

# Excerpts from the Proposed Resource Management Plans and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw-Harquahala Planning Area (BLM, August 2008)

## 2.7.1 Management Common to Both Planning Areas

### 2.7.1.1 Land Health Standards

In managing and implementing all resource programs, BLM must consider the Land Health Standards described in *Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* (Rangeland Management). The Land Health Standards were developed, pursuant to 43 CFR 4180, through a collaborative process involving BLM's staff and the Arizona Resource Advisory Council (RAC). The Land Health Standards were approved by the Secretary of the Interior in April 1997. These standards have been developed to determine the characteristics of healthy ecosystems on public lands and management actions to promote them. When approved, the Land Health Standards became BLM Arizona policy, guiding the planning for and management of BLM-administered lands. The Land Health Standards, therefore, have been incorporated into both the Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw-Harquahala RMPs. Listed below are the standards that describe the conditions needed to encourage proper functioning of ecological processes and that have been adopted as the Land Health Standards applicable program wide to BLM Arizona.

#### **Standard One: Upland Sites**

Upland soils exhibit infiltration, permeability, and erosion rates that are appropriate to soil type, climate, and landform (ecological site).

#### **Criteria for Meeting Standard One**

Soil conditions support the proper functioning of hydrologic, energy, and nutrient cycles. Many factors interact to maintain stable soils and healthy soil conditions, including suitable amounts of vegetation cover, litter, and soil porosity and organic matter. Under proper functioning conditions, rates of soil loss and infiltration are consistent with the site's potential.

Ground cover in the form of plants, litter, or rock is present in pattern, kind, and amount sufficient to prevent accelerated erosion for the ecological site; or ground cover is increasing as determined by monitoring over an established period of time.

Signs of accelerated erosion are minimal or diminishing for the ecological site as determined by monitoring over an established period of time.

As indicated by such factors as:

- ground cover,
- litter,
- live vegetation (e.g., grass, shrubs, trees) amount and type,

- rock ,
- signs of erosion,
- flow pattern,
- gullies, and
- rills and plant pedestaling.

Exceptions and exemptions (where applicable):

- None.

### **Standard Two: Riparian-Wetland Sites**

Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning condition.

#### **Criteria for Meeting Standard Two**

Stream channel morphology and functions are appropriate for proper functioning condition for existing climate, landform, and channel reach characteristics. Riparian-wetland areas are functioning properly when adequate vegetation, landform, or large woody debris is present to dissipate the stream energy of high-water flows.

Riparian-wetland functioning condition assessments are based on examination of hydrologic, vegetation, soil and erosion-deposition factors. BLM has developed a standard checklist to address these factors and make functional assessments. Riparian-wetland areas are functioning properly as shown by the results of applying the appropriate checklist.

The checklist for riparian areas is in Technical Reference 1737-9, Process for Assessing Proper Functioning Condition (BLM 1993d). The checklist for wetlands is in Technical Reference 1737-11, Process for Assessing Proper Functioning Condition for Lentic Riparian-Wetland Areas (BLM 1994c).

As indicated by such factors as the following:

- gradient,
- width/depth ratio,
- channel roughness and sinuosity of stream channel,
- bank stabilization,
- reduced erosion,
- captured sediment,
- ground water recharge, and
- dissipation of energy by vegetation.

Exceptions and exemptions (where applicable):

- Dirt tanks, wells, and other water facilities built or placed at a location to provide water for livestock or wildlife and not determined through local planning to provide for riparian or wetland habitat are exempt.
- Water impoundments permitted for construction, mining, or other similar activities are exempt.

### **Standard Three: Desired Future Conditions**

Productive, diverse upland and riparian-wetland plant communities of native species exist and are maintained.

### **Criteria for Meeting Standard Three**

Upland and riparian-wetland plant communities meet DPC objectives. Plant community objectives are determined with consideration for all multiple uses. Objectives also address native species and the requirements of the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA); FLPMA; Endangered Species Act (ESA); Clean Water Act (CWA); and suitable laws, regulations, and policies.

DPC objectives will be developed to assure that soil conditions and ecosystem function described in Standards 1 and 2 are met. These objectives detail a site-specific plant community, which when obtained, will assure rangeland health; State water quality standards; and habitat for endangered, threatened, and sensitive species. Thus, DPC objectives will be used as an indicator of ecosystem function and rangeland health.

As indicated by such factors as the following:

- composition,
- structure, and
- distribution.

Exceptions and exemptions (where applicable):

Ecological sites or stream reaches on which a change in existing vegetation is physically, biologically, or economically impractical are exempt.

#### **2.7.1.4 Biological Resources**

##### ***Land Use Allocation***

Management of Desert Tortoise Habitat

##### ***Desired Future Conditions - Desert Tortoise***

Desert tortoise habitat, by habitat category, will be managed to achieve the following desired conditions:

- Category I - Maintain stable, viable populations and protect existing tortoise habitat values and increase populations where possible,
- Category II - Maintain stable, viable populations and halt further declines in tortoise habitat values, and
- Category III - Limit tortoise habitat and population declines to the extent possible through mitigation.

Categories I and II desert tortoise habitat will be managed to retain all natural sheltersites (boulders or caliche caves or similar features used by tortoises for sheltering) and be unfragmented.

Vegetation will consist of at least 5 percent native perennial grasses, at least 10 percent native perennial forbs or subshrubs, at least 30 percent native trees and cacti, by dry weight, as limited by the potential of

the ecological site as described by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) ecological site guides.

### ***Management Actions - Desert Tortoise***

Standardize desert tortoise management throughout its habitat. Management will be consistent with the following documents:

- Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on Public Lands: A Rangewide Plan (BLM 1988b).
- Strategy for Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on Public Lands in Arizona, Instruction Memorandum No. AZ-91-16 (BLM 1990a)
- Strategy for Desert Tortoise Habitat Management on Public Lands in Arizona: New Guidance on Compensation for the Desert Tortoise, Instruction Memorandum No. AZ-92-46 (BLM 1992), and
- Supplemental Guidance for Desert Tortoise Compensation, Instruction Memorandum No. AZ-99-008 (BLM 1999).

Desert tortoise habitat will be managed according to the categories shown on Map 2-92. Habitat management categories and boundaries will be revised as new population information becomes available. The criteria that will be used in revising categories and boundaries are those in the 1988 Rangewide Plan (BLM 1988b).

The criteria for Category I tortoise habitat areas are the following:

- Habitat areas are essential to maintenance of large, viable populations.
- Conflicts are resolvable.
- Populations are medium to high density or low density contiguous with medium or high density.
- Populations are increasing, stable, or decreasing.

The criteria for Category II tortoise habitat areas are the following:

- Habitat areas may be essential to maintenance of viable populations.
- Most conflicts are resolvable.
- Populations are medium to high density or low density contiguous with medium or high density.
- Populations are stable, or decreasing.

Category III tortoise habitat areas are the following:

- Habitat areas are not essential to maintenance of viable populations.
- Most conflicts are not resolvable.
- Populations are low to medium density not contiguous with medium or high density.
- Populations are stable or decreasing.

No net loss will occur in the quality or quantity of Category I and II desert tortoise habitat to the extent practicable. BLM will address and include mitigation measures in decision documents to offset the loss of quality or quantity of Category I, II, and III tortoise habitats.

Compensation may be required to mitigate residual impacts from authorized actions.

Evaluate on a case-by-case basis all proposed activities, including the following, for impacts to desert tortoise population or habitats:

- requests for rights-of-way,
- easements,
- withdrawals,
- other land tenure actions,
- range improvements,
- wildlife habitat projects,
- mineral material sales, and
- commercial and organized group SRP applications.

Mitigation for adverse impacts is permissible to achieve no net loss in quantity or quality of desert tortoise habitat.

In Category I and II tortoise habitats, all motorized competitive races will be prohibited from March 31 through October 15. All other use requests during this time will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be denied or adjusted to avoid conflict with tortoise activity and habitat. Mitigation for conflicts will be permissible to achieve no net loss in quantity or quality of desert tortoise habitat.

All mining plans of operations will be assessed for impacts to desert tortoise habitat on a case-by-case basis. Adverse impacts to desert tortoise would be mitigated to the extent allowable in the 3809 regulations.

#### ***Administrative Actions - Desert Tortoise***

Maintain and develop a proactive public education program on the desert tortoise and its habitat requirements, including participation in public events with tortoise habitat information. Update existing tortoise brochure every five years or as needed.

Continue to work with and support other agencies and public entities in desert tortoise conservation.

#### ***Management Actions - Priority Species and Priority Habitats***

Emphasize and give priority to managing priority species and priority habitats in the event of conflicts between resource management objectives. Priority species include the following:

- game species,
- special status species,
- birds of conservation concern, and
- raptors.

See Appendix H for a complete list of priority species.

Priority habitats include areas allocated as WHAs (pronghorn fawning habitat, pronghorn movement corridors, and bighorn sheep habitat), ACECs, riparian areas, springs, bat roosts, and desert tortoise habitat.

Reintroductions, transplants, and supplemental stockings (augmentations) of wildlife populations will be carried out in collaboration with AGFD or the USFWS for the following purposes:

- to maintain current populations, distributions, and genetic diversity,
- to conserve or recover threatened or endangered species, and
- to restore or enhance native wildlife species diversity and distribution.

Species that may be reintroduced, transplanted, or augmented include but are not limited to pronghorn; desert bighorn sheep; mule deer; desert tortoise; beavers; lowland leopard frogs; Mexican garter snakes; and native fishes like spikedace, Gila chub, Gila topminnow, desert pupfish, longfin dace, speckled dace, and desert sucker.

### ***Management Actions - Threatened or Endangered Species***

The actions described below implement the relevant Terms and Conditions and Conservation Recommendations contained in the following Biological Opinions and Conference Opinion:

- [2-21-88-F-167] The Phoenix Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.
- [2-21-96-F-421] The Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan (1983), and Lower Gila North Grazing EIS (1982).
- [2-21-96-F-422] The Eastern Arizona Grazing EIS, Phoenix District Portion.
- [2-21-99-F-031] Reintroduction of Gila Topminnow and Desert Pupfish into Three Tributaries of the Agua Fria River.
- [2-21-03-C-409] Existing Phoenix Resource Management Plan for the Agua Fria National Monument.
- [2-21-03-F-210] BLM Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management.

Acquisition criteria for non-Federal lands will include the potential

- to enhance the conserving and managing of threatened or endangered species habitat, riparian habitat, desert tortoise habitat, key big game habitat and
- to improve the overall manageability of wildlife habitat.

BLM will not transfer from Federal ownership the following:

- designated or proposed critical habitat for a listed or proposed threatened or endangered species,
- lands supporting listed or proposed threatened or endangered species if such transfer would be inconsistent with recovery needs and objectives or would likely affect the recovery of the listed or proposed species, and
- lands supporting Federal candidate species if such action would contribute to the need to list the species as threatened or endangered.

Exceptions to the above could occur if the recipient of the lands would protect the species or critical habitat equally well under the ESA, such as disposal to a non-Federal governmental agency or private organization if conservation purposes for the species would still be achieved and ensured.

Wildlife and prescribed fire management will incorporate the T/E Species Conservation Measures described in Appendix P which resulted from the BLM Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management (BO #2-21-03-F-210).

***Desired Future Condition - Gila Topminnow, Gila Chub and Desert Pupfish***

All biologically suitable perennial waters on public lands in the planning areas will be occupied by thriving populations of Gila topminnow, Gila chub, and desert pupfish.

***Management Actions - Gila Topminnow, Gila Chub and Desert Pupfish***

In cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, re-establish Gila topminnow, Gila chub and desert pupfish into suitable habitat sites throughout the planning area.

Stream bank alteration due to recreation activities and livestock grazing in areas occupied by Gila topminnow, Gila chub, and desert pupfish will be limited to 25 percent annually.

Domestic livestock utilization of native riparian trees seedlings along streams occupied by Gila chub, Gila topminnow, and desert pupfish will be limited to 30 percent of the apical stems per growing season.

Fuels treatments on watersheds for habitat occupied by Gila topminnow, Gila chub, and desert pupfish will be limited to no more than 1/2 the watershed in any 2-year period.

***Administrative Actions - Gila Topminnow, Gila Chub and Desert Pupfish***

In coordination with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, monitor all Gila topminnow, Gila chub and desert pupfish populations annually.

Monitor for mortality of Gila topminnow, Gila chub and desert pupfish populations following significant runoff events within a year of treating the watershed with prescribed burns.

All monitoring results will be shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service annually.

BLM will coordinate all fire suppression actions in watersheds occupied by Gila topminnow, desert pupfish and Gila chub with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). If incidental take of these species is likely to occur due to suppression actions, BLM will cooperate with appropriate agencies to collect and salvage fish, if collection and salvage operations can be accomplished safely. BLM will renovate/restore the population site(s) and aid in the re-establishment of the species into the original site(s). If repatriation is not possible due to extreme effects at the site, BLM will coordinate with the FWS to locate or restore a substitute site. Once conditions are suitable for the fish or a substitute site has been selected, the salvaged fish shall be reintroduced. BLM shall coordinate the salvage and release with the FWS and AGFD.

The BLM will monitor the effects of fire suppression actions on Gila topminnow, desert pupfish and Gila chub using approved protocols. Where fire suppression actions may have resulted in fish mortality, the BLM will investigate fire suppression related fish mortality and determine if there have been measurable reductions in abundance from that previously determined by status reviews. The BLM will monitor post-fire levels of sediment, debris, and fire-fighting chemicals and water quality at Gila topminnow, desert pupfish and Gila chub sites to ensure the habitat remains capable of supporting these fish. Water quality

data will include temperature, pH (acidity), dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solids, and turbidity. This monitoring will occur as soon as practicable after the fire and will be coordinated with FWS.

BLM will provide a brief report of monitoring results to the FWS by February of each year following monitoring efforts along with the Wildfire Suppression Documentation forms which will contain the data agreed upon (see FWS File # 02-21-03-F-0210).

At Silver Creek and Indian Creek:

- Monitor stream bank alteration and vegetation two times annually, during and following livestock seasonal use period.
- Monitor functional condition and trend every 3 years.

At Tule Creek:

- Inspect and maintain the fenced enclosure two times annually when livestock are present in the area.
- Monitor stream bank alteration and vegetation annually when livestock are present.
- Monitor functional condition and trend every 3 years.

#### ***Desired Future Condition - Spikedace***

The Agua Fria River, where biologically suitable, is occupied by a thriving population of spikedace.

#### ***Management Actions - Spikedace***

In cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, re-establish a spikedace population in the Agua Fria River.

#### ***Desired Future Condition - Southwestern Willow Flycatcher***

Riparian areas that could physically support (due to floodplain width and gradient) southwestern willow flycatcher habitats will attain the vegetation structure, plant species diversity, density, and canopy cover to constitute suitable habitat. Vegetation in these riparian areas will be sufficiently dense and structurally complex to inhibit flycatcher predators and cowbirds from finding flycatcher nests. Livestock management facilities or other facilities will not be located so that they would attract cowbirds to suitable flycatcher habitat.

#### ***Management Actions - Southwestern Willow Flycatcher***

Within the range of southwestern willow flycatcher, livestock grazing will conform to the guidelines described in the "Not Likely to Adversely Affect" section of Guidance Criteria for Determinations of Effects of Grazing Permit Issuance and Renewal on Threatened and Endangered Species (BLM and US Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona and New Mexico 1999) or any subsequent agreed-upon amendment to these guidelines.

The current guidance criteria for Not Likely to Adversely Affect states:

1. Disturbance of individuals or nests, predation, or parasitism would not be likely because livestock use would not occur in occupied habitat during any time of the year.
2. Suitability for nesting flycatchers would not be reduced because livestock grazing in unoccupied suitable habitat would not occur during the growing season (key vegetation characteristics are maintained or enhanced and conditions promoting cowbird parasitism are avoided).
3. Cowbird parasitism would be unlikely because grazing would occur greater than five miles from occupied habitat during the breeding season, or
4. Monitoring of flycatcher nests demonstrates that no cowbird parasitism is occurring when livestock use occurs closer than 5 miles, but not within, occupied habitat, or
5. Cowbird parasitism would be unlikely due to the physical juxtapositions of habitat type, terrain, facilities, elevation, and other factors.
6. Progression of potential habitat towards becoming suitable within 10 years would not be impeded by livestock grazing (e.g. regeneration or maintenance of woody vegetation is not impaired by trampling, bedding, or feeding).
7. Sufficient monitoring is in place to demonstrate that habitat suitability is being maintained or enhanced in accordance with two and four above. Such monitoring would continue through the life of the grazing action under consideration.

#### ***Desired Future Condition - Bald Eagle***

Habitat quality and quantity of riparian areas within the foraging range of bald eagles in the Lake Pleasant area is maintained and nesting and habitat for wintering birds in the Agua Fria River drainage is maintained. Sufficient quantity and quality of these riparian areas provide roosting and potential nesting trees and adequate prey.

#### ***Desired Future Condition - Yellow-billed Cuckoo***

Riparian areas that could physically support (due to floodplain width and gradient) yellow-billed cuckoo habitats will attain the vegetation structure, plant species diversity, density, and canopy cover to constitute suitable habitat. Livestock utilization will not substantially reduce the abundance, density or distribution of native riparian tree species through herbivory.

#### ***Management Actions – Other Priority Species – Desert Bighorn Sheep***

Domestic sheep and goat grazing will be prohibited within nine miles of occupied desert bighorn sheep habitat to avoid disease transmission and comply with Bureau guidelines. Desert bighorn sheep habitat is depicted on Map 3-10.

#### ***Management Actions – Other Priority Species – Birds of Conservation Concern***

Management of habitat for Birds of Conservation Concern will emphasize avoidance or minimizing impacts and restoring and enhancing habitat quality to implement Executive Order 13186. Through the permitting process for all land use authorizations, ensure the maintenance of habitat quantity and quality. Take (as defined in the Glossary) of migratory birds from authorized activities will be minimized or avoided.

#### ***Desired Future Condition – Riparian Habitat***

Riparian areas will include a plant community that consists of streambanks dominated (> 50 percent) by native species from the genera *Scirpus*, *Carex*, *Juncus*, and *Eleocharis*. The size class distribution of

native riparian obligate trees will be > 15 percent seedlings, > 15 percent mid-size, and > 15 percent large size (depending on existing conditions and the site potential). Size classes are defined as follows:

- Seedlings are < 1 inch in basal diameter.
- Mid-sizes are 1 to 6 inches in basal diameter.
- Large sizes are > 6 inches in basal diameter.

### ***Management Actions - Springs***

Developed springs, seeps, and other projects affecting water and related resources will be designed to protect ecological functions and processes and to continue to provide habitat at the source for endemic invertebrates, native fishes, and other native aquatic species that may be present.

Water rights needs will be quantified, filed for, and protected, including those for instream flows, streams, springs, and other water sources important to wildlife, fish, and riparian values.

Water quality will be monitored and protected to meet Federal and State standards and to ensure that the needs of fish and wildlife are met along with the needs of people.

### ***Desired Future Conditions – Bat Roosts***

The bat roost habitats values associated with natural caves and abandoned mine features are protected and these sites do not pose a threat to human safety.

### ***Management Actions - Bat Roosts***

Authorized activities will ensure the maintenance of bat roost habitat quantity and quality, using mitigation to achieve the DFC.

### ***Desired Future Conditions – Wildlife Habitat Across All Areas***

Maintain, restore, or enhance the diversity, distribution, and viability of populations of native plants and wildlife, and maintain, restore, or enhance overall ecosystem health. Discretionary activities in the planning areas will be managed to ensure connectivity of habitats and maintenance of unrestricted wildlife movement.

All upland areas will include:

- a plant community that consists of native perennial grass and ground cover adequate to improve wildlife habitat and
- improved watershed function based on monitoring and ecological site potential. Upland sites include five percent or greater dry-weight composition of native perennial grass, as limited by the potential of the ecological site as described by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) ecological site guides.

The Desired Plant Community for upland sites will have a long-term stable population of columnar cacti and paniculate agave, where the sites have the potential for such plant communities.

### ***Management Actions - Wildlife Habitat Across All Areas***

Identify, minimize, and mitigate for wildlife habitat degradation, loss, and fragmentation to achieve the DFC.

The *Land Health Standards described in Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration* (BLM 1997a) will be applied to all activities on the public land.

The density and distribution of wildlife waters will be maintained, improved, or increased throughout the planning areas to sustain and enhance wildlife populations across their range.

All existing wildlife waters will be maintained or improved as needed to maintain the presence of perennial water for wildlife.

New wildlife waters will be built when needed to maintain, restore, or enhance native wildlife populations or distributions.

Reasonable administrative vehicular access will be allowed for AGFD staff to wildlife water facilities for maintenance, repair, or research.

Water developments, including those for purposes other than wildlife will include design features to ensure safe and continued access to water by wildlife.

The planning areas contain suitable habitat for relocating and releasing individual animals and release of rehabilitated wildlife. These types of wildlife releases are not intended to establish new populations but are appropriate in areas of suitable habitat. Wildlife species that can be released include but are not limited to black bears; mountain lions; burrowing owls; and other raptors, reptiles, and game species.

The evaluation of vehicle routes, in conjunction with the route designation process, will consider the effect of routes on wildlife habitat values. Routes that conflict with maintaining sensitive wildlife habitat will be mitigated to achieve DFC. Mitigation will include, but not be limited to the following:

- route closure,
- seasonal use restrictions,
- rerouting,
- vehicle type restrictions,
- vehicle speed restrictions, and
- other mitigation suitable to the nature of the conflict.

Administrative access will be allowed by law for enforcement and AGFD and USFWS staff for natural resource management. AGFD's use of motorized and mechanized equipment off designated routes is considered an administrative use and will be allowed in suitable locations (as agreed to by BLM and AGFD) for such purposes including, but not limited to the following:

- water supplementation,
- collar retrieval,
- capture and release of wildlife, and
- maintenance, repair, and building or rebuilding of wildlife waters.

### ***Administrative Actions - Wildlife Habitat Across All Areas***

Through cooperative partnerships with AGFD and other State and private entities, BLM will conserve, enhance, and restore wildlife habitats, including natural springs, wetlands, and streams.

Continue to implement wildlife habitat management through wildlife HMPs, developed in cooperation with AGFD to meet the requirements of the Sikes Act and address site-specific habitat management objectives. Existing HMPs will be used until new plans are developed.

### ***Desired Future Condition – Invasive Species***

The distribution and abundance of invasive plants and animals will be limited to current levels and through active management, the impact of invasive species on native ecosystems will be reduced from current levels.

### ***Management Actions – Invasive Species***

Adverse impacts to natural plant and animal communities from invasive species would be reduced. Efforts to control or eradicate invasive wildlife species will be carried out in cooperation and collaboration with AGFD or suitable weed management associations or other organizations.

Nonintrusive, non-native plant species will be considered suitable where native species:

- are not available,
- are not economically feasible,
- cannot achieve ecological objectives as well as non-native species, and
- cannot compete with already established non-native species.

The use and perpetuation of native plant species will be emphasized when restoring or rehabilitating disturbed or degraded rangelands.

### ***Administrative Actions – Invasive Species***

A monitoring, management, and educational program will be established to reduce the spread of plants classified as invasive by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

## 2.7.3.6 Recreation Resources

The Desired Future Condition and management actions that follow will apply to all public lands, including those within MUs in the Bradshaw-Harquahala Planning Area, unless superseded by management actions for SRMAs, RMZs, or other land use allocations. Where management actions in SRMAs, RMZs, or other land use allocations are silent on the subjects listed below, the actions listed below will apply.

### ***Land Use Allocation***

The designated Wilderness areas will all be allocated as Special Recreation Management Areas. Wilderness Areas included in this planning area are:

- Harquahala Mountains Wilderness,
- Hummingbird Springs Wilderness,
- Big Horn Mountains Wilderness,
- Hassayampa River Wilderness, and
- Hells Canyon Wilderness.

### *Desired Future Conditions*

Wilderness areas will be managed for primitive settings to preserve their outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and naturalness.

### *Land Use Allocation*

Extensive Recreation Management Areas

### *Management Actions*

#### **General Recreation**

All recreation actions such as facilities, projects, programs, amenities, and trails, as described in the sections below, would conform to land use plans, activity plans, and resource management objectives. The proposed actions need to conform to the managerial and social settings described in the document, such as recreation settings, VRM, SRMA, RMZ, lands allocated to maintain wilderness characteristics, and other management prescriptions.

#### **Camping**

Dispersed camping would be permitted on all planning area lands unless otherwise specifically designated as closed or restricted for resource protection or public safety purposes.

The current 14-day length of stay camping limit would continue to be policy for all public lands in the planning area, unless otherwise specifically designated or modified by management actions in this plan. The 14-day limit may be reached by continuously occupying one site or by occupying more than one site within a 25-mile radius within a 90-day period. Following the 14-day period, the party may not relocate to a campsite within a distance of 25 miles that was previously occupied, nor may they return to any sites previously occupied. After 14 days, the party may also choose to move to a designated camping area or move off public land. Extensions beyond the 14-day length of stay may be permitted on a case-by-case basis where needed for resource protection and land use management provisions.

Designated camping locations and camping length of stay limits (long- and short-term) would be developed as needed for the following purposes:

- protecting resources,
- ensuring visitor safety,
- resolving social conflicts,
- improving recreation experiences, and
- increasing recreation opportunities.

All campsite construction or designation would be compatible with social and managerial recreation settings and VRM objectives. Communities, user groups, or agency staff can bring camping site proposals forward for management attention.

Self-contained or vehicle-based camping would be permitted within 100 feet of the centerline of designated routes. Visitors camping and parking along roads and routes will be strongly encouraged through visitor information, education and signing to select and use camp and parking sites with clear evidence of prior use. Such evidence is indicated or evidenced by vehicle access to the site, lack of vegetation, bare mineral soils and other dispersed campsite amenities such as fire rings.

Campsites would be designated and developed at mining sites and prospecting areas when needed for resource protection due to trail proliferation, loss of soil and vegetation cover, public health and safety concerns, or user conflicts.

Any trailhead or staging area could be closed to overnight camping upon written authorization of the authorized officer.

It is unlawful for a person to camp within 1/4 mile of a natural water hole containing water or man-made watering facility containing water in such a place that wildlife or domestic stock will be denied access to the only reasonably available water (Arizona Revised Statute 17-308, Unlawful Camping).

### **Group Use (Non-commercial)**

Existing vehicle parking and camping sites must be large enough to accommodate the group size without increasing the footprint of the disturbance area. Large group activities and events with 75 or more people would require a special recreation permit unless otherwise specified in special management areas or designated sites where carrying capacities are established in subsequent implementation level plans, or when special management and monitoring are determined to be needed.

### **Group Use in Wilderness (Non-commercial)**

Large group activities in wilderness areas would be managed consistent with the provisions in Section 2.7.3.1 under the discussion of Designated Wilderness Areas.

### **Equestrian Activities**

Monitor and manage equestrian use according to the Arizona Land Health Standards (Land Health Standards).

Encourage the use of weed-free animal feed to prevent the introduction of noxious, invasive weeds.

### **Geocaches**

The placement of geocaches would be prohibited in archaeological and raptor nesting sites. Virtual caches may be allowed within archaeological sites with prior written authorization from the authorized officer.

Other sites may be prohibited if it is determined that the placement of these caches creates unacceptable resource impacts, conflicts with other users or health and safety concerns.

## **Paintball Activities**

Paintball activities would not be allowed in wilderness areas and ACECs. Such activities would be allowed elsewhere in the planning area, if suitable to other resource management objectives and special management allocations. The following stipulations would apply:

- Require nontoxic, biodegradable and water soluble paintball capsules.
- Allow temporary obstacles or structures to be used but require that they be removed at the end of the visit to the public lands. Allow no mechanized or motorized cross-country travel to set up or remove structures. Authorize no permanent structures.
- Require goggles and masks protecting the ears, face, and throat.
- Prohibit shooting paintballs at wildlife and saguaro cacti. Prohibit the use of natural features, such as boulders and vegetation, as paintball targets.
- Require participants to pick up and remove from the area all items related to paintball activities, including capsules and any other trash.
- Require SRPs for paintball activities with more than 15 participants, unless otherwise specified in special management areas.
- Prohibit paintball activities within 1/4 mile of
  - high-use recreation areas such as campgrounds, trailheads, and staging areas
  - designated non-motorized trails
  - areas with permitted recreation activities
  - active scientific and research areas

## **Rock Collecting**

Allow the collecting of rocks, minerals, semi-precious gemstones, invertebrate fossils, and petrified wood in reasonable amounts. In BLM Arizona, reasonable limits for personal use are defined as up to 25 pounds per day, plus one piece, with a total of 250 pounds per person per year.

## **Special Recreation Permits**

### General

No permit or event limits would be established at this time for the planning area. Allow permit and/or event limits to be established later in response to monitoring of resources, users, or social conflicts.

SRPs would be authorized on a case-by-case basis for all recreation activities meeting the requirements in 43 CFR 2930 and applicable manuals, policies, and guidance. SRPs would be required for all commercial or competitive use recreation activities. SRPs may also be required for the following:

- noncommercial, noncompetitive organized group activities and events
- vending operations;
- individual noncommercial recreation use in Special Area Designations
- academic, educational, scientific or research uses

The criteria for when permits are required for these uses may be found in BLM Manual H-2930-1, Recreation Permit Administration Manual and Handbook. Definitions of the types of uses may be found in the Glossary.

Issuance of SRPs is at BLM's discretion. BLM would evaluate permit applications on the basis of applicable laws and regulations and conformance with existing land use plans, including consistency with recreation and other resource objectives. The decision to authorize a proposed use would depend on the following:

- potential resource impacts,
- conflicts with other users,
- health and safety concerns,
- past or present performance with BLM or other agencies, and
- BLM's ability to timely process the application and effectively administer the permit.

Permits would be authorized, ensuring compliance with Federal, State, county, and local air quality and noise regulations.

Permits are authorized based on the inclusion and compliance of standard and activity specific stipulations regarding the proposed activities. These stipulations for SRPs have been developed to protect natural resources, reduce user conflicts, and minimize health and safety risks. The stipulations must be adhered to keep the permit in good standing. Failure to comply with the stipulations can result in loss of permit privileges and/or lead to penalties prescribed in 43 CFR 2933.33. An example of these stipulations may be found in Appendix K.

### Vending

SRPs may be issued for vending operations at a recreation site, or in conjunction with a permitted activity or event. The SRP for the activity or event may include vending operations if the operations are directly related to the permitted activity or event, and the permittee is responsible for the vending operations. If the permittee is not responsible for the vending operations, a separate SRP for the vending would be required.

Vending may be considered at recreation sites if the service or goods for sale:

- directly enhances the recreation experience and
- cannot be readily provided by the closest local community.

Permanent structures would not be authorized under a vending permit.

### Competitive Races

All motorized competitive races would need to comply with the desert tortoise policy in the Biological Resources discussion of the Management Common to All Action Alternatives section of this chapter.

Motorized competitive speed races would be authorized only in SRMAs or RMZs where an allocation for such use has been made.

## **Leases and Land Use Permits**

### Concession Leases

Recreation concession leases, long-term authorizations for the use of public lands, are authorized under 43 CFR 2920. BLM would evaluate concession leases on a case-by-case basis to determine if they conform to land use plans, activity plans, and resource management objectives. The proposed lease would need to conform to the managerial and social settings such as recreation settings, VRM objectives, and other special use area prescriptions. A strong public demand must also be demonstrated for the proposed products or services to be considered. Leases would be awarded on a competitive bid basis and evaluated by the following traits of the concessionaire:

- experience,
- ability to provide quality services,
- financial stability and integrity, and
- past or present performance and financial offer.

### Apiary Permits

Apiary (bee keeping) permits will be prohibited within 1/4 mile of the following:

- high-use recreation areas such as campgrounds, trailheads, and staging areas,
- designated non-motorized trails,
- areas or routes with permitted recreation activities, and
- active scientific and research areas.

### Commercial Filming Permits

Permits for commercial filming or still photography, in accordance with Public Law 106-206, would be issued under the SRP guidelines when associated with permitted recreation activities. The fee schedule would be used as outlined in 43 CFR 2920 commercial filming regulations. Proposals would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if they conform to land use plans, activity plans, and resource management objectives. Proposed activities would need to conform to the managerial and social settings as described in the document such as recreation settings, VRM objectives, and other special use area prescriptions. Land Use Permits for non-recreation related commercial filming will be authorized in conformance with 43 CFR 2920 guidelines.

### **Recreation Opportunity Spectrum**

Maintain current inventoried recreation settings within ERMA. ROS inventory is portrayed on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum on Map 3-11. Since the areas allocated as ERMA and SRMA change by Alternative, actual desired settings also change by Alternative.

### **Facilities**

Recreation management facilities would be planned and installed where needed for:

- protecting resources,
- providing for visitor safety,
- resolving social conflicts,
- improving the quality of recreation experiences, and
- increasing recreation opportunities.

Facilities can include water sources, toilets, scenic turnouts, cultural interpretive sites, kiosks, signs, parking areas, staging areas, and trailheads. Installed facilities must be compatible with recreation management objectives and desired settings and VRM standards. Communities, user groups, or agency staff can bring facility proposals forward for management attention.

### **Recreational Target Shooting**

Recreational target shooting has increased in popularity on BLM-managed lands as the population in Central Arizona has increased and availability of land to shoot on has decreased. BLM land is, for the most part, open to recreational target shooting. Public lands are shared by many users. It is imperative the target shooter select a shooting site that is both safe to other public land users and considerate of natural resources. The following discussion includes criteria for selection of safe and considerate shooting sites.

It is the ultimate responsibility of the recreational target shooter to ensure the projectiles they fire are contained within the shooting site they select. While shooting is allowed in most public land areas, the shooter should make no concession concerning safety. Consideration of other people using public lands is not only considerate, *Arizona Revised Statutes Title 13-1201* says:

(A). A person commits endangerment by recklessly endangering another person with a substantial risk of imminent death or physical injury.

(B). Endangerment involving a substantial risk of imminent death is a class six felony. In all other cases, it is a class one misdemeanor.

Therefore, it is paramount that shooters continually evaluate their shooting activities and the requirements necessary to ensure those activities can be conducted with projectile/bullet containment as a primary goal.

General considerations for selecting a suitable shooting site include the following:

- Make sure you have a safe backstop. That means you can see where the bullets are hitting behind the target. A hill or pushed-up berm of dirt is perfect. Remember that bullets can ricochet off flat surfaces—that includes rocks, dirt and water. Put your targets right in front of the backstop to ensure your bullets stop in the dirt. (Detailed guidelines for backstops and side berms can be found below.)
- Select a site that doesn't put others at risk. Do not shoot towards or across areas where other people congregate such as hiking trails, vehicle parking and staging areas, and trail heads. It is a violation of Arizona State law (*A.R.S. 17-301B*) to shoot across a maintained road. Though this law only pertains to maintained roads, there are many routes in the desert that are used by motorcycles, quads, and four-wheel drive vehicles that are not as apparent as a maintained road. Shooting in the direction, or across them, though not a violation of the reference law, could be just as dangerous to people using them. Choose a site that avoids shooting across or towards motorcycle, quad, or four-wheel-drive routes as well.
- In addition to motorized routes, there are many popular hiking, bicycling and equestrian trails. Select a site that doesn't cross or shoot in the direction of a trail that could put people at risk.
- Selection of a safe shooting site would include staying more than ¼ mile from any residence or occupied structure. When selecting a site, assume any structure is occupied. It is a violation of Arizona State Law to knowingly discharge a firearm at a structure. The statute (*A.R.S 13-1211A and B*) says:

(A). A person who knowingly discharges a firearm at a residential structure is guilty of a class two felony.

(B). A person who knowingly discharges a firearm at a nonresidential structure is guilty of a class three felony.

- Selection of a site should include avoiding such improvements as wildlife or livestock water facilities, livestock control facilities such as corrals and fences, signs or kiosks installed to provide information, barns or other rural developments, or any other improvement that was not specifically designed to be shot at.
- It is a violation of Arizona State law (*A.R.S. 13-1603A 1*) if a person "Throws, places, drops or permits to be dropped on public property or property of another which is not a lawful dump any litter, destructive or injurious material which he does not immediately remove." This includes not only trash, but also brass or shells (including shotgun shells) from spent ammunition and items used as targets. Shooters are required to remove any targets, items on which targets are mounted, and brass from spent ammunition. BLM Phoenix District policy is to only use targets that do not produce litter, and to remove them when you are finished shooting.
- Under the Code of Federal Regulations (*43 CFR 8365.2-5(a)*) no person shall "Discharge or use firearms..." on a developed recreation site. *43 CFR 8360.0-5(c)* defines "Developed Recreation Sites and Areas" as "...sites and areas that contain structures or capital improvements primarily used by the public for recreation purposes. Such sites or areas may include such features as: delineated spaces for parking, camping or boat launching; sanitary facilities; potable water; grills or fire rings; or controlled access."

Selecting sites with side berms and backstops is optional where the shooter can be assured of safe shooting 1.5 miles downrange for pistol or 3.5 miles downrange for high powered rifles, with appropriate left and right ricochet safety zones. With the popularity of public lands for recreation and other uses, this scenario is the exception rather than the rule. Therefore, the primary purpose for selection of backstops and side berms is to protect against the injury of people, the damage of property or both.

The type of firearms being fired and the shooting activity being conducted will dictate the extent of the backstops, side berms and safety fans required to achieve that goal.

A downrange safety fan is an area beyond the backstop and side berms that is free of people or property that can be injured or damaged by errant bullets. It is important to remember that, depending on the suitability of the backstop and side berms, a safety fan downrange will be required to assure a safe shooting area. Below are ideal specifications for both backstops and side berms. Sites with less than ideal backstops and side berms must have increasingly longer downrange safety fans, approaching the distances described above of 1.5 miles for pistols and 3.5 miles for high power rifles. Even with an ideal backstop and side berms, site selection should still consider downrange safety and a downrange safety fan.

The characteristics of safe backstops and berms recognized as needed for safe shooting practices are as follows:

- Height. Preferred backstops include naturally occurring hills or mountainsides, or steep-sided wash banks. Backstops of soft dirt are preferred over hard surfaces, and rocky slopes should be avoided as they create a high ricochet hazard. A minimum height of 15 feet is acceptable but 20 to 25 feet is recommended. Remember that bullet ricochet can happen even on the best

backstop. Site selection should consider ricochet possibilities and backstops that exceed 20 to 25 feet should be chosen where possible to reduce ricochet away from the shooting area.

- Width/Length. The width of the backstop should be at least as wide as it is high. Targets should be placed directly in front of or on the backstop with sufficient backstop on either side to catch bullets. Ideally, side berms should be the same height and the full length of the shooting area from the backstop to even with the firing line.
- Slope. The range side slope (side facing the shooter) must be as steep as possible, but not less than a 45-degree slope (a ratio of one-to-one). Side berm slopes should have the same dimensions.

Remember, even with the perfect backstop and side berms, finding a suitable shooting area must include a safety fan beyond the backstop.

The bottom line is to select a shooting site in harmony with adjacent properties and other public land users. The site should prevent adjacent properties and other public land users from experiencing any risk from the shooters activities. The overall responsibility of the shooter is to stop fired bullets before they exit the selected shooting area. It is the intention of the BLM to provide a safe and pleasant experience for any public land user. If shooting areas emerge that are contrary to the above criteria they will be clearly construed as putting other public land users at risk and they may be closed to shooting by the authorized officer, either temporarily or permanently.

As the demand for recreation shooting grows along with the demand for other recreation opportunities, the need may arise to identify and designate areas as shooting ranges. Many locations within the planning area would be suitable for this use and could provide a safe and enjoyable shooting experience. Identification and future management would be defined through further site specific planning and analysis.

### 2.7.3.7 Travel Management

#### **Motorized and Mechanized Travel and Public Access**

##### *Land Use Allocations*

All designated wilderness areas are closed to motorized and mechanized vehicle uses. Motorized and mechanized uses on all other BLM's lands will be Limited to Designated Routes. Until routes are designated, motorized vehicle access is limited to currently inventoried vehicle routes.

Closed = 96,820 acres

Limited to Designated Routes = 799,820 acres

##### *Desired Future Condition*

Define, designate, implement, and monitor a designated and comprehensive travel management network affording a range of high-quality and diverse motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. The network would consist of a system of areas, roads, primitive roads and/or trails. The travel management network and associated recreation opportunities would be consistent with other resource management objectives and recreation settings for the area.

Motorized routes connect neighboring communities, local jurisdictions, and lands administered by county, State, and Federal agencies to allow for multiple-day OHV experiences.

A regional network of motorized routes and access exists for long-distance OHV back country touring. Looping, regional routes connect the Black Canyon, Bradshaw Foothills, Wickenburg/Vulture, and Harquahala-Big Horn areas, and continue north to the Wagoner and Skull Valley area to connect to Prescott National Forest and the Great Western Trail. Economic development of local communities to the south, east, and west of Phoenix is synergistic with providing outstanding motorized recreation.

### ***Management Actions***

All motorized vehicles and mechanized human conveyances (such as bicycles) would be limited to designated routes. All routes would be designated within five years of plan approval. Until route-specific designations are made, all motorized/mechanized vehicle travel and access would be limited to currently inventoried vehicle routes. Where inventories are not complete, use will be limited to existing routes. Inventoried routes will be updated with input from BLM, partnerships, user groups, and citizens. For these purposes, livestock and game trails are not considered existing routes or trails. Cross-country travel off designated routes would be prohibited, except for the following reasons:

- public health, safety, and law enforcement emergencies;
- administrative uses; or
- BLM-authorized tasks approved by the authorized officer.

Vehicle access on designated routes may be temporarily closed when weather creates muddy conditions. When conditions are such that travel by vehicle cannot be accomplished without damaging the existing roadway or departing the roadway and traveling cross-country, the route is closed until the roadway can once again support a vehicle without damage.

BLM recommends a standard evaluation process, supported by software and database and that is compatible with GIS functionality. A structured evaluation process would be applied to develop a designated travel and transportation system for all routes within the Bradshaw-Harquahala Planning Area. A description of the current BLM Arizona standard process used to evaluate and designate routes can be found in Appendix D (should be a link in e-Planning). These designations would apply to motorized vehicles and mechanized equipment designed to provide a mechanical advantage and intended for human conveyance, including automobiles, trucks, ATVs, motorcycles, mountain bikes, and other conveyances with one, two, three, four, or more wheels or tracks.

Once route designations are complete, changing conditions and demand may suggest a need for new routes to be added to the route network. The process for adding new routes to the designated route network, motorized or non-motorized, would include a structured analysis approach. All proposed additions to the designated route network would be processed as follows:

1. Route locations will be mapped or located using accepted Global Positioning System devices and presented to the BLM office for consideration. Locations for route proposals off of designated motorized routes must be located and mapped using non-motorized methods.
2. The route proposal submitted to BLM will include a description of the route including its proposed width, its proposed use(s), and a rationale for its need.
3. The route location will be staked and flagged for on-the-ground review by resource specialists.
4. The route location will be analyzed for potential conflicts such as, (but not limited to): wildlife habitats, cultural resources, visual resources, other recreation uses, mining claims or leases, grazing

facilities, rights-of-way, and proximity to other jurisdictions (such as private land.) A structured process, such as that described in Appendix D would be used to evaluate and document the potential route conditions.

5. The conflict assessment would lead to possible mitigation actions or alternative locations or design.
6. An environmental analysis (EA) would be conducted to determine the environmental affects of the proposed route and any Alternatives and mitigation suggested.
7. A decision would be issued by the authorized officer based on Land Use Plan compliance, resource objectives, and environmental impacts.
8. The Travel Management Plan would be updated accordingly.

Single or multiple-use OHV and technical vehicle loops, routes, specialized sport sites and management strategies would be designed and developed through interdisciplinary plans, with community and user input. Routes and areas would be developed as needed for the following purposes:

- protecting resources,
- ensuring visitor safety,
- satisfying local community needs, and
- improving recreation experiences or increasing recreation opportunities, such as for rock crawling and motorcycle trials.

Limits of acceptable change indicators and standards would be developed in site-specific planning to reduce user and resource conflicts. All motorized vehicle route construction would be compatible with social and managerial recreation settings and VRM standards. Communities, user groups, or agency staff can bring motorized vehicle route proposals forward for management attention.

Existing routes would be selected and designated for inclusion into a regional route network.

General long-distance travel corridors for OHV travel between field offices and other adjoining lands will be designated.

Loop route opportunities would be recognized and spur trails connected to augment the existing route network where no resource conflicts preclude the actions.

Easements or rights-of-way across key private and State-administered lands would be acquired to ensure long-term network viability and public access. Easements or rights-of-way actions will be undertaken when:

- route system effectiveness is or would be adversely effected by outside actions;
- opportunity becomes available and the action is consistent with recreation settings and goals;
- recreation and resource disciplines need public and/or administrative access to sites;
- portal access is desired to support resource objectives of safety and sustainability.

Where (1) a route creates a conflict between route users and natural or cultural resources, or (2) an OHV or special vehicle use conflicts with recreation management objectives, the following or other mitigation could be applied:

- closing routes;
- limiting season of use and vehicle types, speeds, and noise;
- rerouting offending route segments; or
- modifying routes to reduce or eliminate conflicts.

Motorized vehicles may not be used off designated vehicle routes to retrieve game. The cross-country use of wheeled game carriers is permitted, except in wilderness areas. Permittees, including livestock operators may not use motorized vehicles off designated routes without express permission from the Field Manager.

Recreation and Special Use permits would be authorized ensuring compliance with Federal, State, county, and local regulations for air quality and noise.

Use of transportation routes has the potential of contributing fugitive dust to the PM<sub>10</sub> non-attainment area in Maricopa County. Use of routes in PM<sub>10</sub> non-attainment areas and routes with fugitive dust issues will be part of the planning area's ongoing monitoring program. Proposed mitigation actions (closure, seasonal restrictions, speed limits, change in use, surfacing, surface and dust abatement treatments) will be addressed as part of the adaptive management for Travel and Transportation Management. Routes causing or contribution to unacceptable or noncompliant air quality impacts will be closed to travel until route conditions change or are corrected.

### ***Administrative Actions***

Develop Travel Management Plans to implement route designations, technical vehicle sites and other activities associated with travel management.

To comply with Maricopa County, State of Arizona and the Environmental Protection Agency's management of airborne particulates, it is BLM's responsibility to develop site specific planning to conform to those rules. BLM will manage and conduct activities on BLM land in a manner as to not contribute to fugitive pollutants that exceed thresholds. Upon completion of this planning effort, an air quality conformance plan will be developed for activities within the Maricopa County non-attainments areas which will focus on any potential dust producing activities, especially motorized recreation.

Coordinate route designation with adjoining field offices and land management agencies.

Establish relationships and enter into agreements with local interest groups and the business community for long-term route maintenance and community support for the ongoing management of the route system and its funding.

Prior to OHV route designations, citations may be issued and other enforcement actions taken for illegal or unauthorized vehicle travel documented by BLM and Law Enforcement personnel. BLM's completed OHV route inventory for any subject area will constitute routes open and available for vehicle travel prior to a completed route evaluation and designation. Vehicle use in areas or on "routes" not included as part of the inventoried route network will be considered illegal and unauthorized off-road or cross-country travel. Signing may or may not be present. For illegal or unauthorized vehicle travel, citations may be issued at the discretion of the Law Enforcement officer. Citations will be issued for vehicle travel on inventoried and pre-existing motorized routes when the routes are signed as closed to motorized travel. In accordance with BLM Instructional Memorandum 2005-07, vehicles may not pull off a designated route more than 100 feet.

### **Motorized Technical Vehicle Activities**

#### ***Desired Future Condition***

Provide designated, managed sites for specialized vehicle use, considering the unique natural terrain required for such activities. Certain types of motorized activities, such as rock crawling and motorcycle observed trails, require extreme terrain features and are not conducive to general use by traditional stock 4-WD vehicles. These sites would not be evaluated and established during motorized route designation; however, access to these sites would be evaluated during route designation.

### ***Management Actions***

Technical vehicle sites would be evaluated and established on a case-by-case basis. Sites would be established if they result in no net loss of quality or quantity of sensitive resources such as cultural sites, wildlife habitat for priority species, sensitive soil resources, and other resources sensitive to motorized activities.

Limitations to assure the safe and intended use of these sites will be established as necessary. BLM, working with user groups and enthusiasts, would define the limitations in order to provide and maintain challenging opportunities for specialized sport activities. In accordance with BLM Instructional Memorandum 2005-007, difficulty ratings will not be published. Motorized users would be informed of the required equipment and skills necessary to utilize these sites through signing, information sheets, and outreach programs.

### ***Administrative Actions***

Develop Travel Management Plans to implement route designations, technical vehicle sites and other activities associated with travel management.

Evaluate and establish technical vehicle sites on a case-by-case basis, with community and user input. Sites will be developed as needed for the following purposes:

- ensuring visitor safety,
- meeting enthusiast needs,
- improving recreation experiences,
- increasing recreation opportunities

Site plans will establish limits of acceptable change indicators and standards. All sites must be compatible with social and managerial recreation settings and VRM standards; satisfy biological and ecological land health standards; protect or mitigate cultural resources; and achieve water quality standards for influenced drainages and watersheds.

### **Non-motorized Trail Networks**

#### ***Desired Future Condition***

Provide a local and regional network of designated non-motorized trails for short and long-distance travel by foot, horseback, and human-powered conveyances (e.g. mountain bikes). Connect communities and Sonoran Desert landscapes by linking regional areas and communities through trail planning and implementing as coordinated by a State of Arizona trails plan. Develop trails that connect Black Canyon City with the Black Canyon Trail and Agua Fria National Monument. Also, use long-distance trails to link communities and areas such as (but not limited to) the following:

- Prescott Valley,
- Mayer,
- Black Canyon,
- Bradshaw Foothills,
- Wickenburg area,
- Vulture Mountains, and
- Harquahala Mountains.

Assist tourism and economic development of communities by providing non-motorized outdoor recreation experiences.

### ***Management Actions***

Equestrian and mountain biking activities that require SRPs could be limited to existing trails, which for these purposes do not include livestock and game trails. These limitations would be included in permit stipulations designed to protect resources and address safety concerns. Casual hiking and equestrian activities are not restricted to trails unless prescribed in the management actions of a special area designation or allocation. The authorized officer may close areas to casual hiking or equestrian use, or require these activities to be limited to trails, to mitigate resource damage.

### ***Administrative Actions***

Develop comprehensive Travel Management Plans for the management units. These plans would implement the route designations for the area.

Plan, designate, and develop new hiking, equestrian, or mountain bike trails through interdisciplinary plans with community and user input. Trails will be developed as needed for the following purposes:

- protecting resources,
- ensuring visitor safety,
- meeting community needs,
- improving recreation experiences, or
- increasing recreation opportunities.

Trails project plans will establish limits of acceptable change indicators and standards. All trail building must be compatible with social and managerial recreation settings and VRM standards. Recreation settings are established in the Recreation sections of this plan. VRM standards are established in the Visual Resources sections of this plan. Communities, user groups, or agency staff can bring trail proposals forward for management attention.

An evaluation process, similar to one described in Appendix D, will be used to establish a designated public access and route system within the Bradshaw-Harquahala area public lands, consistent with the land use plan resource management objectives.

### ***Travel Management Plans***

Travel management plans (TMPs) will be created for management units after route designation is completed. The TMP will address issues such as:

- A map depicting the final decision for route designations, including all modes of travel and primary uses.
- Guidance for seeking active public involvement throughout the route designation process and follow on management decisions.
- Guidance for using an interdisciplinary approach to identifying and mitigating resource impacts.
- Definitions and additional limitations for specific roads and trails (defined in 43 CFR 83400-5(g)).
- Creating a catalog for each individual route's Travel Management Objective (TMO) sheets;
- Indications of changes in status of existing routes and areas.
- Risk management
- Coordination with adjoining jurisdictions
- Identify long distance route corridors for connectivity with adjoining jurisdictions and general long distance touring.
- Identification of Special Recreation Management Zones where Technical Four Wheel Drive activities are authorized.
- Criteria and procedures for making additions and deletions from the route system;
- Signing plans and sign inventories;
- Facility development (engineering);
- Guidelines for education and enforcement;
- Guidelines for system monitoring and compliance;
- Coordination with BLM's Facility and Asset Management System(FAMS);
- Dust management plans;
- Indicators to guide future plan maintenance, amendments or revisions related to the travel management network.
- Needed improvements, signing, trailheads and staging areas.
- Needed maintenance intensity and easements or rights-of-way to maintain the existing or proposed road and trail network providing public land access.
- Guidelines for periodic review of the travel management plan and triggers for making updates and/or maintenance.
- Identification of existing roads, primitive roads, trails and related facilities (baseline inventory data)
- Other topics as necessary to manage travel.

General Travel Management Area boundaries correspond to Management Unit boundaries. The following considerations will guide decisions on travel management:

- a. Designated wilderness areas are managed according to the existing decisions described in this plan.
- b. All areas outside of designated wilderness are limited vehicle use areas where vehicles are limited to routes designated as open or available for vehicle use as follows:
  - Non-motorized, mechanized vehicle use (e.g., bicycles, hang gliders, other devices for conveyance and stock drawn carts/wagons) is restricted to routes or sites designated as available, or open for such use. Non-motorized, hand-powered wheeled game carriers are permitted as described below.
  - Decisions regarding motorized vehicles are according to the prescriptions in the Travel Management sections of this plan.
- c. Non-mechanized travel (i.e., foot and equestrian use) is allowed off designated routes, except where otherwise prohibited. The creation of routes caused by repetitive use is discouraged. Routes not meeting land health standards or plan objectives may be closed.
- d. All caves, mines, wells, abandoned structures, or other confined spaces are closed to public entry unless an individual site is signed open for such entry or entry is authorized under special use permit.

- e. The use of aircraft, motorized and non-motorized, must conform to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards including the use of backcountry landing strips. There are no backcountry airstrips designated for public use on BLM land within the planning area. Use of public lands for launching or landing aircraft other than airplanes (balloons, hang gliders, etc.) may be permitted on a case-by-case basis through the appropriate permit process. The Yarnell Hang Gliding launch area is discussed in other sections of this plan.
- f. Area closures to access and travel methods may be enacted where travel is determine to be inconsistent with the recreation management zone, harming resources, or failing to achieve the objectives of the plan.
- g. Touring routes and trail systems, both motorized and non-motorized, are a priority and will be addressed through activity (implementation) level planning. Proposed actions that may effect proposed touring routes and trail systems will be evaluated and adjusted when possible to avoid impacts. Examples of priority routes and trail systems include the Maricopa County Regional Trail System and long distance vehicle touring routes with local and regional significance.
- h. Administrative and other authorized use will be approved on a case-by-case basis (see decision of administrative and emergency access below).
- i. Temporary access and use restrictions may be enacted when needed to protect resources or public health and safety.

PM<sub>10</sub> Non-attainment Area Administrative TMA:

- a. All General TMA prescriptions apply.
- b. The areas described in 40 CFR 81.303 or subsequent regulation or policy as PM<sub>10</sub> air quality non-attainment areas will be managed for compliance with EPA and County standards and other applicable standards to maintain air quality. Dust mitigation measures may be implemented including, but not limited to, speed limits, adding dust reducing agents to disturbed areas, seasonal closure, or year round closure.
- c. Management units affected in part or whole are: Castle Hot Springs, Hassayampa.