

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2011-023-EA Wickenburg Community Travel Management Plan

The Bureau of Land Management has conducted an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Plan to address travel management in the Vulture Mine, The Box, and Wickenburg Community Recreational Management Zones (RMZ). The plan entails five actions:

1. Route designation and implementation prescriptions,
2. Establishment and development of trail-related facilities,
3. Management of *The Box* (RMZ),
4. Route management within the Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area (CRMA) and
5. Management of organized events and OHV racing in the Vulture Mine RMZ.

Several resource mitigation features have been incorporated into the plan design and were analyzed in the EA.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based upon a review of the EA, I have determined that the plan is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the *2010 Bradshaw-Harquahala Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision*. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the plan as described below.

CONTEXT:

The plan covers 101,600 acres of federal public lands surrounding the community of Wickenburg, Arizona.

INTENSITY:

The following discussion is organized around the 10 Significance Criteria described at 40 CFR 1508.27. The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this plan:

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse:

The **beneficial effects** of the plan's five actions and Standard Operating Procedures include improved management of roads, primitive roads, trails, enhanced recreational opportunities, better managed OHV events, future construction of new trails and facilities both motorized and non-motorized, improved defense of riparian habitat (especially The Box) and recovering desert tortoise habitat through route closures, removal and reclamation of closed and illegal routes within the planning area. **Adverse effects** include decreasing routes for vehicle access, impacting casual use for prospecting, allotment permittees, and OHV recreationists.

2) Degree of effect on public health and safety:

Active management of the route network will improve public safety in general, and specifically limiting access to some AML sites would have a positive effect on public safety. While some public health and safety risks may be associated with racing events and fugitive dust, protection and mitigation measures described in the EA should ensure that these impacts would not be significant.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:

The planning area is not within the proximity of park lands, prime farmlands, wilderness areas (nearest one is north of planning area), wild and scenic rivers. The planning area does include cultural resources and Vulture

Peak Area of Critical Environment Concern (ACEC). With mitigation measures analyzed in the EA, impacts to these resources are not expected to be significant.

- 4) *Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:*

Public scoping on this plan revealed some concerns on the effectiveness of route designation. Additional concerns were expressed regarding the closing of The Box to vehicle use and potential increase in direct impacts to mineral management. These impacts were disclosed in the EA and are not anticipated to be highly controversial.

- 5) *Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve a unique and unknown risk:*

No unique or unknown risks were identified when analyzing impacts from the Proposed Plan.

- 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 proposed plan neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

- 7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts:*

No individually or cumulatively significant impacts were identified for the proposed plan. Any adverse impacts identified in the Proposed Plan in conjunction with any adverse impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions will result in negligible to moderate impacts to natural and cultural resources.

- 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:*

An intensive archeological inventory to identify districts, sites, or other properties eligible for listing to or included on the National Register of Historic Places was completed for the Proposed Plan. Historic properties were identified in the area of potential direct effects. The potential effects of the plan on cultural resources are the same as the no-action so no change is anticipated. Monitoring of the route network should decrease the potential to adversely affect these resources. On-site monitoring of the construction activities for new trails and facilities by qualified archeologists will minimize the potential for adverse effects to heritage resources.

- 9) *Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat:*
On-site monitoring of construction activities for new trails and facilities by trained biologists will minimize the potential for adverse effects to biological resources.

- 10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law:*

The proposed plan violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

Approved by:  Date 5/22/2014
BLM Hassayampa Field Manager