacent land managers.

BLM PERSPECTIVE:

BLM believes that a designated system of signed routes, accompanied by informative maps will accommodate the responsible user and minimize damage to critical resources.

CONTACT:

Elaine Zielinski, BLM State Director, (602) 417-9500



Recreational Shooting on Arizona Public Lands

July 2007

ISSUES:

Recreational shooting on public lands has been occurring since the expansion of the American West. Shooting activities, such as “target shooting,” “shooting practice,” “plinking,” “sporting clays,” “skeet,” and “sighting-in,” have been occurring since firearms were introduced west of the Mississippi. This commonly occurs on lands on the edge of someone’s property, on the outskirts of a community, or in remote areas offering an unstructured setting. Most of these recreational shooting areas also have little societal conformity to abide by, where participants are free to shoot whatever firearm is available in a manner desired, without relative fear of harming others. In addition, the practice of lining up bottles to shoot has been immortalized in movies and media, and is still a practice by recreational shooters today.

With the growth and urbanization of the American West in the 21st Century, the edges of property have become closer, the outskirts of communities more crowded, and remote areas fewer. It has become increasingly difficult for shooters to find unstructured settings, where rules of etiquette and societal impositions are of little concern, and harder still to find settings that can absorb continued deposits of destroyed and abandoned targets without becoming a noticeable eyesore.

In response to the challenge of finding enjoyable places to practice shooting activities, many shooters and shooting-related organizations have established rules of responsibility and etiquette, such as safe shooting practices and collecting and proper disposal of shells and targets when finished. Groups have organized and/or established managed ranges to meet the needs of their specific activity, including sporting clay courses to long-range rifle targeting ranges, and plinking galleries to mock urban assault/reactive gunnery practice courses. This has done much to sustain the compatibility of recreational shooting with other activities occurring on or near the public lands, including those lands in Arizona.

Recent demographic changes in Arizona are straining the limits of what these strategies can achieve. To compound the issue, the Arizona State Land Department decided to close all target shooting on their lands, and the Tonto National Forest has closed 80,000 acres of national forest system land to shooting around Phoenix. In Tucson, the Coronado National Forest did not renew a special-use permit for a shooting range in Sabino Canyon, citing safety concerns for newly constructed residences in the area. Consequently, Arizona’s public demand for places to shoot on the outskirts of a community or in remote areas has shifted to public lands managed by the BLM.

Current issues arising from recreational shooting activities on BLM-managed lands in Arizona, include the following concerns and issues:

1. Commonly, the issue identified as the most serious concern is the health and safety of people participating in other activities and/or community residents adjacent to public lands. This is reported by all offices except Lake Havasu and Yuma. This issue is emerging rapidly in St. George and Kingman, because surrounding Arizona State Trust Land is being developed into residential areas and crowding recreational shooters into smaller, close-to-town BLM blocks of land already heavily utilized by other recreationists. In the Phoenix and Tucson areas, the issue is already serious; public complaints and public experiences with “close-calls” are occurring.

2. The next common issue is the generalized accumulation of abandoned household refuse used as targets. Again, this is common to all urban interface areas, resulting in expenditure of appropriations for cleanups in the Phoenix District, and the Tucson and Kingman field offices. Annual clean-ups are required in both the Phoenix District and Tucson Field Office. Such efforts have become fiscal and labor detriments to implementing other recreation program goals and accomplishments.
3. The gradual degradation or destruction of monument objects occurring at Ironwood Forest, Agua Fria, and Sonoran Desert national monuments is an escalating issue in these special areas.
4. All BLM offices report occasional vandalism to signs, mostly from "drive-by" shot gunning; Yuma has had some damage to structure facilities in remote areas; Agua Fria National Monument has experienced disproportionately recurring damage to signs.
5. The Tucson area is beginning to identify recognizable, long-term resource damage down range of target sites, such as visible depletion of plant cover. This was also mentioned for the Kingman area regarding gradual de-limbing of down range trees.

Two attempts in Arizona to find collaborative resolutions of local concerns have resulted in lengthy negotiations. Specifically, A) in the Kingman area the selection of a potential shooting range location is under debate due to religious significance of areas for Native Americans; B) in the Tucson area, a proposed closure of the Ironwood Forest National Monument to target shooting is under debate because of perceived Second Amendment infringement and a lack of interested parties to apply for a Recreation and Public Purpose lease alternative. Collaborative efforts have been ongoing since 2001, including the use of the Udall Center for Conflict Resolution.

Current actions:

1. BLM has engaged in discussions with officials from Pima County, Coronado National Forest, and Arizona Game and Fish Department representatives to discuss siting of possible ranges in the Tucson area and increasing on-the-ground presence and education actions.
2. A sixth public meeting was held on the Ironwood Forest National Monument Resource Management Plan to specifically hear from the public about the shooting issue on the Ironwood Forest National Monument.
- 3 The BLM reconvened an executive level group consisting of the Regional Forester, Region 3 United States Forest Service; State Director, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona; and the Director of the Arizona Department of Game and Fish, to develop strategies for addressing this issue.
4. Additionally, a BLM representative spoke at the April Arizona Game and Fish Commission meeting to answer questions regarding this issue.

SUMMARY:

Increased management challenges surrounding recreational shooting are clearly related to increased urbanization adjacent to public lands. With larger populations come higher percentages of irresponsible behavior in these areas. The safety issue for both public visitors and staff is now elevated, and potentially dangerous in the Phoenix and Tucson environments, with St. George and Kingman behind by about two to three years. Safety issues for nearby down range residential areas are already serious in the Tucson area.

BLM PERSPECTIVE:

The BLM is committed to actively working on the greater shooting issue. BLM has regularly stated this in public meetings and has asked for the public's help in developing solutions where shooters can be accommodated on public lands, while allowing for monument resources to be protected. Our stated goal is to encourage some sort of resolution or ongoing productive dialogue. BLM's preferred resolution is to establish nearby designated ranges through a Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) process. This would need to be managed by an entity other than BLM, who is better suited to provide such opportunities. The BLM would also be supportive of local community regulations in concert with BLM management goals, such as county ordinances, should a community initiate such proposals in response to their citizen-expressed concerns.

CONTACT:

Elaine Zielinski, BLM State Director, (602) 417-9500



Pacific Gas & Electric/Topock Project

July 2007

ISSUES:

Hazardous substances released from the Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) Compressor Station, located in eastern San Bernardino County, CA, approximately 12 miles southeast of Needles, CA, have migrated onto and under land managed by the BLM. Specifically, hexavalent chromium originating from maintenance operations at the PG&E facility has been detected in groundwater within 100 feet of the Colorado River. PG&E has owned and operated the facility since 1951. According to their own estimates, from 1951 to 1969, PG&E disposed of approximately six million gallons of untreated chromium-containing wastewater into an ephemeral stream that flows across the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge and BLM-managed land, eventually emptying into the Colorado River. From 1970 to 1989, similar amounts of wastewater were disposed of into evaporation ponds immediately adjacent to BLM-managed land. Actions at the PG&E facility are being performed cooperatively under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). The State of California is the lead for RCRA actions, and the Department of the Interior is the lead agency for CERCLA actions. The BLM is working cooperatively and fully coordinating with involved Federal, state and local agencies.

The project is currently in the investigation phase. Recently, the investigation was separated into two parts; groundwater and soils. Evaluation of both groundwater and soils will move through similar CERCLA regulatory processes (remedial investigation/feasibility study, proposed plan and record of decision). BLM anticipates that this decision will result in an expedited remediation of the groundwater. BLM agrees with the decision to separate groundwater and soils, and will work to ensure progress on the soils portion of project continues.

SUMMARY:

The BLM is committed to a cost effective, expeditious process to complete the investigation, assess risks, develop and evaluate cleanup alternatives, and select and implement a final remedy. The BLM is also working to satisfy the legal and technical requirements necessary to confirm that the investigation and subsequent cleanup are fully protective of human health and the ecological resources present. In addition, the BLM must ensure that potential effects on cultural resources are identified, including those which the Fort Mojave and other Tribes consider sacred, and that such effects are avoided, minimized, or mitigated to the extent possible. The BLM is fully engaged in ongoing consultation with the nine Native American Tribes involved with the project.

BLM PERSPECTIVE:

As a land manager at the site, BLM has asserted its authority under CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. 9604. Pursuant to Executive Order 12580, as amended, and DOI Departmental Manual Section 104, CERCLA response action has been delegated to the BLM to address the release or threatened release of hazardous substances on or from land under BLM's jurisdiction, custody or control. This delegation includes the ability to recover costs from the responsible party (PG&E). To date, BLM has been successful in recovering \$1.2 million for the DOI Central Hazardous Materials Fund.

CONTACT:

Elaine Zielinski, BLM State Director, (602) 417-9500



Colorado River Border Security and Vegetation Management

July 2007

ISSUES:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages public lands with significant resources along the lower Colorado River (Yuma) in the area known as the "Limitrophe." This consists of a 24-mile stretch of river forming the international border with Mexico which is characterized by:

- riparian areas and dense salt cedar (tamarisk)-dominated non-native plant communities;
- multi-jurisdictional ownership on the U.S. side with about 1,407 acres of public lands;
- habitat for hundreds of species of migratory and breeding birds, including the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher;
- high levels of serious crimes related to border security which affect all law enforcement agencies and public safety;
- operations and infrastructure projects by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Border Patrol (OBP), including projects to remove salt cedar and manage vegetation re-growth;
- strong interest by the Yuma County Sheriff's Office (YCSO) to remove the non-native vegetation from large areas of public and tribal lands; and
- a strong interest in longer-term restoration of native vegetation by city, community, and non-governmental organizations.

Law enforcement agencies, including Yuma County Sheriff Ralph Ogden and OBP, have increasingly become concerned over the serious border crimes being committed in this stretch of land where more than 1,500 crimes have been reported. BLM and other agencies are concerned about safety for employees and the public, including winter visitors and hunters during certain seasons. For the last two years, BLM has addressed the issue of salt cedar treatment and maintenance issues, as well as, longer-term restoration of native vegetation with DHS, CBP, OBP, Sheriff Ogden, and members of the Borderlands Management Task Force (BMTF) salt cedar work group.

SUMMARY:

In April 2007, the BLM Yuma Field Office completed an environmental review process to approve and implement fuels treatment of salt cedar in three high crime areas. The provisions of the approval limited the treatment window through March because of the presence of threatened and endangered species, but a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) extension permitted the work in April. BLM re-allocated planned hazardous fuels funding to this project. BLM used a Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) task order for equipment and operators to treat acres and YCSO provided security. The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) provided significant hours for flagging and monitoring. Under BLM leadership and with interagency assistance, 256 acres were treated and over 100 acres of salt cedar were re-treated.

Environmental Assessment for Treatment, Maintenance and Restoration:

Currently the BLM is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA), which considers additional vegetation treatment, maintenance to prevent re-growth, and restoration and/or mitigation. The EA covers about 1,407 acres of public lands. The proposed action, formulated with the OBP and YCSO, would authorize 673 acres of treatment. The OBP has applied for a right-of-way to complete the work. The EA does not cover private lands (over 300 acres) and tribal lands (over 3,000 acres) managed by the Cocopah Tribe. The Yuma Field Office anticipates that the EA will be available for public review this summer. BLM is

coordinating with the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), the Cocopah and Quechan Tribes, the USFWS, the YCSO, and other stakeholders.

The EA process considers broader consultation under the Endangered Species Act with the USFWS. Recent data have confirmed that two federally listed species occur in the area; the Yuma clapper rail and the southwestern willow flycatcher. The EA team is currently focusing on mitigation for the loss of vegetation cover that may be important to these species. Mitigation is required because: 1) the BLM resource management plan (RMP) requires mitigation in the Colorado River riparian corridor; and 2) on-site or off-site mitigation would minimize the effects to listed species below the significance threshold. Previous BLM mitigation requirements for similar projects involved replacing native vegetation at certain density requirements on an acre-for-acre basis or lesser amounts.

Mitigation and longer-term restoration along the limitrophe have been identified under other land use and multiple-species plans. The long-term vision for the area is to replace the non-native vegetation with a native cottonwood, willow and mesquite vegetation community. However, the immediate issue is to ensure officer, employee and public safety through treating the dense salt cedar cover.

BLM PERSPECTIVE:

BLM supports border security and similar efforts to improve safety along the Colorado River U.S.-Mexico border for everyone. BLM remains committed to working with DHS on its infrastructure projects and operations to deter illegal immigration and smuggling activities. In addition, BLM will continue to communicate and support federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to protect public land resources and provide for human safety.

CONTACT:

Elaine Zielinski, BLM State Director, (602) 417-9500



The Southern Arizona Project: Accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2006

July 2007

ISSUES:

The Southern Arizona Project is a multi-year project to mitigate the impacts of illegal immigration and smuggling activities. Between 2003 and 2005, the project was funded through Congressional added-on supplements. In fiscal years 2006 and 2007, the BLM funded this project through its base annual appropriations. Program funds allocated through FY06 amount to \$3,442,000. This funding breaks out as follows: FY06 -- \$971,000; FY05 -- \$986,000; FY04 -- \$790,000; FY03 -- \$695,000.

These funds were shared among BLM offices in southern Arizona and were granted to counties and towns, federal and state agencies, non-governmental groups, and to the Tohono O'odham Nation for mitigation activities on their lands. The program extends from the west Colorado River corridor to the New Mexico border on the east. In the past, this program concentrated on lands within 100 miles north of the border, but in 2006, many clean up projects occurred as far north as the vicinity of Phoenix.

SUMMARY:

Full end of year reports and accomplishments for the project from 2003 to 2005 may be found at: http://www.blm.gov/az/undoc_aliases/reports.htm. The 2006 accomplishments will be posted to the web this summer.

The FY06 Program:

Mixed trash clean-ups: Litter removal increased tremendously in volume, however this represents, both undocumented immigrant trash (UDIs) and urban fringe trash that results from residents, visitors and others who illegally deposit litter, mattresses, and other items on top of UDI sites. Mixed garbage is especially apparent at the Colorado River (Yuma), Morgan City Wash (near Phoenix), and the fringes of the Ironwood Forest National Monument (IFNM).

In addition to the partners who receive direct funds, the participation of volunteers, humane and citizen groups, hikers and hunters, youth groups, local residents, and conservation associates must be acknowledged as keys to the success of this program.

In 2006, partnerships were added: Arizona Game and Fish Department, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), and Coronado National Forest (CNF). BLM partners augmented BLM funds to add other funding sources and groups. Cochise County reimbursed ranchers, scouts and hiking groups for collecting and removing trash on CNF lands. The Tohono O'Odham Nation (TO Nation) matched funds from this program with an Environmental Protection Agency grant and with the TO Nation's resources to develop a solid waste program. The Town of Marana devoted resources to weekly clean-ups in the IFNM. Special law enforcement details supported by program funds produced the following results during their patrol or operations:

- 50 stolen vehicles were recovered
- 136 vehicles tied to UDI smuggling were impounded

- 560 UDIs were detained for U.S. Border Patrol
- 622 pounds of marijuana were seized
- 11 weapons were seized
- 13 search and rescue operations were conducted
- 52 law enforcement assists and backups were provided

A Summary of Accomplishments for FY06:

- Litter removal: over **2,800 bags** of trash plus dump truck and dumpster loads amounted to **1,060,000 pounds** of trash removed from public lands. This included 35,350 pounds removed by Marana from the IFNM and 443 tons cleaned up along the Colorado River corridor.
- Litter removal: over **3,809 bags** or **71,280 pounds** of trash were removed from other federal, private and state lands; some removed by mules from inaccessible areas.
- Litter removal: over **3,565 bags** or **50,260 pounds** (25.13 tons) removed from the TO Nation's lands.
- Abandoned cars: **130 abandoned vehicles** were removed and a much higher number were identified for future removal from the TO Nation's lands.
- Bicycle removals: **1,902 removed** from the TO Nation and 35 other bicycles removed from BLM public lands, mainly the Sonoran Desert National Monument (SDNM).
- Fencing and repairs: BLM repaired 30 cuts in 50 fence sections over a 33 mile fenceline in the Lower Sonoran Field Office (LSFO) and installed 2 miles of fence in the IFNM to protect plants; the San Bernardino NWR (SBNWR) repaired 3 miles; Pima County repaired 2,750 feet; Buenos Aires NWF (BANWF) spent 238 hours repairing fences; Malpais Borderlands (Malpais) repaired fence cuts on a continuous basis; the Coronado National Memorial (CNM) repaired other fence segments; and the CNF purchased fence materials and cattle guards that were installed by the National Guard.
- Roads and trails rehabilitated, removed or restored: the BLM LSFO/SDNM maintained 26 miles of road, rehabilitated 50 illegal routes, restored and signed or re-signed routes, and maintained trailheads; BLM and CNF installed cattleguards; BLM rehabilitated 1,600 feet of illegal routes in the IFNM; and the Malpais repaired roads.
- Sensitive area protection: FWS installed steel vehicle guard rail through Lesley Canyon NWR and bollard vehicle barriers along the SBNWR south boundary; BLM completed installation of the Sanford Canyon pipe rail vehicle barrier at Cienega Creek; and BLM San Pedro Riparian NCA (SPRNCA) installed vehicle barriers at Bead Hill and installed and repaired water gaps at Escupule Wash.
- The BLM LSFO and its partners improved watering holes and accessibility for pronghorn antelope by removing trash, fences and debris, and replacing existing water tanks with new ones.
- BLM IFNM and the TO Nation designed protection to close an important archaeological site to vehicle traffic through boulders---to be completed in FY07.
- Restoration Projects: BLM Yuma Field Office removed undesirable vegetation and fuels from 8 acres; planted cottonwood and willow poles and 920 potted mesquite trees; and the SPRNCA crew reseeded 351,000 square feet of UDI campsites in 5 locations.

- **Vandalism and Graffiti Clean-up:** San Bernardino and Lesley Canyon NWR repaired vandalism or removed spray-painted rocks associated with UDIs.
- **Monitoring and Identification Projects:** the LCNWR and SBNWR initiated studies to monitor potential UDI impacts, especially to habitat and avian wildlife; CNM and SCA spent 450 hours locating, documenting and developing a GIS database of UDI impacts; and participants surveyed 22.6 miles in a six-week time period.
- **Environmental Education and Signing:** BLM placed anti-dumping signs in the Yuma Colorado River Corridor and bilingual protective signing and stickers with universal language dealing with fire in the LCNCA; and students completed a CLASP learn and serve project at the IFNM.

BLM PERSPECTIVE:

BLM resources are insufficient to protect and repair lands under severe impacts from increasing illegal immigration and smuggling activities in Southern Arizona.

CONTACT:

Elaine Zielinski, BLM State Director, (602) 417-9500



Andrada Quarry Mining Plan of Operation

July 2007

ISSUES:

The BLM has signed a permit for a mining plan of operations reopening a controversial marble quarry southeast of Tucson. The proposed quarry is located in a rural area with an increasing number of residences. The nearest house is 1,450 feet away from the proposed quarry and local residents are opposed to reopening the quarry. Residents fear that blasting will damage wells and structures and are concerned that renewed mining will lower the water table, create dust and noise, and lower property values. They are also concerned with truck traffic on the local roads. Pima County is against the quarry because it is within the Biological Core of the Pima County Conservation Land System.

SUMMARY:

W.R. Henderson Arizona Properties, LLC submitted a Plan of Operations to mine locatable high-purity limestone (marble) on land that is State Trust surface and federal mineral estate. W.R. Henderson owns the mining claims on the split-estate tract. The plan calls for expansion of an existing quarry on private land onto State land that has been mined off and on for 40 years. W.R. Henderson submitted a plan to BLM for approval as required under 43 CFR 3809. The total disturbance outlined in the plan is 14 acres, 7 of which are already disturbed from past mining. The operator plans to open pit mine into a hill and haul the material offsite for processing. The resulting quarry will be about 100-feet-deep but will be above the water table. Visual impacts are an issue but greatly mitigated because of the topography. The plan includes a detailed study of blasting and describes how the operator will control the blasting so that no structural damage will occur. After completion of mining, W.R. Henderson intends to reclaim and build homes on the private land.

BLM participated in two scoping meetings with people from the local area to hear issues and concerns as part of the National Environmental Policy Act process. BLM mailed post cards to the entire zip code where the mine is located to announce the availability of the Environmental Assessment for a 30-day public review and comment. The Tucson Field Office received 25 letters and emails, including one from the Pima County Administrator, all opposed to the mine.

BLM signed the decision record approving the mining plan on July 6, 2005. Petitions for a State Director review were filed by three parties in August 2005. A Stay was issued by the State Director on the decision to approve the plan. BLM has revised the Environmental Assessment (EA) to better address the issues brought forth by the petitioners.

A local group, the Empire-Fagan Coalition, sponsored a public meeting in August 2006, to ask the public to sign a petition opposing three proposed limestone mining operations southeast of Tucson, one of which is the proposed Andrada Quarry.

BLM PERSPECTIVE:

W.R. Henderson is exercising its right under the General Mining Law to mine on its mining claims. This is not a discretionary action. The plan has been reviewed and is satisfactory. The original decision record was signed on July 6, 2005. A revised environmental assessment was completed and a decision record was signed March 12, 2007, to approve the plan of operations. The Empire-Fagan Coalition and Save the Scenic Santa Ritas appealed the decision and asked for a stay of the decision on April 27, 2007. On June

6, 2007, the BLM received notice from the Interior Board of Land Appeals that it has granted the Petition for Stay of the BLM mining plan of operations decision.

CONTACT:

Elaine Zielinski, BLM State Director, (602) 417-9500



Arizona Land Use Planning Update

July 2007

Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw - Harquahala Land Use Plans

- The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is in the Washington Office for review.
- The plan is on track for publication in August 2007.

Sonoran Desert National Monument and Lower Sonoran Land Use Plans

- The Draft RMP/Draft EIS planning effort is making progress and an Administrative Draft has come to the BLM State Office for review.
- BLM expects approval from the Washington Office to print the Draft RMP by the end of September.

Lake Havasu Field Office Land Use Plan

- The Record of Decision and Approved Plan was signed by the State Director on May 10, 2007. The Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Record of Decision and Approved Plan will be published the week of July 9, 2007.

Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument/Vermilion Cliffs National Monument/Arizona Strip Field Office Land Use Plans

- The Proposed RMP/Final EIS was published on March 2, 2007. Seven protest letters were received.
- The Arizona Strip Office is working with the Washington Office Protest Team and specialists in the Arizona State Office to draft resolution letters. They are making good progress and hope to have the protests resolved so they can have their Records of Decision and Approved Plans completed in the fall of 2007.

Ironwood Forest National Monument Land Use Plan

- The Draft RMP/Draft EIS was released for public comment on March 2, 2007. The comment period closed May 30, 2007.
- The Tucson Field Office conducted six public meetings during the comment period.
- The plan has generated considerable controversy pertaining to recreational target shooting and has received in excess of 10,000 comments letters and emails.
- Publication of a Proposed Plan and Final EIS is anticipated for November 2007.

Yuma Land Use Plan

- The Draft RMP/Draft EIS was published for public comment in December 2006. The public comment period closed March 16, 2007.
- They have received approximately 400 comment letters. The field office is working on responding to the comments.
- The Yuma Field Office is scheduled to have the Proposed RMP and Final EIS ready for release to the public by September 2007.

San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area and Tucson Field Office Land Use Plans

- The San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (San Pedro RNCA) is located within the Tucson Field Office. Public lands in the San Pedro RNCA are managed under the Safford RMP (1992, 1994) and San Pedro RNCA Management Plan (1989).
- Fiscal year 2005 was the initial year of funding for this planning effort. The San Pedro RNCA RMP will be combined with the Tucson Field Office RMP (Tucson RMP) under one planning effort. The Tucson RMP will address all remaining BLM administered lands not covered by the Las Cienegas NCA and Ironwood Forest National Monument RMPs.
- The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare both land use plans was published in the Federal Register on September 2, 2005. The scoping report was approved in September 2006.
- The actual start up of the plan preparation is dependent on funding availability. The proposed start up date is Fiscal Year 2009.

For Immediate Release: June 7, 2007

Contacts: Penny Foreman at (602) 319-6698 or (602)402-7690
Camille Champion at (623) 580-5500

BLM Public Land Auction Nets Seven Million

Phoenix, Ariz – Today, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sold a 282.50 acre parcel, taking in \$7,000,000 under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act (FLTFA). Members of the public were welcome to attend the event held at the BLM-Phoenix District. Not a chair was empty as spectators and prospective bidders filled the room waiting for the auction to begin. The parcel is nestled at the base of the Estrella Mountains in Goodyear, Ariz.

Following the auction, the successful bidders, Voyager Properties and Cole Company, a joint venture paid the required 20 percent of the bid amount, and will be required to pay the remainder within 180 days. Voyager Properties and Cole Company are based in Scottsdale, Ariz.

This is the first competitive sale of federal BLM public land in Arizona since the passage of FLTFA in the year 2000. Eighty percent of the revenues generated from this public land sale go into a special FLTFA account available to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture for acquiring inholdings within certain federally designated areas, or lands adjacent to those areas and containing exceptional resources.

For more information about BLM public land sales and the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, please visit www.blm.gov/az/

-BLM-

For Release: June 18, 2007

Contacts: Deborah E. Stevens, (602) 417-9504

E-Mail Address: Deborah_Stevens@blm.gov

Arizona BLM to Hold Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale

Phoenix, Ariz. – An oral competitive oil and gas lease sale, sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), will be held Wednesday, July 10, 2007, at the BLM office located in downtown Phoenix. The BLM will accept oral competitive bids on 44 parcels in two Arizona counties, containing 321,237.96 acres. The parcels are located in Apache, Navajo and Mohave counties.

The parcels will be offered to the highest bidder. Auction rules call for a \$2 per acre minimum bonus bid on any parcel. This means a buyer will pay the bonus bid price for the right to obtain the federal lease, in addition to a standard \$1.50 per acre first year rental on the lease. Leases are issued for a primary term of ten years, and will be continued as long as oil or gas is produced in paying quantities.

BLM will also charge winning bidders \$130 per parcel to help cover the administrative costs. If the lease produces oil or gas, the federal government will collect a 12.5% royalty on production.

Registration for bidder identification numbers will begin at 8 a.m. The auction will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the BLM office's 8th floor conference room located at One North Central Avenue (Phelps Dodge Building). Parking is available across the street from the building.

The BLM has posted a notice of sale on its website and in its Arizona Offices' public rooms. It contains a complete list of the parcels, conditions of the sale and lease stipulations. Copies of the sale notice are available upon request by writing: BLM, Attention: Lands/Minerals Adjudication and Withdrawals (Oil and Gas Lease Contact), One North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004, or by calling Paul Buff (602) 417-9225.

For Immediate Release: June 15, 2007
Contact: Deborah E. Stevens, (602) 417-9504

**Arizona to Receive \$19,098,223 from Interior
Under Federal Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program**

Phoenix, Ariz. – Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced today that Arizona will receive more than \$19 million under the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Act to compensate county governments whose jurisdictions contain tax-exempt federal lands.

"This year's appropriation was able to maintain the level of PILT funding achieved last year, the highest funding level in history," Kempthorne said. "We are getting these funds to local governments in a timely manner, by June 15, to help the counties plan their annual budgets. We recognize the importance of these communities in helping to support federal lands and this money will help pay for essential services, such as firefighting and emergency response and to help improve school, water, and road systems."

The Interior Department collects about \$4 billion annually in revenues from commercial activities on federal lands, such as oil and gas leasing, livestock grazing and timber harvesting. A portion of these revenues are shared with states and counties in the form of revenue-sharing payments. The balance is deposited in the U.S. Treasury, which in turn pays for a broad array of federal activities, including PILT funding to counties.

Of the \$232.5 million appropriated for PILT in FY2007, \$232.1 million goes for payments to counties and other local governments; the balance funds the administration of the program. Payment eligibility is reserved for local governments (usually counties) that contain nontaxable federal lands and provide government services related to public safety, housing, social services, transportation and the environment.

PILT payments are calculated using a formula provided in statute. The annual PILT payments to local governments are computed based on the number of acres of federal entitlement land within each county or jurisdiction and the population. The lands include the National Forest and National Park Systems, those managed by the Bureau of Land Management, those affected by Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation water resources development projects, and others.

Individual county payments may vary from the prior year as a result of changes in acreage data, which is updated yearly by the federal agency administering the land, and population data, which is updated by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The per acre and population variables used in the formula to compute payment amounts are subject to annual inflationary adjustments using the Consumer Price Index. The requirement for annual inflationary adjustments to the per acre and population variables was included in the 1994 amendments to the Payments in Lieu of Taxes Act.

For purposes of calculating the 2007 payment, the per acre amounts are adjusted from the 2006 payment of \$2.15 per acre and thirty cents per acre to \$2.23 and thirty-one cents per acre. The population variables are adjusted from \$57.66 - \$144.13 to \$59.85 - \$149.61 per capita. The 2007 payment funds about 65 percent of the authorized level of \$358.3 million.

The computation also adjusts the payment for the level of prior-year revenue payments and the amount that a county receives under Sections 6904 and 6905 of the PILT Act. Revenue payments are federal payments made to local governments under programs other than PILT during the previous year. These include those made under the Refuge Revenue Sharing Fund, the National Forest Fund, the Taylor Grazing Act, the Mineral Leasing Act, the Federal Power Act, and the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. Sections 6904 and 6905 provide additional payments for additions to the National Park System and National Forest Wilderness areas.

As a result of increases in Forest Service timber payments, reductions in PILT entitlement land, a decrease in the prorating percentage and expiration of section 6904/5 payments, the total 2007 PILT payments to 37 states will be slightly lower than the 2006 payments. However, only 17 states or territories had payments that will decrease by more than one percent: Connecticut, Florida, Guam, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania,

Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Virgin Islands and Wisconsin.

In addition, the FY 2007 PILT payments to Nacogdoches County, Texas and Ada County, Bannock County, Clearwater County, and Valley County, Idaho will be reduced as a result of adjustments needed to correct for incorrect acreage data reported in prior fiscal years.

2007 PILT payments by Arizona County

Apache County	\$956,164	Mohave County	\$1,935,970
Cochise County	\$1,236,526	Navajo County	\$749,814
Coconino County	\$951,551	Pima County	\$1,902,625
Gila County	\$1,896,351	Pinal County	\$858,776
Graham County	\$1,487,969	Santa Cruz County	\$570,905
Greenlee County	\$376,788	Yavapai County	\$1,323,147
La Paz County	\$1,070,982	Yuma County	\$1,936,291
Maricopa County	\$1,844,364		
Total			\$19,098,223

2007 PILT payments by State:

Alabama	\$445,414	Nevada	\$13,895,664
Alaska	\$16,162,107	New Hampshire	\$1,037,031
Arizona	\$19,098,223	New Jersey	\$69,037
Arkansas	\$2,884,413	New Mexico	\$22,742,930
California	\$21,026,411	New York	\$80,316
Colorado	\$17,352,969	North Carolina	\$2,493,121
Connecticut	\$18,214	North Dakota	\$929,180
Delaware	\$10,682	Ohio	\$438,474
Florida	\$2,799,184	Oklahoma	\$1,558,142
Georgia	\$1,483,991	Oregon	\$6,575,856
Hawaii	\$196,857	Pennsylvania	\$338,732
Idaho	\$16,588,070	Rhode Island	\$0
Illinois	\$648,012	South Carolina	\$241,272
Indiana	\$391,672	South Dakota	\$2,684,423
Iowa	\$266,452	Tennessee	\$1,459,514
Kansas	\$662,591	Texas	\$2,656,038
Kentucky	\$1,577,978	Utah	\$20,057,363
Louisiana	\$323,201	Vermont	\$538,572
Maine	\$211,807	Virginia	\$2,353,582
Maryland	\$68,332	Washington	\$6,699,447
Massachusetts	\$61,909	West Virginia	\$1,574,618
Michigan	\$2,560,255	Wisconsin	\$785,551
Minnesota	\$1,600,297	Wyoming	\$15,362,731
Mississippi	\$901,720	District of Columbia	\$16,249
Missouri	\$2,308,823	Guam	\$1,345
Montana	\$17,186,456	Puerto Rico	\$6,064
Nebraska	\$679,057	Virgin Islands	\$23,410
Total			\$232,133,759