

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Arizona Strip District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages public lands in the northern portions of Coconino and Mohave counties, Arizona, north and west of the Colorado River. On January 11, 2000, President William J. Clinton issued Presidential Proclamation 7265, which established Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument (Parashant). On November 9, 2000, Presidential Proclamation 7374 established Vermilion Cliffs National Monument (Vermilion). As dictated by the presidential proclamations, these two Monuments are to be managed under individual management plans. This leaves BLM-administered lands in the Arizona Strip District not within either of the Monuments, referred to as the Arizona Strip Field Office (FO), that also requires separate management direction, which is provided in this Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP).

The designation of Parashant and Vermilion as National Monuments dictated the need for a revised management plan for the remaining 1.68 million acres of non-monument public lands administered by the Arizona Strip FO. This is because access to the Monuments, for the most part, lies across Arizona Strip FO lands, and some of the uses that were formerly allowed and permitted on Monuments lands, such as fuelwood and Christmas tree cutting or mineral materials permits (for sand and gravel or landscaping rock removal), can now occur only on Arizona Strip FO lands. As a result, this RMP, the Arizona Strip FO Approved RMP (Approved RMP), has been prepared by the Arizona Strip District of the BLM and revises the Arizona Strip District RMP (BLM 1992, as amended). It is necessary to guide management actions for the Arizona Strip FO by providing a set of decisions outlining management and creating a framework for future planning and decision making.

Under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, the BLM is directed to manage public lands on the basis of multiple use and "in a manner that will protect the quality of scenic, historic, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resources, and archaeological values." The term "multiple use" refers to the "harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment." Multiple use involves managing an area for various benefits, recognizing that the establishment of land use priorities and exclusive uses in certain areas is necessary to ensure that multiple uses can occur harmoniously across a particular landscape.

Along with FLPMA, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and other mandates provide the direction for the preparation of an RMP for the Arizona Strip FO. As mentioned above, the purpose of this Approved RMP is to provide both a set of decisions

outlining management direction and to create a framework for future planning and decision making. Its scope is necessarily broad since it is a general framework document that will guide the overall management of activities within the Arizona Strip FO. As in the case of any RMP, it is expected that there will be a future need for subsequent and more detailed planning, which will focus on specific geographic areas or management issues. Further NEPA documents will be written to analyze and implement decisions that are not fully addressed in this Approved RMP. In each subsequent activity plan and NEPA document, the BLM will include a description of the desired future conditions of the land, resources involved, analysis of potential impacts, and an explanation regarding how the proposed activities, as well as reasonable alternatives, would contribute to attaining those conditions.

PLANNING AREA AND MAP

The Arizona Strip FO encompasses roughly 1.98 million acres located between the two Monuments in both Coconino and Mohave Counties: 1,679,896 acres of BLM-administered lands, 170,165 acres of Arizona State Trust lands, and 130,962 acres of private lands (see Map 1.1). The Arizona Strip FO also contains 41 acres of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands that make up the Tanglefoot Work Area east of Fredonia, Arizona. The communities of Fredonia, Littlefield, Beaver Dam, Scenic, Desert Springs, Arvada, Cane Beds, Colorado City, and Centennial, Arizona, are located on enclaves of private lands within the Arizona Strip FO, with the larger communities of St. George, Washington, Big Water, Hurricane, and Kanab, Utah and Mesquite, Nevada directly across state lines. Since it includes several communities within the Arizona Strip FO that are linked via U.S. 89A, Arizona 389, and Interstate 15, and large portions of the area are easily accessible via a number of unpaved county roads, the Arizona Strip FO receives the most human use when compared to the two Monuments. In addition to recreation and ranching, the Arizona Strip FO also provides for the mining of uranium, gypsum, sand and gravel, picture stone, and flagstone.

In 1984, Congress designated 80,629 acres of BLM lands within the Arizona Strip FO as wilderness. These wilderness areas include Cottonwood Point, Beaver Dam Mountains, the northern unit of the Paiute, and a portion of Kanab Creek. Another 3,652 acres of the Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness exists directly across the state line in Utah. Most of Kanab Creek Wilderness is administered by the USFS. The southern half of Paiute Wilderness is in Parashant. The Canaan Mountain Wilderness Study Area (WSA) adjoins the Cottonwood Point Wilderness to the north in Utah. Most of Grand Canyon National Park that is contiguous to the Arizona Strip FO is proposed for wilderness designation, while some portions of the St. George FO of the BLM are also recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

Map 1.1. Arizona Strip FO Location Map

ISSUES ADDRESSED

Publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Arizona Strip FO on April 24, 2002, initiated a 90-day public scoping and comment period. Following this, the BLM published a newsletter and held 11 open houses in 2002 to encourage public input on the future management of the Arizona Strip FO. Ten cooperating agencies and a dozen other Federal and state agencies provided information and input into development of the RMP/EIS. From all this input, the BLM developed four conceptual alternatives that were presented to the public via newsletters and five open houses. These preliminary alternative public meetings were held in 2003. A 90-day public comment period on the Draft Plan/EIS was initiated on December 16, 2005 followed by release of the Proposed Plan/Final EIS (FEIS) on March 2, 2007. Information from these meetings, the cooperating agencies and interested state and Federal agencies, and the public was then used to develop this Approved RMP.

ISSUES USED TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES

One of the most important outcomes of the scoping process was the identification of significant issues that were addressed in the Approved RMP. For planning purposes, an “issue” is defined as a matter of controversy, dispute, or general concern over resource management activities, the environment, or land uses. In essence, issues help determine what decisions were made and analyzed in the Proposed Plan/FEIS.

Based on the scoping comments received and their subsequent analysis and evaluation, five major planning issues were identified as being within the scope of this planning effort, which were then addressed and analyzed in the associated EIS. All of these issues center on the larger question of just how much human activity should be allowed while still providing the mandated level of resource protection. The five issues are presented below, followed by a short description of why each is significant and the management decisions that they required.

Issue 1: How will transportation and access be managed?

Transportation and access (i.e., travel management) emerged from the scoping process as the primary issue for the public, and is closely tied to the other issues addressed. A network of routes currently exists throughout the Arizona Strip FO. Some people believe closing a number of routes and limiting vehicular access would provide the best protection of resources in the Arizona Strip FO. Others think all existing routes should remain open for recreational and resource uses.

While many route inventories for the main transportation routes in the sub-regions of the Arizona Strip FO were completed during development of this Approved RMP (see Map 2.21), some

inventories of routes in the field office remain to be completed and were outside the scope of this planning effort. The inventory and subsequent route evaluation for the Ferry Swale sub-region, that portion of the Arizona Strip FO between Vermilion and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (NRA), was completed and the routes within that sub-region are designated with the signing of the Record of Decision (ROD) that accompanies this Approved RMP.

Once the route inventories are completed for the remainder of the sub-regions in the Arizona Strip FO, route evaluations and eventual designations will then be conducted following the same procedure used for designating routes in Parashant, Vermilion, and the Ferry Swale area. Public participation will be a crucial part of the route evaluation process for the Arizona Strip FO, just as it was for the Ferry Swale area and the Monuments.

Decisions about restricting or improving access are addressed in Chapter 2 of this Approved RMP. Proposed travel management implementation decisions and associated maps for the Ferry Swale area are also detailed in Chapter 2.

Issue 2: How will areas with wilderness characteristics be managed?

A number of individuals and groups voiced their concern for protecting areas with wilderness characteristics in the Arizona Strip FO. Many brought up the concept of additional wilderness designations during the public scoping period. Some felt that additional wilderness designations in the Arizona Strip FO would be the best way to protect resources. Others were not in favor of additional wilderness designations because they felt such actions would prevent the majority of visitors from accessing the remote sections of the field office, especially those that enjoy motorized forms of recreation. Such arguments, however, are outside the scope of this Approved RMP as only Congress has the authority to designate new wilderness areas.

The BLM historically has had the authority to inventory, assess, and recommend suitable public lands as WSAs; however, recent guidance clarified that this authority expired in 1991. With the passage of FLPMA in 1976, the BLM had 15 years to inventory and identify lands suitable for designation as wilderness by Congress. That inventory and review was completed in 1991 and submitted to Congress in 1993. Many of the WSAs identified Bureau-wide are still managed today under an Interim Management Policy (IMP). With the passage of the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984, any WSAs in Arizona not included as part of a statutory wilderness by Congress were “released” by Congress from the IMP. The Arizona Strip FO contains no WSAs from that 15-year period.

In 2001, the BLM issued new policies in the Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedure Handbook (H-6310-1). The handbook reiterated the BLM’s authority to inventory, assess, and designate public lands as WSAs. These lands would then be available at any time for Congress to consider for designation as wilderness areas. The state of Utah and others challenged the

authority of the Department of the Interior (DOI)/BLM to designate and manage new (post 1993) WSAs as wildernesses, arguing that BLM completed the wilderness suitability process for public lands with the submission of recommendations to Congress in 1993. In the ensuing Utah Wilderness Settlement (April 2003), the DOI/BLM agreed that FLPMA does not allow identification or protection of new WSAs after 1993. In 2003, the BLM formally rescinded the Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures Handbook. Therefore, in this planning process, additional BLM lands cannot be considered or recommended for designation as WSAs.

In September 2003, the BLM provided new guidance in Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2003-274 and IM 2003-275, Change 1. Specifically, IM 2003-274, Implementation of the Settlement of Utah v. Norton Regarding Wilderness Study, applied the terms of the Utah Wilderness Settlement Bureau-wide. Additionally, IM 2003-275, Change 1, Consideration of Wilderness Characteristics in Land Use Plans, provides guidance for planners and the public for assessing areas that may exist in essentially natural condition, or landscapes where the opportunities to experience solitude or engage in primitive and unconfined recreation may be outstanding. IM 2003-275, Change 1, also provides guidance for making decisions about maintaining these values where they are reasonably present or have sufficient value and need, and are practical to manage. The “non-impairment standard” of FLPMA Section 603 and the BLM IMP for WSAs are not applied as measures to protect naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation.

Issue 3: How will Arizona Strip FO resources be protected?

There are valuable natural and cultural resources within the Arizona Strip FO in need of protection. Decisions for protecting these resources, including additional Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) for protecting natural and cultural resources, are identified in this Approved RMP.

Issue 4: How will livestock grazing be addressed?

The scoping process identified livestock grazing as an issue for a number of people. Comments ranged from eliminating livestock grazing in many parts of the Arizona Strip FO to supporting all grazing activities in the field office. Those in the middle supported eliminating livestock grazing only in environmentally sensitive areas.

All land uses, including livestock grazing, were incorporated into the concept of overall environmental health. Modifications to current grazing systems are detailed in Chapter 2.

Issue 5: How will people’s recreation activities be managed?

Lands in the Arizona Strip FO are used for a variety of recreational activities, including exploring, sightseeing, hiking, backpacking, camping, hunting, off-highway vehicle (OHV) use

on designated routes or “open OHV areas,” and mountain bike riding. Given growth projections for communities in the southwestern U.S. and the increased participation of people in recreation pursuits on public lands over time, ineffective management of visitor activities is recognized as potentially having profound environmental effects on Arizona Strip FO lands. These possible effects, along with potential user conflicts, make appropriate management of these activities crucial to protecting Arizona Strip FO resources.

During the scoping process, the public frequently referred to the important relationship between the remoteness of the Arizona Strip FO and the quality of visitor experiences. The special recreation management areas and recreation management zones in Chapter 2 of the Approved RMP detail how land managers decided where and what types of recreation-tourism markets should be targeted for more structured types of recreation opportunities. They also decided what kinds of custodial management are needed for unstructured, dispersed recreation found in the extensive recreation management areas.

Decisions, such as where and what kind of interpretation and signage to provide, how to minimize potential user conflicts, and what types of recreation settings should be maintained in specific areas, are important elements addressed in Chapter 2. For identified markets, Chapter 2 includes more specific decisions for various recreation management zones that address maintaining or enhancing the public benefits, experiences, and activities and settings each zone provides.

ISSUES ADDRESSED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE FEIS

In addition to the five issues identified during public scoping, the planning team identified two management concerns that also need to be addressed regarding restoration of degraded ecosystems and consideration of the local communities and human use in the Arizona Strip FO, which are presented below. These concerns are presented below followed by a short description of why each is significant and the management decisions that support them.

Management Concern 1: How will degraded ecosystems be restored?

Restoration of degraded ecosystems is an important management concern. Disruption of the natural fire regime has caused the degradation of ecosystems within the Arizona Strip FO (e.g., grasslands are being overrun by shrubs and ponderosa pine forests are unnaturally dense). The use of such techniques as mechanized thinning and prescribed fire can help restore degraded ecosystems. The actions to assist in restoring these degraded ecosystems are detailed in Chapter 2 and the possible vegetation treatment tools and methods are described in Appendix E.

Management concern 2: How will the human factors in the Arizona Strip FO be considered?

While the focus of this RMP is on the area's natural and cultural resources and on the uses of these resources, the human or social factors were also considered. While largely uninhabited, the Arizona Strip FO surrounds some small communities dependent upon public lands for deriving certain economic, personal, family, community, and environmental benefits. These communities include Beaver Dam, Colorado City, Fredonia, Littlefield, Desert Springs, and Scenic, Arizona. Other small and mid-sized communities and one urban area located just outside the field office boundaries are also closely connected to the public lands in Arizona. These include Page, Kaibab Village, and Moccasin, Arizona; Mesquite, Nevada; and Big Water, Hildale, Hurricane, Washington, Kanab, and St. George, Utah.

Public safety is also a concern. Sections in Chapter 2 on health and safety; recreation; and air, soil, and water identify management approaches to assist with public safety.

Rapid population growth on private lands in the region will also affect the natural and cultural resources and future uses on the Arizona Strip. Decisions identified in Chapter 2 address actions necessary to maintain or protect the resources and uses in the Arizona Strip FO. Monitoring and adaptive management will assist the BLM in modifying some uses, if conditions exceed acceptable levels. Management approaches to be used in the Arizona Strip FO are detailed in Chapter 2.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BUT NOT FURTHER ANALYZED

While all issues identified during the public scoping process were considered by the BLM, not all were further analyzed. These include issues that were beyond the scope of the EIS, mainly because they did not meet the purpose and need of the Approved RMP. Other issues are not further analyzed in this Approved RMP because they are addressed through administrative or policy action.

Issues Beyond the Scope of the EIS

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidelines for implementing NEPA require Federal agencies to analyze all "reasonable" alternatives that substantially meet the purpose and need for this Approved RMP. The purpose of this Approved RMP is to provide for management of the Arizona Strip FO within the provisions of the proclamation and to meet the requirements of FLPMA and other laws and regulations.

The following specific alternatives, or actions that could be components of alternatives, were suggested but not analyzed or carried forward because they did not fulfill the requirements and needs of this Approved RMP.

Recommendations for BLM Wilderness Study Areas

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition and members of the public provided recommendations on WSAs in the Arizona Strip FO. In addition, the planning team was working toward making recommendations for WSAs early in the planning process. However, guidance issued in 2003 clarified that the BLM's authority to designate WSAs expired in 1993, resulting in the termination in any attempts to designate new WSAs. The BLM has, however, assessed wilderness characteristics (naturalness, solitude, and primitive recreation) on BLM-administered lands in the field office and has management actions regarding where, how, and to what extent these characteristics will be managed in the Approved RMP (see Chapter 2 and previous discussion in this chapter on pages 1-5 and 1-6).

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition also provided comments and proposed management prescriptions on areas managed to maintain wilderness characteristics. Including this information of these prescriptions would be contrary to BLM policy as outlined in BLM IM 2003-274 and IM 2003-275 and more recent guidance in IM AZ-2005-007, Guidelines for achieving consistency in ongoing and future Arizona Land Use Planning efforts.

PLANNING CRITERIA/LEGISLATIVE CONSTRAINTS

Bureau of Land Management planning regulations (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1610) require preparation of planning criteria to guide development of all RMPs. Planning criteria provide the principles that guide and direct the development of the Approved RMP and influence all aspects of the planning process, including inventory and data collection, alternative development, and impact analysis, as well as the selection of a preferred alternative, followed by the selection of the Proposed Plan and the final selection of the Approved RMP. In effect, planning criteria ensure the tailoring of plans to the identified issues and the avoidance of unnecessary data collection and analysis. The basis of determining planning criteria includes applicable laws, agency guidance, public comment, data analysis, professional judgment, and coordination with other Federal, state, and local governments and American Indian tribes.

The planning criteria used in developing the Approved RMP for the Arizona Strip FO are as follows:

- This Approved RMP was completed in compliance with FLPMA. Provisions of the Endangered Species Act, NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Clean Water

Act, and other Federal laws and executive orders and management policy requirements were also met.

- This Approved RMP and associated ROD includes data and maps that provide information on the Arizona Strip FO.
- Valid existing management decisions from previous plans, if appropriate, may be carried forward into this Approved RMP or subsequent activity and/or implementation plans. Decisions from the following plans were considered and may be modified or amended, as appropriate: Arizona Strip RMP (BLM 1992) as amended, Mojave Desert Plan Amendment (BLM 1998), Paiute and Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness Management Plan (BLM 1990), Cottonwood Point Wilderness Management Plan (BLM 1991), Habitat Management Plans, and the Arizona Strip Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (BLM and Arizona Game and Fish Department [AGFD] 2001).
- The Approved RMP is consistent with officially approved or adopted resource-related plans, policies, and programs of other Federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes so long as such plans, policies, and programs are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal laws and regulations.
- Terms and conditions and reasonable and prudent alternatives from all applicable Final Biological Opinions will be implemented. Conservation measures are included.
- Cooperating agency status was encouraged for affected Federal, State, and local governments and Indian tribes. The environmental analysis input and proposals of Cooperating Agencies was used to the maximum extent possible consistent with BLM responsibilities (43 CFR 1501.6 (a) (2)).
- An adaptive management approach will be followed to achieve desired outcomes. Monitoring outlined in the Approved RMP will be used to determine if desired outcomes at the land use plan level are being achieved. If not, implementation actions and/or allowable uses will be modified to achieve land use plan objectives.
- The Approved RMP emphasizes ecological restoration and preservation of natural and cultural resources.
- The statewide land health standards, established by the Arizona Resource Advisory Council and approved by the Secretary of Interior, will be used to evaluate all surface disturbing activities on public lands where BLM administers grazing privileges.

- This Approved RMP does not identify any public lands for designation as WSAs. However, the BLM has identified lands that will be managed to maintained wilderness characteristics so that such lands remain in a natural condition and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined types of recreation activities.
- Arizona Strip FO lands were designated as “open,” “limited” or “closed” to motorized and mechanized vehicle uses. As the availability of route inventory data allowed, only those decisions concerning specific routes in the “limited” areas of the Ferry Swale area were made in the land use plan. Decisions about specific routes for other areas in the Arizona Strip FO with insufficient inventory will be deferred until route inventory is completed. A final travel management network for the Arizona Strip FO will be achieved within 5 years of the ROD.
- This Approved RMP directly involved American Indian tribal governments by providing strategies for the protection of recognized sacred and traditional uses and sites.
- The lifestyles of area residents, including the activities of grazing, hunting, other resource uses, and recreation, are recognized in the Approved RMP. Much of the area’s historic value is connected with ranching operations, both past and present.
- The Approved RMP does not address statutory wilderness boundary adjustments.
- This Approved RMP sets forth a framework for managing recreation and commercial activities in order to produce a variety of beneficial outcomes gained through safe and enjoyable visitor experiences and activities that require appropriate natural and community landscapes.
- This Approved RMP used the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Management to ensure appropriate grazing practices are followed to protect watershed integrity and habitats for plant and wildlife species on public lands.
- The Approved RMP considered public input, interests, and values; past and present uses of public land and adjacent land; public benefits of providing goods and services; environmental impacts; social and economic values; public safety; and ecosystem restoration.

PLANNING PROCESS

This Approved RMP was developed in conjunction with the Approved Plans for Parashant and Vermilion. The overall planning process began in February 2001 when the BLM formed an interdisciplinary planning team, based in St. George, Utah (see Appendix P for the list of preparers). Since the NPS manages a portion of Parashant, the NPS acted as a joint-lead agency with the BLM in writing the Approved Plan for that Monument. While the history of the

planning process involves the other two planning areas (Parashant and Vermilion), the discussion here focuses solely on the development of the Approved RMP for the Arizona Strip FO.

The interdisciplinary planning team for the creation of this Approved RMP was comprised of BLM staff and resource specialists. The planning team met numerous times beginning in 2001 to gather background information, identify goals and objectives, examine resource issues, develop alternatives, and write/review the Draft Plan/EIS and Proposed Plan/FEIS for this Approved RMP. In addition, a series of Community Based Partnership and Stewardship courses were held in northern Arizona and southern Utah in which the public provided early information and communication regarding the Arizona Strip FO. The NOI to prepare an EIS for this Approved RMP for the Arizona Strip FO (as well as the other two planning areas) was published in the *Federal Register* on April 24, 2002. Following this, the BLM hosted a series of public open houses in 2002 and 2003 to solicit public comment on the scoping issues and preliminary alternatives for the Draft Plan/EIS.

The Draft Plan/EIS presented a No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and four action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E). Alternative E was BLM's Preferred Alternative because it balanced human use/influence with resource protection. The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft Plan/EIS was published on November 16, 2005, initiating a 90-day public review. The BLM also held a series of open house meetings to solicit public comment on the Draft Plan/EIS in January of 2006.

The Proposed Plan/FEIS, published in January 2007, responded to public comment and cooperative agency review of the Draft Plan/EIS through numerous revisions and modifications, as well as provided direct responses to comments. In this fashion, the BLM's Preferred Alternative in the Draft Plan/EIS was modified and presented as the Proposed Plan (Alternative E) in the Proposed Plan/FEIS. The NOA for the Proposed Plan/FEIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 2, 2007, which opened the 30-day public protest period in accordance with 43 CFR Part 1610.5-2. The BLM received seven protest letters during this period. The BLM Director addressed all protests without making significant changes to the Proposed Plan; however, the protests received did lead to minor adjustments, corrections, and clarifications were made as a result of the protests received. This Approved RMP is one of three management plans that were developed from the Proposed Plan/FEIS that guides future management actions in their respective units.

RELATIONSHIP TO BLM POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS

This section describes the relationship of this Approved RMP to other BLM policies and programs, the role of collaboration efforts in the planning process, the consideration of related plans (state, local, and tribal), and policies and decisions that have affected the planning process.

Under NEPA, Federal agencies are mandated to prepare EISs for major Federal actions. This Approved RMP conforms to the CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA requirements (40 CFR 1500-1508).

The BLM planning process, which is guided by NEPA, FLPMA and the planning guidance contained in 43 CFR 1600, involves an interdisciplinary approach and provides opportunities for public involvement and interagency coordination.

Management plans ensure that the BLM manages public lands in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in FLPMA, under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. As required by FLPMA, public lands must be managed in a manner that:

- a) Protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water, and cultural resources and values
- b) Where appropriate, preserves and protects certain public lands in their natural condition and provides food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals
- c) Provides for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use by encouraging collaboration and public participation through the planning process.

In addition, public lands must be managed in a manner that recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources for minerals, food, timber, and fiber from public lands.

In addition to the Federal mandates and guidelines mentioned above, the planning team considered a number of existing management plans, programmatic documents, and standards and guidelines in the preparation of this Approved RMP. These include the following:

Land Use Plans and Amendments

- Arizona Strip District RMP (BLM 1992)
- Arizona Strip RMP Mojave Desert Amendment (BLM 1998)
- Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management Finding of No Significant Impact and Environmental Assessment (BLM 2003)

Legislative EIS

- Arizona Statewide Wild and Scenic Rivers Legislative EIS (BLM 1994)

Activity (Implementation) Level Plans

- Shivwits Resource Area Implementation Plan for the Arizona Strip District Approved RMP (BLM 1992)
- Vermilion Resource Area Implementation Plan for the Arizona Strip District Approved RMP (BLM 1992)

- Paiute and Beaver Dam Mountains Wilderness Management Plan (BLM 1990)
- Cottonwood Point Wilderness Management Plan (BLM 1991)
- Arizona Strip Desert Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (BLM and AGFD 2001)
- Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) Final Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2002)
- Virgin River Resource Management and Recovery Program (USFWS 2000)
- Biological Opinion for the Arizona Strip RMP-Mojave Amendment (USFWS 1998)
- Recovery Plan for the California Condor (USFWS 1996)
- Virgin River Fishes Recovery Plan (USFWS 1995)
- Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan (USFWS 1994)

Programmatic NEPA Documents

- BLM Vegetation Treatment FEIS (BLM 1991)

Policy and Rules

- Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (BLM 1997)

These documents were examined not only to assure appropriate integration and compliance, but also to identify information still appropriate for inclusion in this RMP and/or decisions that are still valid and could be carried forward. Activity plans that have been tiered off these plans have also been considered in this planning effort.

COLLABORATION

A variety of Federal, state, county, local, and tribal groups played a vital role in this planning process by attending meetings, providing databases and general information, conducting peer reviews, and assisting with the development of the management alternatives presented in this Approved RMP.

Intergovernmental, Interagency, and Tribal Relationships

The CEQ requirements contained in 40 CFR 1501.6 and 1508.5 mandate that Federal agencies responsible for preparing NEPA analysis and documentation do so “in cooperation with state and local governments” and other agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise (42 USC 4331(a), 4332(2)). In support of this mandate, the BLM planning team invited a broad range of local, county, state, tribal, and Federal agencies to attend a series of meetings to develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) that would establish cooperating agency status with the BLM. Cooperating agency status offers the opportunity for interested agencies to assume additional roles and responsibilities beyond the collaborative planning processes of attending public meetings and reviewing and commenting on planning documents. Although they are

time-limited documents, MOUs describe the roles and responsibilities of the BLM and the cooperating agencies during the planning process. Invitations to become formal cooperators were sent to more than 200 agencies, communities, and tribes.

Ten cooperating agencies worked with the BLM to provide verbal and/or written comments during the planning process, which helped to develop this Approved RMP. These cooperating agencies were concerned with the management of the resources and uses in the Arizona Strip FO and provided planning information on various planning topics, including Geographic Information System data. The following counties, communities, tribe, and state agencies signed MOUs to be cooperating agencies with the BLM for this planning effort:

- Coconino County, Arizona
- Mohave County, Arizona
- Kane County, Utah
- Washington County, Utah
- Fredonia, Arizona
- Colorado City, Arizona
- Kaibab Paiute Tribe
- AGFD
- U.S. Federal Highway Administration
- Arizona Department of Transportation

In addition, representatives from other interested Federal and state agencies and one tribe were provided planning information and were given the opportunity to comment on preliminary drafts of the RMP/EIS. Some attended the cooperating agency meetings and provided verbal and/or written comments. These entities were as follows:

- Arizona State Land Department
- NPS: Grand Canyon National Park, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Pipe Spring National Monument
- BLM: Kanab Field Office, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, St. George Field Office, Las Vegas Field Office
- Department of Defense, Air Force Regional Environmental Office, San Francisco, California
- USFWS, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, Flagstaff and Phoenix, Arizona
- USFS; North Kaibab Ranger District, Kaibab National Forest
- Hopi Tribe

The planning team also initiated consultation with American Indian tribes and bands who have oral traditions and historical or cultural concerns relating to the Arizona Strip FO, or who are

documented as having occupied or used portions of the field office during prehistoric or historic times. In January 2002, the BLM initiated consultation with 14 tribes or bands, which included five bands within the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah and six chapters within the Navajo Nation. Of these, six tribes and six chapters use or have concerns regarding the resources of the Arizona Strip FO. All of the consulted tribes or bands currently live on or near the Arizona Strip or have historic ties to the area. Some continue to use the resources in the Arizona Strip FO. These tribes, bands, and chapters include:

- Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
- Colorado River Indian Tribe
- Havasupai Indian Tribe
- Hopi Tribe
- Hualapai Indian Tribe
- Kaibab Band of Paiutes
- Las Vegas Indian Center
- Las Vegas Paiute Tribe
- Moapa Band of Paiutes
- Navajo Nation (Cameron, Coppermine, Bodaway/Gap, Tuba City, LeChee, and Coalmine Chapters)
- Pahrump Band of Paiutes
- Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah (Indian Peak, Cedar, Shivwits, Koosharem, and Kanosh Band of Paiutes)
- Pueblo of Zuni
- San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe

Tribal members expressed concern for the natural and cultural resources in the Arizona Strip FO, access to and use of these resources, opportunities to expand reservation boundaries onto public lands, and management of these resources on public lands. Kaibab Paiute band members expressed concern about access and subsequent vandalism on the reservation from public lands.

The Bureau of Applied Research and Anthropology at the University of Arizona in Tucson conducted a Southern Paiute ethnographic and place name study on the Arizona Strip in conjunction with this planning effort (Stoffle et al. 2004, 2005).

The BLM administers livestock grazing and minerals in Glen Canyon NRA, subject to Glen Canyon NRA policy and enabling legislation (see discussion below on administration of livestock grazing within the NRA). The planning team met several times with Glen Canyon NRA staff and received input from them regarding the management of livestock grazing, minerals, and specific route designations near Glen Canyon NRA boundaries.

Other Stakeholder Relationships

Various other groups also played a vital role in the planning process. Their participation was informal and infrequent. One of these groups, the Arizona Strip Alliance, was formed in the late 1990s in response to the early discussions regarding the establishment of the Monuments on the Arizona Strip. Local communities, counties, and agency representatives from southern Utah and northern Arizona united in order to plan on a regional scale. Employees from BLM's planning team attended Alliance meetings and kept members up-to-date on current planning efforts.

The Arizona Wilderness Coalition, Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Grand Canyon Wildlands Council, and Grand Canyon Trust are other groups that played an important role in the planning process. Grand Canyon Trust acquired the Kane and Two Mile Ranches midway through the planning effort and provided recommendations on future management of livestock grazing and the natural and cultural resources within the Arizona Strip FO. These groups all provided major contributions in the development of this Approved RMP including public scoping comments recommending a transportation plan and additional WSAs and ACECs, information on the effects of transportation systems on wildlife, and other planning and resource information and recommendations.

In order to address the specific needs of wildlife, fish, and special status plants and animals, a group of biologists and botanists met to develop specific guidance and direction to meet those needs for this Approved RMP. Team participants included staff from AGFD, USFWS, Lake Mead NRA, North Kaibab Ranger District of the USFS, and Arizona Strip District of the BLM. On occasion, representatives from the Nature Conservancy and the Grand Canyon Wildlands Council also participated. Major contributions from this team included the development of a comprehensive resource assessment for wildlife and special status species, background information on the biology of a variety of species affected by the Approved RMP, and a set of proactive decisions appropriate to each of the alternatives. The team also provided comments and recommendations on route designations, ACECs, vegetation management, and other sections of the Approved RMP.

ADMINISTRATION OF GRAZING WITHIN GLEN CANYON NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Glen Canyon NRA was established on October 27, 1972, under Public Law (P.L.) 92–593. In establishing Glen Canyon NRA, Congress directed that, “The administration of...grazing leases within the recreation area shall be by the BLM. The same policies followed by the BLM in issuing and administering...grazing leases on other lands under its jurisdiction shall be followed in regard to lands within the boundaries of the recreation area, subject to provisions of Section 3(a) and 4 of this Act.” The BLM administers grazing on the NRA subject to this enabling legislation and in accordance with the NRA General Management Plan, Grazing Management

Plan, and interagency agreements and MOUs. The Arizona Strip FO administers livestock grazing on a portion of one allotment that occurs on public land and within Glen Canyon NRA: the Lees Ferry (Soap Creek) Allotment.

RELATED PLANS

Title II, Section 202 of FLPMA provides guidance for the BLM's planning process to coordinate planning efforts with American Indian tribes, other Federal departments and agencies, and agencies of state and local governments. To accomplish these directives, the BLM has kept abreast of state and local plans, assured that consideration is given to such plans, and worked with these other entities to avoid inconsistencies among their various plans. Section 202 of FLPMA goes on to state in Subsection (c)(9) that "[L]and use plans of the Secretary under this section shall be consistent with state and local plans to the maximum extent he [sic] finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of this Act."

In keeping with the above mandates, members of the planning team reviewed the Federal, county, and municipal plans listed below for consistency:

- Coconino County, Arizona, Comprehensive Plan (Coconino County 2003)
- Kane County, Utah, General Plan (Kane County 1998)
- Mohave County, Arizona, Comprehensive Plan (Mohave County 2003)
- Washington County, Utah, General Plan (Washington County 1994)
- Glen Canyon NRA RMP (1986)
- Glen Canyon NRA GMP (1979, reprinted 1991)
- Grand Canyon National Park General Management Plan (NPS 1995)
- Colorado River Management Plan (NPS 2006)
- Kaibab National Forest Land Management Plan (USFS 1996)
- Las Vegas BLM RMP (BLM 1998)
- Dixie Resource Area RMP (BLM 1998)
- Town of Colorado City, Arizona, General Plan (HDR 2002)
- St. George, Utah, General Plan (St. George City 2002)
- Fredonia, Arizona, General Plan (Fredonia Town 1994)
- Mesquite, Nevada, Master Plan (1994) and Updates (2007)
- AGFD Strategic Plan (AGFD 2006)

OVERALL VISION

A vision, as used in this context, is an ideal to strive for which is not quantifiable or set to a specific time frame. A goal is a statement of a desired outcome that often has quantifiable measures and established time frames for achievement.

The vision for the Arizona Strip FO is to retain, where it currently exists, the present natural and socially remote nature of the field office while still allowing compatible human use to occur within “the place where the West stays wild.”

SIGNIFICANCE AND MISSION STATEMENTS

The BLM has developed significance and mission statements for the Arizona Strip FO based on management principals identified by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976, as amended. Significance statements address what makes the area unique while mission statements reflect ideal conditions that managers should strive to attain.

Significance

A variety of resources on the Arizona Strip FO lands is significant from a regional and national perspective.

The Arizona Strip FO contains a long and rich human history spanning at least 12,000 years. These lands contain irreplaceable archaeological resources that are significant because of their good condition, scientific potential, and historic and cultural importance. Opportunities exist for study, preservation, and interpretation of these resources.

Arizona Strip FO lands are rich in historic resources from the past 150 years such as ranch structures and corrals, fences, water tanks, mines, and historic routes. These structures exist in nearly their original context. They provide a unique opportunity for public interpretation, appreciation, and education of the historical and social significance of these early lifestyles.

These lands contain remote, wide-open landscapes of incredible beauty, with unique geologic features that have remained essentially unchanged through time.

The Arizona Strip FO is located at the junction of two physiographic units (Basin and Range and Colorado Plateau) and three floristic provinces (the Colorado Plateau, Mojave Desert, and Great Basin).

The area includes fragile and healthy ecosystems ranging from the Mojave Desert to pinyon-juniper and ponderosa pine forests. Opportunities exist to restore vital habitats and study ecosystems.

Much of the area includes broad expanses of pinyon-juniper woodlands that provide opportunities for harvest of woodland products such as firewood, posts, and Christmas trees. Opportunities also exist for collection of native seeds and plants.

The area supports sustainable populations of a full range of native wildlife and plant species. The majority of the special status species in the Arizona Strip FO is on the edge of their geographic range and surviving in one of the largest remaining blocks of relatively undisturbed habitat available to them.

Recreation opportunities abound that produce a variety of personal, familial, community, economic, and environmental benefits from visitors enjoying outdoor experiences while engaged in activities such as hiking, biking, backpacking, camping, sightseeing, driving for pleasure, hunting, wildlife viewing, geo-caching, and OHV driving and exploring .

Livestock grazing and related ranching activities occur over most of Arizona Strip FO lands. Traditional ways of life are preserved, as well as economic benefits to local communities.

The area contains broad expanses of pinyon-juniper- and sage-covered plateaus and tributary canyons leading to the north rim of the Grand Canyon.

Much of the Arizona Strip FO is open to mineral development. Uranium deposits are found in breccia pipe features across the Arizona Strip. The lands are also suitable for gypsum, sand and gravel, picture stone, and flagstone collection.

High quality, night sky viewscapes occur across the Arizona Strip FO.

Unique desert riparian areas offer places of high biological diversity and a rich variety of native wildlife species. Other ecosystems also offer a rich variety of native wildlife species.

These lands support ecological processes that provide opportunities to study physical and natural systems.

The Arizona Strip FO offers opportunities for community expansion and other development in and adjacent to local communities.

The lands contain remote landscapes, much of which remain essentially unchanged through time and exemplify “the place where the West stays wild.”

Mission

The goal of Arizona Strip FO management is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands and resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, with multiple uses being the primary emphasis of management. This will be accomplished in a

cooperative and cost-effective manner by working jointly with state, county, local and Federal agencies and with tribes, communities, universities, researchers, and the interested public.

Remote natural and social settings are managed to preserve unspoiled landscapes, where they exist, while providing opportunities for people, communities, and the environment to benefit from visitors experiencing adventure, beautiful vistas, retreat from the pressures of modern life, and a sense of discovery through a variety of appropriate and sustainable backcountry activities.

Another goal is to serve the needs of the American people under principles of multiple use and sustained yield (FLPMA Sec. 302 (a), see also FLPMA Sec. 102(7)). Management balances recreational, community, commercial, scientific, historical, and cultural interests with long-term protection of renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include diverse vegetative communities and unique habitats with timber, minerals, watersheds, fish, wildlife, and wilderness areas encompassing a host of natural, scenic, scientific, recreational, and cultural values. In managing and protecting these resources, the BLM also recognizes public needs for energy, defense, minerals, food, communication, wood products, rights-of-way, community lands, forage, and fiber.

The Arizona Strip FO's "Blueprint for the Future" consists of six goals:

1. Maintain healthy ecosystems, with emphasis on recovery and protection of special status species and preservation of cultural values, providing for economic and social benefits.
2. Serve current and future publics in their use and enjoyment of the Arizona Strip FO.
3. Promote collaboration with agencies, communities, tribes, and groups.
4. Invite and support open dialogue with the public.
5. Inform and educate the public about resources and wise uses of such resources.
6. Assist the public in benefiting from safe, enjoyable experiences and activities on public lands.