

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared this *Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/FEIS) to provide direction for managing public lands administered by the Yuma Field Office (YFO) and to analyze the environmental effects resulting from implementing the alternatives addressed in this document.

The planning area extends northward along the lower Colorado River from the United States–Mexico International Boundary at San Luis, Arizona, to north of Blythe, California, and Ehrenberg, Arizona, including a narrow strip of land in Imperial and Riverside counties, California, and a portion of La Paz County, Arizona. The planning area extends east across Yuma County into western Maricopa County and south to the northern boundary of the Barry M. Goldwater Range. The planning area includes the City of Yuma, the towns of Quartzsite and Wellton, and a number of other smaller communities, and encompasses more than 1.3 million acres of BLM-administered public land, resources, and uses.

The PRMP/FEIS was prepared in compliance with BLM's planning regulations Title 43 Code of *Federal Regulations* (CFR) 1600 under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. This document also meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the *Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the NEPA* (40 CFR 1500-1508), and requirements of BLM's *NEPA Handbook* 1790-1.

This document (including the Route Inventory maps described in Chapter 2 under Travel Management) is also available on the Internet at http://www.blm.gov/az/LUP/yuma/yuma_plan.htm and on compact disc.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Currently, the YFO manages resources under portions of three different land use plans: The *Yuma District Resource Management Plan* (1987), as amended; *Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan* (1988), as amended; and *Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan* (1983), as amended. This PRMP/FEIS combines the relevant portions of those documents and updates the plan with issues and concerns identified during the scoping process. The purpose is to provide direction that will guide future land management actions for BLM-administered lands within the planning area. The PRMP/FEIS analyzes alternatives to resolve management issues, determines management objectives and actions, and establishes monitoring methods to facilitate multiple use and sustained yield management for the entire planning area.

PUBLIC SCOPING

The Notice of Intent to prepare the *Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (DRMP/DEIS) was published in the *Federal Register* on March 30, 2004. YFO held four open houses during 2004 and solicited comments using comment forms and informational flyers (distributed by mail and by hand). YFO also invited public participation in the planning process through the use of the BLM website. Prior to the DRMP/DEIS, approximately 860 comments were received from agencies, organizations, the public, and other interested stakeholders. Of the comments received, a large number concerned transportation planning and use of off-highway vehicles (OHV), recreation issues, management of habitat for threatened and endangered species and other wildlife, and management of lands with wilderness characteristics. The remaining comments were divided between other resources as listed in the Table ES-1.

Comments pertaining to transportation planning and OHV use of public lands ranged from requests that there be more OHV access to requests that more controls be placed on OHV use. Many of the comments point to the need to complete the route designation process as soon as practical.

**Table ES-1
Comments Received by Topic before the DRMP/DEIS**

General Topics	Number of Comments
Riparian/Floodplains/Wetlands	4
Soil, Water, and Air Quality	9
Vegetation Management	25
Fish and Wildlife	77
Threatened and Endangered species, and Special Status Species	36
Cultural/Paleontological/Native American Concerns	33
Fire Management	5
Hazardous Materials/Solid Waste	4
Recreation	131
Visual Resources	35
Land Tenure and Use Authorizations	53
Transportation Planning and OHV	214
Airspace	3
Grazing Use	19
Wilderness Characteristics	71
Special Area Designations	65
Socioeconomics	12
Law Enforcement/Public Safety	29
Border Issues/Undocumented Immigrants	29
Wild Horses and Burros	3
TOTAL	857

Comments on transportation planning and OHV focused on both the need to maintain motorized access and the need to protect natural and cultural resource values from OHV recreation.

Comments pertaining to recreation expressed the desire that BLM continue to provide for camping in Long-Term Visitor Areas (LTVAs) as well as dispersed areas. Other specific comments addressed the importance of wildlife viewing, hunting, and horseback riding. Other comments requested new or improved recreation facilities in specific locations.

Comments relating to habitat for threatened and endangered species and other wildlife included opinions for and against the development of new water sources on public lands. Other comments addressed the importance of habitats for Sonoran pronghorn and flat-tailed horned lizard, expressing concerns regarding fragmentation of habitat, and identifying the need for wildlife corridors.

Comments regarding lands with wilderness characteristics included a public proposal that large acreages be managed to preserve these values. Other comments suggested that no lands outside of designated Wilderness be managed to protect wilderness characteristics.

The balance of the comments addressed a wide range of opinions and concerns, some of which are beyond the scope of YFO's land use planning and this RMP. Most scoping comments, however, are reflected in some fashion in one or more of the PRMP/FEIS alternatives.

To meet BLM's goal "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations," the PRMP/FEIS focuses on the following topics and the potential decisions needed to influence future actions:

- Land Health Standards
- Special Designations Management
- Coordinated Management Areas
- Vegetation Management
- Wildland Fire Management
- Fish and Wildlife Management
- Special Status Species Management
- Livestock Grazing Management
- Wild Horse and Burro Management
- Recreation Management
- Travel Management
- Visual Resource Management
- Wilderness Characteristics Management
- Cultural Resources Management
- Paleontological Resource Management
- Air, Water, and Soil Management
- Lands and Realty Management
- Mineral Resource Management
- Public Health and Safety Management

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

YFO continued collaboration efforts by including communities in the formulation and development of alternatives. The open house gave citizens the opportunity to provide input for the BLM to consider in refining the issues to be addressed, discuss visions for BLM lands, and begin exploring alternative ways to manage BLM lands and resources. Input received from citizens (both groups and individuals) was considered in developing the alternatives. Citizens could also submit formulated alternatives. These submissions were considered in the range of alternatives and analyzed in the EIS, as required by NEPA. Another series of open houses presented the public with a range of alternatives. The workshops began with a brief overview of the RMP process and the preliminary draft alternatives. Following this presentation, participants

were given the opportunity to circulate to various stations that were facilitated by YFO and contractor staff. This gave the public a firsthand look at how the alternatives are layered with one another and how they vary by alternative. Information about the plan was posted on the YFO website (currently http://www.blm.gov/az/LUP/yuma/yuma_plan.htm) to encourage public participation throughout the planning process.

The PRMP/FEIS was developed with the following Cooperating Agencies: the Arizona Department of Transportation; Arizona Game and Fish Department; Bureau of Reclamation; Cibola, Imperial, and Kofa National Wildlife Refuges; City of Yuma; Cocopah Indian Tribe; Federal Highway Administration; Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe; Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma; Town of Quartzsite; U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground; U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Patrol; Yuma County Department of Public Works; Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District; and Yavapai-Apache Nation.

BLM also consulted with Native American tribes who have oral traditions or cultural concerns relating to the planning area, or who are documented as having occupied or used portions of the planning area during historic times. Three Native American tribes (the Cocopah Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes, and Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe) currently reside within or adjacent to the boundaries of the planning area. A number of other Native American tribes also have recognized cultural ties to these lands.

ALTERNATIVES

The basic goal of developing alternatives was to prepare different combinations of management to address issues and to resolve conflicts among uses. Alternatives must meet the purpose and need; must be reasonable; must provide a mix of resource protection, use, and development; must be responsive to the issues; and must meet the established planning criteria. Each alternative is a complete land use plan that provides a framework for multiple-use management of the full spectrum of resources, resource uses, and programs present in the planning area.

Two types of land use planning decisions are found under each topic for each alternative: Desired Future Conditions (resource goals and objectives) and Management Actions (prescriptions to help achieve management objectives).

Under all alternatives the YFO will manage the public lands in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and BLM policy and guidance, and to meet Land Health Standards. A summary of the key resource management proposals in this PRMP/FEIS are reflected by alternative in Table ES-2.

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Land Health Standards				
Arizona’s Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (1997) would be incorporated into the RMP under all alternatives.				
Special Designations – Wilderness				
Eight congressionally designated Wilderness Areas totaling approximately 167,800 acres would continue to be managed according to the Wilderness Act of 1964 under all alternatives.				
Special Designations – National Historic Trail (NHT)				
Support the establishment of a recreational Juan Bautista de Anza NHT through the planning area under all alternatives. A total of 111 miles of the trail are located within the YFO. Twenty-one miles of the trail are located on BLM-administered lands, and the other 90 miles of the trail would be established and managed through cooperative agreements with other stakeholders.				
Special Designations – National Recreation Trail (NRT)				
0.5 mile designated NRT at Betty’s Kitchen.	Extend Betty’s Kitchen NRT up to 5.5 miles.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Special Designations – National Back Country Byways				
There are no Back Country Byways currently identified.	7 Back Country Byways totaling 220 miles	4 Back Country Byways totaling 76 miles.	0 miles Back Country Byways.	2 Back Country Byways totaling 21 miles.
Special Designations – National Scenic Byways				
There are no Scenic Byways currently identified.	0 miles Scenic Byways	64 miles of Scenic Byway on U.S. Highway 95 between the Town of Quartzsite and Yuma.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative C.
Special Designations – Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)				
8,200 acres designated within 2 ACECs.	8,200 acres designated within 2 ACECs.	44,700 acres designated within 3 ACECs.	626,800 acres designated within 7 ACECs.	Same as Alternative C.

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components
(continued)**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Coordinated Management Areas (CMA)				
3,830 acres within 2 CMAs.	8,330 acres designated within 3 CMAs.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative B.
Vegetation Management				
12,400 acres managed as a Resource Conservation Area. Vegetation Habitat Management Areas (VHA) were not specially addressed in previous plans. 134,700 acres closed to firewood collection in 2 areas.	0 acres managed as a VHA. 142,800 acres closed to firewood collection in 4 areas.	12,400 acres managed as a VHA in 1 area. 179,300 acres closed to firewood collection in 5 areas.	22,900 acres managed as VHA in 3 areas. All BLM lands in planning area closed to firewood collection.	22,900 acres managed as VHA in 3 areas. 153,000 acres closed to firewood collection.
Vegetation Management – Priority Species				
Continue to manage BLM Priority Species according to BLM Manual 6840.06 C to ensure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out do not contribute to the need for the species to become listed.				
Wildland Fire Management				
Decisions from the Arizona Statewide Land Use Plan Amendment for Fire, Fuels, and Air Quality Management (2004) would be carried forward and all wildfires would be fully suppressed.				

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components
(continued)**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Fish and Wildlife Management				
539,500 acres designated Priority Wildlife Habitat along Colorado and Gila rivers. Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (WHAs) were not specifically addressed in previous plans.	1,545,800 acres designated between 4 WHAs. (WHA acreages may overlap.)	1,605,200 acres designated between 5 WHAs. (WHA acreages may overlap.)	900,400 acres designated between 4 WHAs. (WHA acreages may overlap.)	1,526,200 acres designated between 5 WHAs. (WHA acreages may overlap.)
Special Status Species				
<p>The following special status species and their habitats would be managed in accordance with the Endangered Species Act and BLM policy under all alternatives:</p> <p>Federal Listed Species: California brown pelican, Gila topminnow, bonytail chub, desert pupfish, Mojave desert tortoise, razorback sucker, Sonoran pronghorn, southwestern willow flycatcher, and Yuma clapper rail</p> <p>Federal Candidate Species: Yellow-billed cuckoo</p> <p>State Listed Species: Bald eagle, burrowing owl, cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl, flat-tailed horned lizard, Sonoran desert tortoise</p>				
Livestock Grazing				
1,005,600 acres available to livestock grazing in YFO. 215,200 acres available to livestock grazing in Lake Havasu Field Office. 309,500 acres unavailable to livestock grazing in YFO.	680,900 acres available to livestock grazing in YFO. 215,200 acres available to livestock grazing in Lake Havasu Field Office. 637,100 acres unavailable to livestock grazing in YFO.	428,300 acres available to livestock grazing in YFO. 215,200 acres available to livestock grazing in Lake Havasu Field Office. 889,700 acres unavailable to livestock grazing in YFO.	0 acres available to livestock grazing in YFO. 1,533,200 acres unavailable to livestock grazing in YFO and Lake Havasu Field Office.	Same as Alternative C.

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components
(continued)**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Wild Horse and Burro Management				
263,700-acre Cibola-Trigo Herd Management Area (HMA). Appropriate Management Level would be 165 burros and 150 horses.	179,000 acres managed as the Cibola-Trigo HMA. Appropriate Management Level same as Alternative A.			
Recreation Management				
Continue management of existing recreation sites: 2 - LTVAs 13 - 14-day Camping Areas 1 - 10-day Camping Area 5 - Day Use Only Sites 2 - Concessions 10 - Boat Launches 11 - Fee Sites Determine if new sites need to be established or existing sites need to be expanded on a case-by-case basis	Same as Alternative A	Same as Alternative A	Continue management of existing recreation sites. New sites would not be established and existing sites would not be expanded.	Same as Alternative A

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components
(continued)**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Recreation Management (cont.)				
Recreation Management Areas (RMA) not specifically addressed in previous plans.	Public lands would be allocated to RMAs as follows: 697,100 acres Destination Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) 587,300 acres Community SRMA 0 acres Undeveloped SRMA 33,600 acres Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA)	Public lands would be allocated to RMAs as follows: 494,300 acres Destination 64,900 acres Community 559,300 acres Undeveloped 199,500 acres ERMA	Public lands would be allocated to RMAs as follows: 250,500 acres Destination 35,600 acres Community 642,700 acres Undeveloped 389,200 acres ERMA	Public lands would be allocated to RMAs as follows: 455,700 acres Destination 123,200 acres Community 571,600 acres Undeveloped 167,500 acres ERMA
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)/Prescribed Recreation Settings were not specifically addressed in previous plans.	Public lands would be divided into six Prescribed Recreation Settings as follows: Primitive: 167,800 acres Semi-primitive: 147,400 acres Rural Natural: 786,700 acres Rural Developed: 171,800 acres Suburban: 2,500 acres Urban: 8,300 acres	Public lands would be divided into six Prescribed Recreation Settings as follows: Primitive: 167,800 acres Semi-primitive: 135,400 acres Rural Natural: 689,100 acres Rural Developed: 144,900 acres Suburban: 2,500 acres Urban: 8,300 acres	Public lands would be divided into six Prescribed Recreation Settings as follows: Primitive: 167,800 acres Semi-primitive: 436,700 acres Rural Natural: 282,200 acres Rural Developed: 65,600 acres Suburban: 2,500 acres Urban: 8,300 acres	Public lands would be divided into six Prescribed Recreation Settings as follows: Primitive: 167,800 acres Semi-primitive: 154,700 acres Rural Natural: 723,900 acres Rural Developed: 131,700 acres Suburban: 5,700 acres Urban: 4,700 acres

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components
(continued)**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Travel Management				
Open OHV Management Area: 400 acres at the Ehernberg Sandbowl. Closed OHV Management Areas: 169,000 acres (167,800 acres of Wilderness; 1,200 acres outside of Wilderness) Limited OHV Management Areas: OHV use limited to existing routes within the remainder of planning area	Open OHV Management Areas: 3,800 acres within 3 areas. Closed OHV Management Areas: 171,000 acres (167,800 acres of Wilderness; 3,200 acres outside of Wilderness) Limited OHV Management Areas: OHV use is limited to 4,600 miles of inventoried routes within the remainder of the planning area.	Open OHV Management Areas: 2,400 acres within 3 areas. Closed OHV Management Areas: 171,300 acres (167,800 acres of Wilderness; 3,500 acres outside of Wilderness) Limited OHV Management Areas: OHV use is limited to 4,600 miles of inventoried routes within the remainder of the planning area.	Open OHV Management Areas: Same as Alternative A Closed OHV Management Areas: 233,800 acres (167,800 acres of Wilderness; 66,000 acres outside of Wilderness) Limited OHV Management Areas: OHV use is limited to 4,600 miles of inventoried routes within the remainder of the planning area.	Open OHV Management Areas: Same as Alternative A Closed OHV Management Areas: 172,900 acres (167,800 acres of Wilderness; 5,100 acres outside of Wilderness) Limited OHV Management Areas: OHV use is limited to 4,600 miles of inventoried routes within the remainder of the planning area.
Visual Resource Management (VRM)				
Designated VRM classes: Class I: 167,800 acres (Wilderness) Class II: 15,200 acres Class III: 1,135,000 acres Class IV: 0 acres	Designated VRM classes: Class I: 167,800 acres (Wilderness) Class II: 541,800 acres Class III: 552,300 acres Class IV: 56,100 acres	Designated VRM classes: Class I: 167,800 acres (Wilderness) Class II: 561,100 acres Class III: 567,500 acres Class IV: 21,600 acres	Designated VRM classes: Class I: 192,400 acres (including Wilderness) Class II: 624,800 acres Class III: 496,400 acres Class IV: 4,400 acres	Designated VRM classes: Class I: 167,800 acres (Wilderness) Class II: 618,600 acres Class III: 512,400 acres Class IV: 19,200 acres
Wilderness Characteristics				
Wilderness characteristics were not specifically addressed in previous plans.	48,400 acres	91,400 acres	301,200 acres	Same as Alternative B.

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components
(continued)**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Cultural Resources				
Continue to manage 16 cultural resource sites and areas as Conservation for Future Use. SCRMAAs were not specifically addressed in previous plans.	21,200 acres in 4 SCRMAAs.	29,900 acres in 11 SCRMAAs.	22,200 acres in 8 SCRMAAs.	28,500 acres in 10 SCRMAAs.
Paleontological Resources				
Paleontological resources were not specifically addressed in previous plans.	Public lands would be allocated to classified as high, moderate, or low sensitivity on the basis of a sensitivity map (to be developed).			
Air, Water, and Soil				
PM ₁₀ Non-Attainment Areas were not specifically addressed in previous plans.	<p>Management actions would take current PM₁₀ Non-Attainment Area into account—appropriate mitigation would be required on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Measures to improve water quality would be consistent with Federal and State standards. Floodplains would continue to be managed according to Federal and State guidelines.</p> <p>Management actions would minimize impacts to sensitive soils—appropriate mitigation would be required on a case-by-case basis.</p>			
Lands & Realty				
19,100 acres available for disposal.	46,900 acres available for disposal.	10,500 acres available for disposal.	8,200 acres available for disposal.	11,900 acres available for disposal.
Acquisition: BLM would seek to acquire non-Federal lands from willing sellers, including lands within or adjacent to existing wilderness or existing and proposed ACECs.				

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components
(continued)**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Lands & Realty				
174,300 Withdrawal acres. 300 miles within 4 ROW Corridors. 6 Communication Sites	171,400 Withdrawal acres. 500 miles within 10 ROW Corridors. 13 Communication Sites	173,200 Withdrawal acres. Same as Alternative B. 11 Communication Sites	176,100 Withdrawal acres. 400 miles within 5 ROW Corridors. 8 Communication Sites	179,800 Withdrawal acres. 465 miles within 8 ROW Corridors. 10 Communication Sites
Renewable energy was not specifically addressed in previous plans. Under all alternatives, renewable energy would be proposed on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand.				
Minerals Management				
174,300 acres withdrawn from mineral development. Remainder of planning area open to mineral development. No surface occupancy would be allowed in 171,500 acres of 1 ACEC and Wilderness.	171,400 acres withdrawn from mineral development. Remainder of planning area open to mineral development. New mineral material disposal sites would not be authorized within all ACECs. Surface occupancy restrictions would apply throughout 176,000 acres of 2 ACECs and Wilderness.	173,200 acres withdrawn from mineral development. Remainder of planning area open to mineral development. New mineral material disposal sites would not be authorized within all ACECs. Surface occupancy restrictions would apply throughout 212,500 acres of 3 ACECs and Wilderness.	176,100 acres withdrawn from mineral development. Remainder of planning area open to mineral development. New mineral material disposal sites would not be authorized within all ACECs. Surface occupancy restrictions would apply throughout 219,800 acres of 4 ACECs and Wilderness.	179,800 acres withdrawn from mineral development. Remainder of planning area open to mineral development. New mineral material disposal sites would not be authorized within all ACECs. Surface occupancy restrictions would apply throughout 212,500 acres of 3 ACECs and Wilderness.
Locatable Minerals – Public lands outside designated Wilderness and other existing withdrawn areas would continue to be open to entry under the mining laws.				
100 acres managed for Salable Minerals in 1 proposed community pit (currently under NEPA review).	800 acres managed for Salable Minerals in 6 community pits.	400 acres managed for Salable Minerals in 3 community pits.	Same as Alternative A.	700 acres managed for Salable Minerals in 5 community pits.

**Table ES-2
Summary of Key Alternative Components
(continued)**

Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E (Proposed Plan)
Public Health & Safety				
Public lands would be managed to provide for public health and safety as required to address issues including, but not limited to, unexploded ordnances, mining and milling waste, illegal dumping, undocumented immigration, other border issues, etc.				

Note: Approximate acres were used which reflects the best available data at the time document was prepared.

Alternative A (No Action)

Alternative A (No Action) describes the continuation of the present management of the planning area and provides a baseline from which to identify potential environmental consequences when compared to the Action Alternatives. This alternative describes current resource and land management plan direction as represented in the Yuma District Resource Management Plan (1987), as amended; Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan (1988), as amended; and Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan (1983), as amended. This alternative results in no revision to the existing plans.

Alternative B

Alternative B generally places an emphasis on consumer-driven uses and the widest array of uses, emphasizing recreation, mineral, and energy development. It identifies areas most appropriate for these various uses. It places a greater emphasis on developed and motorized recreation opportunities and less on remote settings and primitive recreation.

Alternative C

Alternative C provides visitors with opportunities to experience natural and cultural resource values of the planning area. It allows visitation and development within the planning area, while ensuring that resource protection is not compromised. It is generally managed with decisions that have a greater balance of multiple uses. Alternative C identifies a combination of natural processes and active management techniques for resource and use management and it provides for both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities.

Alternative D

Alternative D generally places emphasis on preservation of the planning area's natural and cultural resources through limited public use and discontinuation of livestock grazing. It focuses on natural processes and other unobtrusive methods for natural resource use and management. It proposes greater opportunities for dispersed non-motorized recreation and fewer motorized and developed recreation opportunities.

Alternative E (Proposed Plan)

Alternative E (Proposed Plan) reflects the best combination of decisions to achieve BLM goals and policies, meets the Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team) purpose and need, addresses the planning issues, and considers the recommendations of cooperating agencies and BLM specialists. The Proposed Plan proposes actions that include, but are not limited to, management of recreation, wildlife, minerals, cultural resources, livestock grazing, and land tenure; designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern; access to public lands; and other topics.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRMP/DEIS

Notice of the release of the DRMP/DEIS for a 90-day public review period was published in the Federal Register on December 15, 2006. Five formal public meetings were held during the public comment period on the DRMP/DEIS. These meetings were held February 5 through 8, 2007, in

Wellton, Town of Quartzsite, Yuma, and Tucson, Arizona, and in Blythe, California. The meetings provided an opportunity for interested members of the public to learn more about the analysis contained in the DRMP/DEIS, as well as provided an opportunity for attendees to submit comments, written and oral, on the document.

The YFO received more than 430 comment letters (including public comment forms from public meetings, oral testimonies, postal letters, e-mails, and faxes) from individuals, agencies, organizations, and groups during the public comment period on the DRMP/DEIS. Public comment letters resulted in over 1,400 individual comments. Comments received by general topic (percent) are presented in Table ES-3.

Table ES-3
Comments Received by Topic during DRMP/DEIS Public Comment Period

General Topics	Percentage of Comments
Natural Resource Management	37%
Access/Transportation Management	24%
Alternatives and Options	15%
Process	7%
Lands and Realty Actions	6%
Recreation Management	5%
Special Designations	5%
Plan Specific Codes	>1%
Socio and Economic	>1%
TOTAL	100%

All comments received during the public comment period were reviewed and considered. Comments that presented new data or addressed the adequacy of the document, the alternatives, or the analysis are responded to in Chapter 5 of this PRMP/FEIS pursuant to BLM policy. There were also many comments received which requested further clarification in the document. Although not required to be addressed, these comments requesting clarification may have resulted in additional language or revisions throughout the PRMP/FEIS.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The planning area has hot summers, mild winters, low rainfall, high evaporation rates, and low humidity. Approximately 110 days per year have average temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit; the daily average for July is 107 degrees Fahrenheit. In January, the average daily temperature is 67 degrees Fahrenheit. The average annual precipitation within the planning area is 3.5 inches with rainfall intensities generally low during winter and spring and high during summer and fall. Approximately 60 percent of the precipitation results from winter and spring storms and 40 percent from summer and fall storms. Relative humidity ranges from 4–40 percent in the summer and 25–50 percent during the winter months. Wind speeds in the district average approximately eight miles per hour. Prevailing wind direction is generally from the south during the spring and summer and from the north during the fall and winter.

The topography of the YFO planning area is characterized by rugged mountain ranges, sloping plains, and broad valleys. Slopes range from 1–20 percent on valley floors to sheer bluffs in the mountains. Elevations range from 100 feet above sea level along the United States–Mexico Southerly International Boundary to 3,500 feet atop Eagletail Mountain. Mountain ranges in the planning area include the Big Maria, Chocolate, Dome Rock, Eagletail, Gila, Laguna, Little Horn, Mohawk, Muggins, New Water, Palomas, Tank, and Trigo Mountains. There are three broad desert plains in the planning area: the long and narrow La Posa Plain, extending south from the Buckskin Mountains to the Castle Dome Mountains; the Castle Dome Plain, extending south from the Middle and Castle Dome Mountain ranges; and the Palomas Plain, extending eastward from the Little Horn, Tank, and Palomas Mountains.

The YFO planning area lies entirely within the Lower Colorado sub-basin of the Colorado Hydrologic Region. The Colorado River flows through the entire north–south length of the planning area, and the Gila River traverses the planning area from east to west where it joins the Colorado River. The Bureau of Reclamation regulates water flows on the lower Colorado River through dams, associated reservoirs, and backwater areas at various points along its length. Water quality of the Colorado and Gila rivers are naturally high in total dissolved solids but show little signs of degradation related to domestic, municipal, or industrial wastes.