



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Phoenix District
Sonoran Desert National Monument
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In Reply Refer To:
8012.1 (AZ240)

Decision Memorandum:

Public Information Kiosks Sonoran Desert National Monument, Arizona

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Phoenix District

Applying
Categorical Exclusion 516 DM 11 (G)(4)
NEPA No. DOI-BLM-AZ-P040-2012-006-CX

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The BLM is proposing the installation of up to nineteen public information displays, or sign “kiosks,” on the SDNM adjacent to, or south of, Interstate 8. The sign kiosks would replace existing wooden bulletin boards installed over two years ago to provide public information in response to heightened concerns for issues related to illegal immigration and drug smuggling in the area. These concerns remain, and the sign kiosks would provide a place for continued display of information related to ongoing law enforcement and resource remediation efforts in the area, as well as provide an opportunity to furnish additional information such as educational materials on flora, fauna, and natural history.

Proposed Action

Two styles of sign kiosks would be installed. Four kiosks located at primary access points used by relatively high numbers of visitors would each contain two panels for display of information, and eleven kiosks located at secondary access points used by relatively few visitors would each contain one panel for display of information (see map, “Locations of Sign Displays”). Four single-panel kiosks will be held in reserve and installed at other access points in the area as necessary. Two-panel kiosks (each 48” x 48”) would be mounted on three 6” x 6” steel uprights

and single panel kiosks (48" x 48") would be mounted on two 6" x 6" steel uprights. Each post would be set in a below-ground foundation comprised of a 20"-24" diameter "Sonatube" frame filled with concrete. No improvements for access or parking are proposed.

Plan Conformance

The action is consistent with the *Lower Gila South Resource Management Plan* (1988), as amended, which infers the administrative use of signing for the provision of public information related to various programs.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11 (G)(4), which states: "Placement of recreational, special designation, or information signs, visitor registers, kiosks, and portable sanitation devices."

The application of this categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment. As described below, none of the exceptions to categorical exclusions from NEPA (contained in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2) apply to the proposed action:

2.1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Implementation of the proposed action will provide for a more consistent, more attractive, and lower maintenance display of information related to issues of public safety at public access points to the project area. The provision of this information for the public is believed by the BLM to be important, but does not significantly impact public health or safety.

2.2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

The proposed action is within the Sonoran Desert National Monument; however, no significant impact to natural resources and unique geographic characteristics of the monument would occur. A standard stipulation relating to discovery and conservation of cultural resources potentially encountered during the course of the project will act to mitigate potential impacts to cultural resources of the SDNM.

2.3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

There is no known potential for controversy or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

2.4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

All actions to be taken are standard sign installation procedures using hand tools and minimal mechanical means in localized areas. No significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks will result from implementation of the action.

2.5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

The action does not establish precedent for, or foreclose on, any future action.

2.6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

The action is not connected to and cumulative with any other present or reasonably foreseeable future action that poses significant environmental effects.

2.7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.

One sign kiosk installation will occur near the Bighorn Station, a property eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Siting of this kiosk will be made with the concurrence of a BLM cultural resources specialist so as not to impact this property.

2.8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.

No endangered or threatened species, or their habitats, are present in the project area.

2.9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

No Federal, State, local, or tribal law will be violated by implementation of the action.

2.10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.

No low income or minority populations will be affected by implementation of the action.

2.11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.

No known Indian sacred sites or religious practices are known to occur in the project area. Local tribal members have indicated occasional use of certain areas within and adjacent to the project

area for collection of saguaro fruits, a practice of traditional cultural importance; however, no impact to such use is anticipated.

2.12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.

The action is not expected to contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds.

Persons and Agencies Consulted

The BLM has developed the proposed action internally with staff from the Cultural, Law Enforcement, Recreation, and Wildlife disciplines represented.

Decision and Rationale on Action

I have decided to install up to nineteen public information displays, or sign “kiosks,” on the SDNM adjacent to, or south of, Interstate 8 as described above. The sign kiosks would provide for a more consistent, more attractive, and lower maintenance display of information related to issues of public safety at public access points to the SDNM in the vicinity of Interstate 8. The sign kiosks would provide a place for continued display of information related to ongoing law enforcement and resource remediation efforts in the area, as well as provide an opportunity to furnish additional information such as educational materials on flora, fauna, and natural history.

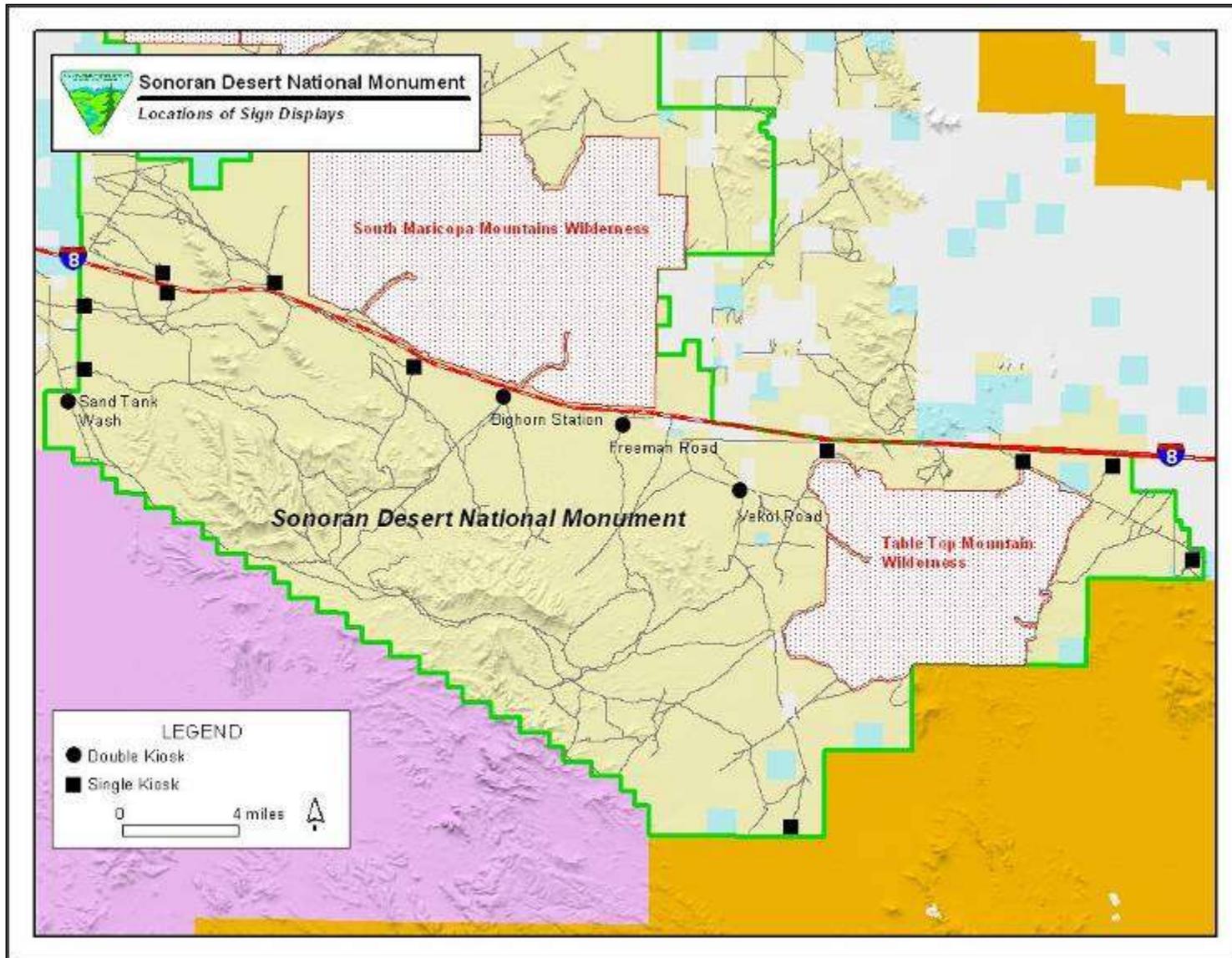
I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is consistent with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required.

The following stipulation is required as a condition of implementation:

If any cultural and/or paleontological resource (historic or prehistoric), site, or object is discovered during the course of project implementation a BLM Phoenix District archaeologist will be immediately notified. All work will cease until an evaluation of the discovery is made by the authorized officer to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values.

Authorization

This action is being taken pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), Section 201(b): “As funds and manpower are made available, the Secretary shall ascertain the boundaries of the public lands; provide means of public identification thereof including, where appropriate, signs and maps....”



Map. Locations of sign displays proposed for the Sonoran Desert National Monument near Interstate 8.