

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE
BLM/AK-CHIN DIRECT LAND SALE**

DOI-BLM-AZ-P020-2012-0006-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts discussed in the attached environmental assessment (EA), and considering the significance criteria in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.27, described below, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

Context

The project is a proposed land sale of a 160-acre parcel 25 miles south of downtown Phoenix in Pinal County, Arizona. The 160-acre parcel is an undeveloped tract of federal land that is isolated from other federal land, with no approved or planned designated public uses occurring on the property. Illegal, non-approved uses are occurring on the parcel, such as dumping, off-road vehicle use (off designated roadways), and other land-disturbing activities. Existing runway protection zones for the Ak Chin Regional Airport are designated in the northwestern portion of the parcel. The Ak-Chin Indian Community needs to be able to manage the land within these zones in order to maintain control of them. This could not be done if the land is developed in such a way as to be incompatible with these goals. To meet this need the Ak-Chin Indian Community is pursuing the purchase of the land from the BLM. No construction is anticipated or planned for the subject parcel.

Intensity

The evaluation of the intensity of the Proposed Action is organized around the 10 Significance Criteria described at 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal.

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse

The environmental analysis documented in DOI-BLM-AZ-P020-2012-0006-EA did not identify any individually significant short- or long-term impacts. The beneficial effects of the project include maintaining runway protection zones free from incompatible land uses.

2. Degree of effect on public health and safety

The analysis showed that there would be no significant adverse effect on public health and safety. The proposed land sale would not result in an adverse impact on air quality, generate noise, cause erosion or otherwise impact water quality, or result in the generation or require the disposal of hazardous materials.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas

A cultural resource survey was completed within the subject parcel. No resource eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places was identified. Based on soil characteristics, the land within the parcel is considered prime farmland if irrigated. No agriculture use is currently occurring and no infrastructure for irrigation exists. Given the lack of irrigation infrastructure and that the land is not in production, the Natural Resources Conservation Service would not identify the parcel as prime farmland. No parks, designated trails, wetlands, rivers, or ecologically critical areas occur within the parcel.

4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial

Public comments were received that identified that the subject parcel provided recreational opportunities to the public and that it should not be sold. The proposed action reduces the area available for dispersed recreation. However, 1,120 acres of State Trust land adjacent to the subject parcel would remain available for recreational uses with the purchase of a recreation permit that costs approximately \$15 annually. This reduction in available recreational lands would result in a negligible impact on dispersed recreation in the vicinity of the parcel. Future recreational parks and trails are identified in both the Maricopa and Casa Grande planning documents (City of Casa Grande 2008 and 2009; City of Maricopa 2008). No significant individual or cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of this action.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk

The analysis did not identify possible effects on the quality of the human environment that are uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk.

6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration

The analysis did not reveal that the Proposed Action would establish a precedent for any future actions with significant effects, and the activities are not connected to any other future actions. Implementation of this decision would not trigger other actions, nor is it a part of a larger action in the project area encompassed by this decision. The action is in conformance with the *Lower Sonoran Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan* (2012b), which identifies the isolated parcel as suitable for disposal.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts

The analysis did not identify any known significant cumulative or secondary effects.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect district, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources

A cultural resource survey was completed within the subject parcel. No resource eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places was identified within the parcel.

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat

The parcel is within the known foraging distance of the lesser long-nosed bat maternity roost at the Old Mammon Mine, which is located approximately 30 miles from the project area. It is estimated that there are less than 20 saguaro cacti present on the 160-acre parcel (less than 0.125 saguaros/acre); the 160-acre parcel contains relatively low-quality habitat for foraging lesser long-nosed bats based on the low density of saguaro cacti present. Since no construction is anticipated as part of the proposed action, the land sale would not result in potential impacts to federal endangered, threatened, candidate or sensitive species or adversely impact migratory birds that may occur in the area.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law

The analysis showed that the Proposed Action is consistent with federal, state, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

Finding

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the BLM / Ak Chin Direct Land Sale Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-AZ-P020-2-12-0006-EA), and considering the significance criteria contained in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR 1508.27), I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

Responsible Officials:

Recommendation of finding: _____/S/_____
Jo Ann Goodlow
Project Manager

6/30/2014_____
Date

Approval of finding: _____/S/_____
Edward J. Kender
Field Manager
Lower Sonoran Field Office

6/30/2014_____
Date