

Agua Fria National Monument

Manager's Annual Report
FY 2013

2013

Manager's Annual Report



Arizona

NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS



Table of Contents

1	Agua Fria National Monument Profile	1
2	Planning and NEPA	4
3	Year's Projects and Accomplishments.....	6
4	Science	12
5	Resources, Objects, Values, and Stressors	14
6	Summary of Performance Measures.....	19
7	Manager's Letter	20

Agua Fria Profile

Designating Authority

Designating Authority: Antiquities Act of 1906, Presidential Proclamation 7263, President William J. Clinton

Date of Designation: January 11, 2000

Location and Acreage

The Agua Fria National Monument (AFNM) is located approximately 40 miles north of Phoenix Arizona; located in southeastern Yavapai county. The AFNM consists of 70,900 acres of BLM- administered lands and 1,444 acres of private inholdings.

The Monument includes all of the BLM-administered public lands that make up the Perry Mesa Archaeological District listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The District was established to recognize and protect the particularly well-preserved system of prehistoric communities that were inhabited between A.D. 1250 and 1450. The approximately 50,000-acre nationally registered Archaeological District is the largest prehistoric district in the nation.

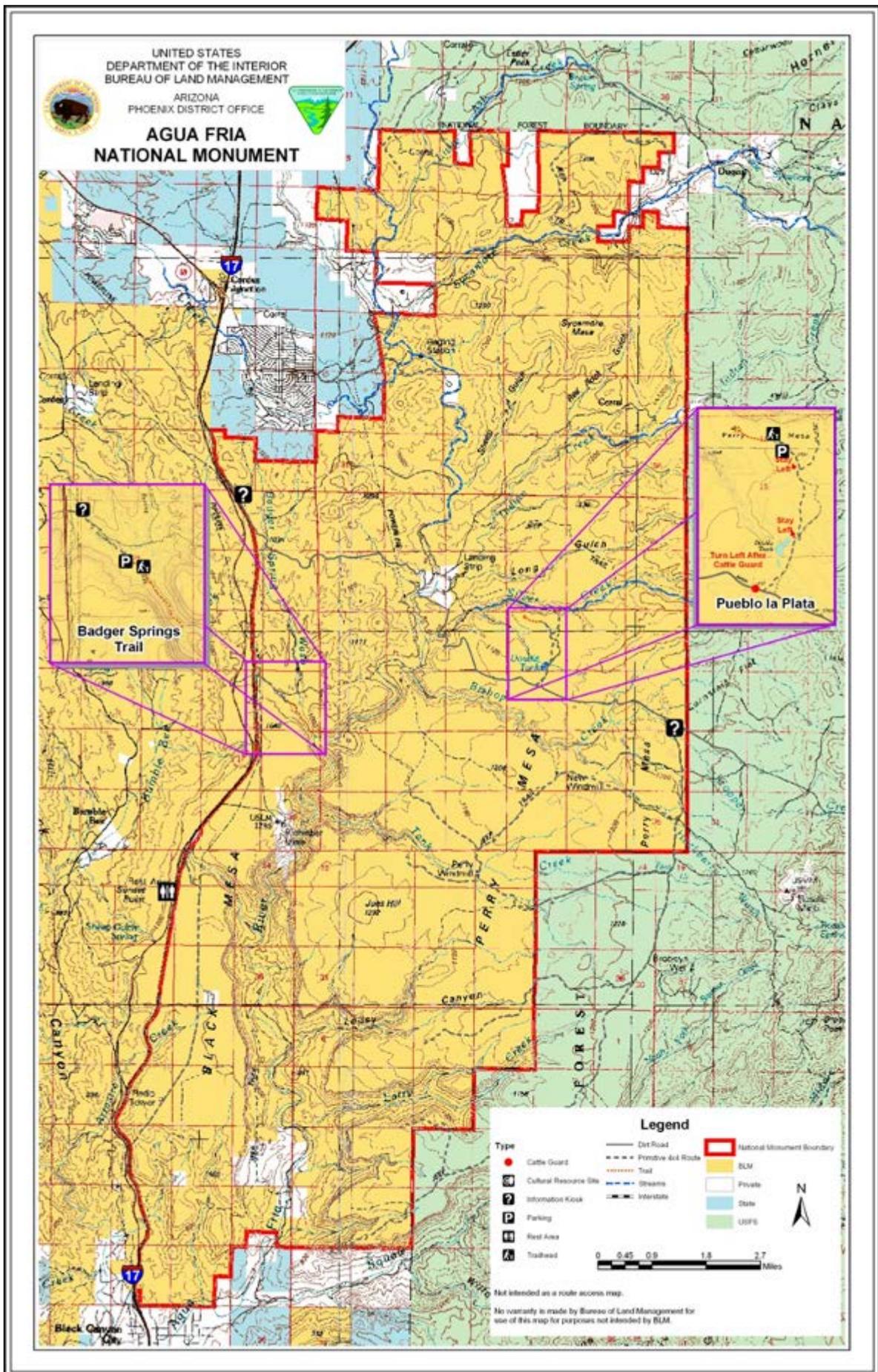
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Managing Partners

N/A



Map of the Agua Fria National Monument in Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13). The Badger Springs Trailhead and Pueblo La Plata are called out.

Staffing

The AFNM was staffed with Monument Manager Amanda James, Wildlife Biologist Paul Sitzmann, Archeologist Bryan Lausten and Park Ranger Nancy Stallard in FY13. Two of the three filled positions, wildlife biologist and archaeologist, also provide support to the Hassayampa Field Office. Wildlife Biologist Paul Sitzmann was a graduate student and was working part-time while completing his master's degree. Park Ranger Nancy Stallard retired in September 2013.

The position for a natural resource specialist remained vacant throughout the year. Amanda James, former Natural Resource Specialist and current Monument Manager, acted in both the Monument Manager and Natural Resource Specialist positions. Listed below are the positions on the table of organization and staff name.

Monument Manager: Amanda James

Park Ranger: Nancy Stallard

Wildlife Biologist: Paul Sitzmann

Archaeologist: Bryan M. Lausten

Natural Resource Specialist: Vacant

Planning and NEPA

Status of RMP

In FY13, the AFNM was managed under the Agua Fria Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (AFNM ROD/RMP) approved on April 2010. The implementation strategy for the plan was completed in July 2010. A review of the implementation strategy was conducted in FY13.

Status of Activity Plans

The Badger Springs Recreation Plan was ongoing in FY13. NEPA analysis to implement the Badger Springs Recreation plan was drafted.

The travel management plan for the AFNM was approved by the 2010 AFNM ROD/RMP. Plan implementation included 11.5 miles of road maintenance within the AFNM and an additional 12 miles of roads were signed as closed. Ongoing monitoring of road closures was conducted by the park ranger and volunteers.

Status of RMP Implementation Strategy

The three-year review of the AFNM RMP Implementation Strategy was completed in FY13. The strategy emphasized the goals of achieving desired natural resource conditions, achieving desired biological communities, providing for recreational benefits in the AFNM Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), enhancing the understanding and awareness of the AFNM, providing sustainable working landscapes, protecting and interpreting cultural and paleontological resources, enhancing land use, and protecting lives and property through wildfire management.

Strategic goals were accomplished by various actions that were conducted in FY13. Work toward achieving desired natural resource condition goals included upland and riparian monitoring, resolution of a trespass livestock issue, juniper thinning and pile burning actions. Achieving desired biological communities was accomplished by population monitoring and maintaining high quality habitat. Recreational opportunities in the AFNM Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) was accomplished by maintaining roads and bathrooms in the area and separating user conflicts through the completion of NEPA analysis and installation of range improvements that removed livestock grazing in the Badger Springs Recreation Area. That action also served to provide sustainable working landscapes.

Cultural and paleontological resources were protected with an extensive partnership through the Arizona Site Stewardship program, which provides volunteers who monitor selected cultural resource sites and continued science partnership with Arizona State University. Additional protection to cultural resource sites was provided through monthly archaeological surveys and documentation of new sites on the monument with assistance from BLM volunteers and the Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument. Enhanced land use was accomplished by ongoing visitor use projects and community outreach projects like the Black Canyon City Heritage Park which will serve as the community gateway center for the AFNM. Lastly, fire staff were on hand to respond to protect lives and property.

Key NEPA Actions and/or Authorizations

Many NEPA actions were initiated in FY13. Projects and FY13 status are listed below:

DOI-BLM-AZ-P030-2013-0002-CX Emergency Water System Maintenance

The emergency water system maintenance authorized the dredging of a water diversion system that provides water to the Horseshoe Ranch, an inholding owned by Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Status: Project Completed in FY13

DOI-BLM-AZ-P030-2013-0004-CX Box Bar Allotment Study Enclosures

The proposed project is to install 10 vegetation study enclosures within the Box Bar Allotment.

Status: NEPA Initiated

DOI-BLM-AZ-P030-2013-0001-EA Indian Creek Enclosure EA

The proposed action is to exclude livestock grazing in Gila chub Critical Habitat within the Box Bar Allotment.

Status: NEPA Initiated

3

Year's Projects and Accomplishments

As is always true for the AFNM, an abundance of exciting work was accomplished. FY13 was no different. Both AFNM staff and the large number of BLM volunteers and volunteers associated with the Friends of the AFNM (Friends) were critical to this year's success. A large assortment of projects were completed this year. Projects ranged from ongoing wildlife and habitat monitoring projects, grassland and riparian restoration project, youth engagement, cultural resource surveys, site documentation and monitoring and many more. Detailed projects are highlighted below by resources program areas.

Wildlife Program

- In October of 2012, efforts to continue tracking pronghorn antelope within the AFNM was conducted. GPS radio collars were attached to 10 pronghorn within and near the AFNM. The data gathered through this effort will be used to inform land management decisions. GPS locations through time will allow land managers know where to focus grassland restoration projects, fence modification projects, and water developments.
- Fish surveys for Gila chub and Gila topminnow, both endangered species, were conducted in all tributaries where they are found. These tributaries include Larry Canyon, Lousy Canyon, Silver Creek, and Indian Creek. Electro-fishing, hoop nets, and snorkeling were used to count and measure fish. Both Larry and Lousy Canyons were found to have high numbers of Gila Chub and Gila topminnow. Populations of Gila chub continue to persist at low densities in Silver and Indian Creeks.
- A large Yellow-billed cuckoo survey effort was conducted by staff of the AFNM, the Audubon Society and the Friends. Staff and volunteers monitored 6 populations of the elusive bird throughout the AFNM. Many cuckoos were documented on the AFNM during the FY13 survey. The Yellow-billed cuckoo is a candidate species for listing of protection under the Endangered Species Act.
- Juniper reduction projects continued in FY13 on the AFNM. In April 2013, Fire Staff with the BLM conducted a prescribed burn of nearly 500 acres. The goal of the prescribed burn is to improve grassland habitat for pronghorn and other wildlife species. Thinning and burning the excess Juniper open wildlife corridors, reduce predator hiding cover, and improve forage for wildlife.
- Riparian Restoration efforts continued in the River Bend area. Youth crews assisted AFNM staff with pole planting of willows and cottonwoods and plug planting of sedges. After multiple years of restoration efforts and the construction of a vehicle barrier, the area is now heavily vegetated and looks much more like a vibrant riparian ecosystem rather than a road.

Recreation and Volunteer Program

- In a visitor-service program update, the staff of AFNM noticed a trend where visitors prefer to obtain information about public lands by using QR codes. Using a smart phone, the visitor aims the phone at the QR code and arrives at a web site. The AFNM began the QR code program in FY13. Visitors are now also able call a number posted along routes and kiosks and receive a recorded message about the landscape they are visiting, a safety message, historical information, or items of interest. As an added feature, the visitor may also use the QR codes. The BLM is able to check the status of visitors in real time and ascertain their home town. Note that we had a visitor from as far away as Michigan.
- Work continues on development of interpretive signs and updating pamphlet information for the monument. General interpretive informational brochures about the monument are made available for the public at the Phoenix District Office.
- The Friends have adopted a stretch of I-17 from milepost 259 (Bloody Basin exit) to milepost 260, both northbound and southbound lanes. The benefits of participation in the Adopt-A-Highway are many, and among them are:
 - ◇ Cost effective recognition to millions of motorists
 - ◇ Signage that works day and night all year long
 - ◇ Unrivaled exposure in and around the Monument
 - ◇ A display of responsible citizenship to potential and existing members and donors
 - ◇ The foundation for an "environmentally conscious" public relations campaign
 - ◇ Litter-free highways

Cultural and Paleontology Resources Program

- In spring 2013 ASU taught the Legacies on the Landscape seminar on the Monument and adjacent portions of Tonto National Forest. That seminar had two objectives, to undertake a survey to determine whether agaves are significantly co-located with prehistoric village sites and to collect and analyze plain ware ceramics for petrographic analysis to determine whether some sites on Perry Mesa are earlier than others. Phyllite temper characterizes early ceramics. In May 2013 the results of the seminar were presented at a luncheon, hosted by ASU, during which the students presented the results of their research on the ceramics and/or the survey data. BLM staff and tribal members were in attendance. The continued partnership with Arizona State University's Legacy on the Landscape project resulted in the completion in the fall of 2012 of the manuscript for the Alliance and Landscape volume on ASU's work on Perry Mesa (to be published in 2014) by University of Utah Press.



Annual Archaeology Expo 2013

- BLM co-hosted the Annual Arizona Archaeology Expo which was held on the historic Horseshoe Ranch located within the monument in March 2013, in partnership with Arizona State Parks and the State Historical Preservation Office and the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

- The Friends' Cultural Resources Committee installed Carsonite markers that identify the Badger Springs Wash Trail in the AFNM. Cultural resources in the area were monitored by both the Friends and the Arizona Site Stewards. The Friends participated in cultural resource site clean-

ups at the Historic Teskey and 1891 Schoolhouse, and at Badger Springs Petroglyph site. Photographic comparative analysis was also completed by the group.

- In 2013 the Friends' Cultural Resources Committee was awarded the Arizona Archaeology Advisory Commission Awards in Public Archaeology for Private / Non-Profit Programs, which was presented at the yearly Arizona Historic Preservation Conference. Every year awards like this are presented to individuals and/or programs that have significantly contributed to the protection, preservation, and education of Arizona's non-renewable archaeological resources.



Friends of the AFNM Cultural Resources Committee

- During FY13, Arizona Museum of Natural history, Mesa Southwest Museum conducted three separate paleontological surveys within the monument. The survey focused on locating Paleogene (Oligocene-Miocene) deposits in the extreme southern portion of the Monument looking for fossils. The surveys did identify Paleogene (Oligocene-Miocene) deposits and some fossils, the Museum has expressed interest continuing Paleontological surveys in the Monument.

Current Areas of Focus

The AFNM is currently focusing on maintaining sustainable working landscapes that emphasize proper ecological function and maintaining heritage properties of the National Conservation Lands while allowing for multiple uses of the landscape. This lofty goal is accomplished in a variety of ways. Monitoring, youth and community engagement, resource protection and administrative actions were critical in achieving this goal.

Education, Outreach, and Interpretation

- AFNM staff and members of Audubon Society partnered with local inter-city high schools to develop and promote the River Pathways Project. The River Pathways curriculum, a collaborative effort between Audubon Arizona, the BLM, and the Phoenix Union High School District is intended to get urban students outdoors, introduce them to Arizona's native habitats, and build their interest in careers managing public lands. This is done through five classroom modules focused on riparian ecology and resource management, a field trip to the Nina Mason Pulliam Rio Salado Audubon Center. Students are trained in monitoring techniques used by scientists in the field, and a second field trip to the AFNM where select students got a chance to use what they learned while conducting field studies with biologists from the BLM. In 2013, River Pathways reached a total of 842 students from 17 high schools in the Phoenix area. Students participating in the River Pathways Program also had the opportunity to apply for summer internships where they will work with Audubon Arizona and BLM staff during the annual Yellow-Billed Cuckoo surveys along the Agua Fria River. During this reporting period, Audubon staff completed surveys for the Yellow-billed Cuckoo on the AFNM with three high school interns recruited from three different River Pathways schools in Phoenix (Carl Hayden, South Pointe and Youngker).
- Arizona State University's Legacy on the Landscape partnership is a collaborative effort by archaeologists and ecologists to investigate the legacy of prehistoric and modern human land use on the mesas of AFNM north of the Phoenix Basin. This project has a strong educational component, involving both graduate and undergraduate students in interdisciplinary research in the field and laboratory.
- The Friends staffed booths at the 2013 Arizona Archaeological Expo, which was held at the Historic Horseshoe ranch within the monument and organizing the annual Friends Group Meeting. Volunteers from this group conducted five educational hikes for the public.

Partnerships

- The Friends are organized exclusively for charitable, scientific, and educational purposes; more specifically to protect, preserve, and promote appreciation and enjoyment of the ecological, archaeological, scenic, and scientific resources and values of the AFNM. The Friends play an important role in assisting the BLM with critical support for Monument activities. They organize outings and perform service projects on the Monument, such as: monitoring trails and cultural resources, removing non-native plant species, performing trash pickups, recording rock art, annual wet-dry mapping and act as stewards for the Monument.
- The Legacies on the Landscape project is a collaborative effort by archaeologists and ecologists at Arizona State University (ASU) and BLM to investigate the legacy of prehistoric human land use on the mesas of the AFNM north of the Phoenix Basin. ASU hosted a seminar highlighting student research papers centering at Perry Mesa on May 7, 2013. The research papers were not only part of the student's curriculum, but part of the ongoing Legacies on the Landscape Project. The project is funded in part by Cost Share Grants from the BLM, administered by the AFNM and funding from the National Science Foundation.

Volunteers

We made significant advances in FY13 to increase volunteerism within the monument. The number of BLM volunteers was increased by 24%. Volunteers included individuals from the Friends, the Arizona Site Stewards, the Arizona Archaeological Society, the Arizona Rock Art Coalition, the Upper Agua Fria Watershed Partnership, and the Arizona Riparian Council.

- Since their establishment in 2007 the Friends have been very active partners in supporting the BLM's efforts to manage and protect the AFNM's cultural and natural resources and in conducting public education and outreach. In FY13 the Friends continued to focus on public education and the preservation of the AFNM. Projects completed by the Friends contributed 2,211 volunteer hours (valued at \$48,642) and include : multiple trash pickups along Interstate 17 at the Monument entrance at Bloody Basin road, at the historic Teskey and the 1891 Schoolhouse site and collection of trash within the monument during organized hikes and outings, as well as the public outreach activities mentioned above. To support cultural resources protection and outreach efforts, Friends volunteers devoted 432 hours to assisting in cultural resource surveys, site protection and documentation projects.

- Volunteers from the Upper Agua Fria Watershed Partnership, the Arizona Riparian Council and the Friends assisted with the annual wet-dry mapping project. A total of 343 volunteer hours contributed to mapping surface water in 52 miles of the Agua Fria River and its tributaries.



Agua Fria River

Budget

Total FY13 Budget: \$536,441

FY13 Base funding: \$461,441

FY13 Onetime funding: \$75,000

Land or Easement Acquisitions

N/A

Science

Grassland habitat response to vegetation treatments (Dr. William Miller, Arizona State University, Polytechnic, Paul Sitzmann, BLM graduate student, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department)

Starting in FY12 and continued in FY13, a vegetative community response to fuels treatment study was conducted. The emphasis of the study is to determine how both the vegetative community and pronghorn respond to fuels treatments conducted by the BLM. Vegetation sampling has been conducted on approximately 9,900 acres of the national monument and represented areas that are: proposed for fire treatment in the near future; and areas that were burned in 2009, 2010, or 2011. Focal areas of the study were located in important fawning grounds where broadcast burns are used for grassland restoration and in juniper encroached grasslands that are thought to impede pronghorn movements and degraded habitat.

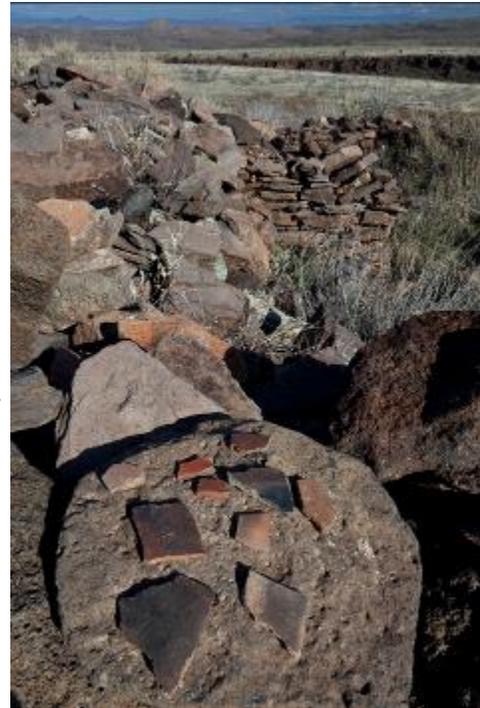
In FY13 data on nearly 700 hundredth hectare plots, 1200 0.5m² micro plot were entered into excel and analyzed from data collected in FY12. Additionally, subsequent field data collection of the same study areas were replicated by a graduate student and field assistant. Replication of the FY12 study design will allow for significant increase in the predictive ability of statistical models.

Additionally, in FY12 the Arizona Game and Fish Department initiated a pronghorn radio telemetry monitoring study by collaring 25 pronghorn with GPS collars. In FY13, returned collars were redeployed for additional data collection of new individuals. Data from the collars was used to identify isolated groups of pronghorn and movement corridors. Juniper removal was planned and implemented in areas where collar data suggested there was a high potential to benefit pronghorn and improve habitat permeability.

A long term replication of the study, five and 10 years after the initial study, will allow land managers gain a much better understanding of semi-desert grassland response to fuels treatments. Perennial vegetation, especially woody species, take multiple years to respond to treatments. Drought conditions persisted during the initial data collection which reduced grassland recovery. Long term duplication will provide land managers critical information about the response of the vegetative community, a proxy for pronghorn behavior, to fuels treatments.

Legacies on the Landscape Project (Arizona State University School of Human Evolution and Social Change)

Arizona State University's Legacy on the Landscape partnership is a collaborative effort by archaeologists and ecologists to investigate the legacy of prehistoric and modern human land use on the mesas of AFNM north of the Phoenix Basin. This desert grassland and riparian ecosystem has experienced two intense pulses of human use in the past 750 years: a sizeable agricultural occupation in the 1300s and livestock grazing since the mid 1800s. The project looks to reconstruct key ecological and archaeological features of the landscape before, during, and after (in the case of the indigenous occupation) these pulses of human land-use. This project has a strong educational component, involving both graduate and undergraduate students in interdisciplinary research in the field and laboratory.



Pueblo la Plata

Pueblo la Plata



5

Resources, Objects, Values, and Stressors

The AFNM’s “resources, objects, and values” were established by Presidential Proclamation (January 2000). The Monument embraces an extraordinary array of historic and biological resources. These objects of scientific and historic interest are described verbatim from the Presidential Proclamation below:

Heritage Resources:

“The ancient ruins within the monument, with their breathtaking vistas and spectacular petroglyphs, provide a link to the past, offering insights into the lives of the peoples who once inhabited this part of the desert Southwest. The area's architectural features and artifacts are tangible objects that can help researchers reconstruct the human past. Such objects and, more importantly, the spatial relationships among them, provide outstanding opportunities for archeologists to study the way humans interacted with one another, neighboring groups, and with the environment that sustained them in prehistoric times.

The monument contains one of the most significant systems of late prehistoric sites in the American Southwest. Between A.D. 1250 and 1450, its pueblo communities were populated by up to several thousand people. During this time, many dwelling locations in the Southwest were abandoned and groups became aggregated in a relatively small number of densely populated areas. The monument encompasses one of the best



Pueblo la Plata

examples of these areas, containing important archeological evidence that is crucial to understanding the cultural, social, and economic processes that accompanied this period of significant change.

At least 450 prehistoric sites are known to exist within the monument and there are likely many more.

There are at least four major settlements within the area,

including Pueblo La Plata, Pueblo Pato, the Baby Canyon Ruin group, and the Lousy Canyon group. These consist of clusters of stone-masonry pueblos, some containing at least 100 rooms. These settlements are typically situated at the edges of steep canyons, and offer a panorama of ruins, distinctive rock art panels, and visually spectacular settings.

Many intact petroglyph sites within the monument contain rock art symbols pecked into the surfaces of boulders and cliff faces. The sites range from single designs on boulders to cliffs covered with hundreds of geometric and abstract symbols. Some of the most impressive sites are associated with major pueblos, such as Pueblo Pato.

The monument holds an extraordinary record of prehistoric agricultural features, including extensive terraces bounded by lines of rocks and other types of landscape modifications. The agricultural areas, as well as other sites, reflect the skills of ancient residents at producing and obtaining food supplies sufficient to sustain a population of several thousand people.”

In addition, The free-flowing Agua Fria River and its tributaries, which virtually bisects the monument is a notable heritage resource and is eligible for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.”

Heritage Resources Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Stable

Heritage Resources Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Number of objects identified by survey	Number of objects identified as possessing value	Number of Cultural Resource sites monitored (of those possessing object or value)
70,900	550	550	22

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored
70,900	4,608 acres (6.5% of total unit acres)	~70,000 acres (this is difficult to determine since less than 10% of the unit has been surveyed)	11 acres

Stressors Affecting this Resource, Object, or Value

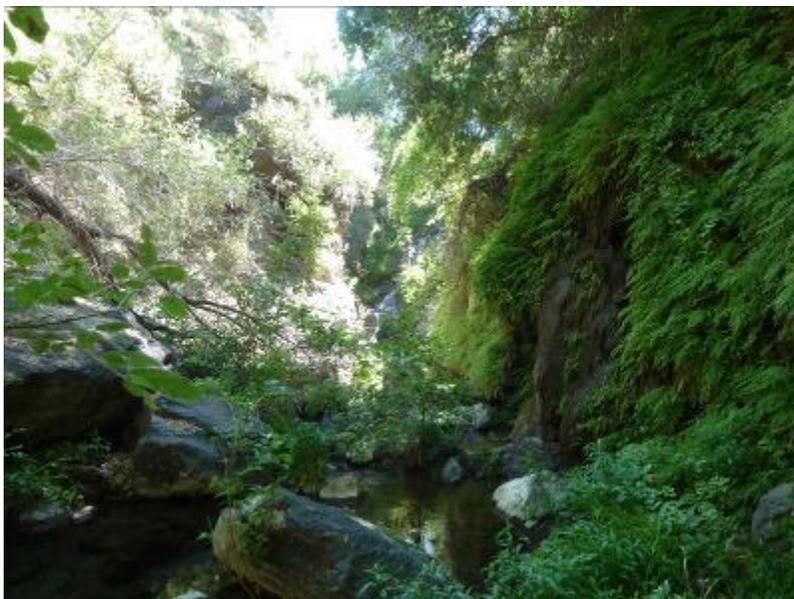
Vandalism, increased visitor use, and occasional off road vehicle use occurs in river bottoms and cross county. In FY13 there were no reports of vandalism or theft to cultural sites. Visitation to the Monument and known cultural sites continues to increase annually.

Biological Resources:

“In addition to its rich record of human history, the monument contains other objects of scientific interest. This expansive mosaic of semi-desert grassland, cut by ribbons of valuable riparian forest, is an outstanding biological resource. The diversity of vegetative communities, topographical features, and relative availability of water provide habitat for a wide array of sensitive wildlife species, including the lowland leopard frog, the Mexican garter snake, the common black hawk, and the desert tortoise. Other wildlife is abundant and diverse, including pronghorn, mule deer, and white-tail deer. Javelina, mountain lions, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and neotropical migratory birds also inhabit the area. Elk and black bear are present, but less abundant. Four species of native fish, including the longfin dace, the Gila mountain sucker, the Gila chub, and the speckled dace, exist in the Agua Fria River and its tributaries.”

Biological resources are monitored in the following manner:

- Upland Vegetation—The upland resources consist of semi-desert grasslands dominated by Tobosa grass. These areas occur primarily on mesa tops and support an abundance of wildlife.
- Riparian Vegetation—Riparian resources are made of lush deciduous tree forest with an understory of water dependent vegetation such as sedges, rushes, cat-tails and an assortment of other species. These areas are critical to support wildlife including many threatened and endangered species.
- Wildlife Species —The Monument is home to many wildlife species including many native fish species, some of which are endangered; 196 bird species, one of which is a candidate species (Yellow-billed Cuckoo); many big game species such as the pronghorn antelope, and many other species.



Lousy Canyon Gila chub fish surveys

Biological Resources Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Trend

Value

<i>Upland</i> —Fair	Stable —Trend is currently being assess with AIM plot data analysis.
<i>Riparian</i> — Fair	Stable (8 miles), Down (6 miles) —Riparian trend is stable in most areas where assessed through Proper Functioning Condition assessments. However, the trend of Silver Creek declined due to an influx of sediment from the 2005 Cave Creek Complex Wildfire.
<i>Wildlife Resources</i> —Good	Stable (10 populations), Down (1 population) — Wildlife resources are stable in most areas where assessed. However, due to influx of sediment Silver Creek, Gila chub populations are like extirpated due to loss of surface flows. Pronghorn continue to thrive in the uplands. Yellow-billed cuckoos were present in areas where they are expected to occur.

Biological Resources Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres/Miles Inventoried	Acres/Miles Possessing Object	Acres/Miles Monitored
70,900	<i>Upland</i> —~90% - Using Attribute, Inventory, and Monitoring (AIM) Strategy methods.	~63,800 acres which excludes 47 miles of riparian habitat associated with the river and tributaries.	Completed in 2012. Plots will be reread in 4-5 years.
	<i>Riparian</i> —~100% - Multiple Indicator Monitoring (MIM) and Proper Functioning Condition (PFC)	47 miles of riparian corridors occur in the Monument.	12 miles
	Pronghorn—~100% of	~50,000 acres of habitat	40,000 acres
	Yellow-billed cuckoo—~70% habitat	~30 miles of habitat	12 miles of habitat and 6 populations
	Native fish species—~100% of T & E habitat and ~5% of total native fish habitat	~40 miles of habitat	12 miles of habitat and 12 populations

Stressors Affecting this Resource, Object, or Value

Upland Resources

Ongoing drought conditions have likely caused a decline in forb production which has resulted in reduced pronghorn fawn recruitment. Presence of invasive non-native grass and forb species continues to be a challenge in areas of high disturbance such as human cause wildfires along the I-17 corridor.

Riparian Resources

Stressors to riparian resources continue from ongoing drought conditions, made worse by upstream ground water pumping. Sediment from the Cave Creek Complex Fire inundated almost all of Silver Creek. Invasive non-native plant species such as Dalmatian toadflax, salt cedar, and Malta star thistle are intermittently present along stream banks. Fortunately, existing native riparian plant communities are out-competing these weed species. Livestock operators grazing outside the terms and conditions of permitted authorizations has been a problem in riparian pastures. As a result, additional allotment compliance checks is required for allotments with seasonal use in riparian pastures.

Wildlife Resources

Wildlife continues to be impacted by an ongoing drought. Sediment from the Cave Creek Complex Fire inundated almost all of Silver Creek and likely resulted in the loss of Gila chub populations in the area. Pronghorn populations are stable but weed infestations such as black mustard on Black Mesa continues to degrade habitat. Yellow-billed cuckoo populations are stable in the Monument but ongoing riparian degradation from drought, ground water pumping and climate change will continue to be a concern.



Agua Fria River Canyon

6

Summary of Performance Measures

In FY13, approximately 200 acres of heritage resources were inventoried and 22 cultural sites were monitored with the assistance of volunteers from the Friends Cultural Resources Committee, Arizona Archaeology Society members, and Arizona Site Steward volunteers.

Biological resources inventoried and monitored in FY13 40,000 acres of terrestrial habitat and upland vegetation which encompassed pronghorn fawning grounds and movement corridors, 12 miles of riparian habitat and streams, 6 Yellow-billed cuckoo populations, and 12 native fish populations including Gila chub, Gila topminnow, longfin dace, and desert sucker, several of which are an endangered species.

Summary Table*

Resource, Object, or Value	Status	Trend
Heritage Resources	Good	Stable
Upland Resources	Fair	Stable
Riparian Resources	Fair	8 miles stable, 6 miles down
Wildlife Resources	Good	Stable (10 populations), Down (1 population)

*This table is simply an amalgamation of the individual object/value status tables in the “Objects, Values, and Stressors” section.

Manager's Letter

Partnerships have been a key factor in accomplishing the important work summarized in this report. Other ongoing partnerships include the Central Arizona Grasslands Conservation Strategy (CAGCS) – an interagency team composed of BLM, Prescott and Tonto National Forests, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The mission of the CAGCS is to work across multiple land ownership jurisdictions to restore grassland ecosystems and benefit the wildlife that depend upon them, in particular species like the pronghorn antelope. The strategy emphasizes ground level project implementation and adaptive management focusing on habitat development, maintaining habitat corridor linkages and water source development projects.

Another important partnership revolves around the Horseshoe-Copper Creek Allotment Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP). The Horseshoe Ranch, recently purchased by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, is the base property for the BLM AFNM Horseshoe Grazing Allotment and the US Forest Service Tonto National Forest Copper Creek Grazing Allotment, which are managed jointly. The three agencies are working together to create a tri-agency CRMP for the two allotments. The CRMP planning process is a public collaborative process designed to engage all interested publics/stakeholders in the identification of local resource needs/opportunities, assist agencies in the collection of resource data, assist in the development of alternatives that address these needs/opportunities, and to encourage participation on long-term resource working groups and adaptive management processes.

Federal reserved water rights work continued throughout FY13 and will continue in to the future. Six automated stations collect data on precipitation, discharge, and gauge height. This data is used to quantify instream water rights claims. Thus far, instream water rights have been filed for Sycamore Creek and the Agua Fria River.

The AFNM staff was pleased to find out that overall 90% of visitors rated their recreation experience as good. The Monument scored very high marks in the knowledge and courtesy of their staff which reflects highly towards the Friends' volunteers conducting the surveys. The results also gave the AFNM staff useful demographics information on visitors and the type of recreational pursuits they enjoy on the Monument. The AFNM staff is grateful for the help from the Friends in making the survey project a success and showing the value of partnerships.

In the upcoming year we will continue with grassland restoration projects through the Central Arizona Grasslands Strategy partnership. In FY13 AFNM was recognized as a Healthy Landscapes focal area and received \$100,000 of one-time funding to assist with grassland restoration efforts. Upland and riparian monitoring to support the Horseshoe-Copper Creek CRMP will also continue in the upcoming year.



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The mention of company names, trade names, or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the federal government.