

# **Yuma Field Office**

## **Record of Decision**

### **Approved Resource Management Plan**

Yuma Field Office

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
*January 2010*



# **ABSTRACT**

The Yuma Field Office Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) describes the plan for managing approximately 1.3 million acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)–administered land in southwestern Arizona and southeastern California. Information provided by the public, other agencies, Native American tribes, organizations, and BLM personnel was used to develop this RMP. The Approved RMP seeks to provide an optimal balance between authorized resource uses and the protection and long-term sustainability of sensitive resource values within the planning area. Major issues addressed in the RMP include the management of special designations, fish and wildlife habitat management, wild horse and burro management, recreation management, travel management, the maintenance of wilderness characteristics, and lands and realty.

# **MISSION STATEMENT**

The BLM is responsible for the balanced management of BLM-administered lands and resources and their various values so that they are considered in a combination that will best serve the needs of the American people. Management is based upon the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, a combination of uses that take into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources. These resources include recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, fish and wildlife, wilderness and natural, scenic, scientific, and cultural values.



# United States Department of the Interior

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In Reply Refer To:  
1610 (AZC020)

Dear Reader:

We are pleased to announce that after 5 years of hard work and collaborative effort, the revision of the Yuma Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) is complete. This document provides guidance for the management of 1.3 million acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered lands in southwestern Arizona and southeastern California. These lands are within the BLM Colorado River District in La Paz, Maricopa, and Yuma counties in Arizona and Imperial and Riverside counties in California.

The attached Record of Decision (ROD) and RMP have been prepared in accordance with the Federal Land Policy Management Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The ROD and RMP have been sent to members of the public who requested a copy and to pertinent local, State, Federal, and Tribal governments. The ROD finalizes the proposed decisions presented in the Yuma Field Office Proposed RMP/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that was released in April 2008 and was subject to a 30-day protest period. Seven protest letters were received and reviewed by the BLM Assistant Director for Renewable Resources and Planning in Washington, D.C. After careful consideration of all points raised in the protest letters, the Assistant Director concluded that the planning team and responsible decision makers followed all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and pertinent resource considerations in developing the Proposed RMP in the FEIS. Minor modifications or points of clarification incorporated into the RMP in response to issues raised during the protest process and final BLM review are discussed in the ROD under the sections entitled Modifications and Clarifications. The protest review did not result in any significant changes to the RMP.

This ROD serves as the final decision for the land use planning decisions described in the attached RMP. Now that the ROD is signed, we look forward to your assistance and participation as we implement the decisions contained in this RMP.

Copies of the ROD and RMP can be obtained on the web at [http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/fo/yuma\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en/fo/yuma_field_office.html). Additional printed or CD copies may be obtained at the address above or requested by email at [YFOWEB\\_AZ@blm.gov](mailto:YFOWEB_AZ@blm.gov) or by telephone at (928) 317-3200.

We greatly appreciate all who contributed to the completion of this RMP, including other Federal agencies and Tribal, State, and local governments. This includes the many Cooperating Agencies named in Section 1.7.1 of this RMP. We also appreciate the extensive public

involvement during this time by groups, organizations, and individuals. Public input informed and improved the planning documents and we hope you will continue to work with us as we implement the decisions in this RMP. If you need information or have questions, please contact us at (928) 317-3200.

Sincerely,  
  
James T. Shoaff  
Field Manager

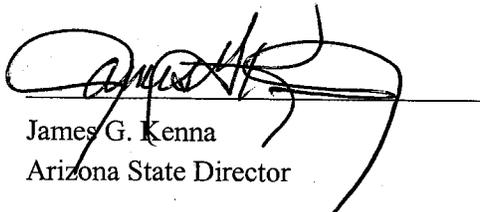
# Yuma Field Office

## Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan

Prepared by  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Colorado River District  
Yuma Field Office  
Arizona

January 2010

Approved by:

  
James G. Kenna  
Arizona State Director

  
Date

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# RECORD OF DECISION

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision (ROD) approves the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposal to manage the BLM-administered public lands within the Yuma Field Office (YFO) as presented in the attached Approved Resource Management Plan (Approved RMP). This Approved RMP was described as Alternative E in the April 2008 YFO Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) (United States Department of the Interior [USDOI] BLM 2008). The ROD provides the background on development of the plan and rationale for approving the proposed decisions contained in Alternative E, and describes the clarifications and modifications made to resolve the protests received.

## 1.1 RESULTS OF PROTEST REVIEW

The BLM received seven protest letters during the 30-day public protest period provided for the proposed land use plan (LUP) decisions contained in the YFO PRMP/FEIS, in accordance with 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610.5-2. The following planning area stakeholders submitted protests on the YFO PRMP/FEIS:

1. Animal Welfare Institute
2. Morriset, Schlosser, Jozwiak & McGaw, on behalf of the Quechan Tribe
3. Tamarack Lagoon Corporation
4. Arizona Wilderness Coalition, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club-Grand Canyon Chapter, Western Watersheds Project, The Wilderness Society, and Yuma Audubon Society
5. Mr. Mark Skousen
6. Ms. Andrea Martinez
7. Western Watersheds Project

The protest letters focused on special area designations, fish and wildlife, special status species management, livestock grazing management, travel management, wilderness characteristics management, and cultural resources management. Protesting parties made the following observations and suggestions:

- The YFO RMP revision must follow applicable laws, regulations, policy, and guidance, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal Land Policy and

Management Act (FLPMA), Administrative Procedure Act, Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act, Endangered Species Act (ESA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the BLM *Land Use Planning Handbook*.

- The protective and recovery needs of listed, special status species, state-sensitive species, and herpetofauna need to be fully addressed.
- Continuous year-long grazing is not a feasible grazing management strategy on Sonoran Desert public lands, nor is seasonal/ephemeral grazing necessarily appropriate. The Eagletail and Bishop allotments should not be available for grazing.
- There is a need to take a hard look at the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to resources from livestock grazing and travel management.
- There is a need to take a hard look at the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to recreation and travel management from the closure of desert washes to off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel.
- Additional acreage in the planning area should be designated as Closed OHV Management Areas. All lands with wilderness characteristics and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) should be closed to OHV use.
- YFO should not use the Route Evaluation Tree in its travel management planning.
- Additional acreage within the planning area should be allocated to the cultural resource use category of Traditional Use.
- Additional measures should be taken to protect cultural resources, including designating additional ACECs, withdrawing areas from mineral entry, and eliminating resource uses (e.g., Right-of-Way [ROW] Corridors) in culturally sensitive areas.

These and other issues were discussed in the seven protest letters. The BLM Director of Renewable Resources and Planning in Washington, D.C., addressed all protests without making significant changes to the Proposed Plan, although minor adjustments, corrections, and clarifications were made and have been explained in this ROD. The Modification (Section 1.2.5) and Clarification (Section 1.2.6) sections describe these adjustments.

## 1.2 DECISION

The decision is hereby made to approve the attached plan as the Approved RMP for BLM-administered public lands located in California and Arizona that are administered by the YFO (see Map 1-1 in the Approved RMP). The Approved RMP replaces relevant decisions in the Yuma District RMP, as amended (1987a); Lower Gila South RMP, as amended (1988); *Lower*

*Gila North Management Framework Plan* (1983a); and the *Approved Amendment to the Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan*, as amended (1983b).

The plan was prepared under the regulations of 43 CFR Part 1600, which implements FLPMA of 1976. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for this Approved RMP in compliance with NEPA of 1969. The plan is nearly identical to the one presented in the PRMP/FEIS published in April 2008. Management decisions and guidance for public lands under the jurisdiction of the YFO are presented in the section titled Management Decisions in the Approved RMP attached to this ROD.

All decisions covered by the ROD are land use planning decisions that were protestable under the land use planning regulations (43 CFR Part 1610).

## **1.2.1 WHAT THE DECISION/APPROVED RMP PROVIDES**

Many LUP decisions are implemented or become effective upon approval of the Approved RMP. According to the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook, LUP decisions are broad-scale decisions which guide future land management actions and subsequent site-specific implementation decisions. LUP decisions identify specific areas of public land or mineral resources where certain uses or management actions are allowed, are excluded, or may be restricted in order to achieve a desired future condition or to protect certain resource values. LUP decisions fall into two categories: Desired Future Conditions (Goals and Objectives) and Management Actions (Allowable Uses) to achieve outcomes. For each resource, additional guidance is presented in the form of Administrative Actions. Administrative Actions are not land use planning decisions, but are a key component of the overall RMP.

### **A. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS (GOALS AND OBJECTIVES)**

Desired Future Conditions provide overarching direction for BLM actions in meeting the agency's legal, regulatory, policy, and strategic requirements. Goals and objectives initially were identified at the beginning of the planning process and refined through subsequent collaboration with cooperating agencies. Goals are broad statements of desired outcomes, but generally are not measurable. Objectives are more specific statements of a desired condition that may include a measurable component. Desired Future Conditions represent land or resource conditions that are expected to result if planning goals and objectives are fully achieved.

### **B. MANAGEMENT ACTIONS (ALLOWABLE USES)**

Management Actions are anticipated to achieve the Desired Future Conditions. Management Actions identify where land uses are allowed, restricted, or prohibited on all BLM-administered surface lands and Federal mineral estate in the planning area. The Approved RMP includes specific land use restrictions to meet Desired Future Conditions and may exclude certain land uses to protect resource values. Because the Approved RMP identifies whether particular land uses are allowed, restricted, or prohibited, Management Actions often include a spatial (e.g., map) component. Management Actions that require additional site-specific project planning as funding becomes available will require further environmental analysis. The BLM will continue to involve and collaborate with the public during implementation of this plan.

## C. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Administrative Actions are not RMP-level decisions. However, they are day-to-day activities conducted by BLM often required by FLPMA that to be accomplished do not require a NEPA analysis or a decision by a responsible official. Examples of Administrative Actions include mapping, surveying, inventorying, monitoring, collecting needed information such as research and studies, and completing project-specific or implementation-level plans. Administrative Actions are included in this Approved RMP because they guide future programs and budget planning.

### 1.2.2 KEY DECISIONS IN THE APPROVED RMP

Listed below are the key management decisions in the Approved RMP.

- Nominates two National Back Country Byways totaling 21 miles in coordination with two other BLM field offices.
- Nominates 64 miles of United States (U.S.) Highway 95 between the Town of Quartzsite and Yuma, Arizona, as a National Scenic Byway.
- Designates three ACECs covering 44,700 acres.
- Identifies three Coordinated Management Areas (CMAs) covering 8,330 acres.
- Allocates three Vegetation Habitat Management Areas covering 22,900 acres.
- Closes 153,000 acres to firewood collection.
- Allocates five Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (WHA) covering 1,526,200 acres (some WHA acreages overlap).
- Makes 428,300 acres available to livestock grazing within the YFO; makes 215,200 acres available to livestock grazing within the BLM Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO); and makes 889,700 acres unavailable to livestock grazing in the YFO.
- Manages 179,000 acres as the Cibola-Trigo Herd Management Area (HMA) for wild horses and burros.
- Allocates five Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) covering 1,150,500 acres; allocates 22 Recreation Management Zones (RMZs) within the five SRMAs; and allocates 167,500 acres as Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMAs).
- Designates 400 acres as an Open OHV Management Area; designates 172,900 acres of Closed OHV Management Areas; and designates 1,144,700 acres of Limited OHV Management Areas.

- Commits the YFO to comprehensively designating 4,600 miles of inventoried routes in the planning area through implementation-level Travel Management Plans (TMPs) within five years. Limits motorized travel to 4,600 miles of inventoried routes until the route designation process is complete; and, after the route designation process is complete, limits motorized travel to designated routes only.
- Designates 167,800 acres as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I; 618,600 acres as VRM Class II; 512,400 acres as VRM Class III; and 19,200 acres as VRM Class IV.
- Identifies 48,400 acres where wilderness characteristics will be maintained.
- Allocates 10 Special Cultural Resource Management Areas (SCRMA) covering 28,500 acres.
- Identifies 11,900 acres as available for disposal.
- Designates eight ROW Corridors totaling 465 miles.
- Designates 10 communications sites.
- Continues existing withdrawals from mineral development across 174,300 acres; proposes to withdraw an additional 5,500 acres from mineral development; and applies surface occupancy restrictions throughout 212,500 acres.
- Identifies five community pits for salable minerals extraction within 700 acres.

The ROD serves as the final decision establishing the LUP decisions outlined in the Approved RMP and is effective on the date it is signed. No further administrative remedies are available for these LUP decisions.

### **1.2.3 WHAT THE DECISION/APPROVED RMP DOES NOT PROVIDE**

The Approved RMP does not contain decisions for actions outside the jurisdiction of the BLM. Comments asking for decisions that were beyond the scope of this plan were forwarded to the appropriate agency. In addition, many decisions are not appropriate at this level of planning and are not included in the ROD. Examples of these types of decisions are discussed below.

#### **A. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

The decision will not change the BLM's responsibility to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

## **B. NATIONAL POLICY**

The decision will not change the BLM's obligation to conform to current or future national policy.

## **C. FUNDING LEVELS AND BUDGET ALLOCATIONS**

Funding levels and budget allocations are determined annually at the national level and are beyond the control of the YFO.

## **D. MONITORING STRATEGIES TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE DECISIONS IN ACHIEVING PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Monitoring strategies will be addressed in specific activity-based plans that will be completed to implement the Approved RMP.

### **1.2.4 IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS**

Implementation Decisions generally constitute the BLM's final approval allowing on-the-ground actions to proceed. These types of decisions require site-specific planning and NEPA analysis. They may be incorporated into implementation plans (activity or project plans) or may exist as stand-alone decisions. At this time, YFO has not identified specific implementation-level decisions within this Approved RMP. Future activity-level plans will address the implementation of the Approved RMP.

### **1.2.5 MODIFICATIONS**

Modifications were made to the Approved RMP based on the review and resolution of the protest letters. The agreed upon modifications to the decisions are provided below.

- Due to the change in status of the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) after printing the PRMP/FEIS, the Approved RMP was updated.
- The BLM has provided the correct source report citation in Section 2.8.3-E: *Compensation for the Desert Tortoise Report* (Desert Tortoise Compensation Team 1991).
- The BLM has modified Section 2.12.2-C in response to a protest issue. The additional Administrative Action coded AA-219v will read:
  - Consider a range of alternative route designations in future TMPs, including alternatives that consider closing a majority of non-essential routes that were created without authorization and a majority of non-essential drivable desert washes.

## 1.2.6 CLARIFICATIONS

As the result of protests and continued internal review, the BLM made clarifications in the Approved RMP, which are noted below.

- Clarifications, reclassifications, and reorganization of the PRMP/FEIS Desired Future Conditions, Management Actions, and Administrative Actions were made in order to present the information in a decision document format for the Approved RMP. Introductory texts, graphics, and appendices were included as needed to support the Approved RMP decisions.
- Additional text was added to adopt and implement the Bonytail Chub Recovery Goals (USDOI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2002a).
- The BLM clarified sections 2.12.1-C and 2.12.2-A in response to a protest issue. The decisions coded TM-012 and TM-028 read as follows:
  - TM-012: Limit motorized use within Limited OHV Management Areas to existing inventoried routes appearing on the YFO route inventory maps (Maps TMA-1 to TMA-5). Motorized travel will not be allowed on roads, trails, and drivable washes that are not included on the YFO route inventory maps. After the YFO Transportation System is finalized, limit motorized use within Limited OHV Management Areas to designated routes only.
  - TM-028: During the development of the YFO Transportation System, provide additional opportunities for interested stakeholders to identify existing roads, trails, and drivable washes that do not appear on Maps TMA-1 to TMA-5.
- The BLM clarified Section 2.12.2-B in response to a protest issue. The decisions coded TM-030 and TM-031 read as follows:
  - TM-030: Prior to beginning each individual TMP, interested stakeholders are provided with opportunities to submit written scoping comments, including recommendations as to how specific routes should be designated. Specific route designation recommendations should be accompanied with a rationale as to why the BLM should adopt the designation. Route designations that will be considered include, but are not limited to:
    - Open to Motorized Use,
    - Limited to Particular Types of Vehicles, such as all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, rock crawlers, etc.,
    - Limited to Authorized Users Only, such as mining claimants, grazing permittees, ROW holders, etc.,

- Limited to Non-Motorized Uses, such as hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding,
  - Limited seasonally, or
  - Closed.
- TM-031: Prior to approving each individual TMP, interested stakeholders are provided with opportunities to submit written comments, including recommendations as to how specific routes should be designated. Specific route designation recommendations should be accompanied with a rationale as to why the BLM should adopt the designation. Route designations that will be considered include, but are not limited to:
- Open to Motorized Use,
  - Limited to Particular Types of Vehicles, such as all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, rock crawlers, etc.,
  - Limited to Authorized Users Only, such as mining claimants, grazing permittees, ROW holders, etc.,
  - Limited to Non-Motorized Uses, such as hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding,
  - Limited seasonally, or
  - Closed.

### **1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE ALTERNATIVES**

Five alternatives, including a No Action Alternative, were analyzed in detail in the Draft RMP/Draft EIS (DRMP/DEIS) and PRMP/FEIS (USDOI BLM 2006 and 2008). The alternatives were developed to address major planning issues identified through the scoping process and to provide direction for resource programs influencing land management.

Each alternative is composed of a set of components (decisions) that can be identified as a general theme. Each theme represents a distinct concept for management using a variety of land use planning decision types (including Land Use Allocations and Designations, Special Designations, Desired Future Conditions, and Management Actions). These decisions provide management direction at a broad scale and guide future actions to govern management of BLM-administered public lands.

### **1.3.1 ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)**

Alternative A (No Action) described the continuation of the present management of the planning area and provided a baseline from which to identify potential environmental consequences when compared to the proposed action alternatives. This alternative described current resource and land management plan direction as represented in the Yuma District RMP, as amended (1987a); Lower Gila South RMP, as amended (1988); and *Approved Amendment to Lower Gila North Management Framework Plan*, as amended (1983b). This alternative resulted in no revision to the existing plans.

### **1.3.2 ALTERNATIVE B**

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

### **1.3.3 ALTERNATIVE C**

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

### **1.3.4 ALTERNATIVE D**

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

### **1.3.5 ALTERNATIVE E (PROPOSED PLAN)**

Alternative E was the BLM's Proposed Plan in the PRMP/FEIS. Using the Preferred Alternative in the DRMP/DEIS, the BLM revised the alternative to incorporate comments received during the 90-day public comment period. The resultant alternative with some additional modifications and clarifications is the Approved RMP attached to this ROD. In the most comprehensive manner, the Approved RMP is designed to respond to each of the issues and management concerns recognized during the planning process. The BLM has determined that the decisions presented in the Approved RMP will provide an optimal balance between authorized resource use and the protection and long-term sustainability of sensitive resources within the planning area. As with Alternatives A through D, the Approved RMP is the summation of its Desired Future Conditions, Land Use Allocations, Management Actions, and Administrative Actions.

The Approved RMP reflects the best combination of decisions to achieve BLM goals and policies, meet the purpose and need of the RMP revision, address the identified planning issues, and consider the recommendations of the public and cooperating agencies. The Approved RMP includes the management of recreation, wildlife, minerals, cultural resources, livestock grazing, land tenure, designation of ACECs, access to public lands, and other topics.

The Approved RMP is considered the preferable alternative when taking into consideration the social, economic, and natural components of the human environment. The U.S. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has defined the preferable alternative as the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in Section 101 of NEPA. This section lists six broad policy goals for all Federal plans, programs, and policies:

1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
2. Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
3. Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
4. Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
5. Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
6. Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

Based on these criteria, identification of the preferable alternative involved balancing current and potential resource uses with the need to protect resources, as well as consideration of the human environment. Alternative B could be viewed as the least environmentally preferable alternative, as it offered the most intensive, active management for use of the area, which may have impacted other resource values the most or limited the rate of ecosystem recovery. However, this alternative could have provided the greatest economic benefit to the region in the short term. Alternative C would have been more environmentally preferable than Alternative A or Alternative B. This alternative would have provided a balance between sustainable economic benefits and resource protection. Alternative D would have been more protective of natural and biological values than Alternatives A, B, or C, but would have provided for fewer uses with more restrictions on those uses. The Approved RMP provides a balanced approach with protection for the environment while also providing economic and recreational activities.

## 1.4 MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS IN SELECTING THE APPROVED RMP

The BLM is tasked with the job of multiple use management and the sustained yield of renewable resources. These tasks are mandated under FLPMA and numerous other laws and regulations that govern the management of public lands for various purposes and values. Key laws and Executive Orders (EOs) are listed in Appendix A.

Due to the diversity of community needs and stakeholders affected by management of BLM-administered lands, there has been both support and opposition to certain components of the Proposed Plan that were presented in the PRMP/FEIS. The BLM's objective in choosing Alternative E as the Approved RMP was to address these diverse needs and concerns in a fair manner and provide a practical and workable framework for management of BLM-administered public lands. The BLM is ultimately responsible for preparing a plan consistent with its legal mandates that reflects its collective professional judgment, incorporating the best from competing viewpoints and ideas. The Approved RMP (Alternative E as modified in consideration of public and agency comments and internal review) provides a balance between those reasonable measures necessary to protect the existing resource values and the continued public need for use of the BLM-administered public lands within the planning area.

The Approved RMP proposes management that will improve and sustain properly functioning resource conditions while considering needs and demands for existing or potential resource commodities and values. In the end, resource use is managed by integrating ecological, economic, and social principles in a manner that safeguards the long-term sustainability, diversity, and productivity of the land. Additional key concerns are addressed below.

The Approved RMP responds to issues related to managing for healthy rangelands and riparian and upland vegetation while still providing for livestock grazing and fish and wildlife habitat. The Approved RMP achieves this end by making 428,300 acres of the planning area available for livestock grazing, as long as *Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration (Standards and Guidelines)* continue to be met, and by restricting grazing where it is incompatible with resource values.

The Approved RMP specifies conditions for permitted activities such as communication uses, and other commercial uses as appropriate, at the LUP level to resolve concerns regarding impacts of commercial uses. Impacts on uses as a result of protective management were disclosed in the PRMP/FEIS, and considered in conjunction with impacts to resource values. The Approved RMP provides the best balance in allowing for uses to occur while providing for protection of resource values and public health and safety. The Approved RMP responds to issues regarding noxious weeds and invasive species by maintaining the BLM's integrated management approach, as well as emphasizing the reestablishment and restoration of native plants during project activities and as a part of the watershed assessment process.

Concerns about specific resource values are addressed throughout the Approved RMP. Since standard management contained in the Approved RMP protects many of the relevant and

important values in the planning area, only three areas were designated as ACECs where additional special management is necessary.

The Approved RMP responds to increasing demands for recreation on BLM-administered public lands while adhering to FLPMA's mandate for multiple use management and the sustained yield of renewable resources.

The Approved RMP responds to travel management and access issues by providing a mechanism for route designation under TMPs, to be completed in five years. Pending completion of route designation, travel is restricted to existing inventoried routes of travel with a network of transportation routes that tie into roads administered by the counties, the states of Arizona and California, and Federal agencies. Users who value non-motorized areas for hunting, hiking, and solitude, are accommodated by areas that are closed to motorized or mechanized travel, as in designated Wilderness.

## 1.5 MITIGATION MEASURES

Measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm were built into the Approved RMP where practicable and appropriate. Many of the standard management provisions will minimize impacts when applied to activities proposed in the planning area. The *Standards and Guidelines* will be used as the base standards to assess the health of BLM-administered lands in the planning area. *Standards and Guidelines* will be applied as appropriate. When applicable, the Best Management Practices (BMPs) described in Appendix B will be used for a number of land uses, including livestock grazing, mineral development, recreation management, and realty actions. Additional measures to mitigate environmental impacts may also be developed during subsequent NEPA analysis at the activity-level planning and project stages, or through legally mandated consultations covering those same proposed actions.

As a part of this planning effort, the BLM executed ESA Section 7 consultation with the USFWS. The USFWS provided the BLM with a *Biological Opinion (BO) for the Yuma Field Office Resource Management Plan*, January 29, 2009 (USDOI USFWS 2009). The Approved RMP adopts and implements the conservation measures from the USFWS' BO (Appendix C). As this plan's decisions are implemented, actions determined through environmental analysis to potentially affect species listed or candidate species for listing under the ESA would trigger additional site-specific consultation on those actions.

## 1.6 PLAN MONITORING

Monitoring is the repeated measurement of activities and conditions over time with the implied purpose to use this information to adjust management if needed to achieve or maintain resource objectives. The BLM planning regulations (43 CFR Part 1610.4-9) call for monitoring RMPs on a continual basis and establishing intervals and standards based on the sensitivity of the resource to the decisions involved. CEQ regulations implementing NEPA state that agencies may provide

for monitoring to assure that their decisions are carried out and should do so in important cases (40 CFR Part 1505.2(c)).

There are three types of monitoring. These include implementation, effectiveness, and validation monitoring, as described below.

### **1.6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING**

Implementation monitoring is the most basic type of monitoring and simply determines whether planned activities have been implemented in the manner prescribed by the plan. Some agencies call this compliance monitoring. This monitoring documents the BLM's progress toward full implementation of the LUP decision. There are no specific thresholds or indicators required for this type of monitoring, but progress towards plan compliance will be evaluated and reported at a five-year interval from the date of plan approval. Aspects of the following two monitoring types may also be addressed in this report.

### **1.6.2 EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING**

Effectiveness monitoring is aimed at determining if the implementation of activities has achieved the Desired Future Conditions (or Goals and Objectives). Effectiveness monitoring asks the question: Was the specified activity successful in achieving the objective? This requires knowledge of the objectives established in the Approved RMP as well as indicators that can be measured. Indicators are established by technical specialists to address specific questions, and thus avoid collection of unnecessary data. Success is measured against the benchmark of achieving the objectives (Desired Future Conditions) established by the plan, which may include regulated standards for resources such as endangered species, air, and water. The interval between these efforts will vary by subject and expected rate of change, but effectiveness monitoring progress will generally be reported to the Field Office Manager on an annual basis with trends and conclusions when appropriate and also incorporated in five-year evaluation reports.

### **1.6.3 VALIDATION MONITORING**

Validation monitoring is intended to ascertain whether a cause-and-effect relationship exists among management activities or resources being managed. It confirms whether the predicted results occurred and if assumptions and models used to develop the plan are correct. This type of monitoring can also be done by a partner, contract with other agencies, academic institutions, or other entities.

Since LUP monitoring is the process of (1) tracking the implementation of land use planning decisions and (2) collecting and assessing data/information necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of land use planning decisions, monitoring related to the Approved RMP will consist of implementation and effectiveness monitoring.

The BLM will monitor the Approved RMP to determine whether the objectives set forth in this document are being met and if applying the LUP direction is effective. Monitoring for each program area is outlined in the Management Decision section of the Approved RMP. If

monitoring shows LUP actions or BMPs are not effective, the BLM may modify or adjust management without amending or revising the plan as long as assumptions and impacts disclosed in the analysis remain valid and broad-scale goals and objectives are not changed (see the discussion entitled Maintaining the Plan in Section 1.9.6 of the Approved RMP). Where the BLM considers taking or approving actions that will alter or not conform to the overall direction of the plan, the BLM will prepare a plan amendment or revision and environmental analysis of appropriate scope (see the discussion entitled Changing the Plan in Section 1.9.7 of the Approved RMP).

## **1.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RMP**

Specifically, the process began when the BLM published the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an RMP with EIS in the *Federal Register* on March 30, 2004. The Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft RMP and EIS was published on December 15, 2006. The NOA of the PRMP/FEIS was published on April 11, 2008.

Implementation of the Approved RMP will begin with publication of its NOA in the *Federal Register*. Some decisions in the Approved RMP require immediate action and will be implemented upon publication of the ROD and Approved RMP. Other decisions will be implemented over a period of years. The rate of implementation is tied, in part, to BLM's budgeting process.

## **1.8 CONSISTENCY REVIEW**

Neither the Arizona nor the California Governor's Office identified any inconsistencies between the PRMP/FEIS and State or local plans, policies, and programs following the 60-day Governor's Consistency Review of the PRMP/FEIS (initiated March 6, 2008, in accordance with planning regulations at 43 CFR Part 1610.3-2(e)).

Consistency of the Approved RMP with other local, State, Tribal, and Federal plans and policies (which sometimes conflict among themselves) was also considered as a factor in alternative selection. The Approved RMP is consistent with plans and policies of the USDOJ and BLM, other Federal agencies, State government, and local governments to the extent that the guidance and local plans are also consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of Federal law and regulation applicable to public lands.

## **1.9 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

One of the BLM's primary objectives during development of the YFO's Approved RMP was to understand the views of various publics by providing opportunities for meaningful participation in the resource management planning process. The BLM interdisciplinary planning team used the scoping process to identify issues relevant to the YFO planning area. Through communication media such as meetings, newsletters, and news releases, the public was provided

opportunities to identify issues that needed to be addressed in the RMP revision. The goal was for this process to result in an increased sense of the planning process, the decisions that result from it, and the importance of collaborative stewardship as a strategy for implementation.

Additionally, CEQ regulations 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. In support of this mandate, the BLM invited a broad range of local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies to establish cooperating agency status with the BLM. Cooperating agency status offers the opportunity to assume additional roles and responsibilities beyond the collaborative planning processes of attending public meetings and reviewing and commenting on plan documents. Several Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies signed Memoranda of Understanding to serve as cooperating agencies for the YFO RMP. These agencies are listed in Section 1.7.1 of the Approved RMP.

The BLM facilitated public involvement through a series of open houses in 2004 and 2005, and another series of meetings was held to announce and discuss the Draft RMP and EIS in 2007. The YFO also maintained a national mailing list of approximately 1,600 individuals, agencies, interest groups, and Tribes who expressed interest in the planning process. The BLM mailed planning bulletins to those on the mailing list to keep them informed of project status. Additionally, public meetings were announced at least 15 days prior to the event in local news media. The BLM also participated in numerous meetings with cooperating agencies, other Federal agencies, Native American tribes, and State and local governments. Additional details concerning the coordination process are included in the Approved RMP in the section entitled Planning Process, and in the PRMP/FEIS.

## **1.10 AVAILABILITY OF THE PLAN**

Copies of the ROD and the YFO Approved RMP are available by request from the following locations: The BLM YFO, 2555 East Gila Ridge Road, Yuma, Arizona, 85365, (928) 317-3200, and on the BLM Arizona Web site at [www.blm.gov/az](http://www.blm.gov/az).

## Field Manager Recommendation

Having considered a full range of alternatives, associated effects, and public input, we recommend adoption and implementation of the attached Yuma Field Office Resource Management Plan.



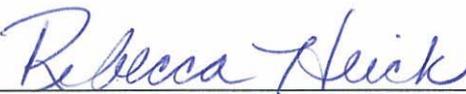
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James T. Shoaff  
Field Manager  
Yuma Field Office

1/29/2010  
Date

## District Manager Concurrence

I concur with the adoption and implementation of the Yuma Field Office Resource Management Plan.



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Rebecca Heick  
District Manager  
Colorado River District

1/29/2010  
Date

## State Director Approval

In consideration of the foregoing, I approve the Yuma Field Office Resource Management Plan.



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James G. Kenna  
Arizona State Director

1/29/2010  
Date