

## Bureau of Land Management- Southern Arizona Project FY 2010 Fact Sheet

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Undocumented immigration and drug smuggling operations continue to have a detrimental effect on the fragile landscape of the Sonoran Desert. Smugglers and undocumented immigrants travelling on foot, by automobiles, bicycles, or horses have led to the creation of unauthorized trails and roads. Disabled vehicles, bicycles and even horses are abandoned in the desert. Large quantities of trash continue to be left by undocumented immigrants, particularly in areas of “lay up” sites where they rest or wait for rides.

The Southern Arizona Project (SAP) is administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Arizona to mitigate the effects of undocumented immigration and drug smuggling on Arizona’s borderlands. Cleanup and mitigation projects funded through the SAP are managed by the BLM, cooperating governmental agencies, and nonprofit groups. This fact sheet summarizes SAP accomplishments and highlights from Fiscal Year (FY) 2010.

Remediation and restoration of impacted lands is an important focus of the SAP. Disturbances to the natural landscape fragment wildlife habitat, cause excessive erosion, and increase the presence of invasive plant species. Efforts have focused on trash clean up, elimination of unauthorized roads and trails, removal of invasive brush, and replanting with native species. The installation and maintenance of fencing and other barriers has helped to minimize illegal travel on unauthorized routes.

The SAP is coordinated by the BLM Arizona State Office, and project funds are distributed to the Tucson, Lower Sonoran, and Yuma Field Offices, as well as other borderlands partners within 100 miles of the international border. Partners in FY 2010 included: Coronado National Forest, Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Cochise County, the Town of Marana, the City of Yuma, the Tohono O’odham Nation, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and the International Sonoran Desert Alliance.

SAP projects provided numerous seasonal jobs for America’s youth. Over 150 temporary jobs were created by the program in FY 2010. This included the hiring of Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns as well as Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) youth work crews.

### **Highlights from FY 2010:**

Trash removal: Over 255 tons (510,000 lbs.) of trash was removed.

Vehicle removal: 77 vehicles and 787 tires were removed.

Land restoration: Over 2500 acres of land were cleaned up and remediated. This represents a fourfold increase in lands remediated from FY 2009. Restoration efforts included clearing of invasive plant species, replanting areas damaged by unauthorized roads and trails, grading of disturbed sites to restore natural contours, and erecting barriers to minimize future access to these areas.

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Nationally designated areas: Cleanup, remediation, and mitigation projects were completed in the Sonoran Desert and Ironwood Forest National Monuments, San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, San Bernardino and Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuges, and Coronado National Forest.

Project ROAM: BLM initiated Project ROAM (Reclaim Our Arizona Monuments) in June of 2010 in an effort to increase safety of the public and BLM employees and protect sensitive resources within the Sonoran Desert and Ironwood Forest National Monuments. Project elements include protection of natural and cultural resources, and increased law enforcement patrols. ROAM resources also supported larger efforts, such as Operation Trident, a collaboration of interagency law enforcement in high impact areas, including the national monuments. BLM installed 1.3 miles of temporary Normandy-style vehicle barriers to stop drug smugglers from creating and using illegal routes within the Table Top Wilderness Area. BLM staff and youth crews also completed intensive cleanup and remediation projects in conjunction with the installation of the barriers.

Borderlands Field Work Interagency Safety Training Guide: SAP funding supported completion of the Borderlands Field Work Interagency Safety Training Guide. This guide outlines best safety practices for people working in the borderlands. Topics addressed in the guide include dealing with illegal activities and emergencies as well the harsh climate and physical conditions of the borderlands. This is a companion to the previously produced Borderlands Safety DVD.

Tohono O'odham Nation Cleanup Projects: The Tohono O'odham Nation again partnered in SAP cleanup efforts in FY 2010. The Tohono O'odham reservation abuts the international border as well as BLM and other publically owned lands. Their location makes the Tohono O'odham Reservation one of the most active smuggling areas in the state. Tribal staff and volunteers cleaned up over 150 separate sites impacted by illegal activity.

ADEQ Web-Based Assessment and Management Tool: SAP provided the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) with funding to assist in the continued development of web-based and GIS management tools for the collection, standardization, and sharing of data between the many stakeholders affected by waste issues along the international border. The website, [www.azbordertrash.gov](http://www.azbordertrash.gov), includes guidance on conducting and documenting cleanup projects, a feature for mapping cleanup project locations, and information on volunteer opportunities. Continued coordination between ADEQ and partner agencies has led to more streamlined and consistent documentation of borderlands cleanup projects.

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<b>SOUTHERN ARIZONA PROJECT Highlights</b>		
<b>Fiscal Year 2010 Totals*</b>		
<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>TRASH REMOVAL</b>	255 tons (510,000 pounds) of trash removed *	Total of BLM and partner cleanup projects
<b>ABANDONED VEHICLE REMOVAL</b>	77 vehicles removed	BLM/Border Patrol cooperative effort, south of Interstate 8
<b>TIRE REMOVAL</b>	13.5 tons (27,000 pounds) removed	787 tires removed and transferred to county collection centers.
<b>BICYCLE REMOVAL</b>	364 bicycles removed	Bikes are in highly remote locations and are difficult to reach and remove.
<b>LAND RESTORATION</b>	2583 acres	Acres reclaimed on roads, lay up sites, illegal smuggling routes.
<b>UNAUTHORIZED ROAD AND TRAIL RECLAMATION</b>	5 miles	Unauthorized roads and trails restored to natural condition.
<b>TRAILS AND ROADS MAINTAINED</b>	18 trail miles; 23 road miles	Vekol Road and Smith Road fully maintained.
<b>VEHICLE INCURSION BARRIERS ERECTED</b>	1.3 miles *	Project ROAM; stops smuggling vehicles from entering Table Top Wilderness Area.
<b>SIGNS AND POST INSTALLATION</b>	219 signs installed or replaced	Completed by youth crews and BLM staff
<b>WELL SITE OPERATIONS</b>	3 wells maintained	Wells operated for endangered Sonoran Pronghorn. Damage from smugglers repaired.
<b>FENCE CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR</b>	4600 feet and 301 fenceposts	New fencing protects natural resources.
<b>FENCE REMOVAL</b>	14,500 feet	Removal of damaged fences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes some ROAM data from the first quarter of FY11.</li> </ul>		