

APPENDIX I
MIDDLE GILA CANYONS AREA
TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN
CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Formal consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was conducted pursuant Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 on the Proposed Middle Gila Canyons Transportation and Travel Management Plan (TTMP). The USFWS biological opinion of April 2010 identified the conservation measures below to avoid and minimize effects to listed species and their critical habitats¹. These conservation measures will be applied during implementation of the various actions in the TTMP.

General Conservation Measures

CM-1: Cross country travel by motorized vehicles for working livestock, for hunting or to retrieve game, or other activities will not be allowed. Exceptions may be authorized on a case-by-case basis, and approved under the appropriate land-use authorization and subject to stipulations that may be deemed necessary.

CM-2: Interpretive efforts will be increased to promote a greater appreciation and respect for historic, cultural, and natural resource values in the area, and promote stewardship and involvement of visitors in taking care of sensitive areas (wildlife, habitat, cultural sites and properties, riparian areas, aquatic habitat, etc). 5

General Rehabilitation and Restoration Measures

Rehabilitation and Restoration Measure (RR) -1 When rehabilitating important areas for federally listed species that have been damaged by fire or other activities, the biologist will give careful consideration to minimizing long-term impacts. Someone who is familiar with resource impacts and the needs of the affected species will contribute to rehabilitation plan development. Appropriate timing of rehabilitation and spatial needs of federally listed species will be addressed in rehabilitation plans.

RR-2: Seed from regionally native or sterile alien (non-native) species of grasses and herbaceous vegetation will be used in areas where reseeding is necessary following ground disturbance to stabilize soils and prevent erosion by both wind and water.

RR-3 Sediment traps or other erosion control methods will be used to reduce or eliminate influx of ash and sediment into aquatic systems.

RR-4: Use of motorized vehicles during rehabilitation or restoration activities in suitable or occupied habitat will be restricted, to the extent feasible, to existing roads, trails, or washes, and

¹ Biological Opinion on the Proposed Middle Gila Canyons Transportation and Travel Management Plan (File number 6840, AZ-420), United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2 Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, Phoenix, Arizona; April 5, 2010.
<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Biological.htm>

to temporary access roads. If off-road travel is deemed necessary, any cross-country travel paths will be surveyed prior to use and will be closed and rehabilitated after rehabilitation or restoration activities are completed.

RR-5: All temporary roads, vehicle tracks, skid trails, and off-road vehicle (ORV) trails resulting from fire suppression and illegal activities will be rehabilitated (water bars, etc.), and will be closed or made impassible for future use.

RR-6: (Recommended) Develop public education plans that discourage or restrict fires and fire-prone recreation uses during high fire-risk periods. Develop brochures, signs, and other interpretive materials to educate recreationists about the ecological role of fires, and the potential dangers of accidental fires.

Riparian, Wetland, and Aquatic Conservation, Rehabilitation, and Restoration Measures

The following Conservation Measures will be implemented during operations in riparian, wetland, or aquatic habitats, unless firefighter or public safety, or the protection of property, improvements, or natural resources, render them infeasible during a particular operation. Necessary modifications of the Conservation Measures or impacts to federally protected species and habitat during operations will be documented by the Resource Advisor, and coordinated with the FWS.

RA-1: Crossings of perennial streams in suitable or occupied habitat for federally protected species will not be permitted, unless an established road already exists or where dry, intermittent sections occur.

RA-2: Avoid the use of chemicals in riparian habitats or within 300 feet of aquatic habitats, particularly sites occupied by federally protected species.

RA-3: Priority for placement of camps, staging areas, and aircraft landing or refueling sites will be outside riparian habitats or river/stream corridors occupied by federally protected species. 6

RA-4: When using water from sources supporting federally protected species, care must be taken to ensure adverse impacts to these species are minimized or prevented. Consider replacing water when appropriate. Unused water from fire abatement activities will not be dumped in sites occupied by federally protected aquatic species to avoid introducing non-native species, diseases, or parasites.

RA-5: Use of containment systems for portable pumps to avoid fuel spills in riparian or aquatic systems will be required.

RA-6: (Recommended) Develop and implement restoration plans for affected riparian or aquatic habitats, including long-term monitoring, to document changes in conditions in the riparian zone and watershed that maintain flood regimes and reduce fire susceptibility. Monitor stream water quality and riparian ecosystem health to determine effects of management activities. Coordinate efforts and results with the FWS and AGFD.

RA-7: Monitor Cochran Crossing for off road activities in the floodplain and streambed.

Species-Specific Conservation Measures

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

WF-1: Implement the Conservation Measures for Management Activities in Riparian and Aquatic Habitats.

WF-2: Avoid developing access roads that would result in fragmentation or a reduction in habitat quality

WF-3: Vegetation treatment projects adjacent to occupied or unsurveyed suitable habitat will only be conducted when willow flycatchers are not present (October 1 – March 31).

Bald Eagle

BE-1: No human activity within ½ mile of known bald eagle nest sites between December 1 and June 30.

BE-2: No tree cutting within ¼ mile of known nest trees.

BE-3: No human activity within ¼ mile of known bald eagle winter roost areas between October 15 and April 15.

BE-4: No tree cutting within the area immediately around winter roost sites as determined by BLM biologists.

BE-5: No helicopter or aircraft activity within ½ mile of bald eagle nest sites between December 1 and June 30 or winter roost sites between October 15 and April 15. 7

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

YC-1: Implement the Conservation Measures for Management Activities in Riparian and Aquatic Habitats.

Spikedace

LM-1: Implement the Conservation Measures for Management Activities in Riparian and Aquatic Habitats for occupied reaches and critical habitat.

LM-2: All reasonable efforts shall be made to minimize disturbance within the wetted areas of the Gila River or tributary channels.

LM-3: No heavy equipment will be used off-road during projects within the wetted areas of the Gila River.

LM-4: All reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that no pollutants, or chemicals associated with projects or activities enter surface waters of reaches occupied by these two fish species.

Flowering Plants

The following Conservation Measure for known locations and unsurveyed habitat of all federally protected plant species within the planning area will be implemented during the life of the plan to the extent possible:

PL-1: During project-related construction and staging activities, no personnel will be permitted within 100 meters of identified individuals or populations, nor will off-road vehicles be allowed within the 100-meter buffer area in habitat occupied by federally protected plant species. One of the primary threats to many of these plant species is trampling and/or crushing from personnel and vehicles.

Lesser Long-nosed Bat

LB-1: Instruct all special Recreation Permit holders in the identification of agave and columnar cacti and the importance of their protection.

LB-2: Prior to implementing any activities, pre-project surveys will be conducted for paniculate agaves and saguaros that may be directly affected by activities.

LB-3: Protect long-nosed bat forage plants -- saguaros and high concentrations of agaves -- from recreational activities, and from modification by management activities to the greatest extent possible. "Agave concentrations" are contiguous stands or concentrations of more than 20 plants per acre. Avoid driving over plants or piling slash on top of plants, Staging areas for crews or equipment will be located in disturbed sites, if possible.

LB-4: No seeding/planting of nonnative plants will occur in any treatment site with paniculate agaves or saguaros. Trail crew members and the project foreperson will be briefed on threatened and endangered species concerns and mitigative measures.